

Third Party Evaluator's Opinion on Coastal Communication System Project

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Vietnam has more than 3,200 km coastline and has jurisdiction right in a marine area of nearly one million kilometre square. This is a very valuable resource of the country. In order to protect, develop and exploit this resource, a radio communication system has a vital role in all marine activities. It is the only bridge between onshore people and offshore ships in normal condition, as well as in emergency cases. The coastal communication system project was born to fulfill this requirement.

At the time of this evaluation (October 2004), the whole project has been completed and in operation. The Northern part has operated for 4 years and the Southern part has operated for more than 4 months.

With the gathered information, it can be confirmed that the coastal communication system project is one of the projects that are relevant to Vietnam development plan and has achieved high effectiveness among Japan's ODA projects.

Relevance

The project is relevant to the development, reform, and integration strategy of Vietnam. One of the major objectives in the 30 year development strategy of Vietnam (1991-2020) is to exploit marine economics potential including exploiting natural resources, especially oil and gas (which is currently one of the key industry in Vietnam); farming and exploiting sea products, marine transportation (which is also a major industry of Vietnam). In addition, following the reform and open-door policy, Vietnam has participated in bilateral and multilateral co-operation, as well as in international conventions. Without this project, Vietnam would not be able to observe the provision of SOLAS convention. Thus, the project helps in progressing the implementation of development, reform, and integration strategy of Vietnam.

Effectiveness

The project meets its objectives that the Prime Minister approved which were demonstrated in the following points:

- ✓ Provide information for marine search and rescue: implement 24/24 hour watch on the national and international distress frequency in accordance with GMDSS; timely react to distress signals received and co-ordinate with the relevant organizations; broadcast marine safety information notices to ships operating offshore; provide information for marine search and rescue operations between the search and rescue organizations and the ships in accident.
- ✓ Ensure stable and un-disrupted information service to ships: provide information service 24/24 hour to ships, support the co-ordination and management in marine related industries (marine transportation; oil and gas exploration and production; fishing etc.); provide information service to individuals domestically and internationally.
- ✓ Help to strengthen marine security and control, protect national marine territory: The coastal radio stations are the official communication channel on national marine sovereignty; receive and provide timely to the relevant government bodies information on the operations of foreign ships that are operating in Vietnam territory;
- ✓ Protect marine environment : provide information that helps in preventing and reacting to marine accidents; support in fighting against sea pollution.

- ✓ Help in transmitting and broadcasting information to remote areas: This will help to narrow the gap in living standard, especially it will help in improving the social life of people in remote areas.

In order to increase further the effectiveness of the project, below are some recommendations to the Government of Vietnam:

- ✓ A document with legal framework should be issued to require ships, especially fishing boats to be equipped with sufficient communication facilities so that they are able to communicate with the coastal information system in case of emergency (Currently, there are only 10% of the ships in operation that are equipped sufficiently communication facilities).
- ✓ Set up factories that can produce economically rescue equipment for ships.
- ✓ Improve capability of search and rescue organizations by equipping them with sufficient and modern facilities.