

## GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The existing off-farm activities in Shuimo are based on comparative resource advantages. Future efforts in the promotion of off-farm activities should clearly be based on these advantages. In this context, the following guidelines can be suggested:

- 1) The vast hilly area in Shuimo township can be used for the cultivation of a variety of cash-crop trees. Efforts, therefore, need to be directed towards motivating and encouraging households in such ventures.
- 2) Shuimo township has definite advantages for the cultivation of medicinal plants, *moyu*, and bamboo. These are not only suitable for the natural conditions prevailing in Shuimo but also have a prospective market. Other cash trees such as lacquer and walnuts and fruits such as persimmons and grapes also have potential. Cultivation of these fruits and cash-crop trees in combination with medicinal plants will not only lead to the better use of mountain diversity but also help farmers to avoid the risks associated with changes in market demand.
- 3) Livestock-rearing especially pig raising has prospects in the area. Efforts to provide extension support for pig-raising in the field of epidemic prevention should be strengthened. Local government has not been able to meet the demand for extension support. Large-scale pig raising should only be promoted with caution because the local farmers have still not mastered the essential techniques and methods.
- 4) Promotion of off-farm activities in Shuimo township should take the spatial variations into consideration. While horticultural crops and medicinal plants have advantages in the mountains, the valley villages provide scope for the promotion of off-farm agriculture. The scope for the development of rural enterprises in processing medicinal plants and *moyu* needs to be investigated.
- 5) Although Shuimo township is linked with the Chengdu-Aba road, the condition of the present road is very poor. Improvement in the road's condition as well as communication facilities is therefore necessary.
- 6) Technical guidelines and skill training need to be provided before new activities, such as the cultivation of *moyu* and medicinal plants, are undertaken.
- 7) Market information is extremely essential if farmers are to be encouraged to undertake new off-farm activities. The local government department for rural enterprises should make efforts to procure and provide such information to concerned households. This is particularly true in the case of medicinal plants, *moyu*, and bamboo.

- 8) Many of the off-farm activities and their promotion are contingent on the continuation of the contract responsibility system. It is therefore necessary to allay any fears that households may have on this score. Also, local government should not interfere in all township activities and village-run enterprises but delegate responsibilities according to the contract responsibility system.
- 9) The county government should make efforts to help low income farmers in this township as it has done in other townships. Provision of inputs (*moyu* seeds, for example) at concessional prices, preferential loans from local banks, and training in the required techniques are areas where support is needed.
- 10) Public security, particularly with respect to the care and protection of cash-crop trees, has to be strengthened to encourage farmers to plant medicinal and cash-crop trees. An area of concern to farmers is the protection of such trees on contracted hill lands.