

Report

Piteå - An Giang

A double round trip with environmental and energy in focus

Pre study tour in the scope of the Municipal Partnership Program



1. Enter record and participating partners

Enter record number: 2010-0129,

Participating partners Piteå Kommun represented by:

Peter Roslund Mayor, Erik Persson head of Energy development and chairman of Solander Science Park <http://www.solandersciencepark.se/>, Åsa Wikman, coordinator sustainable municipalities and Gerd Sävenstedt head of information and coordinator of external relations and Marcus Lidman project leader for the gasification project at ETC.

An Giang District represented by:

Mr. Lam Minh Chieu, Chairman of the Provincial People's committee, Mr. Tran Anh Thu, Vice Director of Natural Resources and Environment, Mrs. Pham Ngoc Xuan, Head of Department for Environmental Protection, Dr. Nguyen Thi Van Ha, lecturer at the University of Technology, Ho Chi Minh City and Mr. Huynh The Nang, vice chairman of the An Giang Provincial People's Committee. For two days Ms Tran Thi Hue and the vice director of external relations Nguyen Thi Hong Dao were part of the group.

2. Contact person

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3. Summary

The inception phase elaborated the possibilities for further cooperation in a partnership program focusing on sustainability and energy. There was also an expressed interest from the Vietnamese side to explore the possibilities of further development of a gasification technique developed in Piteå. The aim is to see if this technique can be developed in such a way that rice husk can be used as fuel. It would be a useful tool for producing energy and address an environmental problem.

The pre-study phase has included a delegation of five from Piteå visiting An Giang in January 2011 and a delegation of five paid by the project (+ two) from An Giang (+ 14) visiting Piteå in March 2011. Sites, related to rice and energy, have been visited, discussions regarding further cooperation have been held and an understanding of each other conditions has been achieved.

The outcome of this phase is regarding the Municipal partnership an agreement of submitting an application to ICLD focusing on sustainability and energy. The outline of the application was done

jointly during the visit in Piteå and later on in Uppsala during a workshop. Regarding the technical collaboration a process has been started which will include an application to the Energy Agency to finance a trial of bio fuels, including rice husk. A meeting with the University took place where the possibilities of collaboration between the Universities in Luleå – Ho Chi Minh City- An Giang were explored.

4. Background and problem areas

According to political strategies, the Municipality of Piteå should be developing international relations in issues related to renewable energy and sustainable development. One of the aims is to support local industry and organisations. Through contact persons with established relations in Vietnam, the Municipality of Piteå have searched for a suitable partner with international ambitions and came in contact with representatives for An Giang District, Mekong Delta, and Vietnam.

4.1 Problem areas - Too much rice husk and lack of Energy

In the An Giang district rice production is the base of the economy together with fish farming. There is also a lack of electricity which means that rice mills can't utilize its full capacity. Today the rice husk is dumped into the rivers/canals and used as fuel for brick burning with air pollution as a result.

5. Results of the pre-study

The main result from the pre study is that the problem areas for a partnership application is agreed on, The Municipal Executive board in Piteå has also formally decided that Piteå will cooperate with An Giang if funds are granted and the process for finding solutions for technical cooperation has started. A formal decision will also be taken by the Peoples Committee in An Giang.

In Piteå a gasification technique is developed within the network of Solander Science Park which hopefully can be further developed for using rice husk to produce energy.

Activities

In Vietnam: The time in Vietnam was spent on sites visits and meetings. The main purpose was to get an understanding of the situation, the problems and the possibilities. It was done by presentations, discussions and site visits. Presentations were done both from the Vietnamese side and the Swedish.

The site visits took us to industrial clusters, a meeting with Phu Tans people's committee where they shared their ideas and pointed out problems and possibilities regarding a social rice husk project built on cooperation between small rice farmers, enterprises and researchers.

Politicians, university staff and officials from the An Giang District participated in the meetings as well as entrepreneurs who also accompanied us for three days to Thailand where we made a number of site visits to power plants.

During the discussions there were three tracks for discussions, technical cooperation, cluster building and a Municipal partnership program. Regarding the Municipal partnership program one main problem addressed was awareness regarding waste management and lack of guidance regarding climate and energy issues, discussions which were continued during the Vietnamese delegation's stay in Sweden.

Also the week in Piteå consisted of site visits and discussions, but in Piteå parts of two days were used for starting up the process with an aim to produce an outline for an application to ICLD.

As there is a need to continue the process before an application can be submitted we agreed to meet in May in connection with the Vietnamese delegation's visit in Växjö.

During one meeting day, focus was on cluster building between the Municipality, Enterprises and the University. Officials, one lecturer from the University of Long Xuyen City in An Giang and business people from the An Giang district participated in that program and also joined for a field trip visiting the gasification plant in Hortlax, ETC and Solander. There was also a meeting between representatives from Meva, the owner of the gasification technique and representatives from An Giang.

During the tour in Vietnam the people's committee and administration were involved, as well as the university both in Ho Chi Min City and in Long Xuyen, rice mill farmers and participants in a social rice mill project.

In Piteå people from ETC, Solander Science Park and their partners, the University and Framnäs Folkhögskola, a department at the University and Pireva, a Municipal Enterprise in the area of waste management and energy production have been involved in order to get an understanding of what can be possible in a cooperation between Piteå and An Giang.

A project proposal is drafted in the area of finding structures to work with energy and climate issues on a local level. If the next application for further cooperation will be approved by ICLD, both a coordinator and a steering committee is appointed, consisting of politicians, representatives from the Municipality and Solander Science Park.

As there were many meetings with Solander Science Park and partners during the visit in Piteå we came to the conclusion that we needed more time to meet in order to have a good foundation for the partnership proposal. As the same Vietnamese constellation also is visiting Växjö as a part of a pre tour study program we decided to meet before they return to Vietnam for a working session related to the proposal.

6. Internal and external involvement and participation

A delegation from An Giang met with a representative from Solander Science Park in 2010 which led to a joint letter of intent from ETC, The University of Luleå and the Municipality of Piteå for co-research on Technology solution for utilization of rice husk and rice husk ash in Mekong Delta. This was signed September 30 in 2010. In November 2010 the mayor and vice mayor in Piteå signed a letter of interest regarding co-operation between the Municipality of Piteå and the An Giang Province in Vietnam. In the letter it was stated that the Municipality of Piteå would apply for a grant to ICDL in order to carry out a pre tour study where the aim should be to find common projects that will strengthen both the An Giang district and our region in an area of renewable energy and building a sustainable society. It should include a possibility to look for cooperation between Solander Science Park partners and companies in the An Giang district. The Municipality of Piteå took on to create a

group of people from the Municipality, University and Solander Science Park who would be a part of the cooperation.

From People's Committee in An Giang there was also a letter of interest where they expressed the interest in a partnership cooperation. The main points were to develop and apply suitable technology solutions to increase the efficiency of rice husk and biomass utilization, to support and strengthen the interlinks among, to set up the CDM projects, energy strategies and policies, management experience for development of Green power and bio-fuels and to capacity via training courses.

The steering committee in Piteå will consist of Peter Roslund, mayor, Mats Berg executive chief officer, Johan Hedin project coordinator Solander Science Park and Gerd Sävenstedt, head of information and external relations. The coordinator of the project will be Åsa Wikman coordinator for sustainable communities.

The result of the pre study has been presented in the local newspaper, a staff magazine and in the regional radio and been presented among the partners of the Solander Science Park.

7. Atmosphere for cooperation

Two cultures have met through a language which we don't have in common. Even to use ones' own mother tongue can be a challenge and working through a foreign language is by nature a bigger challenge. That's why we also spent time on the content of the terms we used when we formulated both the problems and the objectives for further cooperation. It was done with respect and curiosity and with a willingness to understand. We have had fun together, laughed a lot together and neither side has shown prestige.

When you start to work together you also become aware of the differences. In Sweden we are process oriented and in Vietnam result oriented. Also there are differences in business culture, the Vietnamese is more indirect and the Swedish more direct which also has been a challenge to handle.

It's a lesson learnt that we all have to be aware of when we are starting our next step in the cooperation.

8. Budget and expenses

The granted budget didn't cover the costs. The Municipality of Piteå needed to add money to the budget in order to cover the expenses. The main reason was that the air tickets for the Swedish delegation became much higher than normal depending on New Year and shortage of tickets. What also added to the expenses was that one of the members in the Vietnamese delegation became seriously sick the same morning as they were going to leave and at that time the Vietnamese delegation decided to stay until the sick person also could leave.

One lesson learned is that we need to have a bit more of preparation time so we can book more advantageous tickets.

9. Reimbursement

Account for Piteå kommun Plusgiro 127230-1

10. Contribution from An Giang

During the pre study tour in Vietnam the contribution from the Peoples' Committee was extensive. A lot of people were engaged during our stay. During the stay in Vietnam they hosted us extremely well and paid for all meals, partly their own costs for hotels, for transportation in Vietnam, for arrangements and an interpreter. Meeting rooms were arranged for, either in the town hall or at the hotels.

Tickets to Piteå for two participants in the Vietnamese delegation was also covered by the Peoples Committee.

11. Contacts with ICLD

In the preparation for the pre tour study tour it was of great help to have Mr. Carlén as a contact person. We also benefitted from having both him and Lina Pennlert participating in the tour in Vietnam. After our return two of us have participated in a one days' workshop regarding submitting partnership proposals to ICLD. A day with many lessons to learn. We are very satisfied with all the contacts we have had with ICLD so far.

Peter Roslund

Kommunalråd, Piteå kommun

Huynh The Nang

v.chairman An Giang PPC