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Interdisciplinary Analysis and Assessment of Innovation Transfer to Farmers in the Red River Delta, Vietnam

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Abstract

The Red River Delta (RRD) is one of two biggest deltas in Vietnam. The region is the origin of paddy rice in the country. Agriculture plays an important role for Vietnam's economy, especially in the RRD. Recently, adoption of innovations in agriculture has enhanced the quality and quantity of production. Old varieties of crops have been replaced and improved management practices as well as production methods such as Integrated Planning Model (IPM) have been implemented.

This research project focuses on the question, whether there is a necessity to enhance the process of innovation transfer to farmers. Social-economic conditions of the region have to be taken into account. The project will evaluate the existing transfer system and tries to find out if it is possible to improve the innovation transfer by interfering into the process.

The interdisciplinary research project uses the theory of diffusion of innovation, the theory of collective action, and other explanations such as the cultural effect and individual behaviour. The results of this paper are based on 15 expert interviews and 85 detailed questionnaires of smallholder farmers.

The cooperation between farmers and agents of extension services, S&T organisations, agricultural enterprises, NGOs will be described. In some cases, the process of innovation transfer to farmers happens directly because of agreements in a contract between partners, or motivated by incentives, or simply pursuant to a learning process following diffusion of information through networks. The role of farmers in these processes is also directly observed as an active or passive participation. Farmers are classified in groups of adopters (potential adopters, early adopters), imitators (later adopters) and non-adopters and factors to explain the adoption behaviour are discussed.

Keywords: Adoption of innovations, agricultural economics, diffusion of innovations, innovations transfer, planned behaviour