

THESES OF DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

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**BUILDING NEW RURAL AREAS AND ITS IMPACTS ON
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM**

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1. Introduction and Objectives of the PhD dissertation

As the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) had a statement in year 1995 that “Because the needs of increasing populations, poverty, malnutrition, land degradation, deforestation, pollution, loss of biological diversity and the overexploitation of the oceans remind us: there is no room for complacency”. Therefore, FAO stated as “We must seek better and sustainable ways and means to meet and overcome these challenges ...”. (Loftas et al., 1995)

Besides, the Rural Development Report 2016 of IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) organization contributed another statement that “Agenda 2030 has explicitly recognized the central role that rural development plays... Hence a transformation of rural areas is needed to enable rural people to capitalize on changes in the world around them, rather than be further marginalized by them.” (IFAD, 2016)

Along with this world circumstance, the Vietnamese state was consistent and determined with its policy orientation to develop the economy in parallel with improving social life and protecting the environment. (MPI of Vietnam, 2015). Therefore, in the country’s Constitution and national socio-economic development strategies and plans, there is a firm aspiration that Vietnam will be a modern and industrialized nation moving toward becoming a prosperous, creative, equitable, and democratic society by 2035. (World Bank, MPI of Vietnam, 2016)

1.1 Objectives of the PhD dissertation

To impress point of view in chapter Introduction, and to depend on the context of the Sustainable rural development strategy and the National target programme in building new rural areas period 2011-2015 in Vietnam, this PhD theses as the short PhD dissertation has some reasons to summary objectives as below:

- Rural areas and rural development progress always play important roles for economy and society in Vietnam. Vietnamese government operates to achieve a strong economy and sustainable development in order to create quality of life with high living standard for whole country, both in urban and rural areas.

- The rising of inequality and disparity of rich and poor would be the occurring fact, which Vietnam is looking for the method of solving. Therefore, the subject of this study aims to present the impacts of socio-economic and environmental issues of building new rural areas in Vietnam. This study also finds the linkages with rural development policies in order to synthesize conclusions for the sustainable rural development progress in Vietnam.

Because the PhD dissertation does not has a goal to design new theories, but it improves an understanding to find solutions for real problems and opportunities of rural development in Vietnam.

1.2 Hypotheses of the study

Hypotheses of the study of this PhD dissertation were chosen to analyse the research topic “Building new rural areas and its impacts on sustainable rural development in Vietnam”. I suggested three Hypotheses such as:

Hypothesis 1: There are positive impacts of the National target programme in building new rural areas under sustainable rural development through three pillars of sustainability: economics, society, environment and they have confronted with the survey research in Hong Lac commune, Hai Duong province, Vietnam.

Test 1: the results give the positive outcomes of three pillars of sustainability in all aspects: economics, society and environment in rural areas by the case of Hong Lac commune in Vietnam.

Hypothesis 2: There is a dynamic transition as the most important result of the National target programme in building new rural areas that is the self-awareness and empowerment of rural residents to increase quality of life and maintain sustainable rural development in rural areas in Vietnam.

Test 2: the results give the positive testing for the aim of PhD topic that there is a dynamic transition of self-awareness and empowerment of rural residents to solve challenges and to deal opportunities in rural areas through National target programmes in building new rural areas period 2011-2015.

Hypothesis 3: Sustainable development of rural areas in Vietnam has web linkages in National target programmes for eradicating hunger and reducing poverty, promoting sustainable rural livelihoods and building new rural areas.

Test 3: the results supplies the comprehensive goals of National target programmes through web linkages such as eradicating hunger and reducing poverty, promoting sustainable rural livelihoods and building new rural areas.

As McLeod Rivera et al., 2003 stated such as “no one strategy or programmatic approach will accomplish everything... agriculture is only one aspect of rural development and other elements need to be addressed”.

Those Hypotheses above have integrated by the core background of theoretical and practical frameworks in rural studies in the chapter Literature review and chapter Materials and Methods of the PhD dissertation. Obviously, the scientific research throughout all Chapters consistent with the Objectives and Hypotheses of my PhD dissertation. In this streamline, it is necessary to consider the Principles of Rural development programmes had defined by formulation of Oakley et al., (1985) such as a line: Access - Independence - Sustainability - Going forward - Participation - Effectiveness. Because those are still significant, till nowadays.

2. Materials and Methods

The PhD dissertation synthesizes scientific theories in rural development and comparison with the practical issues as well as to find a promotion of building new rural areas in general and especially for the case in Vietnam by National target programme in building new rural areas period of years 2011-2015.

2.1 Methodology of PhD dissertation

- Using desk research with materials of scientific reviews about rural development, rural areas, rural studies and related disciplines and a source of secondary data (of the General Statistics Office in Vietnam (hereinafter is GSO) and of FAO, WB, UNs, OECD ...) in order to discuss the necessary issues of PhD topic.

- Using some scientific methods in social sciences (such as Descriptive methods, Time series analysis, and Statistics models and Graphics - Cluster analysis, Linear Regression in R commander and other statistical analysis) to apply for data analysis on rural development study of PhD topic.

Especially, the PhD dissertation based on the knowledge and learning lessons of SWOT analysis - a new tool for appraisal European rural development policies to gather essential programming steps of “an external appraisal and an internal appraisal.” According to the author, “the database used in a SWOT analysis will be tailor-made, integrating quantitative and/or qualitative data over short-, medium- or long-term periods of time.” (Karppi et al., 2001)

Those methodologies aim at finding out the major factors of sustainable rural development through the National target programme of building new rural areas in Vietnam period 2011 - 2015 although having the unfulfilled empirical information source.

On the other hand, the PhD dissertation focus on data analysis of the survey researches at a small commune, Hong Lac commune, in Red River delta, as an empirical entity. It undertaken upon the National target programme in building

new rural areas in Vietnam, period 2011-2015 in both of qualitative data and quantitative data to deal with “the class of problems and phenomena” in the field of research topic.

2.2 Concepts and Approaches of Rural development study

European Communities (EC), 2008 mentioned that: “Rural development has to be a prominent part of the development agenda as three out of every four people in developing countries live in rural areas and rural growth has proven to be an important precursor for country development in general.” (European Communities, 2008).

This PhD theses considers a definition of participation in rural development that is such as “To allow for a more equitable development process, disadvantaged stakeholders need to be empowered to increase their level of knowledge, influence and control over their own livelihoods, including development initiatives affecting them”. (Guimaraes, 2009).

In term of finding better approaches for rural development study, PhD theses focus on the concept of collective action. According Vanni, (2014), there was a definition of Marshall (1998) about Collective action such as “the action taken by a group (either directly or on its behalf through an organization) in pursuit of members’ perceived shared interests”. Otherwise, Meinzen-Dick et al. (2004) had a concept of features of collective action, as it is the involvement of a group of people, shared interests, common and voluntary actions to pursue those shared interests.

It is simply to apply the collective action for rural development process while we need to promote the empowerment of rural communities to have effective outcomes. I find out a new issue of collective action theory thus this discipline can serve for the research topic of this PhD dissertation: it is the involvement of a group of people when they contribute the activities as the collective participators in rural areas.

2.2.1 Theoretical framework of rural development studies

- **Rural areas in the EU:** Rural areas is a large part and a significant area of European. “Rurality may be defined in traditional description term including the level of population density, the rate of population loss and gain, settlement size, local economic structure and landscape (Skuras, 1998). Population density and settlement size is the most widely quote and official measure in European administration.” (Stathopoulou et al., 2004)

- **Rural development of World Bank definition:** “A national program of rural development should include a mix of activities, including projects to raise agricultural output, create new employment, improve health and education, expand communications and improve housing. ...” (World Bank, 1975)

- **Rural development by FAO definition:** “Rural development is a process integrated with economic and social objectives, which must seek to transform rural society and provide a better and more secure livelihood for rural people” (Oakley et al., 1985)

- **Concept of rural development in Vietnam:** Rural development is not only an economic development but also a development of society and security, and environmental protection. Therefore, rural development is not only a development in agricultural sector but also in rural industry and rural service. Rural development is toward the industrialization and modernization by eradicating lagging behind of rural areas and building rich and civilized rural areas. (Vu et al., 2002)

2.2.2 The conception of sustainable development

- **Sustainable development by UNs definitions:** “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations, 1987)

- **Sustainable development in Vietnam:** “Sustainability is a method of reasonable development in which almost countries take interest. It needs to manage three basic issues are such as - Economic growth. It is a condition for

sustainability; - Environmental quality. It is a guaranty for sustainability; - Inter-generational concern. It is a guaranty for justice in each country and in the world.” (Nguyen et al., 2010)

2.2.3 Some academic terms in Hypotheses

- **Rural livelihoods:** “A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels, in the short and long term.” (Krantz, 2001)

- **Quality of Life:** “Quality of Life is a function of people’s life circumstances, which of course have an economic dimension, but also includes their social networks, their health and their sense of worth, and the sustainability of the environment on which they depend....” (European Communities, 2010)

Summary, the PhD dissertation aims at synthesis of conceptions, definitions and approaches in rural studies in general and in rural development studying in order to describe an overarching understanding at the scope of PhD study about rural areas and sustainable rural development.

2.3 Practical framework for Rural development study

The “Country report - 15 Years achieving the Vietnam Millennium Development Goals” of Vietnamese government, 2015 reported that “.... The country has concentrated on challenging goals and constructing national indicators based on three development pillars - the economy, social and cultural sphere, and the environment” (MPI of Vietnam, 2015). Therefore, achievements of rural development in Vietnam (by Renewal or Doi Moi progress since year 1986) are the results and implementation of a lots funded

programmes (i.e., ODA projects) of the international organizations and of the self-sufficient efforts in all dimensions.

2.3.1 The rural development policy at present in Vietnam

State management on economics for agriculture, rural areas is the management at macroeconomics level, and it has carried through tools such as plan, strategy, programme, projects and policies. Meanwhile policies of agricultural development, rural development play an important role. So, the role of agricultural, rural policies in general that presented in some aspects as below:

- it is establishment of legality and economic environment in order to promote agricultural, rural development.
- it is conductions to prevent unsuitable developments, negative trends in agriculture fields, in rural areas.
- it is strengthening the democratic role in rural living, is a combination between agricultural development and rural economics, culture, society and building new rural areas.” (Pham, 2007)

Rural development policy is not comprehensive in Vietnam at present. It needs to implement and operate with other National target programmes and National strategies under the conduction of Government.

2.3.2 National target programme in building new rural areas

The National target programme in building new rural areas period 2010-2020 and vision into 2030 worked out by government in order to build new rural areas in Vietnam. Thus, the target of programme for new rural development in Vietnam recently is that farmers will play the core position. They will be the managers, inspectors to implement projects, and participate in the process of building new rural.

Besides, Vietnam Sustainable Development Strategy period 2011-2020 had some emerged issues, which related with sustainable rural development such as develop urban areas, build new rural areas and properly allocate population and labor in each region sustainably.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development is the hosts and co-ordinates with offices, agencies and People’s committees and provinces to build up, promulgate legal documents, create training staff for building new rural areas. Nowadays Vietnam is one of “transforming economies” - a country is in a progress of transition from agriculture-based into transforming economy since the Renewal or Doi Moi progress for overall socio-economic development from year 1986. The country is facing *challenges for economic growth* and has *opportunities for sustainable development*. (MPI of Vietnam, 2015)

2.3.3 Rural development policy in Europe Union (EU) period 2007-2013

Historical evolution of rural development policy in Europe Union are integrated with the CAP, Cork Declaration (1996, 2016), and Leader initiative.



Figure 1. Evolution of rural development policy in the EU

(Borec et al., 2009, p: 41, 42 - Figure 2 by *Own adaptation*)

LEADER is the European rural development laboratory when it has enabled new paths to be taken in rural development. It has the beginning of a response to the task of revitalising rural areas by favouring a “bottom-up” approach to development, by using a multi-sectoral approach and seeking to exploit the specific assets of each territory and LEADER underlined the importance of local strategies for sustainable development.”

(Source: [https://www.aeidl.eu/en/projects/territorial development/leader.html](https://www.aeidl.eu/en/projects/territorial%20development/leader.html))

Finding impacts on sustainable rural development in the EU can be seen as a target learning of this PhD dissertation.

2.3.4 Expert's opinion

The PhD dissertation enlarges reference on the experts' opinion about agricultural policies and rural development to have more multi-faceted views. That was an analysis about rural development policies and lessons of rural development programmes (RDPs) as below:

“- Many RDPs target agricultural activities by focusing on diversification approaches and linking agriculture to other sectors. It is still important - to nurture this development potential and explore “niche-markets” if available.
- In almost all successful RDPs farmers are actors in a restructuring process that includes agriculture as one component of a comprehensive and place-based strategy for rural development.” (Dax, 2006)

2.4 Primary research by own tackling: survey research for the PhD topic

The survey research with the topic “Finding some factors of endogenous capacity to building a new sustainable rural area in period 2011-2015 in Hong Lac commune, Thanh Ha district, Hai Duong province, Vietnam” planned by holistic design. It selects cases in two questionnaires and undergo the questions and responses to reflect characteristics and problems of the theoretical framework in the chapter Literature review of my PhD dissertation. A description of the general characteristics and relations of the phenomenon in the questionnaires is the goals of the survey research.

Based on the model analysis (SWOT analysis), a survey research collects cases in a commune and describe a top-down and bottom-up scheme in building new rural areas in Hong Lac commune. The aim of the survey research is a finding of internal advantages and endogenous development in a small commune in Red River delta in Vietnam from a start to finish stage of Hong Lac commune

while it is one entity of National target programme in building new rural areas period 2011-2015.

At the fieldwork in home country, Vietnam, I collected primary data of overall socio-economic development to building new rural areas in Hong Lac commune to evaluate and analyze the data of survey research. I completed a main task of the survey research by making two questionnaires at small size of Samples for the pre-research and the post-evaluation.

3. Results

Agricultural development is becoming to improve sustainably the wealth of nations. Because of the fact that there are a lots countries in the world (especially in low developed countries and even in developing countries) place a large rural areas in each their territories and contain a large proportion of rural residents with key activities in agriculture nowadays.

Agricultural policy *is interchanged* with rural development policy in tasks and operations. It is not only the plans of farming production but also is the goals of improving for new rural areas “with modern socio-economic infrastructure; rational economic structure and production organisations...”, improving the living standard (spiritual and physical life) of rural residents, and achieving sustainable development in rural areas.

3.1 Content of National target program in building new rural areas in Vietnam period 2011-2015

National target programme in building new rural areas implemented in rural areas nationwide from 2010 to 2020. In details, until 2020: 50% of communes will reach the standard of new rural areas (according to National criteria).

National criteria: The national criteria consist of 19 criteria for building new dynamic rural areas in Vietnam from 2010 to 2020, vision 2030. National criteria for building new rural areas divided into five specific categorizes of

criteria including programming, socio - economic infrastructure, economics and production, culture - society - environment and political system.

The fact that National target programme in building new rural areas in first stage of years 2011-2015 is the realization of decision-making for agricultural and rural development in Vietnam. Because current objectives of agricultural policy in Vietnam as set out in the MARD plan for the five years 2011-15 are to achieve sustainable development with high quality output; improve the living standard of people living in rural areas, especially the poor; and protect and utilise natural resources and the environment effectively. (OECD, 2015)

Therefore, the National target programme in building new rural areas period 2010-2020 with first stage in years 2011-2015 is implementing strongly for the triangle model of agriculture, farmers and rural areas under the reorientation for agricultural and rural development in Vietnam.

3.1.1 The main methods to implement the National target programme in building new rural areas

In order to implement Programme for new rural development in Vietnam, government had diversified the capital mobilization for the programme by action plan as below:

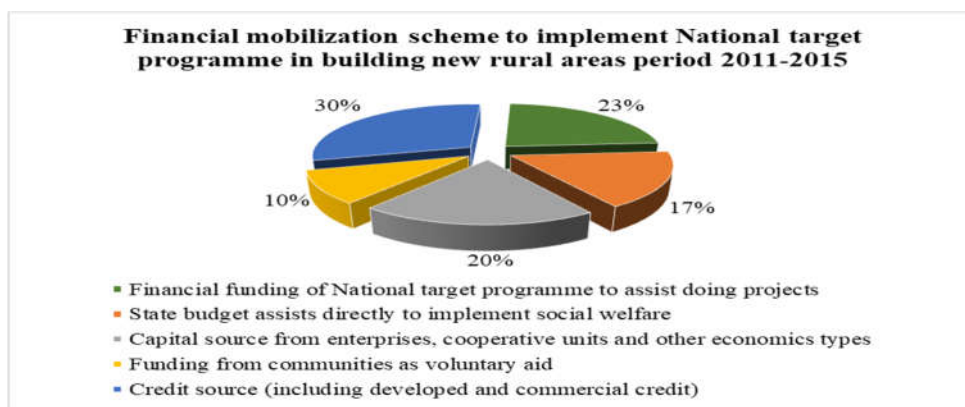
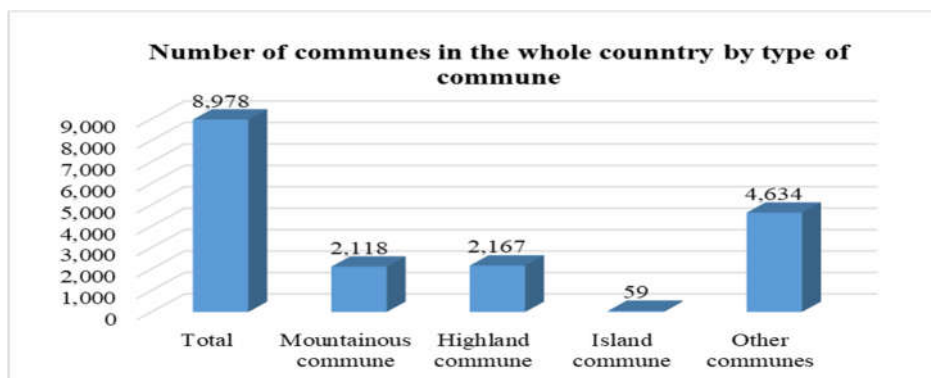


Figure 2. Financial mobilization scheme to implement National target programme in building new rural areas period 2011-2015 in Vietnam

(Source: Decision No. 800/QD-TTg of Prime Minister dated 04 June 2010)

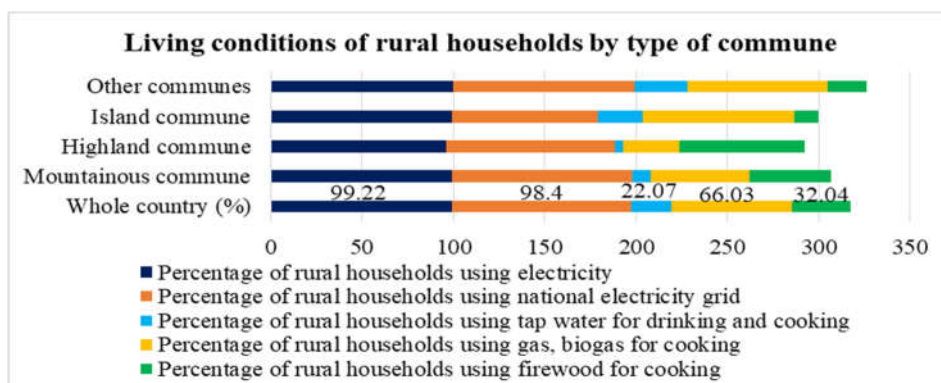
3.1.2 Results of the Rural, Agricultural and Fishery Census 2016

The results of National target programme in building new rural areas in Vietnam period 2011-2015 illustrated by GSO dataset of the “Rural, agricultural and fishery census 2016” (hereafter namely National Agri Census 2016) to be the outcomes of fact-finding of the PhD dissertation.



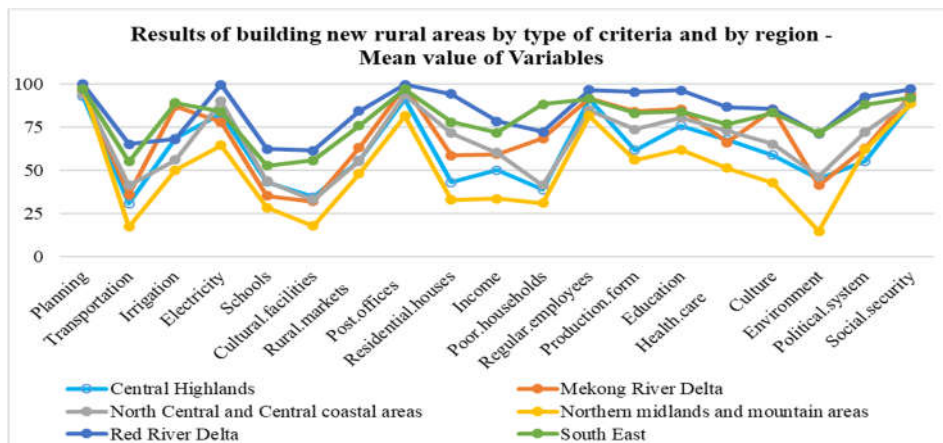
(GSO, 2018, National Agri census 2016)

According to the findings of the National Agri Census, on July 1st, 2016, the Vietnamese rural areas were constituted of 8,978 communes and 79,898 villages. Within five years (2011-2016), all sectors and levels (from the central to the local level) did effectively implement many rural socio-economic development measures and policies. There had been profound changes in the rural image, particularly the investment in infrastructure construction. (GSO 2018, National Agri census 2016)



(GSO, 2018, National Agri census 2016)

- Rural infrastructures had improved in both quantity and quality.



(GSO, 2018, National Agri census 2016, own calculation by R commander)

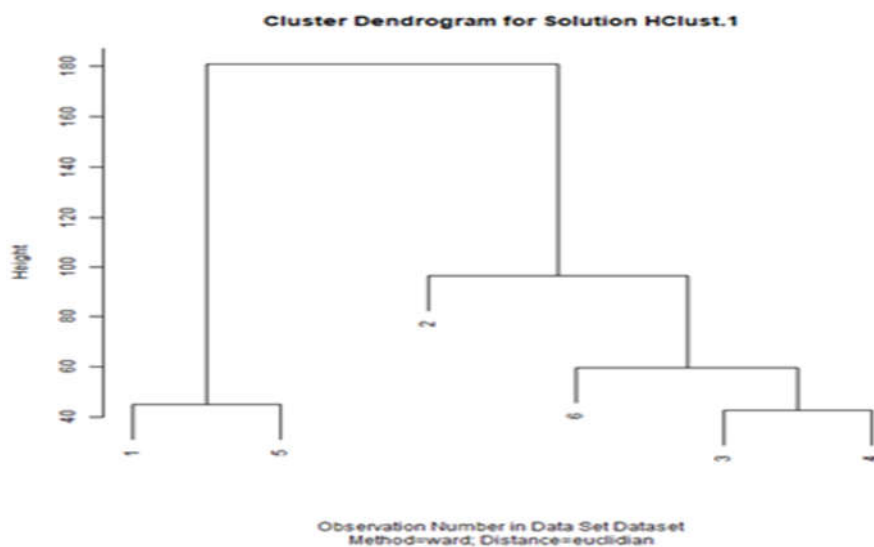


Figure 3. Cluster Analysis for National criteria: HClust.1 (model.matrix(~ 1 +, Dataset))

(GSO, 2018, National Agri census 2016, own calculation by R commander)

Besides that, the positive impacts of results of National target programme in building new rural areas period 2011-2015 had affected to overall rural economy with some major changes as below.

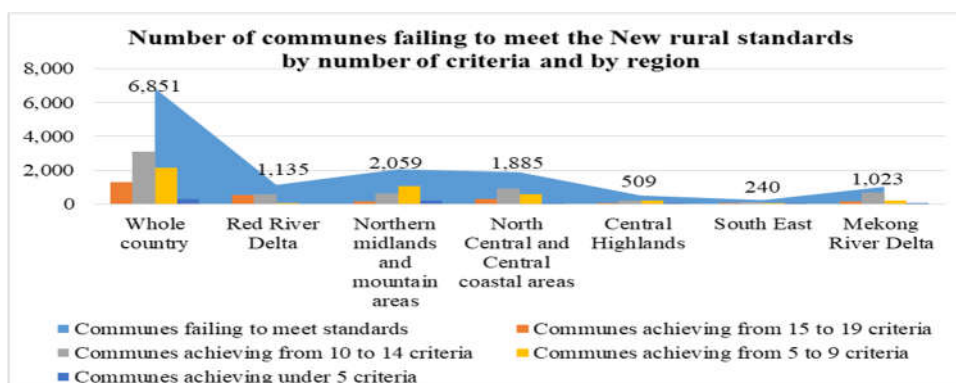
- *The first impact is restructuring of production by diversification.*
- *The second impact is focus on application of science and technology.*
- *The third impact is the mechanization of production that had strengthened.*

Box 1. Some achievements as on July 1st, 2016 Census of National target programme in building new rural areas period 2011-2015

- 5.06 million rural households used water from the centralized water supply works; Only 1.9% rural households were still using water in rivers, lakes or ponds.
- The average number of doctors in commune health stations (CHS) per 10,000 people increased from 1.12 in 2011 to more than 1.37 doctors in 2016; The coverage of health insurance in 2016 was 76.4% of the total rural population, nearly equal to 1.4 times in 2011.
- 53.6% households participated in activities in the community halls of villages or communes; and 49.9% households maintained regular participation.
- In 2016, 66.6% of rural households using industrial gas, biogas, and electricity for cooking. The proportion of households using coal and firewood was 33.1% in 2016.
- 75.6% rural households were using built bathroom; the proportion of rural households using flush toilets and semi-flush toilets was 64.5%.

(Source: GSO 2018, National Agri census 2016, p: 84, 85, 86, 87)

Shortcomings of National target programme in building new rural areas period 2011-2015 as of Census 2016



(GSO 2018, National Agri census 2016)

“The shortcomings of the National target program on building New rural areas were not only reflected in the number of communes which had not accomplished all the criteria, but also in the number of communes striving for the standards, but the accomplishment of the criteria was still unsatisfactory.” (GSO 2018, National census 2016)

Therefore, the conclusion for the Rural, Agricultural and Fishery Census 2016 was that: “Beside the achievements, the rural socio-economic situation and agricultural, forestry, and fishery production had many limitations and weakness. Economic structure was transiting slowly, and small-scale production was still common. Investment for rural areas and agriculture was limited. The labor force was big, but qualifications and skills were low. A part of rural population in the mountains, high lands and remote areas were facing many difficulties and inadequacy.” (GSO 2018, National Agri census 2016)

3.2 Rural development programmes in the EU period 2007-2013 and learning lessons for building new rural areas in Vietnam

“The sustainable development of rural areas has been a key objective of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy since it was formally established as second pillar of the policy in 2000, with increasingly important budget allocations. ... With a new policy framework about to be adopted and the current programming period (2007-2013) coming to an end, Member States will have to prepare new rural development programmes...” (European Union, 2014)

Table 1. SWOP analysis for RD policy 2007-2013 in the EU

<p>Strengths Rural development policy has enabled many farmers to learn new techniques, upgrade facilities and carry out essential restructuring, thus sharpening their competitive edge. (a)</p>	<p>Opportunities Support for RD period 2007-13 evolved from supporting structural adjustment in agriculture to better reflecting the multiple roles of farming in the wider rural context. Policy put a greater emphasis on implementing a coherent strategy for rural development across the EU. (b)</p>
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<p>Weakness The lack of data collection as well as covering of the interaction among evaluation activities, the compilation and refinement of indicators for “ongoing evaluation” during the entire programming period were be the weakness and challenges to ensuring adequate capacity building by Member State needs. (c)</p>	<p>Threatens It is flexible to establish RDPs by condition level of each Member State in line with the common framework built around four axes. It also can create threatening for implementing and ensuring consistency in their programming. (d)</p>
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(Source: European Commission. (Last update 26 Mar 2014, a).

European Commission. (Last update 26 Mar 2014, b, d)

European Commission. (Last update 26 Jun 2014, c); European Union. (2014, c))

Because the RD policy in EU period 2007-2013 had orientation such as “Setting priorities is one thing, then comes actually delivering on them. This is particularly important for a policy that operates on many levels, from defining a strategic framework at EU level, to drawing national programmes to implementation by local administrations, and seeking to promote bottom-up approaches (such as initiatives taken by local groups)” (European Union, 2011) Therefore, I conceive a learning lesson that RDPs must define the difficulties of each rural area at the process of making decision and classify difficulties frequently during implementation. This reflected in the implementation of National target programmes in Vietnam from development planning to the decentralizations administration of management from central offices to local authorities to deal priorities with each rural area in ways of “mutual reinforce to each other”.

3.3 Results of survey researches in Hong Lac commune, Vietnam

A report of the survey research describes the progress of Hong Lac commune under the National target programme of building new rural areas in Vietnam period 2011-2015. Hong Lac commune joined in this National target programme with aims at alleviating poverty and building sustainable rural areas. The report would submit all results of promoting for a better quality of

life and sustainable rural livelihoods of rural residents but it also found challenges of this National target programme in commune.

This report creates a frame/scenario that based on phenomena by data collection in two times of survey research in Hong Lac commune to complete an analysis as a practical experiment for research topic of the PhD dissertation.

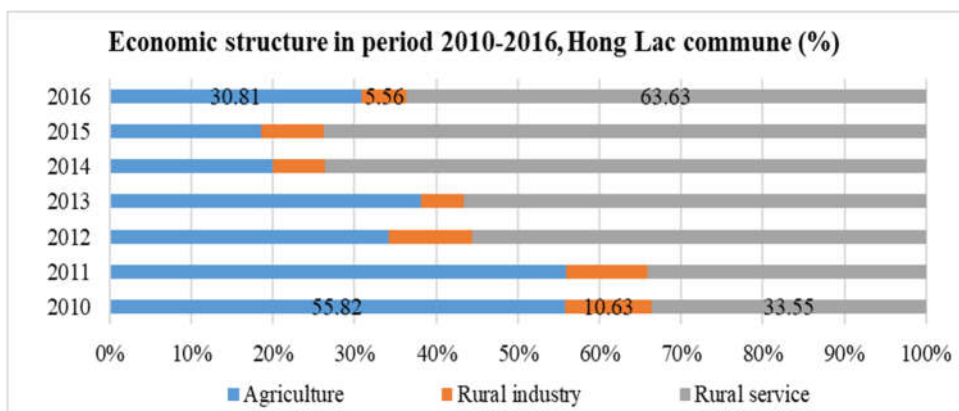
3.3.1 Preparing a planning to building new rural areas in Hong Lac commune

Hong Lac commune places in Thanh Ha district, Hai Duong province in the socio-economic region Red River delta in Vietnam. Commune has total square of 852.9 ha (includes 543.4ha for agricultural area and 309.5ha for non-agricultural area). Rural population has increased from 9.1 thousand people (counts at 2,474 households) in 2010 to 10.3 thousand people (counts at 3,213 households) in 2017.

The survey research was established in the Hong Lac commune in two times of year 2014 and year 2017 in order to make an experiment to illustrate for the research goals of PhD topic “Building new rural areas and its impacts on sustainable rural development in Vietnam”. The data collected through two questionnaires that designed by named PhD student of this PhD dissertation.

3.3.2 Fact-finding of implementing the National target programme in building new rural areas period 2011-2015 in Hong Lac commune

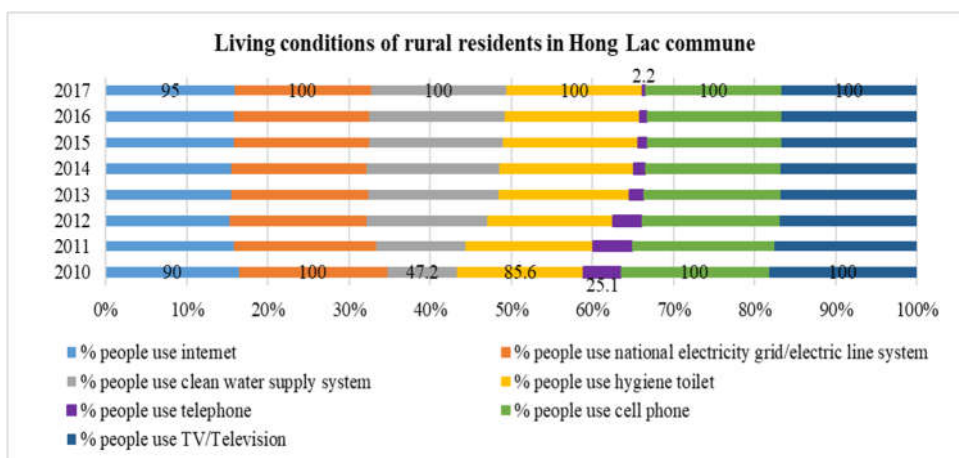
There are successes because of the top-down approach by delivering the policies from center to local and the bottom-up approach by feedback of rural residents. Meanwhile commune leaders and rural residents are both of stakeholders to applying objectives of programme for a better quality of life and for rural sustainable development at their local areas.



(Own Survey researches in 2014 and 2017)

The potentials and advantages of commune in agricultural production had presented through all charts in above. The outcome promoted for increasing of living standards, for transition of labor structure from agriculture to non-agriculture, for food security as well. That are the positive impacts in sustainable rural development in Hong Lac commune during implementation of programme (2011-2015) and afterward.

Although the difficulties of natural resources with small area of land use and overpopulation and agricultural-based production but commune has done almost indicators under regulations of National criteria.



(Own Survey researches in 2014 and 2017)

3.3.3 Conclusions for sustainable rural development based on the survey researches in Hong Lac communes

According to William et al., (2003), investing in agricultural development and in rural development are the sustainable solutions to alleviating poverty and promoting living standard for rural residents.

From this review, there are some executive summary of implementation of National target programme in building new rural areas in Hong Lac commune at the finish stage in December 2017. The interpretation as below is a significant testing for Hypotheses of this PhD dissertation.

(1) Commune has tried to find **the pathway out of poverty, out of logging behind, out of food insecurity** and this work needs to accredit and continue after year 2017. This fact needs to solve by creating more jobs and improving income generation for rural residents involving poor households. These needs cannot depend on only agricultural production but also depend on job opportunities in rural industry and rural service.

(2) **The dividend in different groups of stakeholders in questionnaires of survey researches** recognized the scope of implementation, the effective impacts of programme and the feedback of those groups. Two survey rounds received important feedbacks of interviewees and those are good results to conclude for the role of stakeholders in this programme.

The results of survey research support that the RD policies are important for rural transition or renovation in commune in all socio, economic and environmental aspects. However, rural residents are always the stakeholders who decide success or failure of this programme. Although the objectives of National target programme are positive and beneficial for them but only rural residents can create the change for their commune. Local authorities or commune leaders are the same participators of this progress to accredit all indicators of this National target programme.

First survey research, August 2014: All responses are significant outcomes of awareness of rural residents in Hong Lac commune about National target programme. It illustrated that rural population interested much in National target programme which made the change for their living and promoted for sustainable development of commune.

Second survey research, November 2017: All responses of rural residents supplied positive evaluations and realistic recommendations for the process of National target programme in commune. The result illustrated that all rural residents played a role of core stakeholders in this programme (not only by awareness about policies but also by contribution of themselves). They all agreed with the positive changes of commune because all dimensions of society, economics and environment (three pillars of sustainable development) are improved toward achieving a better quality of life even they need to have more sustainable livelihoods (mainly in job opportunities) in their commune.

- *How rural communities can conceive that they are the core of sustainable rural development and they self-confront with problems and complex issues of building new rural areas?* The response is a progressive model in which it must base on a relevant course of exogenous factors and endogenous capability of farmers and rural residents.

4. Conclusions

The fact that National target programme in building new rural areas in Vietnam period 2011-2015 has many difficulties and challenges for progress of sustainable development in rural areas. The most important outcome of this programme is that it built a rural infrastructure by National criteria to renovate socio-economic and environmental dimensions in each rural area. This is a tangible positive impact to distribute sustainable rural development in rural

areas in Vietnam. Hong Lac commune is a good experimental proof for the scientific research of this PhD dissertation.

Therefore, I recommend that a long-term rural development and National target programme in building new rural areas in second stage (a period 2016-2020) would consider learning lessons from the EU Rural development policy and from the disciplines of knowledge of rural development study worldwide to decide policy fundamentals in order to gain positive impacts of rural living.

The view of policy making for building new rural areas in Vietnam

The decision-making is so important for management and organization of governments in both of promulgation and critical evaluation for policies.

I conceive that building new rural areas does not only build roads, drainage (sewage works), irrigated canals, schools, residential houses, community halls ...but also is the way of farmers and rural residents to access the goals of programme and to promote themselves to be confident, self-decisive, creative in a new dynamic and sustainable rural areas. This is the work, which farmers and rural residents should participate in as “stakeholder involvements” to have a better quality of life. It is an empowerment process for rural residents at their communes.

If so, in my opinion, it must create the clusters of main staffs at central and local areas (as commune leaders and workers) to help rural residents recognize the importance of building new rural areas through rural communication system (rural media), rural extension. It also must establish the dynamic organizational formation of rural production (or rural farming) such as cooperative units and collective units to capture local specificities and to explore the endogenous capability under the conditions of decentralization and globalization nowadays. I recommend that Governments need to verify organizational tasks of agricultural and rural development policies. This task need dialogue and cooperation to call for new attitudes and skills (of farmers, of rural population and concerns).

5. New scientific results

The target of National target programme for new rural development in Vietnam is that farmers and rural residents will play the core position. They will be the managers, inspectors to implement projects, and they participate in the process of building new rural areas to avoid the overlap of implementations or the damage of current rural property.

By the synthesis on rural development and sustainable development in the chapter Literature review and the analysis of all experiment in the chapter Results and Evaluation of my PhD dissertation, I have found some new scientific results as below:

(1) - Creating opportunities for sustainable development in rural areas: I have found that an achieved sustainable rural development is **a rural livable capacity** and it depends on the sustainable livelihoods, and quality of life in rural areas.

(2) - Approving and enhancing reasonable policies and reforms for creating a new rural area: I have proven that those actions **need projections by emphasising on growth and prosperity** through government's and local financing plan for public expenditure, and international integration under optimal choices of decentralisation and globalization to foster sustainable rural development in rural economy, rural environment and rural living.

(3) - Building new rural areas under sustainable development **is the initiative of involvements of the people groups** where and when they contribute the activities voluntarily as the positive collective participators in their rural areas. Rural development will not be significant if it does not focus on improving the better quality of life for rural residents. Moreover, I supposed that rural residents participate in rural development process, as they need to be assigned power and empowerment themselves.

(4) - I have recognized that **building new rural areas corresponds with the standard indicators of the new-style rural areas through the National**

criteria (19 criteria) that is the rational cooperation of the methods and approaches (top-down, bottom-up and stakeholder involvement). Therefore, National target programme in building new rural areas in Vietnam is not only an improvement of new socio-economic infrastructure to improve living conditions but it is also a programme of empowerment for rural residents by their endogenous capability.

(5) - Sum up, I have contributed **a new definition for conception of building new rural areas** such as: “Building new rural areas as a sustainable rural development programme is an initiative of voluntary or obligatory cooperation and participations through collective action scheme/institution. It creates outcomes and improves common benefits which it derives from the tangible advantages and endogenous capacities of local users (farmers and rural residents) and of formal communities (as a commune) in a rational circle of three pillars of sustainability.”

(6) - **New methodological results:** I had done the survey research in small sizes in Hong Lac commune with two questionnaires and this case is a new scientific result as this is a new and primary science research in a commune. This survey implemented in a first time in Hong Lac commune, Hai Duong province to delivery all thematic issues of National target programme in building new rural areas in Vietnam period 2011-2015.

6. List of publications related to the PhD Dissertation

- Scientific publications in English connected to the PhD dissertation

1. Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy; László Vasa. (2018). **Description of agricultural development in Vietnam and ASEAN countries (South East Asian Countries)**. Intermediate Europe: Journal of Social Sciences, Volume 10:1, No. 23 (2018), pp. 105-118, ISSN: 2064-437X Szeged (Electronic edition)
2. Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy (2021). **Reviews of Sustainable Rural Development in the scope of Building new rural areas in Vietnam**. Szent

Istvan University, Kaposvár Campus: Regional and Business studies Journal, Volume 12, No.2 (2020), pp. 77-91, doi: 10.33568/rbs.2521, ISSN 2732-2726 (Online).

3. Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy; László Vasa. (2020). **A new approach in rural development in Vietnam: Evaluation of the National target programme for building new rural areas, 2011-2015.** Polgari Szemle - Civic Review: Economic and Social Journal, Vol. 16, No. 4-6 (2020), pp. 366-378, DOI: 10.24307/psz.2020.1029 (Electronic edition and Printed edition)

- Conference/Workshop papers in English connected to the PhD dissertation

1. Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy; Bernadett Horváthné Kovács and László Vasa. (2015). **Rural development in Vietnam - specific scope to environmental sustainability.** ISBN: 978-963-9821-965 (Printed edition); ISBN: 978-963-9821-97-2 (Electronic edition), pp.157-170.

2. Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy. (2015). **Hunger eradication and poverty reduction - Finding an opportunity for sustainability in Vietnam.** ISBN: 978-963-9821-86-6 (Proceeding on-line).

3. Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy; Bernadett Kovacs. (2017). **The goals of agricultural and rural development strategy in EU and Vietnam.** ISBN: 978-80-89691-42-5; DOI: 10.18427/iri-2017-0061, pp. 29-34 (Printed edition)

4. Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy. (2018). **Regional development in Hungary and a view for the policy-making in Vietnam.** ISBN: 978-615-5754-41-8 (Proceeding on-line), ISBN: 978-615-5754-40-1, pp.199-213 (Printed edition).