



Integrated Assessment of the Impact of Trade Liberalization

A Country Study on the Viet Nam Rice Sector





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Foreword

Since 1989 Viet Nam has been undergoing a gradual transition from a centrally planned socialist to a market-oriented economy under the reform process known as *Doi Moi*, which literally means “change and newness”, a term coined in 1986 for reform and renovation in the economy. This process of transition has been accompanied by high growth, macroeconomic stability and significant structural change. Further reforms have also been conducted by implementing policies of trade liberalization according to Viet Nam’s commitments under the ASEAN Free Trade Area/Common Effective Preferential Tariff scheme (AFTA/CEPT) from July 1995, the Bilateral Trade Agreement between Viet Nam and the United States (USBTA) signed in July 2000, and as part of the negotiations to enter the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The country has gone from being a rice importer to a net rice exporter, and is the second largest rice exporter in the world since 1995. In recent years, the annual volume of rice exports has grown considerably, reaching over 3.5 million tons, representing a share of about 16 per cent of the world rice market. The growth in rice production and rice exports has brought, among other effects, an increase in agricultural income and GDP, and has had a positive impact on poverty reduction. The policies promoting rice production and trade have also had a number of environmental and social impacts, such as adverse effects on human health from the misuse of fertilisers and pesticides, environmental degradation and loss of rice biodiversity from technology inputs.

The integrated assessment of the impact of trade liberalization on the rice sector of Viet Nam is very important since it provides the basis for formulating appropriate measures to mitigate the negative impacts and promote the positive ones. The assessment also supports further trade liberalization in the rice sector. In the Viet Namese context it has also been helpful in supporting national capacity to undertake impact assessment in agriculture and trade.

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United Nations Environment Programme

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the overall coordinating environmental organisation of the United Nations system. Its mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnerships in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. In accordance with its mandate, UNEP works to observe, monitor and assess the state of the global environment, improve the scientific understanding of how environmental change occurs, and in turn, how such change can be managed by action-oriented national policies and international agreements. UNEP's capacity building work thus centres on helping countries strengthen environmental management in diverse areas that include freshwater and land resource management, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, marine and coastal ecosystem management, and cleaner industrial production and eco-efficiency, among many others.

UNEP, which is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, marked its first 30 years of service in 2002. During this time, in partnership with a global array of collaborating organisations, UNEP has achieved major advances in the development of international environmental policy and law, environmental monitoring and assessment, and the understanding of the science of global change. This work also supports the successful development and implementation of the world's major environmental conventions. In parallel, UNEP administers several multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) including the Vienna Convention's Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (SBC), the Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (Rotterdam Convention, PIC) and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

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