



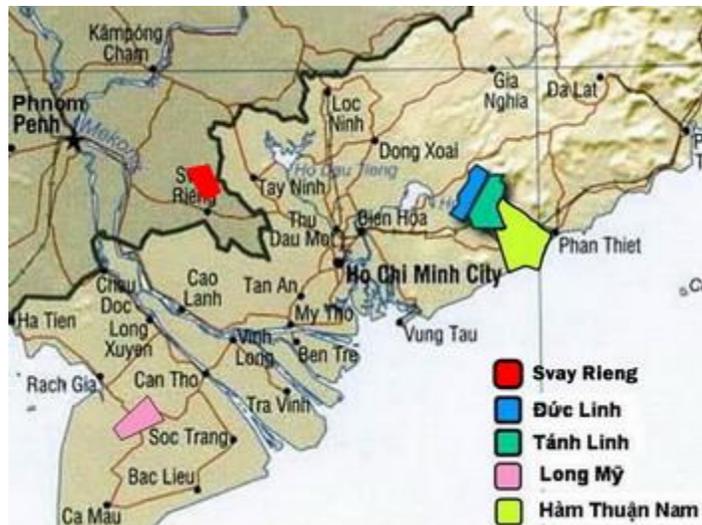
**Final Report to the Rufford Foundation  
Rufford Small Grant - for Nature Conservation  
(Reference RSG 59.07.09)  
Pilot Tánh Linh waste recycling program -Vietnam**

**1. Mekong Plus**

Bernard KERVYN is a cofounder of this organization. From the beginning the long term strategy has been clear: set up a strong local team, and as soon as possible, encourage the constitution of a local NGO. This has now materialized by the creation of Thiên Chí (see [www.thienchi.org](http://www.thienchi.org)) which has taken over the Việt Nam Plus programs in Bình Thuận province. Another local NGO - Anh Dương (see [www.anhduonghg.org](http://www.anhduonghg.org)) has similarly been created to take over the programs in Hậu Giang province.

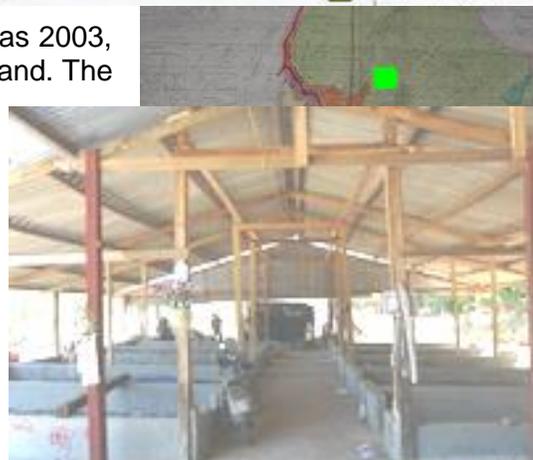
In the meantime the operations have been extended across the border, in the poor Cambodian province of Svay Riêng, thus compelling the change of name from Việt Nam Plus into Mekong Plus.

Mekong Plus supports Thiên Chí, which has taken over the Tánh Linh program last year but all operations are run in close cooperation. Mekong Plus is funding Thiên Chí, but Thiên Chí is increasingly finding complementary funding directly, without going through Mekong Plus.



**2. The waste recycling program**

Although the need for waste management and recycling has been identified as a priority by the local authorities as early as 2003, Đức Linh could still not provide an adequate piece of land. The district of Tánh Linh on the contrary has provided 2 locations and has contributed to the costs of the program. But these are remote places with bad access roads and no electricity. Finally, as Thiên Chí (supported by Mekong Plus) is operating also in Hàm Thuận Nam district, we have inquired about



*The second site, in Đông Kho*

possible locations in that district as well. The answer has been with a location far from the main sources of waste and from the market for compost. Thiên Chí does not have also the human resources to manage the plant at the moment, so we prefer to wait till next year. The land issue is a sort of paradox, because the program aims at reducing the waste in large proportions, thus alleviating the pressure on land in the region.

The pressure on land is an important issue for the government, but is minimized in official statistics by a very large factor. The problem is much more serious than acknowledged officially. It is hoped that waste management can contribute to reduce the pressure on land and improve the cultivated land.

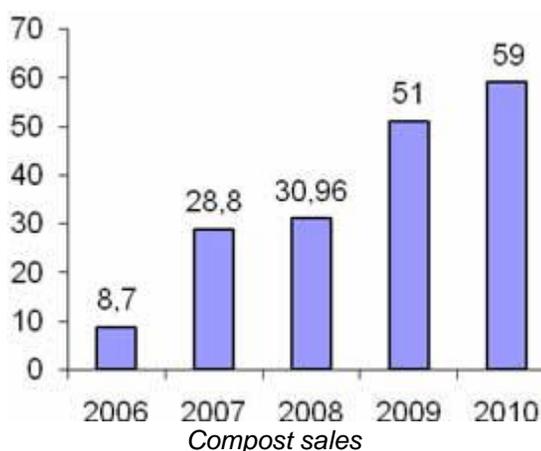
The pilot program is now a success and has been recognized as such by the local authorities. Demand for compost is increasing quickly especially for rubber tree planters.

The district of Tân Linh: the 2 green spots indicate the location of the pilot site (south) and the replication site (north).

### 3. Achievements



*Field training*



There is a technical success as all major problems have been resolved, in spite of a large percentage of solid or even toxic waste, reaching the waste recycling plant, namely from the district hospital (this is illegal though). This is not an entirely bad signal: in fact the waste collectors do a quick sorting themselves even before the truck reaches the waste recycling plant. For instance high quality plastic waste is taken by the collectors, who deprive the plant from some income.

The quality of the compost has been tested successfully by ASE (Hôchiminh City). Field testing followed in rubber plantations: volume increased by 2% and the concentration increased by 0, 3 degree. As a result net income for the planter increases by 2%.

The running expenses are kept at a minimum in spite of the fact there is still no electricity. Access to the national grid has been promised and is in the government planning, but still delayed.

Of course the farmers want to buy good quality compost at the lowest possible price. So that we could sell also to the poorest, the selling price has been subsidized, but the subsidy is progressively reduced.

One major problem has been the manpower. Working at the plant is considered as shameful, as a result we could only recruit workers from far away villages. The labour costs are relatively high for the same reason.



Thousands of farmers have been trained about compost. To make compost at the farm, and to buy compost from the waste recycling plant. In total 284 sessions in 3 districts (about 335 villages), reaching 9299 farmers/sessions. This has had a very clear impact on sales. Although farmers who use organic fertilizer do not yet get a significantly higher price for their crops, they do sell before all other producers, they have a stronger demand. In one of the districts where Mekong Plus operates though (not covered by the waste recycling plant) a dedicated shop will soon open to sell “clean” vegetables.

*Certificate after the compost quality test* For rubber tree planters we have noticed an increase in yields; this will need to be monitored further during the next few years. But the impact on the quality of the soil is already certain.

One sorting machine has been bought so as to save on costs for sorting the plastics from the waste. As a result for 1 ton of plastic waste 8 people x days are needed compared to 18 before.

#### 4. Financial report

Items	In GBP: 1/30.000		
	RSG	Mekong Plus	Spent
Improve all-weather access to the waste recycling units	1.500		2460
Improve equipment for workers' safety & reducing costs	1.500	1.000	1100
Testing of compost & decide for optimal mix	800		456
Promotion among 1000 farmers in farmers' groups: training & subsidized sales	1.700	1.000	2083 365
Promotion among 600 extremely poor farmers: : training & subsidized sales	800	1.200	2517 513
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.300</b>	<b>3.200</b>	<b>9.494</b>

Bernard KERVYN, with Nguyễn Huu Nghia. 19/4/2011