

**WORKSHOP
ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, PLANS
AND PROGRAMS IN VIETNAM**

Hanoi, 22 October 2007

Workshop summary report

Background

Adaptation to climate change needs to be considered when designing development projects and in preparing development policies, plans and programs. Adaptation means reducing the risks from climate change and avoiding negative impacts. Vietnam was identified by the International Panel on Climate Change as one of the countries to be most effected by climate change – action to adapt to it is urgently required in all economic sectors and key development regions. Environmental, social and economic challenges of climate change need to be considered in planning for agriculture, transport, power development, industry, irrigation, water supply and other affected sectors. Priority attention needs to be given to the coastal zone including river basins, urban centres and agricultural lands.

There are two main approaches which need to be adopted for considering adaptation to climate change in development policies, plans and programs:

- Addressing adaptation challenges for climate change within various stages of preparing the development plans, programs or policies; and
- Incorporating climate change adaptation into assessment tools such as Strategic Environmental Assessment and EIA.

Workshop Objectives

This workshop was a forum to stimulate in-country discussion on opportunities for mainstreaming climate change adaptation into key development planning processes in Vietnam and to provide suggestions for the relevant projects undertaken by the participating government and international partners. It is being undertaken as part of MONRE's Office of Climate Change's on-going program, the IIED global initiative "Considering Climate Change Adaptation Issues in Development Policies, Plans and Programs", SEMLA's work on integration of climate change into land-use planning, and ICEM's work on implications of climate changes on coastal areas in Vietnam.

The workshop focused on the following issues:

- Understanding key risks posed by the climate change and the need for awareness raising of decision-makers and planners
- Main options for integrating climate change adaptation into development planning
- Key planning instruments relating, for example, to land-use, socio-economic development, water resource management, and the coastal zone management which need to be adjusted to address climate change
- Main opportunities for considering climate change adaptation within these planning processes and recommendations for their further development
- Key assessment instruments (SEA and EIA) and the main opportunities for using them to consider climate change adaptation and recommendations for their further development
- Recommendations for possible innovations in future policies, legislative/procedural frameworks, institutional arrangements and capacity

development.

Key issues raised in discussion and the main outcomes and suggested areas for innovation and improvement arising at the workshop have been recorded in this summary report. It will be used as a framework of discussion points within government and between government and the international community on priorities for action and coordination of effort in this field.

The summary report identifies key opportunities and challenges for integration of climate change adaptation issues into development planning processes. The report and future discussion on the points it makes may be used for elaboration of future projects and collaboration on climate change.

The workshop agenda appears as Annex 1 and the participant list as Annex 2. The opening speech at the workshop by Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu, Vice Director of Department of International Cooperation, MONRE and Director of the National Office on Climate Change appears as Annex 3.

Key issues raised during workshop discussions

The plenary sessions looked at the main challenges to integrating climate change adaptation into planning processes. In particular two main themes dominated the discussion: (i) the difficulties of coordination on an issue strongly affecting many sectors and (ii) making decisions in the face of scientific uncertainty concerning specific impacts.

Institutional responsibilities: There is a lack of clarity in institutional responsibilities for climate change adaptation. While MONRE is recognized as the national coordination agency, the authority and resources provided to the unit within the International Cooperation Department was not sufficient to drive effective coordination. The challenges and need for coordination was emphasized by many participants, but also evident in the overlapping mandates of institutions participating in the workshop. It was suggested that many other Ministries beyond MONRE and MARD should be targeted and engaged in a collaborative national response. Line ministries mentioned during the discussion were the Ministries of Health, Industry and Commerce, Transport and Construction. The involvement of line ministries is minimal at this stage (other than MARD and MONRE) but in the long-term it is vital to making progress in adaptation.

At the national government level there is no high level forum for inter-ministerial coordination. Even within Ministries (and here MARD was highlighted as a Ministry with an important role to play) there is poor coordination or discussion on climate change adaptation among its various departments. MONRE was seen as the key Ministry for driving the issue higher up the political agenda and as the main coordination body. But it was felt that MONRE needed to explore internal coordination and shared responsibility for climate change adaptation among all of its departments, possibly with the issue addressed through a Director level working group.

More assertive high level leadership is needed to respond across government in a timely and concerted way. Some sort of coordination body with well defined powers may be required at the national level. Other tools to promote multi-sectoral integration to adapt to climate change were mentioned, including strategic environmental assessment of strategies and plans, EIA of projects and also the

establishment of an over-arching climate change policy framework that would provide clear guidance to line ministries and local government.

Uncertainty: There was much discussion about uncertainty of predictions and lack of precision or consistency in assessments of impacts particularly related to sea level rise. This was demonstrated clearly at the workshop where different presentations showed differing results from prediction models based on differing assumption. Decision makers, especially from the provinces, stated that they were being sent confused messages and there was not sufficient certainty for them to plan responses even though they agreed that climate change is happening and requires them to act. Sea level rise was the main consequence of climate change addressed by the workshop which focused on the coastal region of Vietnam. It can be readily modeled but even so development planners considered there was too much variability between possible scenarios - some consensus was required with a consolidated set of guidelines prepared. This would enable them to decide between widely varying options, for example, building dykes as opposed to relocating households, or choosing between investment projects in affected locations.

Several participants and presentations pointed out that sea level rise was already occurring in Vietnam and having significant environmental, social and economic impacts. The situation is expected to become more serious. While consensus was reached on the scale, focus and timing of impacts it was essential to begin planning and acting now. When planners are uncertain, the precautionary principle should be applied. Development should only proceed in vulnerable locations in the most cautious manner and forms, building in adaptation measures.

One participant suggested that there were two different types of planning process: one with precise goals and targets based on extensive available data - this is the prevailing model. The other model is more adaptive and follows broad strategic directions taking into account the key risks. This second form of planning does not require high levels of precision but operates on a range of possible outcomes for each risk. This, it was argued is the planning approach required in responding to climate change.

To reconcile the different demands of planners and decision-makers, it was suggested that potential solutions and adaptation measures need to be clearly stated as much as predicted impacts.

There was overall agreement on the need for much more dialogue and extending the scope of discussion to a wider base of stakeholders. For example, the private sector was not participating in the workshop but has a critical role to play at all levels in adaptation. The potential impacts of sea level rise on coastal areas are crucial considerations in making wise investment decisions. An open dialogue with investors on sea level rise issues should improve the security and stability of the investment environment and need not deter investors. In addition, there are benefits to be derived from sharing data. Climate change site assessments are needed in coastal areas. They would account for a small fraction of overall investment costs. Data and analysis collected from investors during site assessment would support planners and policy-makers in building more comprehensive development planning frameworks which adequately reflect the risks of climate changes.

The workshop was considered successful at scientific level discussion, but not really at the policy-level which would need to involve more senior decision makers from a broader range of sectors and local government. The series of climate change

workshops being held during October and November were welcomed to encourage greater dialogue and broader participation.

Workshop outcomes

This section summarizes points arising from the workshop and the round table discussions held on the following day. It is for attention of government and the non-government community as steps for integrating climate change adaptation into development planning.

The objectives of these summary points are to mainstream climate change into (i) policies, (ii) the mandates of agencies, (iii) development planning processes and (iv) enhance awareness and cooperation between government and non government stakeholders.

It is necessary to review and harmonize policies and planning procedures to achieve integration of climate change concerns. Development planning units responsible for preparing strategies and plans have a crucial role in mainstreaming climate change.

There is a lack of clarity in the institutional response to climate change in Vietnam. There is a need to significantly raise awareness (i) within government and especially in forging lateral linkages between and within agencies and (ii) beyond government to engage the private sector. A process of consultation, coordination and priority setting is needed involving key stakeholders to harness the increasing interest, commitment and resources to plan for and address climate change as an essential part of the development process.

Climate change information needs to be prepared and communicated in ways suited for use in local planning. Similarly adaptation needs must be dealt with at all levels of government planning.

The following “discussion points” arising from the workshop are arranged according to their relevance to:

- A. The policy framework
- B. Processes to identify hot spots and pilots
- C. Institutional arrangements
- D. Consultation and coordination processes
- E. Financing and budgeting
- F. Tools and methods for adaptation
- G. Awareness raising

A: Policy framework addressing climate change

1. The workshop noted that climate change is a reality – it is happening now in Vietnam – and it is probably more urgent than the IPCC has reported due to rapid melting at the poles. There is a need for action by government now and to *promote implementation of the precautionary principle* to guide development decisions when facing situations of uncertainties due to climate change (The precautionary principle is enshrined through various provisions in the National Agenda 21).
2. MONRE is considering preparing a national action plan for climate change adaptation. Several interventions during the workshop emphasized that the preparation process needs to be inclusive with wide consultation of government

agencies, private sector and NGOs. MONRE is preparing the second communication to UNFCCC to be completed by 2009 – need to discuss linking this effort with preparing the national plan.

3. It was noted that it would be beneficial to issue a national directive requiring sectors and local government to *prepare cc adaptation plans* – as part of/integrated with existing development strategies and plan processes. Such directive (or other formal guidance from the national level) would be needed in order to formally launch such planning processes and to allocate funding for their undertaking.

B: Priority setting and additional scenarios for climate change

4. In situations of scarce financial and staff resources, there is a need to define sharp priorities for action. It is not possible to tackle everything at once. Several interventions at the workshop suggested that rapid assessments should be undertaken to identify areas, sectors and communities which will be most affected by climate change and then to focus investment and support on those “hotspots”.
5. MONRE is planning to provide more consistent climate change scenarios (for example on likely rises in sea level) to guide line ministries and local government on ranges of likely direct impacts. MONRE may require international support in defining those scenarios. Several speakers recommended that the MONRE should seek to develop the scenarios through a consultative process involving key line ministries and technical institutes in different sectors, for example, the MONRE Institute of Hydrometeorology and the MARD Institution of Water Resources Planning..
6. The workshop also noted that the validity of any scenarios will be limited by many inevitable uncertainties in climate change predictions. New scenarios should consider risk-based approaches to adaptation planning, not only detailed modeling. Such risk-based scenarios can e.g. outline the likely expected extreme situations (and their probability) with regard to changes in the rainfall patterns, temperatures, droughts and floods, and sea level rise for various regions.
7. New climate change adaptation scenarios can be accompanied by general orientations -rather than rigid targets - for preparing adaptation measures for climate change. The workshop recommended that the actual design of detailed climate change adaptation measures should be entrusted to ‘mainstream planning processes’ in various sectors and regions (see item 3 above).
8. However, adaptation planning and piloting in priority areas should not wait until the more detailed scenarios are built. The broad trends and risks are clear. Planning and piloting of climate change adaptation in priority areas should proceed immediately on the basis of existing information.
9. In order to facilitate adaptation planning and piloting, guidelines are needed for line ministries such as MPI, MARD and MOC for how to integrate CC into their development planning processes. Key sectors and local government will need strong technical support in vulnerability analysis and adaptive planning. (see item 16 below).

C: Institutional arrangements for integrated and coordinated response to climate change

10. The workshop noted that a high level coordinating body is needed with authority to set policy and provide cross sectoral direction and coordination. The Government might consider establishing a high-level, cross-government, national climate change coordination platform (for example, the National Agenda 21 Council of ministers is an option). Currently, it is not an active body – but it is now being reviewed by Government; so there is an opportunity to influence the future mandate of the Council).
11. It was also noted that more attention should be given to the establishment of processes and structures for cooperation and coordination (i) between sectors (eg between MARD and MONRE), (ii) within sectors (eg within MARD and within MONRE) and (iii) within provinces. The private sector and institutes should be involved..
12. In order to facilitate such coordination and cooperation, it would be useful to document who is doing what with regard to climate change adaptation – covering the activities of all key stakeholders - and share that information widely . This could be conducted as an initial step within the framework of ISGE. The National Capacity Self Assessment (1995) included a review but this needs to be updated. Another internal SEMLA review which has also partially covered this issue and should be circulated. INRC could be involved to capture the activities of NGOs (IUCN might also have a potential role in facilitating collaborative action by INGOs). The review might involve “show and tell” workshops, a simple survey and a website posting the results (eg the MONRE website).
13. An informal meeting convened after the workshop recommended to establish a structure and process for donor/government coordination and partnership (eg the ISGE could establish a cc taskforce with a well defined work program. Other options for donor coordination are the disaster relief partnerships)

D: Financing and budgeting

14. Government needs to ensure adequate budget commitment at sector and local government level for the preparation and implementation of adaptation plans to cc.
15. Climate change could be made a priority for the allocation of resources under the National Environment Fund and/or National Disaster Relief Fund (?). Donors need to consider contributing to this fund (or consider setting up a distinct climate change fund). Diverse sources of funding need to be explored – especially involving the private sector, carbon credit systems and other special cc funds such as those set up through ADB and the World Bank.
16. There is a need to *address mitigation with adaptation* given the potential for substantial funding from mitigation strategies. Awareness-building is required in enterprises and government agencies on the risks and mitigation options – and in particular the potential for solutions which are good for business, reduce cc impact and reduce vulnerability.

E: Methodological and information support and sharing of lessons learned

17. Tools and methods should be development for rapid assessments and adaptive planning. Many tools are available, for example under UNFCCC and UNEP for (i)

understanding local impacts and risks; (ii) assessing vulnerability and (iii) defining options for adaptation. The usefulness of those tools under specific circumstances needs to be tested and defined. Rapid, simple and participatory tools that can be applied in Vietnam should be developed.

18. A facility for information-sharing and for defining and sharing of lessons is needed so that others can benefit from agencies with experience in integrating climate change adaptation thinking into their socio-economic planning.

Next steps

A number of workshops on climate change are being arranged over November and December, 2007. Also, individual national and international organizations are developing climate change response projects and programs. While this useful ad hoc exchange and program development continues, the next steps should be taken in building a wide coalition of government, NGOs and international agencies so that a national approach is taken to priority setting and coordinated investment.

As a next step, MONRE could consider convening a special meeting of the ISGE focusing on climate change and involving key INGOs and other stakeholders. The meeting might include:

- (i) A presentation and discussion of the outcomes of the climate change adaptation and development planning workshop and follow up round table summarized here.
- (ii) Consideration of how best to move forward on the priority issues raised in this paper
- (iii) A discussion on collaborative pilot projects and studies required to facilitate cc – development planning integration
- (iv) Consideration of establishing an ISGE climate change task force and work program

Annex 1: Workshop Agenda

Morning Session: Chaired by Nguyen Khac Hieu, Vice – Director of ICD/MONRE

08:30	1. Welcome and introduction to workshop program	Nguyen Viet Thang, Master of Ceremonies ICD/MONRE
08:40	2. Opening remarks	Nguyen Khac Hieu, Office of Climate Change Vice-Director of ICD/MONRE
08:50	3. Global approaches to climate change adaptation with a focus on Asia	Barry Dalal-Clayton and Mozaharul Alam (IIED)
09:20	4. Climate change scenarios and implementation of climate change adaptation measures in Viet Nam	Hoang Manh Hoa, ICD/MONRE, Permanent Office of National SC for Implementing UNFCCC & Kyoto Protocol
09:40	5. Results from the study by the IMHEN on impacts of climate change and adaptation measures	Tran Thuc, Director of IMHEN
10:10	Tea Break	
10:25	6. Integrating climate change adaptation issues into land-use planning and related processes in Viet Nam	Truong Quang Hoc Programme Director, SEMLA
10:45	7. Addressing Climate Change Adaptation Issues in SEA	Nguyen Khac Kinh Director of the Department of EIA and Appraisal, MONRE
11:05	Discussion on the main climate change adaptation issues which need to be considered in planning for the coastal zone	Plenary Discussion
11:45	Lunch (11:45 – 13:00)	Buffet lunch at “The Press Club” – Level 3 Restaurant.

Afternoon working sessions: Specific issues for consideration of climate change adaptation and development planning – Facilitator: Jiri Dusik

13:00	8. Risks posed by climate change in coastal zones of Vietnam – recap of key issues	Jeremy Carew-Reid, Director of ICEM
13:30	9. Climate change and adaptation measures	Le Nguyen Tuong, IMHEN
14:00	Discussion session 1: Urban settlements and urban infrastructure planning	Plenary discussion
14:30	Tea Break	
14:45	Discussion session 2: Agriculture and rural development planning	Plenary discussion
15:30	Discussion session 3: River basin and natural resources use planning	Plenary discussion

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16:15	Concluding remarks	Nguyen Xuan Bao Tam, Vice Director of ICD/MONRE
16:30	Workshop ends	

Annex 2: Workshop Participants

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Annex 3: Opening speech: Dr Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu, Vice Director of Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment – a body assigned by the Government to join and implement the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol – I warmly welcome all the participants to this workshop on “Climate Change Adaptation in development policies, plans and programs in Vietnam” organised by the Department of International Cooperation, under MONRE, in coordination with the International Institute for Environment and Development, the SEMLA Programme, and ICEM - the International Centre for Environmental Management.

The climate change issue is justifiably receiving much attention from countries and international organisations throughout the world. There are 189 parties to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change, including Vietnam. As one of the countries most seriously affected by climate change, particularly by sea level rise, over the past decade, Vietnam has progressively adopted a series of mitigation measures and adaptations to the current and future challenges involved. A series of projects relating to the climate change have been implemented in various parts of the country. Recently, governmental bodies, national and international organisations and donors have adopted a more intensive focus and new initiatives on climate change and adaptation. However, the current national policy framework on climate change is not adequate, and still requires supplementation and improvement to meet the demands of sustainable development.

As the national hosting unit for the implementation of the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol, MONRE has coordinated with relevant Ministries and sectors to prepare and develop the first National Statement sent to the Convention Secretariat. The second Statement is under preparation, to be completed in 2010. That Statement focuses on research and development of mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change based on the climate change scenarios for the period 2020 to 2100.

Vietnam is a country with a 3260 km coastal line, sloping topography, and with most people concentrated in coastal zones. Therefore climate change is one of the most critical issues for national development. According to an evaluation report on the impacts of sea level rise for 84 developing countries released by the World Bank in February 2007, Vietnam is one of 3 most seriously affected countries worldwide. It is essential that we test and adopt methods to integrate adaptation measures into development planning. Adaptation to climate change needs to become a major focus, not only in the preparation of development projects but also in formulating socio-economic development policy, plans and programmes, and in environmental protection at national and local levels.

Climate adaptation and development planning workshop summary report

The objective of the Workshop today is to discuss the major risks caused by climate change in the coastal region of Vietnam, as well as exploring approaches to integrating adaptation measures in the development planning process. The intention is to take the results of your discussions today as a key input to defining a coordinated program of work for the government and its international partners in this field. With more organizations, line agencies and levels of government wishing to contribute and to take appropriate action, there needs to be more effective coordination and a sharper focus on the most important issues and challenges. This workshop is to help set the agenda for that collaborative effort. It will be one of a series of similar consultative events on climate change to be held over the remainder of this year.

I do hope very much that during the Workshop, you will provide extensive comments and suggestions on how best to strengthen the coordination of agencies, organisations and associations in studying and developing adaptation measures for climate change in Vietnam. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the participants for taking time to attend the workshop.

I wish you all good health and a very successful workshop!

Points for closing comments

Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu
Vice Director of Department of International Cooperation
Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment

Final comments on workshop discussions and follow-up

1. Many activities and new initiatives on climate change happening involving many government and international organisations
2. Need for much greater coordination between various government agencies and international partners
3. One option is to establish a climate change working group under the MONRE International Support Group on Environment (ISGE)
4. It would be useful if a special meeting of ISGE was convened on climate change – involving all interested international partners – to discuss results of the workshop and follow up actions
5. Next national workshops on climate change scheduled for November – announce their dates and coverage.
6. Key areas which need to receive priority attention are:
 - (i) Need to develop simple and rapid assessment and planning methods for CC analysis and for integration with development planning suited to Vietnam's situation and capacities
 - (ii) Pilot Strategic Environment Assessments which consider CC concerns
 - (iii) More focused vulnerability analysis on key economic sectors, especially infrastructure, industry and agriculture.
 - (iv) More focused vulnerability analysis on the sea level rise, storm surge and flooding hot spot districts and communes
 - (v) Working with these sectors and local government areas to prepare adaptation strategies
 - (vi) Pilot an integrated river basin approach to climate change adaptation as part of an integrated river basin plan
 - (vii) Vietnam needs to conduct a "Stern" type study similar to the UK exercise