

SIIR/Vietnam Summary – February 2010 Report

February was a shortened month as the office was closed for a week for the Tet holidays, from 13th -21st, and even in the week preceding the Tet holidays, many formal meetings could not happen as people were away. However, the Tet holidays did provide an opportunity to visit partners to give traditional Tet baskets. The SIIR team was able to take advantage of this opportunity to meet with the head of the Budget and Planning department of MoLISA to engage in some strategic lobbying to learn how to best expedite the SIIR approval process through MoLISA. As the Budget and Planning Department will have an important voice whether all the requirements of SIIR project documents are met and can be forwarded to MPI for approval, the SIIR team was able to get valuable advice and scheduled a post-Tet meeting with the B&P staff to go over the draft documents.

Right before Tet the SIIR COP and project officers briefed the COTR on the project design and approval process. The COP also provided draft inputs into USAID/Vietnam Operating Plan. The SIIR COP sent the draft Activity Framework, Annual Workplan and M & E plan the COTR for review as well as DAI. The COP was advised by DAI that a full project workplan document would probably be required (as opposed the matrix format) and a sample narrative workplan was forwarded. Work has begun on a full narrative workplan.

New drafts of the project proposal framework were sent to ICD for comments and revision. After that, the SIIR technical team had a meeting with ICD to discuss about details of the project proposal framework. The discussion focused on the project long-term objective, project management unit and other issues. Both sides agreed on a number of items that will contribute to finalizing the project proposal framework. On the question as to whether there will be a project design presentation workshop, both SIIR and ICD would wait till March to see if it was necessary. In the meantime there has been regular meetings and communications between the SIIR staff and ICD focal points on development of required documents.

The project staff took one week off to celebrate the Tet holidays. Right after Tet, meetings with ICD and Planning and Finance Department were held. Some areas of concerns (national regulations and procedures) were addressed. SIIR team also had discussions with other department to finalize an remaining project design issues. The Legal Department requested a new activity (survey on the capacity of government officials and others to actually implement labor laws) that fortunately could fit into the current project design and ideally be one of the first activities, even beginning in March.

The COP passed through HCMC and meet with the Director of AmCham, the Deputy Director of VCCI and the head of Addias compliance program. He wanted to get feedback on the proposed activities and to get updates on the labor dispute situation and other labor related information.

The SIIR staff met with STAR and VNCI project staff to finalize proposed joint activity plans to be incorporated into the project design.

The COP finalized the project design needs assessment.