

Policies to Promote Agriculture, Fishery Extension in Difficult Areas

Article 2. Decision No. 162/2008/QD-TTg

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Agricultural, fishery extension activities and technical advances in agricultural and fishery production are delivered to people in disadvantaged areas. Decision No 162/2008/QD-TTg focuses on three main objectives: (1) Contribute to alleviation of poverty, increase income, improve living standards for producers in difficult areas through extension activities; (2) Contribute to economic development, socio-political stability, maintaining of the security and defense in disadvantaged areas; (3) Contribute to the development of the local extension system in disadvantaged areas.

Decision No. 162/2008/QD-TTg includes the following support:

- Support the development of demonstration; Specifically: Support 100% of the cost of seeds and other essential supplies for the demonstration of central and local extension programs and projects implemented in disadvantaged areas.
- Support in training and education; namely: Support 100% of materials, cost of travel, accommodation, meals for producers and extension workers in difficult areas to attend training courses organized by national and local extension organizations;
- Support for information and propaganda activities; namely: provide a number of newspapers and magazines for ethnic minority, mountainous and particularly difficult areas: provision of one "Vietnam Agriculture" newspapers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on issued day for commune extension in the difficult areas.
- Support for organizations providing services in disadvantaged areas; Specifically: priority for organizations providing agricultural services in disadvantaged areas in terms of land leasing for production, business and other support.

Despite having support policies, the agricultural extension activities in disadvantaged areas are still very difficult. Commune extension workers have important role, but lack of capacity. Presently, it is one of the biggest limitations of the commune extension officers. Now, there are 11/63 provinces having no commune extension workers, and 46 provinces having no village extension collaborators. Most of commune extension officers just participate partly in implementation due to limited capacity.

Many of the commune extension workers have low education, a majority just have only secondary certificates (81% in Dien Bien, 83% in Cao Bang), very few have college degrees and

rarely have university degrees. Agricultural production activities in provinces are diversified, but the extension staff just have specialized capacity (in terms of crops, livestock, forestry), very few people have general skills and synthesis experiences. In addition, the skills on organizing farmers, promoting product sales, developing value chain ... have not been equipped for local extension officers. This is the basic factor limiting the effectiveness in implementation of extension policies in current difficult areas.

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