



Adaptation for  
Smallholder  
Agriculture  
Programme  
**ASAP**

**ASAP Innovations, Policy and Scaling**

**VIETNAM**

The project successfully mainstreamed climate-informed socio-economic development plans in all communes in two provinces, demonstrating ASAP's potential for long-term policy impact. Agricultural production of Ben Tre and Tra Vinh was re-focused to higher-quality products, high-quality varieties, and processing technologies achieving more efficient and sustainable agriculture in a changing climate.

**The challenge:  
Water scarcity, agriculture and livestock losses, and greater vulnerability for smallholder farmers**

Vietnam is severely impacted by weather and climate events, with increased floods, typhoons, and droughts due to changing rainfall and temperatures. The Mekong Delta, which produces more than half the country's rice, is particularly affected by a changing climate. In the provinces of Ben Tre and Tra Vinh, rising temperatures, saline intrusion, erratic rainfall, and reduced river flow are challenging communities. These changes lead to water scarcity, losses in agriculture and livestock, and greater vulnerability for smallholder farmers.

Smallholder farmers are susceptible to more losses without adaptation measures, and poverty alleviation efforts over the years could be reversed. Therefore, the aim of the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP), through the AMD project, is to build the adaptive capacity of communities and institutions in the Mekong River Delta to better withstand climate change risks.



**Project for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh Provinces (AMD)**

2013 - 2020

**Project Financing**

Total project cost: US\$ 49.34 million  
IFAD financing: US\$ 34 million  
ASAP grant: US\$ 10.5 million

**Outreach**

- 60 communes in 15 districts of Ben Tre and Tra Vinh provinces
- Estimated total of household members attended: 552,626

**Target group**

- Female-headed households;
- Rural poor without land or other productive assets;
- Rural poor with land or aquaculture resources;
- Ethnic minority, most notably the Khmer ethnic minority groups resident in Tra Vinh, who lack income, skills and other factors of production;
- Households just above the poverty threshold.

**Project objective**

Strengthen the adaptive capacity of target communities and institutions to better contend with climate change.

## The innovation: Salinity monitoring is helping smallholder farmers turn the tide

Both provinces piloted some alternatives to give salinity information to farmers. They distributed hundreds of manual salinity meters and trained local farmer groups' heads and agricultural extension staff to use them on rivers and culverts on a regular basis. The information was then broadcasted on commune radio to around 4,617 households, which confirmed its usefulness in crop protection.

In 2018, the project partnered with Ryan Technologies, a Vietnamese start-up dedicated to making every day industrial operations more efficient and sustainable, to establish a network of 21 automatic in-field monitoring buoys in Tra Vinh. The buoys provide real-time water quality data on salinity, alkalinity, pH and water levels. The data are gathered at an operations centre and then shared freely with farmers via a smartphone app called Mekong. As of September 2021, the app had been downloaded almost 11,000 times.

Thanks to that, people in these districts better controlled water level, salinity and pH in agricultural production and aquaculture, and the community became more proactive in adjusting the cropping calendar in 2019 and 2020. As a result, some districts expressed that although the Winter-Spring crop in 2019-2020 suffered from early saline intrusion with very high salinity levels, the total loss was way less compared to 2015-2016.

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*“When I know the water salinity level is high, I first store water in my pond and then close the culvert to prevent salt water from entering my farm”*

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- Mr Le Hoang Ro, AMD's Project Participant who lives in Tra Vinh







## Results and impacts

In Vietnam, ASAP is reported to have built a stronger resilience capacity for partners and communities. The project successfully mainstreamed climate-informed socio-economic development plans in all communes in two provinces, demonstrating ASAP's potential for long-term policy impact.

The interventions facilitated smallholder farmers' participation in planning, membership of social networks, capacity building, access to knowledge, diversified livelihood and income streams, access to credit, climatic risk hazard reduction through infrastructure and better soil and water management and saving techniques.

In terms of agricultural restructuring, positive results have been observed. In Tra Vinh, since 2015, nearly 15,000 hectares of inefficient rice land have been converted to aquaculture, fruit, vegetables and grass cultivation for cows, while in Ben Tre, low drought and salinity-resistant crops like rice and sugarcane were replaced by fruits and aquaculture for which production and areas have been increased to 57,517 ton and 542 hectares, respectively.

In addition, the agricultural production of Ben Tre and Tra Vinh is re-focused on higher-quality products, high-quality varieties, and processing technologies. This is a positive trend to achieve more efficient and sustainable agriculture in a changing climate.

## AMD Footprint



**128,013 smallholder farmers** in both provinces supported in coping with climate change's effects (102% against the target of 125,000).



**3,760 groups** were supported to sustainably manage natural resources and climate-related risks (188% against the target of 2,000 groups) and **35,369 individual group members** (118% against the target of 30,000 people).



**1,338 community-based adaptation and disaster risk management plans** were developed by every commune in the two provinces during the project (2,230% against the target of 60 plans).



**Over half of project households (56.9%) had a 30% increase in climate resilience.**



The project has met the development target of at least **30,000 members of poor and near poor households** whose **climate resilience has been increased 30% by 3.3 times.**



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Investing in rural people

International Fund for Agricultural Development

Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy

Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463

Email: [ifad@ifad.org](mailto:ifad@ifad.org)

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