Assessment of the project
Construction Ceramic Drying Rooms – Clean Air for Bat Trang Ceramic Handicraft Village, co-financed from the Local Small Scale Projects of the Czech Embassy in Hanoi

Based on the successful results of the project implemented in the Bat Trang traditional ceramic village in 2009, the VEPF - Vietnam Environment Protection Fund applied for the follow-up support to extend the project reach and allow for more workshops to install new technologies for production of ceramics - new gas ovens instead of the outdated ones using the coal dust and new drying rooms for ceramic products.

The civic association Development Worldwide has been working in Bat Trang village since 2008 when we had a unique opportunity to see the negative impacts of burning the coal dust. These negative impacts were visible in low efficiency and competitiveness of the production (heating took a long time and the quality of final products was quite poor) as well as in a big amount of solid waste and air pollution and in related direct effects on human health and the landscape. In 2008, the situation in Bat Trang village was also discussed at the international VEPF and DWW conference in Da Nang. A solution to the problems proposed at the conference consisted in replacement of the outdated ovens by a new Vietnamese technology of heating by gas, and the VEPF offered a low interest loans to the workshops/households willing to use the new technology. The pilot workshops were already equipped by this technology and the first results showed very good results.

In 2009, the Czech Embassy supported the project submitted by the VEPF and this support allowed combination of the VEPF loans with a direct contribution to the poor families, selected jointly with the Bat Trang People's Committee. While the loans were mostly used for installation of new gas ovens, the support from the Embassy was used for constructing the drying rooms, using the exhaust heat for finalizing the ceramic products.

The same model was used for a second year of the project in 2010. The official handover of the project results was realized on November 4, 2010 with a participation of local and central authorities as well as a Czech delegation consisted of the representatives of the Czech Embassy in Hanoi (including Mr. Ambassador Michal Kral), DWW, Czech Development Agency, State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic and member of the European Parliament, Mr. Jan Zahradil. All participants could compare the situation with using the coal dust and new heating technology and see the working environment in the workshops and the final products. They also met the project beneficiaries and

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spoke about the impacts of the project. DWW team can then confirm sustainability of project results and significant improvements of the life and working conditions in the village since the first survey in 2008.

We consider the project very successful from several points of view:

- there is a reasonable cost sharing of all development actors based on clear commitments of the beneficiaries (direct investments and repayment of loans), low interest rates provided by the VEPF and a grant contribution from the Czech Embassy in Hanoi;
- there is a high energy efficiency of the gas heating technology, specially developed in Vietnam;
- the applied technology leads both to significantly improved quality of the final products (and thus to increased competitiveness of the workshops) and to minimization of solid wastes and air pollution;
- the project is a good evidence of a reasonable cooperation between the Czech Republic and Vietnam and it also helps to enhance capacities of the VEPF and to increase awareness about the VEPF´s programs and their results;
- and the project is also a good example for other regions in Vietnam where the best practices and lessons learned from Bat Trang can be well used.

We consider the project as a good Czech contribution to the celebration of 1000 years of craftsmanship in Bat Trang.

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