

## Project description WOP Mekong Delta Vietnam

The WOP MEKONG Delta team in the Southwestern Mekong Delta that focuses on four topics, namely:

1. Climate adaptation, future water resources for securing water supply and Long-term climate robust investment proposals
2. Non-Revenue Water(NRW)
3. (Pro Poor) Network extension
4. Organization and HR development

### Climate adaptation, future water resources for securing water supply and long-term climate robust investment proposals

Water and in some cases sewerage services in the Mekong Delta are provided by provincial water supply companies (WSCs) in urban areas, and by provincial Centres for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation in rural areas.

Current (2016) water demand in Can Tho, Soc Trang and Hau Giang is estimated at about 287.000 m<sup>3</sup>/day of which 80% is (sub) urban and industrial water demand.

The estimated water demand is projected to reach about 561.000 m<sup>3</sup>/day by 2025, of which 90% is (sub) Urban and industrial water demand.

The supply deficit in 2025 including realization of ongoing projects and a 25% reduction in groundwater use in Hau Giang and Soc Trang is estimated at 265.000 m<sup>3</sup>/day.

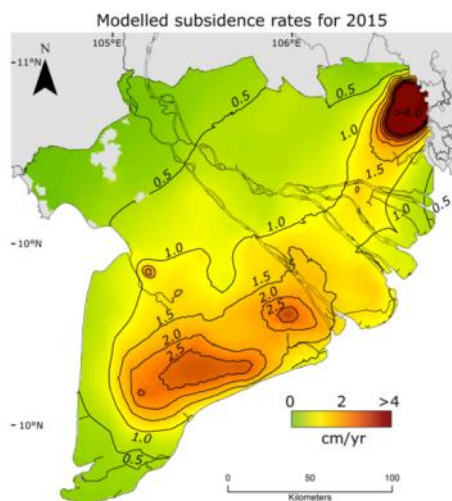
Surface water resources in the downstream provinces nearer the coast (Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu and Ca Mau) already suffers from saline intrusion and increasingly levels of ambient acidity from the soils.

These provinces now rely almost fully on groundwater as their source of drinking water. Exploitation of this groundwater resource beyond its recharge capacity has resulted in a falling level of the groundwater table,

further saline intrusion in the aquifers, and associated land subsidence. The relatively low-lying delta area is already determined to be very sensitive to climate change induced weather extremes and sea level rise.

Available data confirm a trend of increasing saline intrusion both further inland and in increasing concentrations, immediately threatening Can Tho, An Giang, and Kien Giang provinces.

Recent investigations indicate the lowering of water tables in recent years (between 0.5 – 1.0 m in shallow wells and between 3 - 4 m in deep wells).



### **Non-Revenue Water reduction**

The NRW percentage varies between the provinces ranging from 16% – 25% . The government of Vietnam requires all the water companies to reach a NRW of 18% or lower by 2020 and 15% or lower by the year 2025.

As water resources are becoming scarcer, efficient use of the available resources, and thus a reduction of NRW levels towards the national standards, is opportune.

It is also seen as a means to connect new people since for some provinces the raw water sources are scarce.

### **(Pro Poor) Network Extension**

Households that do currently not have a connection to the water supply system do in most cases have a well from which they get water (see pictures), also rainwater is used.

However, there is no water quality control on these systems posing health threats to the people using it.



The reason why these households are not connected is often because of insufficient funds. Relatively more pipeline is needed to reach the outskirts of the urban areas.

It is not necessarily the case that the people without a connection are regarded as poor income wise. However, in 2015, Vietnam approved a new standard to identify poor and near-to-poor households in the country,

which was officially stipulated in Prime Minister Decision No. 59/2015/QĐ-TTg dated November 19, 2015. This standard is more comprehensive than the previous standard (for the period 2011 – 2015: Prime Minister Decision 09/2011/QĐ-TTg dated January 30, 2011).

While the old standard only considered income criteria, the new standard additionally takes into account ten other criteria to evaluate if a household is in the poor or near-to-poor range.

The criteria are:

1. access to health service
2. health insurance
3. education level of adults
4. children's education
5. housing quality
6. average housing area per person
7. water supply
8. latrine
9. telecom service
10. assets in the house

Poverty is now defined as a combination between the income level and the combined score on the 10 criteria above. The definition of poor and near-to-poor is provided in the table below. Interestingly, access to safe water supply and a latrine are two of the ten criteria and have thus become part of the definition of being poor or not.

### **Organization and staff (HR) development**

Generally, the capacity of WSC's staff is regarded underdeveloped. This is a constraint in the development to a more professional organization that is capable of dealing with water resources constraints and absorbing the investments.

The overall objective of the WOP is to assist the WSCs securing long-term water supply in the Southwestern Mekong Delta (southwest of the Bassac river) by 1) increasing the operational capacities and efficiencies of the WSCs, and 2) supporting them in reaching a higher water supply coverage. This can be achieved by working with the selected project partners on strategies for future water resources, NRW reduction, organization and HR development, network extensions and the development of climate robust investment proposals. In this way, the WOP facilitates implementation, and especially absorption, of the MRWSP by the WSCs.

From the side of the central government already clear goals on NRW reduction, water supply coverage, and shift from groundwater to climate robust alternative water sources are set which play an important role in the ambitions of the partnering water supply companies.

The WaterWorX program can contribute significantly to these ambitions of the water supply companies. By doing so the water supply security for the people living in the provinces of Can Tho, Hau Giang and Soc Trang will be ensured for the current and coming generations.