

CIVIL SOCIETY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN VIETNAM

Actors, Roles, and Possibilities



building
local
promise.

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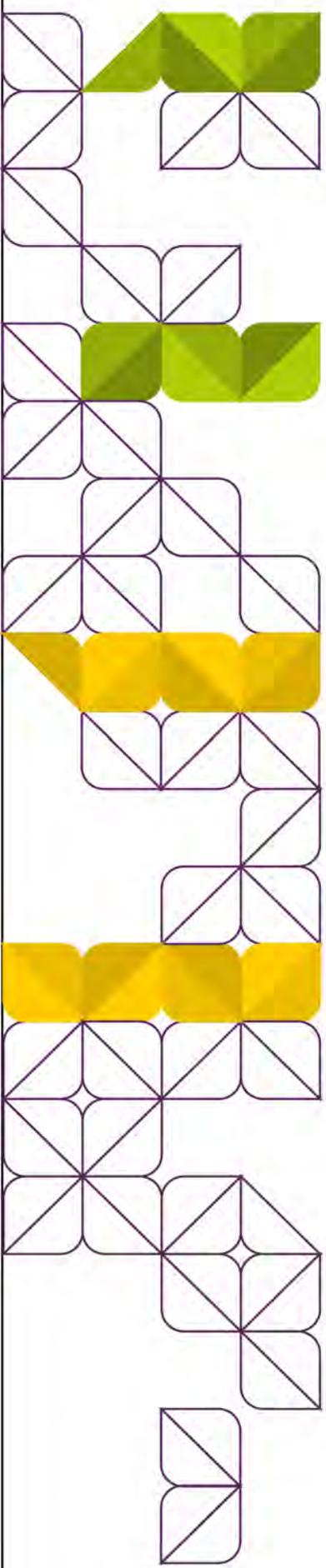
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ABC	Awareness and Behavior Change
ACCCRN	Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
BDS	Benefit Distribution System (for REDD+)
C&E	Center for Development of Community Initiative and Environment
CARE	Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere
CASI	Civil Action for Socio-economic Inclusion in Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCCB	NGO Climate Change Capacity Building Project
CCRD	Center for Rural Community Research and Development
CCWG	NGO Climate Change Working Group
CERDA	Center of Research and Development in Upland Areas
CERED	Center for Environment Research Education and Development
CIDSE	Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
COHED	Center for Community Health and Development
CORENARM	Consultative and Research Center on Natural Resource Management
CRD	Center for Rural Development in Central Vietnam
CSDM	Center for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas
CSEED	Center for Community Socio-Economic and Environmental Development
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DMWG	Disaster Management Working Group
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment (provincial level)
DRAGON	Delta Research and Global Observation Network
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ELAN	Ecosystems and Livelihoods Adaptation Network
FSSP	Forest Sector Support Partnership
FFI	Fauna & Flora International
GIZ	Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (formerly GTZ)
ICEM	International Center for Environmental Management
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
ISSET	Institute for Social and Environmental Transition
IWE	Institute for Water Resources and Environment
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JANI	Joint Advocacy Networking Initiative
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency

MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MCD	Center for Marine Conservation and Development
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MRC	Mekong River Commission (Laos)
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (for REDD+)
NGO RC	VUFO-NGO Resource Center
NISTPASS	National Institute for Science and Technology Policy and Strategy Studies
NTP-RCC	National Targeted Program to Respond to Climate Change
PACCOM	People's Aid Coordinating Committee
P(F)ES	Payment for (Forest) Environmental (or Ecosystem) Services
RCEE	Research Center for Energy and Environment
RECOFTC	Center for People and Forests
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SCC	Climate Change Resilience Center / Support Center for Combating Climate Change
SDRC	Social Development Research and Consultancy
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SIWRP	Southern Institute of Water Resources Planning
SP-RCC	Support Program to Respond to Climate Change
SRD	Sustainable Rural Development
TDI	Institute for New Technology Research, Training and Development
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VACNE	Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment
VEN	Vietnam Environmental Network
VFEJ	Vietnam Forum of Environmental Journalists
VNGO	Vietnamese Non-governmental Organization
VNGO&CC	Vietnamese NGO & Climate Change Network
VRN	Vietnam Rivers Network
VUFO	Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations
VUSTA	Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations
WARECOD	Center for Water Resources Conservation and Development

Executive Summary

As one of the largest challenges facing Vietnam in the 21st century, climate change has attracted participation and cooperation from all sectors of society. Thanks to supportive government policies, available donor funding, and local initiatives, Vietnamese civil society has played a growing role in climate change response.

This white paper written for Pact's country office in Vietnam aims to answer two primary questions: how is Vietnamese civil society responding to climate change? And what does involvement in climate change mean for the development of Vietnamese civil society? While substantial research has been conducted on climate change impacts and programming in Vietnam, no previous studies consider these questions from the standpoint of civil society development, a gap this report aims to address.

Civil society is defined in this paper as a range of formal and informal groups and networks initiated outside the state, including Vietnamese NGOs, research centers, virtual online networks, and community cooperatives, among other forms. The roles of mass organizations and international NGOs are also considered to the extent they cooperate with Vietnamese civil society groups. The paper presents an annotated listing of NGOs, research institutes, and networks of various types and summarizes the extent of civil society involvement in major areas of climate change response. It concludes with an analysis of gaps and opportunities facing civil society in the coming years, together with general recommendations for Vietnamese civil society, international donors, and the Vietnamese government.

The paper finds that civil society involvement has developed rapidly in all areas of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and advocacy. A growing number of organizations and networks are implementing a wide variety of projects in diverse locations. Particular areas of strength are agricultural and coastal mitigation, economic resilience, and household-level energy production. A smaller number of VNGOs have become active in the forest carbon issues of REDD+ and payment for forest environmental ser-

vices (PFES). Policy advocacy, and to a lesser extent community and media advocacy, have been carried out by networks of NGOs and cross-sectoral alliances involving government and donor representatives. Responses from authorities are encouraging, particularly at the central level, with increased cooperation between VNGOs, key ministries, and local government partners.

The major gaps identified in the civil society response are in strategizing, networking, and the organizational capacities of civil society groups themselves. Though many projects have been carried out effectively, this has not always resulted in sustainable organizations and networks. Advocacy strategies are missing or incomplete, often reacting to government initiatives. VNGOs are rightly proud of their participatory training methods but have not always followed through with community-centered programming. Meanwhile, large-scale initiatives such as REDD+, PFES, and province/city adaptation planning have begun with little consultation or participation of local civil society. On each of these topics, the white paper also finds signs of change and openings for increased civil society engagement in the future.

Recommendations call on **Vietnamese civil society** to focus on strengthening its internal capacity; engage in longer-term cooperative partnerships with INGOs, donors, and informal community groups; and develop new networks and constituencies for stronger local roots. **International NGOs and donors** are recommended to include considerations of civil society strengthening in climate change initiatives; increase organizational capacity strengthening programs for civil society, especially at provincial and local levels; facilitate and coach regional climate change networks; and invest in quality, in-depth monitoring of partners. For **Vietnamese authorities**, key recommendations are to strengthen mechanisms for communities and Vietnamese NGOs to involve in policy development and implementation on climate change, forestry, and land tenure issues, as part of a nationally coordinated response.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is widely recognized as one of the most pressing challenges facing Vietnam in the 21st century. According to the World Bank and other experts, Vietnam is among the five countries most vulnerable to climate change, and the most threatened by projected sea level rise (OneWorld 2009). The Mekong Delta, other river deltas, and coastal areas are also at risk from salt water intrusion, storms and typhoons, and drought in some areas (Chaudhry and Ruyschaert 2007, ICM 2009: 59, US Forest Service 2011: 40).

To address these threats, the Vietnamese Government has developed a National Targeted Program to Respond to Climate Change (NTP), approved by the Prime Minister in December 2008, and has spoken out about climate change impacts at international conferences. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) was assigned as the lead agency to implement the NTP. An Action Plan Framework for adaptation to climate change in the agricultural sector was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), also in 2008. Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions have found “increasing political interest and support” (REDD Vietnam, undated), linked with attention to “green growth” and clean energy.

The threat of climate change has attracted concern and action from civil society in all regions of Vietnam. As a result of social and economic development, the spread of the Internet and new forms of media, and more open legal registration procedures for formal organizations, Vietnamese civil society has become more vibrant and diverse in recent years (Nørlund 2006, Wells-Dang 2011). The roles of social organizations, NGOs, and enterprises to respond to climate change are promoted in the NTP (Government of Vietnam 2008).

Climate change is one of the first major issues that has arisen since the renewal of Vietnamese civil society in the 2000s. It has also prompted the formation of many new organizations and networks. Many civil society groups have signaled an interest

in climate change programming: some, perhaps, for the business opportunities available, but most out of genuine concern for the impacts of climate change on Vietnam.

Actors in civil society and in state agencies are all in the process of learning and exploring about climate change programming at a relatively equal level. At the same time, the “general political and legal environment have become more conducive for interactions” between state and civil society (PanNature 2012). As civil society has engaged on policy and implementation, state agencies have in return begun to recognize civil society’s roles in the development process (Kerkvliet et al 2008, Gainsborough et al 2011). Due to the Vietnamese government’s open, progressive, and well-organized policies on climate change, there have been increasingly substantive opportunities for civil society to engage with MONRE, MARD and their provincial and local counterparts. These opportunities for partnership are highlighted in the relevant sections of this paper on mitigation, adaptation, and advocacy.

Although specific impacts vary by geographical area, climate change, like environmental issues in general, affects all residents of Vietnam. It can be a uniting issue among regions and sectors of society. Moreover, the causes of climate change are global, not local, and lie almost entirely outside of Vietnam, which currently contributes only 0.4% of global emissions (UNDP 2011:10) while making up 1.5% of the global population. Climate change response is viewed as a less controversial or “sensitive” subject than certain other environmental concerns. Unlike logging, mining, or dam construction, there are no economic interests that stand to benefit from climate change. Instead, response to climate change requires participation and decentralized governance: climate change planning and adaptation cannot be implemented well from the top down (US Forest Service 2011: 58). In order for Vietnam to respond effectively to climate change, contributions will be needed from citizens and authorities alike.

About this Report

This white paper was prepared according to terms of reference developed by the Vietnam country office of Pact, an international NGO that has been active in capacity development for civil society since the 1990s. Previous Pact work in Vietnam has provided technical and organizational support to Vietnamese civil society organizations in responding to HIV/AIDS, as well as strengthening civil society networks, resulting in lessons and experience that are broadly relevant to civil society action in other sectors.

This paper aims to answer two primary questions, in simple terms: what is Vietnamese civil society doing about climate change? And what does involvement in climate change response mean for the development of Vietnamese civil society?

Information about the first of these questions is scattered in numerous locations: organizational websites and reports, a matrix of climate change activities in Vietnam (World Bank, undated), and documents and meeting minutes of networks and working groups. Previous studies have described the current and potential impacts of climate change on poor and vulnerable people in Vietnam (Oxfam 2008, Bass et al 2010, UN 2011), the primary target groups that civil society seeks to reach. Evaluation reports document the effectiveness of joint projects to raise awareness and strengthen capacity of civil society and government counterparts about climate change (Pham and Nguyen 2011, Le and Le 2011). Based on these and other primary and secondary sources, this report compiles a composite picture of the impacts to date of civil society on climate change. As no existing studies have considered the second question of the impacts of climate change programming on civil society, the paper attempts some initial findings and recommendations on this subject.

Specifically, the paper covers the following main subjects:

- Key accomplishments, contributions, and geographic coverage of Vietnamese civil society in responding to climate change,
- Challenges civil society has faced in addressing climate change,
- Capacity strengthening needs of civil society groups working in this area,
- Gaps in the civil society response, investigating the areas of clean energy, sustainable landscapes,

adaptation, resilience, learning, and policy dialogues.

- Outline the opportunities and potential scope and role for Vietnamese civil society in climate change in the coming five years.

The report is not intended to evaluate specific climate change projects, something that would be inadvisable if not impossible within its scope. Instead, it could be described as a “meta-evaluation” based on existing program reports and information. Research methods consisted of a study of available published, web-based, and ‘grey’ literature, plus telephone and skype interviews with a sample of Vietnamese civil society actors. Fifteen interviews were conducted in all with nine VNGO directors and staff, two staff of research institutes, and four staff of INGOs (see annex). Interviews were mostly in Vietnamese and averaged 30 minutes in length. Respondents are quoted directly in the report where appropriate but not cited by name. In addition, much of the analysis, conclusions and recommendations are based on views expressed by one or more interview respondents, so that to the extent possible, the white paper is informed by a cross-section of civil society voices.

Responsibility for the content of this paper rests with the researcher, who is an international specialist on civil society and networks resident in Vietnam. All translations of interviews and documents from Vietnamese to English are by the researcher. The writer was previously a member of the core group of the NGO Climate Change Working Group and of the advisory committee to the Climate Change Capacity Building Project in 2008-09. He also acts as an informal advisor to one of the VNGOs mentioned in the report, Action for the City. Research for this report was conducted over a relatively short time frame in late March – early April 2012, with few face-to-face meetings. The reliance on web-based sources, in particular, may unintentionally prioritize formal over informal expressions of civil society that are documented in the report. Any mistakes and omissions are the responsibility of the researcher; the views expressed do not necessarily represent positions of Pact. Pact and the writer welcome additional information on organizations, networks, and projects that can be added to future versions of this report.

CIVIL SOCIETY IN VIETNAM

For purposes of this paper, civil society is understood to comprise a range of formal and informal groups initiated outside the state, and the networks they are part of. Formal groups, what are frequently termed “civil society organizations,” include Vietnamese NGOs and research centers. Many of these are registered under the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA) or its provincial branches; others register with ministries, city and provincial authorities, universities, or mass organizations. They range in size from dozens of staff to a single founder, plus volunteers and consultants. Many VNGOs and research institutes have strong technical capacity in their respective field. In part for this reason, many organizations select technical-sounding names with acronyms that are difficult to distinguish from one another (see Table I, p. 10).

Vietnamese NGOs and research centers receive little or no funding from the Vietnamese state and rely primarily on international donor funds. Some, such as university research centers, may exist within state structures, but are financially independent and were started through a local initiative. Others are strongly project-driven and operate largely as nonprofit consulting companies.

VNGOs may be usefully grouped into three “generations” based on qualities of their founders and directors. The first generation began to form in the 1990s, founded by current or retired government officials, academics, and experts with strong connections to the state system. Since 2000, a second generation of NGOs has emerged, led by younger professionals who have international NGO experience or studied overseas. Compared to the first generation, this group is more influenced by business and international models and tends to be somewhat more independent in their thinking. The third generation, in recent years, includes

student volunteer groups, charitable associations, and community-based start-ups such as self-help groups, with a more voluntary and less technical character. Some third-generation groups are formal NGOs, while others have a more informal or network character.

Informal civil society also includes community-based organizations (CBOs) such as farmers’ groups (*to hop tac*), fishers’ cooperatives, and community forestry groups. A study of climate change in the northern mountains of Vietnam, for instance, identifies many creative responses based on indigenous knowledge and informal local community groups (Mai et al 2011). The number of student and volunteer groups is also growing rapidly: in September 2011, more than 1,500 volunteers participated in events in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and 11 other provinces as part of the global 350.org campaign to reduce emissions, and 10,000 people signed a petition committing to act in support of the campaign (Thanh Luan 2011). Both formal and informal groups and individual activists on climate change have assembled into a diversity of networks. These include NGO networks; cross-sectoral networks including government, business, and/or international representatives; virtual networks and e-mail groups; and informal advocacy networks based on personal ties (Wells-Dang 2011). Most are unregistered, since Vietnamese regulations have no legal category for networks. Other networks are officially considered projects of a single registered organization or are affiliated with structures such as the VUFO-NGO Resource Center, a partnership between INGOs and the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO). As with NGOs, the level of participation, representation, and accountability among networks varies.

The term “civil society” (*xa hoi dan su*) has become generally accepted among development actors in Vietnam, including some state officials. Several books and a variety of articles by academics and practitioners have appeared in Vietnamese-language publications urging readers, for instance, “Don’t be afraid of civil society!” (Khiết Hưng 2006). Yet the term is not used in official Party documents, which instead prefer wordings such as “social organizations” (*to chuc xa hoi*) or “people’s organizations” (*to chuc nhan dan*). One network of Vietnamese organizations working on climate change was reportedly told by authorities to change its name from “civil society organizations” to “non-governmental organizations,” which was believed to be less sensitive. In practice, many writers and speakers, both international and Vietnamese, conflate the terms NGO and CSO. For others, the concept of civil society is much broader than NGOs alone, including quasi-governmental organizations.

Mass and Umbrella Organizations

The most significant type of semi-governmental organization in the Vietnamese context is the mass organizations, including the Women’s Union and Farmers’ Union. Other socio-political organizations such as the Vietnam Red Cross can also be considered types of mass organization. These institutions have a hybrid character, with some state functions and some civil society character, depending to some extent on the organization and specific location (Kerkvliet et al 2008: 20). Many NGOs, both international and Vietnamese, work through mass organizations to reach communities; local branches of mass organizations are also members of certain civil society networks on climate change.

Umbrella organizations are state-initiated entities with multiple functions, one of which is representing, registering, and managing NGOs (Vasavakul 2003). The most relevant umbrella for climate change issues is VUSTA, which plays important roles in representing civil society interests to **government and donors and serving as a clearing house for information and ideas.** International NGOs are under a separate umbrella, that of VUFO, which supervises the People’s Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) and the NGO

Resource Center in Hanoi. Like mass organizations, umbrella groups are not included in the scope of this report, but are closely related to it. While recognizing the roles of these state-initiated bodies in the Vietnamese system, for purposes of this paper they are not considered as civil society organizations.

International NGOs

Over 500 international NGOs work in Vietnam. A few are very large, with hundreds of staff and budgets over US \$10 million. Some work primarily as donors or intermediaries, with a light on-the-ground presence, while others operate at the community level, with little to differentiate them from Vietnamese NGOs. Most INGOs have largely Vietnamese staff, and in some cases Vietnamese leadership as well. A small number of INGOs have localized their operations to become VNGOs: in the field of climate change response, notably SRD and CSEED, which are both successors of CIDSE.

INGOs occupy an ambiguous position in Vietnamese civil society. In principle, they belong to civil societies in their home countries, not in Vietnam. Yet they often act as part of civil society efforts in cooperation with Vietnamese NGOs and communities. In some provinces, INGOs have established long-term partnerships; VNGOs are at a relative disadvantage as they are mostly newer, have fewer relationships, and less funding. On the other hand, INGOs require government permission to work in a new province, while VNGOs can work anywhere in the country with a lower level of oversight.

The default INGO and donor strategy in Vietnam has been to work in partnership with government agencies at different levels, rather than with local or informal civil society (Fforde 2008). Some INGOs choose this intentionally, believing it is more effective or efficient; others face pressure to cooperate with authorities through the registration and project approval processes, or may not be aware that alternatives exist. For instance, one **international NGO working on climate change adaptation normally engages local civil society groups in host countries, but decided to work differently in Vietnam “due to institutional arrangements within the country.”** Since the government was already well-organized, “it was fairly obvious that the way to incorporate climate resilience into

decision making was to create a coordination and planning group within the government” (Moench et al 2011: 92, 263).

These decisions may be practical given timing and project management considerations, but the net result is to exclude civil society groups from important discussions.

The Vietnamese Party-state is a multi-lithic and diverse apparatus that is capable of carrying out many climate change-related projects (and others). If an INGO or donor aims to reduce carbon emissions from a particular activity, for instance, it may be essential to work with a government partner to achieve this. But this effort will not include civil society participation unless the donor or INGO takes an active role to ensure it. Project management bodies instituted by governments usually do not provide opportunities for civil society to play a meaningful role in decision-making processes (Bach et al 2011: 28). If local civil society is not included, the project will, de facto, strengthen the role of the state and have the unintended effect of weakening the position of other actors.

Forms of Civil Society Engagement

Civil society organizations and networks engage in a range of advocacy activities, understood as efforts to influence elites on behalf of a collective interest (Wells-Dang 2011: 52). In Vietnamese, “advocacy” is usually understood to mean policy advocacy directed at the state (*van dong chinh sach*), but civil society also advocates for implementation and practice, towards corporations and economic elites, and towards public opinion. Kerkvliet, Nguyen Quang A, and Bach Tan Sinh (2008) identify four main forms of civil society engagement in Vietnam: delivering services, policy and law-making, monitoring officials and holding them accountable, and conveying citizen’s voices. Hannah (2007) places these activities along a spectrum from implementing state policies to opposition. Wells-Dang (2011: 105) focuses instead on advocacy strategies, categorized as embedded, media, and community strategies.

All of these approaches are relevant to civil society involvement in climate change response. The four roles proposed by Kerkvliet, Nguyen, and Bach can be expanded in terms of six forms of climate

change engagement:

- 1) *Direct implementation of projects* (adaptation or mitigation) with government or mass organization partners. The majority of VNGO projects link directly with the commune/ward level. Others target the “meso-institutional” district and province levels. Few VNGOs implement projects with central government agencies (though some INGOs do).
- 2) *Capacity building and awareness raising* for community members and government officials at different levels. Some capacity building training concentrates on knowledge about climate change; other efforts use active learning methods, behavior change communication, community facilitation, and strategic planning. Media advocacy can also be an awareness raising strategy.
- 3) *Monitoring* projects carried out by government or international agencies. This is a “watchdog” function of civil society, promoting accountability and transparency.
- 4) *Policy advocacy*: working to change laws, regulations and/or implementation of government policies.
- 5) *Research and consultancy*, usually on behalf of government or international donors. This is related to policy advocacy, and can be employed for advocacy purposes, but also has a broader scientific and public awareness function.
- 6) *Representation*: drawing upon a constituency base to convey citizens’ voices to government, donors, and/or the media.

Gainsborough et al (2011) point out that advocacy occurs when civil society takes the initiative; left to themselves, state agencies rarely reach out to VNGOs, preferring to consult mass and umbrella-type organizations that are known to them. As civil society becomes more involved on issues such as climate response, there are some signs this is beginning to change.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE

Vietnamese NGOs

This section describes civil society organizations with climate change-focused projects. Tables I-III are not exhaustive lists of all organizations with an interest in the sector, but concentrate on those with one or more active projects and/or that contribute to at least one climate change-related network. Organizations that do not carry out identifiable projects or activities are not listed. Cases where information about an organization's activities was not obtainable from the Internet or published materials are marked "not available."

Climate change-focused projects have an explicit focus on one of the six forms of engagement described above, such as demonstrable impacts on emissions reductions or resilience. Many other projects in livelihoods, disaster preparedness, or environmental conservation may have secondary climate effects; these are not considered here, in part due to space limitations and also to avoid placing "old wine in new bottles" (*binh moi ruou cu*), the re-labeling of traditional development projects in order to attract donor or media attention (McElwee 2012: 422). For instance, a project to develop new crop varieties that can be grown in salinated soil is an example of climate change adaptation, while a project to increase the income of farmers in the same region through livelihood diversification is not, even though the increased income might help farmers adapt to future climate change impacts.

3. CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE

Table I *Hanoi-based VNGOs in Climate Change Response¹*

Name	Year founded	Mitigation	Adaptation	Capacity building	Monitoring	Policy advocacy	Research/ Consultancy	Representation	Locations of climate change projects (provinces)
Action for the City	2006	✓		✓					Hanoi, Quang Nam
Center for Development of Community Initiative and Environment (C&E)	2008			✓					Thai Binh, Thua Thien-Hue
Center for Rural Community Research and Development (CCRD)	1995	✓	✓			✓			Bac Kan, Nghe An, Thanh Hoa, Vinh Long
Center for Non-formal Education and Community Development (CENEV)	n/a			✓					Hoa Binh
Center of Research and Development in Upland Areas (CERDA)	2004	✓			✓		✓		Lang Son, Lao Cai
Center for Environment Research Education and Development (CERED)	1991					✓	✓		n/a
Center for Environment Resources and Rural Poverty Alleviation (CERPA)	n/a		✓	✓					Quang Binh
Center for Community Health and Development (COHED)	n/a			✓					Hoa Binh
Center for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas (CSDM)	2000	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	Lang Son, Yen Bai, other N provs.
Center for Sustainable Development Studies (CSDS)	n/a		✓	✓					Lang Son, Nam Dinh
Center for Community Socio-Economic and Environmental Devel. (CSEED)	1996	✓	✓						Hoa Binh, Lang Son, Thai Binh
GreenID	n/a	✓							Ca Mau, Thai Binh
Marine Conservation and Development (MCD)	2011	✓	✓						Hai Phong, Khanh Hoa Nam Dinh, Thai Binh
Research Center for Management and Sustainable Development (MSD)	2003		✓						Quang Ninh
PanNature	2004	✓		✓		✓			Northern Mtns, Kon Tum
Population, Environment and Development (PED)	2000	✓							Thai Nguyen, Thanh Hoa
RAECP	2011			✓					Youth membership
Climate Change Resilience Center (SCC)	2008	✓		✓		✓			Advocacy campaigns
Sustainable Rural Development (SRD)	2006	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			10 provinces (mainly northern and central)
Institute for New Technology Research, Training and Devel. (TDI)	n/a				✓				Manages website and internet forum
Towards Transparency	2009				✓				National monitoring
Center for Water Resources Conservation and Devel. (WARECOD)	2005		✓	✓		✓			Can Tho, Quang Nam

¹ Table listings are alphabetized by acronym. Sources = World Bank matrix, CCWG minutes, CCCB newsletters, and organizational websites.

The 22 organizations in Table I have a well-distributed variety of activities. Most organizations were formed in the past decade; a few date from the 1990s. Capacity building (training and awareness raising) is the most common activity; research capacity is the least common. Few of these VNGOs represent any constituency, and none are membership-based. The only organization listed with a strong representation focus is CSDM, an ethnic minority-led organization working with community networks in upland areas.

Table II *Provincially based VNGOs*

Name	Year founded	Mitigation	Adaptation	Capacity building	Monitoring	Policy advocacy	Research/Consultancy	Representation	Locations
Center for Education and Communication of Environment (CEACE)	2002			✓					Ho Chi Minh City
Center for Support to Climate Change Response	n/a		✓						Thanh Hoa
Center for Social Research and Development (CSR D)	n/a	✓	✓			✓			Hue
Consultative and Research Center on Natural Resource Management (CORENARM)	2005		✓						Hue
Ha Tinh Center for Community Development	2004			✓					Ha Tinh
Nam Dinh Community Friendship Center	2008			✓					Nam Dinh
Social Development Research and Consultancy (SDRC)	1989			✓					Ho Chi Minh City
Center for Sustainable Community Development of Mountainous Communities (SUDECOM)	2009			✓					Yen Bai

Few VNGOs based outside of Hanoi are engaged in climate change response, and they are involved in fewer activities. In addition to the eight organizations in Table II, local NGOs in Ha Giang, Thai Binh, and Ben Tre partner with Hanoi-based NGOs. Most local NGOs in provinces are first-generation groups founded by former government officials or with close ties to state agencies. In Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta, where many climate change projects are ongoing, most activities are carried out not by NGOs but by research institutes or mass or umbrella organizations. A selection of these is listed in the next section.

Academic and Research Institutions

These organizations are one or several steps closer to state agencies than VNGOs, as they belong to a ministry or state university. In practice, some are virtually indistinguishable from VNGOs but are included here on the basis of their registration status.

Table III *Academic and Research Centers Involved in Climate Change Response*

Name	Mitigation	Adaptation	Capacity building	Monitoring	Policy advocacy	Research/ Consultancy	Locations
Agriculture and Forestry Research and Development Center for the Northern Mountainous Region (AFRDC)			✓			✓	Thai Nguyen Univ of Agriculture & Forestry
Asian Institute of Technology in Vietnam			✓				Ho Chi Minh City
Center for Agrarian Systems Research and Development (CASRAD)	✓					✓	Hanoi
Center for Research and Promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (CEREPROD)			✓				Hanoi University of Education
Center for Rural Development in Central Vietnam (CRD)		✓					Hue Univ. of Ag & Forestry
Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES)	✓					✓	Hanoi National University
DRAGON Research Institute for Climate Change		✓	✓			✓	Can Tho University
Forest Science Institute of Vietnam (FSIV)	✓					✓	Hanoi
Institute for Agricultural Environment	✓					✓	Hanoi
Center for Research on Climate Change and Environment, Institute for Coastal and Offshore Engineering (ICOE)						✓	Ho Chi Minh City
Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment (IMHEN)		✓				✓	Hanoi
Institute for Tropical Biology	✓					✓	Ho Chi Minh City
Institute for Water Resources and Environment (IWE)		✓				✓	Hanoi
National Inst. for Science and Technology Policy and Strategy Studies (NISTPASS)		✓	✓			✓	Hanoi
Nong Lam University Research Centre for Climate Change		✓				✓	Ho Chi Minh City
Research Center for Energy and Environment (RCEE)	✓					✓	Hanoi
Research Center for Forest Ecology and Environment (RCFEE)			✓			✓	Hanoi
Southern Institute of Water Resources Planning (SIWRP)		✓				✓	Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment (VACNE)			✓				Hanoi
Vietnam Environment & Sustainable Development Institute (VESDI)		✓				✓	Hanoi
Vietnam National University						✓	Hanoi
Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA)					✓	✓	Hanoi and provincial branches

Compared to VNGOs, academic and research institutions are spread more evenly across the country, although most are still based in major cities. These organizations are less involved in monitoring and policy advocacy, which do not generally fall within the mandate of these organizations. Instead, they have a stronger research focus.

One agency that deserves particular mention is VACNE, a professional association founded in 1988 by the central government. As an association, VACNE has local and organizational members, giving it the potential to play a larger nationwide role. VACNE has established a climate change committee that publishes a magazine and books and conducts awareness raising for members and local authorities. Some local NGOs are members of VACNE and play active roles in the climate change committee (MCD 2011: 9-10).

Networks

VNGOs, government counterparts, and individuals have formed a broad array of networks relating to climate change response, almost all established in the past five years. Some networks are among NGOs or set up by NGOs, while others are cross-sectoral fora set up by government or donors that include NGO members. A third category of climate change networks is transnational, with one or more Vietnamese participants in a regional or global effort. (See Tables IV-VI).

Table IV *NGO and NGO-led Networks*

Name	Year founded	Mitigation	Adaptation	Capacity building	Monitoring	Policy advocacy	Research/ Consultancy	Coordinator(s)	# and type of active members
Building Civil Society Inclusion in Food Security and Poverty Elimination (CIFPEN)	2002			✓				CCRD, PED	46 VNGOs
Climate Central Network	2011			✓				Nordic Assistance to Vietnam	30 INGOs, VNGOs, and individuals
Climate Change Working Group (CCWG)	2007			✓		✓		CARE, VUFO-NGO Resource Center	12 INGOs and VNGOs in core group
Forum Climate Change	n/a				✓			TDI	Virtual network
Green Generation	2008			✓				Live & Learn	300 youth
Health and Climate Change Network	2011			✓		✓		COHED	10 VNGOs and intl orgs
NorthNet	2012			✓				CARE	8 ethnic minority orgs
Vietnam Environmental Network (VEN)	2006				✓			Individual	Virtual; 232 indiv. members
Vietnam Forum of Environmental Journalists (VFEJ)	1998				✓			Registered under VACNE	100 journalists
Vietnam Rivers Network (VRN)	2005			✓	✓	✓		CSRD, WARECOD	150 indiv, 20 org. members
Vietnamese NGO & Climate Change Network (VNGO&CC)	2008			✓				SRD	150 signed up; core of 8-10 VNGOs

The first civil society network to form specifically around climate change response was the NGO Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) of the NGO Resource Center. The Resource Center's official membership is made up of INGOs, but informal arrangements allow Vietnamese NGOs to participate in working groups under the VUFO umbrella, as long as the formal leadership of the groups includes at least one INGO. The 14 RC working groups are, in practice, an active forum for cooperation among international and local NGOs (VUFO-NGO RC 2011). The CCWG has been chaired since the beginning by CARE International, with a core group currently numbering 12 and three active subgroups on Mitigation, Adaptation, and Awareness and Behavior Change (ABC). The full CCWG meets monthly; most sub-groups meet quarterly. Subgroups may be chaired by VNGOs: Action for the City led the ABC group from 2009-11, and CCRD began chairing the Mitigation subgroup in 2011. CARE has expressed interest in rotating coordination of the CCWG to another core group member, but this has not yet occurred.

In 2011, the CCWG received a grant from the Southern Voices Capacity Building Program, which aims to strengthen the capacity of climate change networks to engage in advocacy (Southern Voices 2011). The grant, via CARE Denmark, provides funding for a CCWG coordinator position and supported a series of advocacy activities, a network capacity analysis, and the development of a joint advocacy strategy with the RC's Disaster Management Working Group (DMWG). The CCWG has linked to advocacy experience from other networks in other countries via the Internet. Although the INGO-led CCWG might not be considered a "southern network" in the strict sense, the Southern Voices program is the only such effort in the sector specifically focusing on network building.

Shortly after the formation of CCWG, four Vietnamese organizations established the Vietnam Non-Governmental Organizations and Climate Change Network (VNGO&CC). The network has a steering committee of five: SRD, MCD, COHED, CORENARM, and CERPA (VNGO&CC 2010b: 3), with two of the founding organizations, CERED and VUSTA's Institute of Social Sciences, also still involved (VNGO&CC, undated). VNGO&CC is structured as a formal network with a steering committee, secretariat, and five sub-groups on sustainable agriculture, natural resources & environment, community health, coastal areas, and re-

search & advocacy. 150 individuals and organizations have registered for the network's mailing list. The VNGO&CC steering committee meets several times per year; sub-groups meet infrequently, with most activities conducted by member organizations, not jointly. The REDD subgroup has been most active, with a joint small project in 2010 and contributions from VNGO members and INGO technical advisors (VNGO&CC 2010c).

Most of the efforts of VNGO&CC members have focused on the Civil Society Capacity Building on Climate Change project (CCCB). Phase I of the CCCB was funded by the Finnish Embassy from mid-2009 to December 2011, with three main components: communications, including a newsletter and website; a program of nationwide training courses; and learning and sharing activities among participants. The project was jointly sponsored by CCWG and VNGO&CC, with a mixed steering committee of INGO and VNGO representatives. SRD, as a member of both networks, was selected as the implementing agency. Coordination of the steering committee structure proved more challenging than expected, and by the later stages of the project, SRD took greater ownership of the project (Le and Le 2011: 22).

A midterm evaluation (completed April 2011) found that the training component of the project was progressing well, while the communication and learning objectives could be better implemented, with more delegation and mobilization of CCWG and VNGO&CC member organizations (Pham and Nguyen 2011: 6). The final evaluation, released in April 2012, noted improvements in the websites and online fora set up through the project, and in the quality and amount of communications materials produced (Le and Le 2011). In particular, a training manual on climate change impacts and adaptation for local communities has been widely used. CCCB has assembled a group of trainers, mostly from government-affiliated research institutions, who are able to replicate this training to communities and other stakeholders.

SRD and other VNGO&CC members are currently preparing for Phase II of the CCCB, which plans to expand the training beneficiaries to local government as well as VNGO staff and counterparts and expand efforts to collect and document successful models of NGO projects in vulnerable areas as a tool for policy advocacy (SRD 2012a). Phase II will no longer include a joint role for CCWG. The CCCB and VNGO&CC will continue to have

separate identities: some provinces do not have any NGO members of the network but have still participated in CCCB, while others just receive information about VNGO&CC but have not joined CCCB activities. Despite these differences, it is often difficult to distinguish between roles and activities of VNGO&CC, CCCB, and SRD as the lead agency of both: as one observer says, “the network is a project.”

Coordination by a single organization is one frequently-encountered structure for civil society networks. In one interview respondent’s view, “the most important thing for networks is the coordinating person or organization. If they can connect others well, the network will work... There shouldn’t be too much control though, or the voices of members won’t come through.” A centralized coordinating body allows for efficient administration, provides a legal umbrella, and satisfies donors’ desire for financial accountability. Drawbacks of this model can be overlapping roles, uneven distribution of work, or concentration of decision-making power, issues that have been faced by several networks in Table IV. It can sometimes result in a network competing for funding with its own member organizations.

An alternate network structure is a looser core group with a division of leadership tasks among

members. The food security network CIFPEN, for instance, encourages its members to co-implement projects (including some on climate change-related topics), but does not carry out projects as a network, instead limiting its role to capacity building activities that benefit members. This model is more participatory, but like the CCCB Phase I advisory board, can often be difficult to implement in practice.

A second type of climate change network extends beyond NGO membership to include government, mass organizations, and donor representatives. Many of the networks in Table V (p. 15) have policy advisory roles that initially did not include VNGOs as members, but were added due to INGO or donor encouragement. In the REDD+ network and FSSP, for instance, VNGOs now have seats at the table based not on tokenism but on their demonstrated experience in forest policy and governance. In other networks, civil society does not yet have an official role, but can observe or comment on discussions. The SP-RCC was set up as a mechanism of cooperation between donors and the Government of Vietnam (JICA, undated); donors have pressed for NGO involvement, but this has not yet been formalized.

Table V *Cross-sectoral Climate Change Networks*

Name	Year founded	Mitigation	Adaptation	Capacity building	Monitoring	Policy advocacy	Research/ Consultancy	Coordinator(s)	Civil society members
Community Network in Mekong Delta	2011			✓				SRD, CEACE, Dong Thap province	44 orgs and individuals
Forestry Sector Support Partnership (FSSP)	2001	✓						MARD, GIZ	CERDA, PanNature
International Support Group on Environment	2001					✓		MONRE	VN ministries and intl donors only
Joint Advocacy Networking Initiative (JANI)	2009					✓		CARE, VN Govt.	14 INGOs and govt agencies involved in DRR
MekongNet	2010		✓					Can Tho University, WARECOD	50 orgs and indiv
Support Program to Respond to Climate Change (SP-RCC)	2009		✓	✓		✓		JICA, AFD	No formal representation
US Vietnam Climate Change Working Group	2010						✓	US and VN govts.	DRAGON Institute
Vietnam REDD+ Network	2009	✓				✓		Norway, MARD	CERDA, PanNature, SRD

3. CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE

Other cross-sectoral networks have been initiated by civil society but have taken on a broader scope. For instance, MekongNet began through a WARE-COD project, funded by the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, to work with local mass organizations (Women's Union and Farmers' Union) to make adaptation plans and strategies. When the project ended at the end of 2011, coordination of the network shifted to Can Tho University, which is well connected throughout the Mekong Delta. It also changed the character of the network, as it is no longer NGO-led and most of its members are now mass organizations.

Cross-sectoral networks enable Vietnamese civil society to connect directly to policy-makers. They are thus effective channels for advocacy and information sharing. They are weaker, like many VNGOs, on connections to local constituencies, even though they may use the language of commu-

nity participation. Numerous informal civil society groups exist at the community level (Fforde 2008), but they are rarely networked together across commune boundaries or with formal NGOs.

Table VI (p. 16) lists nine of a growing number of transnational networks with Vietnamese affiliates. These networks all formed outside Vietnam first, then came to look for members. For instance, ELAN organized a consultative workshop with CCWG in April 2011 in Hanoi (Bachofen 2011). Following this initial contact, ELAN provided CCWG with seed money to pilot integrated adaptation activities. This resulted in an assessment report (Nguyen Van Duyen et al 2011), considered to be a first step in future collaboration between CCWG and ELAN. Additional linkages with cross-sectoral and transnational networks are profiled in the below sections on mitigation, adaptation, and advocacy.

Table VI *Transnational Civil Society Networks with Vietnamese Participation*

Name	Year founded	Mitigation	Adaptation	Capacity building	Monitoring	Policy advocacy	Research/ Consultancy	Representation	Locations
Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN)	2009		✓	✓					Cities of Danang, Quy Nhon, Can Tho
Mangroves for the Future	2007	✓	✓						IUCN
Nexus Carbon for Development	2008	✓							CCRD, MARD biogas project
C4o Large Cities Climate Leadership Group	2006	✓							City of Hanoi
Economy and Environment Program for South-east Asia (EEPSEA)	1993			✓				✓	Individual researchers
Ecosystems and Livelihoods Adaptation Network (ELAN)	2011		✓						CCWG
Enabling Access on Sustainable Energy (EASE)	2004	✓							CCRD, PED, RCEE
REDD Asia Pacific Network	2008	✓							SRD
350.org	2008			✓		✓			SCC

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

Mitigation refers to efforts to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These emissions occur through burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, agriculture, and other economic activities. This section analyzes Vietnamese civil society efforts to conserve forests and wetlands, promote renewable energy, change agricultural production methods, and support market-based methods to account for environmental costs. A box at the end of each topic summarizes current civil society activities and suggests opportunities for future involvement, based on informants' ideas and the writer's independent analysis.

Sustainable Landscapes

Vietnam has been a pioneer in planning a national program to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, known as REDD+. The purpose of REDD+ is to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives to preserve forests and invest in low carbon development. The "plus" in REDD+ is meant to include conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (UN-REDD, undated).

The Vietnam REDD+ Network is a cross-sectoral group of government, donor, INGO, and VNGO participants (see Table V, p. 15), facilitated by the United Nations REDD Program and the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (under MARD). The network has full meetings every six months, seen by participants as valuable opportunities for networking and updating information. Six sub-technical working groups (monitoring-reporting-verification [MRV], benefit distribution systems [BDS], local implementation, private sector engagement, governance, and safeguards) meet more frequent-

ly. Network and sub-group meetings are open to all individuals and organizations who are interested to implement REDD+ in Vietnam (Pham Minh Thoa 2011), and the network has a Google Groups list-serve that anyone can join, though the highly technical jargon common to REDD+ practitioners might dissuade many people, especially at the community level.

Participants characterize the REDD+ network as active, well-moderated, and participatory. With 14 REDD+ projects now in preparation in Vietnam, interest in the subject is high. The Vietnamese Government is preparing a national REDD+ program and institutional frameworks, while subnational activities are also being developed by donors and INGOs, a few cases in partnership with VNGOs. In February 2012, for example, Fauna & Flora International (FFI) launched a REDD+ Community Carbon Pools project in Kon Tum province (Central Highlands) in partnership with PanNature (Reyes 2012).

In the view of one interview respondent, Vietnamese civil society should become involved in “all activities related to REDD,” including national level policy discussions, implementation together with government and international organizations, capacity building, and service provision. “The more people who get involved in these activities, the better!” However, the technical skills and resources required for REDD+ implementation may be beyond the capacity of many smaller NGOs. The role of civil society has not yet been fully recognized yet by government officials, who see VNGOs as too small to be meaningful. All REDD+ program monitoring (MRV) is now being done by the state; given the large flows of money involved, greater involvement of civil society could improve transparency of the process. Towards Transparency, the Vietnam affiliate of Transparency International, is conducting a project for REDD+ preventative anti-corruption measures, with the goal of a civil society capable of monitoring integrity in REDD+ mechanisms (Transparency, undated).

Civil society actors raise additional concerns over the need for forest governance reform to accompany REDD+. There is wide agreement that REDD+ will only work if effective governance structures are in place, including land tenure arrangements, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability. Community-based forest management is an underdeveloped form of civil society in Vietnam. At present, 75% of forest land in Vietnam remains under state management, while 25% has been allocated to residents, mostly in the northern mountains. Vietnam’s 2004 Forestry Law allows for community management, but this has only been applied in a few cases: as of 2008, only 200,000 hectares were being managed by communities out of 10.3 million hectares of forest land nationwide,

or less than 2% (REDD Vietnam, undated).

REDD+ offers the potential of resources and incentives to improve forest governance, but the outcomes are still unclear. “Vietnam doesn’t have an adequate framework to implement REDD in a good way,” says one VNGO actor. “Law enforcement is very weak, and the forest management sector is undergoing reconstruction and reform.” According to FFI, “a central challenge is how to set up effective governance systems that recognize the rights of indigenous and forest-dependent communities, and ensure that the benefits (and incentives) reach these people.” At the same time, “open and positive collaboration with the government” is said to be “the key to a successful implementation” (Reyes 2012). Yet like many governments, the Vietnamese system does not have a strong record of such effective governance systems (Nguyen Xuan Vinh 2011).

A VNGO director who is a member of an ethnic minority group says, “REDD is not only a question of legal reform...it needs to protect the rights of ethnic people according to international principles, protect community rights to land and forests, [and] the REDD benefit distribution system must be transparent and provide benefits for all participants, emphasizing community benefits” (Mai et al 2011: 60). Communities should not only be passive beneficiaries receiving payments, but active agents in preserving their environments (Nguyen Quang Tan 2011: 33). The most significant roles that civil society groups can play involve community facilitation, complaint resolution, and social monitoring and policy advocacy, such as SRD’s focus on lobbying for social safeguards. This monitoring and watchdog role is crucial, since no other actor is likely to perform it.

Current forms of civil society involvement

- Local NGO participation in REDD+ network
- Monitoring of pilot REDD+ projects

Opportunities for further involvement

- Promote community management of forest land
- Support and facilitate local civil society, such as forest users’ groups
- Advocate for an equitable BDS framework
- Link REDD+ to reforms in forestry and land tenure

Mangroves and Wetland Protection

Protection of wetlands and coastal areas is included in the definition of sustainable landscapes. Along Vietnam's 3,200 km of coastline, ecosystems are already significantly affected by climate change with increasing coastal erosion, damage to dikes, and salt water intrusion to agricultural land. Coastal cities such as Danang and Quy Nhon depend on disappearing dune or mangrove ecosystems to buffer flooding and storms (Moench et al 2011: 43), while the loss of mangroves for conversion to shrimp farming has been a major source of emissions (US Forest Service 2011: 14).

The Vietnamese Government has a master plan on shoreline mangrove restoration from 2008-15 (Decision 405/KTN). A new Vietnam Wetland Association was established under VACNE in December 2011. The Climate Change in Coastal Ecosystems Program, a joint initiative of the Australian and German governments, supports the Vietnamese Government to implement an integrated

coastal management program for five Mekong Delta provinces (An Giang, Kien Giang, Ca Mau, Bac Lieu, and Soc Trang), with no apparent civil society participation.

These government programs have shown mixed results. According to workshop proceedings in March 2012, "it has proved difficult to establish mangroves, and 50% of plantings along the coast line have failed... Little attention has been placed on tailoring the species and planting methods to suit a particular site." NGOs and CBOs might be able to apply more locally relevant approaches. MCD's wetland restoration project in Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh, has developed a wetland buffer zone for mitigation of sea level rise (Nguyen Van Duyen et al 2011: 8). Other projects are proposed to be funded through the Mangroves for the Future network (see Table VI, p. 16).

Current forms of civil society involvement

- Mangrove restoration projects in protected areas

Opportunities for further involvement

- Expand direct implementation
- Advocate for civil society involvement in government and donor programs

Methane Reduction from Agriculture

An estimated 15% of greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture (VNGO&CC 2010a: 3). According to IFPRI (2012), "With over 60 percent of the population in Vietnam active in the agricultural sector, there is significant mitigation potential through improved agricultural practices." Since rice is the staple crop in Vietnam, the mitigation potentials from wet rice cultivation are estimated to be the largest. High methane emissions from paddy rice can be reduced through improved water management and less nitrogen fertilizer use during rice production (RCEE and Full Advantage 2010).

Agricultural mitigation has been a major focus of MONRE and MARD and has also attracted the

attention of many VNGOs and research institutes that have technical experience in agriculture and livelihoods. For instance, SRD is implementing the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in Bac Kan and other provinces, working with rice farmers to reduce their methane emissions and need for scarce irrigation water. Combining mitigation and adaptation approaches, the system reduces fertilizer use, pesticides, and seeds (SRD 2012b). In April 2012, AusAID announced two new grants on agricultural mitigation to international and Vietnamese NGOs. Fully organic agriculture models are also being implemented by several local NGOs and social enterprises, including Hanoi Organic Roots, which began as a project of Action for the City.

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural mitigation projects reducing methane outputs from rice cultivation • Small-scale organic vegetable production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand SRI and organic models, documenting emissions reductions • Advocate for MARD recognition of low-methane agricultural methods

Clean and Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is a broad category covering wind and solar power, small-scale hydropower, and biological fuels. Vietnamese civil society groups are currently implementing projects on household biogas and charcoal (bio-char) production, along with improved cooking stoves that reduce pollution and carbon emissions. VNGOs and government agencies are beginning to take interest in other forms of clean energy as well.

CCRD's bio-digester system converts animal and human waste into biogas and digested slurry, with a simplified design tailored to Vietnamese farming households. The resulting biogas, used for cooking, is clean and odorless. The slurry is composted with agricultural residues such as rice husks and stalks to become bio-fertilizer (Pham Van Thanh, undated). CCRD has constructed over 10,000 biogas tanks, each of which it calculates saves 3-5 tons CO₂ equivalent per year. Using agricultural by-products to produce organic fertilizer also reduces emissions from burning rice stalks (VNS 2012). Such models have broad government and donor support: a Vietnam Biogas Association was formed in April 2011 with support from SNV.

Programs on improving cookstoves in Vietnam started in the 1980s, linked to biogas and other rural livelihood projects, and were promoted by the Women's Union to reduce pollution and fuel costs (SNV 2008). These efforts achieved high coverage in only a single province. The Hanoi-based

NGO PED began to design and market small, inexpensive stoves in 2000 and achieved higher adoption rates in a shorter time, but at a smaller overall scale. The organization is currently piloting the use of biomass to make organic charcoal as well. The stoves use as much as 40% less fuel and reduce smoke (Steinglass 2009), but adoption rates are still low. One study found that "For poor consumers, price is of paramount importance. Any new stove that is not cheaper than existing models is likely to fail" (Dang and Oosterhoff 2010).

According to GIZ (undated), Vietnam has high potential to develop second-generation fuels made from industrial and agricultural waste, but marketing will be key to their acceptance. Biofuels currently in production by private sector companies include ethanol and diesel made from cassava, jatropha, and other crops, as well as from animal products such as catfish fat (Commodity Online 2010). Biomass is sometimes understood to encompass vegetable and animal fuels, but more specifically refers to energy from waste products such as rice husks, sawdust, and manure.

A new organization, GreenID, is focusing on renewable energy – solar, biomass, and biogas – using small-scale technology, not the centralized grid. To balance the top-down national power development plan, GreenID plans to carry out local energy planning with communities in Thai Binh province (Red River Delta). There are not

yet many civil society groups working in this area, but energy consulting firms are potential partners. GreenID’s director feels there should be more emphasis on reducing emissions from energy and transportation, which contribute a larger share of greenhouse gases than agriculture.

Hydropower is a controversial subject in Vietnam’s civil society, the subject of advocacy campaigns led by the Vietnam Rivers Network and other activists. A VRN member says, “Hydropower shouldn’t be considered green, except for pico-hydro at the community level. Even small-scale

dams should have a cost-benefit analysis from the economic side... They say these dams are ‘small’ but small is how small? They may still have a big impact, especially if there are problems in the construction process.” Even more contentious is nuclear power: several local NGOs have been in communication with National Assembly members concerning plans to build Vietnam’s first nuclear reactor in Ninh Thuan province (South Central Coast). Although nuclear energy is clean in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, many civil society actors do not consider it safe.

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biogas and bio-char models • Piloting of improved cooking stoves • Advocacy and monitoring of hydropower projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve marketing of biogas and cookstoves • Scale up biomass and biochar projects • Develop an advocacy strategy for civil society involvement in clean and renewable energy at community, provincial and national levels • Increase links with businesses investing and consulting on clean energy • Integrate renewable energy into environmental conservation and livelihood programming

Payment for Environmental Services

PES (sometimes standing for “ecosystem services”) is based on the concept that users (“buyers”) of environmental resources (corporations, electric and water utilities) should pay some or all of the market value to owners of these resources (members of local communities). PES is thus similar to REDD+ (which pays owners for **not** damaging forests) in sharing a need for agreements on amounts and distribution of payments, incentives, and controls (Nguyen Quang Tan 2011). The Vietnamese government and many civil society organizations see PES as a win-win scenario combining poverty reduction and environmental protection.

Vietnam has been a leader in developing PES in Southeast Asia (Catacutan et al 2011, Winrock 2011). Two pilot projects began in Lam Dong (Central Highlands) and Son La (Northern Mountains)

in 2006, expanding in 2009-10 under the name of Payment for Forest Environmental Services (PFES). These efforts were first conceived with the goal of conserving biodiversity, not climate change mitigation (USAID 2009), but are highly relevant to emissions reductions. The donors and implementing agencies view PFES as highly successful (Winrock 2011), while other sources suggest that results have been mixed (Hess and To 2010). The PFES projects are managed by provincial authorities, who are the legal owners of forest land. Rather than an open market for environmental services, PFES has become a state-regulated market with fixed prices and hierarchical structures – an extension of existing forest management subsidy programs rather than a new initiative (Nguyen Quang Tan 2011, McElwee 2012).

Local civil society involvement in the pilot projects has been minimal. There is no substantial difference in programming between the pilot in Lam Dong managed by an international NGO and the bilateral-run pilot in Son La; both follow the default pattern of partnership with local authorities. Study tours, training courses, and working groups have involved government officials only. Through “town hall meetings” to raise awareness of local households, communities have been informed but not fully consulted, like “cheap laborers to be paid for forest protection” (Winrock 2011: 21, Nguyen Quang Tan 2011: 17, Hess and To 2010: 4). Community groups have not been formed in most cases, although K’ho ethnic minority people in Lam Dong preferred to work in teams rather than as individuals (Winrock 2011: 31) and there are brief mentions of household groups in Son La as well (Nguyen and Hess, undated). Local communities do not have legal rights to forest. Their rights are limited to payment from the “forest owners” for their protection work. It is not clear how much their social and cultural needs have been considered (Nguyen Quang Tan 2011: 26, 30). There are clear roles for local civil society in implementing

and monitoring PFES, and for VNGOs to facilitate local community groups’ relations with forest authorities.

Advocacy efforts from the two pilot projects have resulted in two legal instruments, most recently Prime Ministerial Decree No.99/2010/NĐ-CP, which allows for the expansion of PFES nationwide; as of 2011, 19 new projects are being considered (McNally 2010, McElwee 2012). Local conditions vary across the country: a “one-size-fits-all national PFES program would likely face serious difficulties” (Catacutan et al 2011: 5).

Civil society groups have begun to play a role in monitoring the impacts of PFES. PanNature produced a study on pro-poor environmental services. Others have begun to monitor provincial programs: in April 2011, for instance, SRD and CARE attended an opening workshop for PFES in Yen Bai province in the northern mountains (GIZ 2011). Such monitoring may improve linkages to local communities and adapt PFES policy to local conditions

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of provincial PFES planning • Limited degree of participation of community groups in PFES pilots in Lam Dong and Son La 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support decentralization of PFES and adaptation to local conditions • Formation and facilitation of community groups to manage forests and negotiate with state forest management agencies • Monitor PFES projects to ensure equity and protection of indigenous rights • Carry out projects to promote cultural and social rights of local communities in PFES areas, especially ethnic minority residents

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Adaptation consists of efforts to increase resilience to the unavoidable effects of climate change (USAID 2012: 1). This includes data on climate impacts and modeling of future effects, community-based planning, economic resilience activities, and disaster risk reduction.

Information, Science, and Analysis

Significant data on climate change in Vietnam is available through UNDP, the World Bank, DRAGON Institute, and other research institutes such as IWE and SIWRP (see Table III, p. 12). Some climate scientists are linked with civil society networks, such as Nguyen Huu Ninh of CERED, one of the founding members of VNGO&CC. More often, the role of civil society has been to disseminate scientific research through awareness raising and capacity building programs. CCCB keeps a roster of expert trainers from universities and research institutes (as well as a few VNGOs) to conduct courses. Other civil society initiatives have placed information on climate change on the web: for instance websites run by SCC, TDI (www.climatechange-vn.com), and PanNature (www.thiennhien.net), among others. The Vietnam Environmental Network (VEN) is an example of the lively e-mail and blogosphere discussions around climate change and other contemporary environmental topics.

Some VNGOs would like to become more involved in scientific research for advocacy purposes. “The evidence for research now is mostly qualitative,” says one staff. “We need data to show the government” that will convince them of the benefits of VNGO program approaches and replicate or authorize them more widely. Organizations may subjectively believe that their models are effective, but lacking scientific evidence it is hard to convince others (SRD 2012a). Certain VNGOs do have research and evaluation capacity, but this is a restricted expert role of civil society that can probably be better carried out by universities and research institutes – providing the researchers are independent. Many INGOs can draw on established methods and global connections to facilitate research, opening possibilities of joint research partnerships with VNGOs.

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of climate change information through training and Internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint scientific research with INGOs or academic institutions to aid in policy advocacy

Adaptation Planning and Community Engagement

The National Targeted Program calls for each Vietnamese provincial and city People’s Committee to prepare a climate change action plan. District adaptation plans are not mentioned in the NTP but are also needed (US Forest Service 2011: 17). Some provinces have received assistance to develop environmental plans from VACNE or internationally funded projects. For instance, DANIDA has supported action plans and pilot adaptation activities in two focus provinces, Ben Tre and Quang Nam. Observers state that the quality of provincial action plans is mixed. “Many government staff have been trained, but after that they’ve made plans that don’t meet the real needs,” says one interview respondent.

Resilience planning efforts in Vietnam benefit from a high level of climate awareness and demands for effective adaptation responses from the central government, which compares favorably to the situation in many developed countries. Yet there are no appropriate models for how provincial and city plans should be prepared (Moench et al 2011: 204). This is partly a question of funding: there are resources at the central level but not enough funds to implement the NTP in all provinces. Another interview respondent argues, “the government is too centralized in its response to climate change. Most capacity is at the central level and a few main provinces, but it doesn’t have the capacity to implement at the local level.” Government planning begins at the central ministry level and is then cascaded down to provinces and cities, often not involving local levels of governance.

Local communities and civil society have not yet been strongly engaged in provincial- and city-level adaptation planning. After beginning action planning in Ben Tre and Quang Nam, DANIDA realized that they “really need Community-Based Organizations or NGOs to support in this process”

(CCWG 2011b). The most in-depth efforts to support adaptation planning have come through the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN), which implemented a “Urban Climate Resilience Planning Framework” in medium-sized cities in Vietnam, India, Thailand, and Indonesia from 2009-11 (see Table VI, p. 16). ACCCRN’s “agency model” includes urban systems, agents, organizations, institutions, and social structures to identify actions and actors that will build climate resilience (Moench et al 2011: 2-3, 52). In Vietnam, city authorities were selected as the directing agencies, and they appointed local mass organizations to participate: the Red Cross, Women’s Union, and Vietnam Fisheries Society (*Hiep hoi nghe ca*) (ACCCRN 2009).

ACCCRN involved an impressive range of government, university, and INGO actors including ISET, NISTPASS, IWE, SIWRP, and Can Tho University (see Table III). Challenge to Change, an international NGO, led the “community learning dialogue” process in Vietnam and facilitated local hazard, capacity, and vulnerability assessments (Moench et al 2011: 95). Yet actual community participation remained low, with the exception of mass organization representatives. Even with a “highly structured and facilitated” process directed by city governments, it was still difficult for cities to integrate their actions with top-down national plans (*ibid.*, 136-42). The ACCCRN planning program led to small-scale adaptation pilots in each city of about \$50,000 each and the establishment of city Climate Change Coordination offices among government agencies. The network is reportedly planning expansion of the existing city-focused model to Lao Cai and Hue.

ACCCRN’s experience suggests that civil society support for awareness raising and capacity building of government officials, while helpful, is not sufficient to bring about community-based adapta-

tion planning. Conversely, planning at the village or commune level, such as integration of climate change into commune SEDPs, may be participatory but not link to decisions made at higher levels. Bridging the gap between levels might be easier at a small city or district level, rather than provinces or centrally administered cities. In Hoi An, an “Eco-City” planning workshop in September 2011 facilitated by experts from Portland State University (Oregon, USA) included city leaders, commune/ward level mass organization representatives, and a small number of community members, with space for more local civil society participation in future activities.

Civil society also has a potential role in monitoring implementation of adaptation plans after their formulation. In some locations, authorities are considering involuntary resettlement of vulnerable populations such as fishers and migrants (Moench et al 2011: 261). This is also mentioned in the NTP (Government of Vietnam 2008: 21). In cases of possible controversy over land, civil society (including the media) should work with authorities to ensure that people’s rights are upheld.

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support development of provincial action plans in some provinces and cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out policy dialogues and resilience planning at commune/ward and district/city levels • Advocate to donors and government to include civil society from the beginning of adaptation planning processes • Monitor implementation of action plans, particularly effects on vulnerable populations • Monitor local government performance through use of a Local Governance Barometer or similar tools

Economic Resilience

Vietnamese NGOs and research institutes have demonstrated the strongest impacts in small-scale adaptation projects linked to rural livelihoods. Such programming builds on the strengths and experiences of technically-focused organizations, links to government priorities on poverty reduction, and is within the capacity of even the smallest organizations. VNGOs in the central region and northern mountains such as CSDM, SRD and CORENARM have implemented projects to revive traditional seed varieties that are more resistant to adverse weather conditions (CCCB 2011b: 5-6). In the Mekong Delta, the DRAGON Institute and members of MekongNet, among others, have piloted flood- and salt water-resistant rice strains. Resilience activities have also been applied to aquaculture, for instance in MCD’s projects in Nam Dinh aiming to change shrimp farming methods to reduce salinization (VNGO&CC 2010a: 8). Agricultural mitigation activities also frequently have an adaptation component (see above, p. 19).

In the central coastal province of Quang Tri, CRD (Table III) has carried out extensive climate and soil analysis to identify crops that grow well in sandy areas affected by saline intrusion. Local vegetable varieties need little water, and the use of a grid cover on top of the cultivated area reduces heat and wind. The use of compost stores moisture in the soil. For production of sweet potatoes in drought-prone areas, CRD worked with farmers to widen and lower cultivation plots in the dry season, which also retains moisture (VNGO&CC 2010a: 2-3). In these projects, farmers decide themselves which crops to plant, and technical staff provide advice on climate resilience. According to CRD, some of the results are specific to Quang Tri, while others would apply in many coastal locations.

In upland areas such as the Central Highlands, less attention has been paid to environmental sustainability to date. The US Forest Service

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recommends promoting “climate change friendly alternative livelihoods”, such as bamboo cultivation, in place of cassava, rubber and other cash crops (2011: 57). Bamboo and coffee value chain strengthening projects have been implemented effectively by INGOs, donors and the private sector, but so far without significant civil society involvement or focus on climate change adaptation.

The amount of research that goes into economic resilience projects varies, but is generally of good quality. Documenting adaptation impacts is more challenging. Many projects tend to present results only in terms of crop yields and farmers’

incomes, reflecting livelihood program experience. Community engagement models also vary: some organizations deliberately partner with formal and informal farmers’ groups, while others follow the default pattern of working through local authorities or agricultural extension offices. While engagement of official structures is necessary and important, there should be no substitute for working directly with farmers who possess a wealth of indigenous knowledge that can adapt to changing conditions (Mai et al 2011). Supporting community-level farmers’ groups is also a best practice in fostering grassroots civil society (Fforde 2008).

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement agricultural adaptation projects that increase both resilience and farmers’ incomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage involvement of farmers’ groups and local cooperatives • Exchange experiences among farmers in different provinces and regions • Strengthen documentation of climate resilience impacts

Vulnerability and Disaster Risk Reduction

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate climate change awareness into DRR projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase involvement of CBOs in DRR

Disaster risk reduction is a longstanding area of VNGO and INGO programming. In recent years, many organizations have integrated climate change awareness into preparedness training and emergency response projects, as seen in increased cooperation between the CCWG and DMWG. Most DRR efforts continue to link primarily with local government and mass organizations rather than CBOs.

One example of innovative DRR adaptation is that of WARECOD to manage pressure on water resources (undated). Rural communities need small

reservoirs to store water during drought periods and to manage flooding. Borehole wells cope with lowering of the water table and poor quality of surface water. WARECOD’s project in Quang Nam also promotes water re-use and recycling, harvesting rainwater and diverting used kitchen water into vegetable and flower gardens. Such projects reduce community vulnerability in general and contribute to DRR as well as climate change adaptation. In many cases, however, it remains difficult to separate adaptation effects from good development practice and DRR efforts in particular.

ADVOCACY

As described in the section on Forms of Engagement (p. 8), advocacy is understood to include policy formulation as well as advocacy on implementation, towards public opinion and the private sector. Most climate change advocacy uses an embedded strategy, working within the system and making direct contact with state counterparts, since policy-makers are generally open to cooperation on climate responses. Civil society is also involved in media and community-based advocacy on individual and community-level behavior change

Policy Engagement

In November 2011, CCWG and VNGO&CC signed an MOU with MONRE's Department of Hydrology, Meteorology, and Climate Change, the leading Vietnamese government agency on climate change response. The agreement is significant not so much for its content as for the signal it sends of the government's willingness to work with civil society and its implicit recognition of unregistered networks. The parties to the MOU are reportedly working on a joint action plan; VNGO participants say they hope it will lead to more provincial-level contacts with DONREs, which often do not have prior experience with NGO projects and ways of working.

Of the climate change networks, CCWG has been the most effective at gathering the voices of NGOs to speak to policy-makers. VNGOs have been included in the CCWG policy advocacy process, though INGOs continue to take the lead primarily through their Vietnamese staff. CCWG members have engaged in policy discussions with MARD and MONRE since 2008, providing detailed comments on the NTP-RCC and subsequent action plans. In 2011, attention was focused on the National Strategy to Respond to Climate Change and the REDD+ program framework (which is still under development). At first the initiative was all on the side of NGOs, but as government officials recognize the value of civil society inputs, the relationships have stabilized. Both MONRE and MARD have begun inviting CCWG members to attend workshops on a range of climate-related issues.

Although most policy advocacy takes place via networks such as CCWG and the Vietnam REDD+ Network, VNGOs have also begun to carry out independent advocacy activities. PanNature has established a promising model of evidence-based policy research, followed by dialogue and workshops to which government and donor representatives are invited to attend. Such workshops have covered issues including PES and community forestry, sometimes co-hosted with

another NGO or network.

In 2011, as part of the Southern Voices network strengthening program, CCWG joined with DMWG and JANI to develop a joint advocacy plan. In the draft version of the strategy (2012), the majority of activities are listed under Objective 1, "Government laws, policies, strategies and programs... are implemented effectively and with a focus on the most vulnerable communities and groups." Much less detail is provided on Objectives 2 and 3, covering local participation and ecosystem protection. The terms of reference developed for the strategy (CCWG 2011a) and the documents prepared for an internationally facilitated planning workshop in June 2011 are longer and more detailed than the draft strategy itself.

The focus on advocacy on government policies appears reactive, not proactive: it assumes the government takes the lead, and civil society only comments. One VNGO representative argues that "a serious advocacy strategy should have been formed at the beginning" with agreed objectives and specific benchmarks, then pool resources among a group of organizations. In this view, a joint disaster management-climate change advocacy plan might not be the most effective approach.

Two additional gaps identified in the advocacy strategy workshop were **implementation and local participation**. The dissemination of the NTP to district and grassroots levels has been limited, with poor coordination and an insufficient budget allocated. The voices of women, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable social groups have a "right to be heard" that has not yet been strongly included in advocacy activities (Ngo and Chandler 2011: 18, 22). These areas should be emphasized further in subsequent civil society strategy development, in addition to a list of forthcoming government policies to affect.

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy workshops organized by VNGOs • Joint advocacy with MONRE and MARD via CCWG and the REDD+ network • Comments and input to major national documents on climate change response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase advocacy links at provincial and grassroots levels • Emphasize voices of vulnerable groups in policy advocacy • Complete advocacy strategies and plans

Media Advocacy

Environmental issues, including climate change, have become an increasing focus of the Vietnamese media in its print, broadcast, and online forms. Although all formal media is state-owned, a variety of views can be found on social issues. Discussion on websites and blogs is expanding rapidly. Certain journalists are allies and even participants of civil society networks, writing articles, publishing interviews, and opening spaces for public comments (Wells-Dang 2011: 116-20).

The Vietnam Forum of Environmental Journalists has a membership of more than 100 who specialize in writing articles about environmental issues (VFEJ 2011). VFEJ members have joined CCWG meetings and events to exchange information and discuss cooperation with NGOs (CCWG 2011c). The CCWG keeps a database of media contacts and has developed a media outreach strategy. VFEJ regularly organizes seminars and field visits to project sites relating to climate change and other environmental issues. Following one such visit to Ha Tinh in 2008, VFEJ members published a series of articles on

the impact of climate change on grapefruit producers, resulting in increased awareness and investment within the local business community (Bass et al 2010: 30-1).

Online media and blogs are now the fastest-growing media channel among young people and urban residents in Vietnam. Several virtual climate change networks are organized primarily or entirely on the web. The national coordinator of the 350.org campaign credits volunteers and the Internet for the extent of its mobilizations in Vietnam and globally (Thanh Luan 2011). Internet presence alone does not guarantee impact, but it is a crucial tool for civil society organizers.

Media coverage of climate change is not always evenly balanced. One study finds that REDD+ attracts less coverage than other climate issues in Vietnam, due to the complexity of the subject and journalists' limited exposure to it. As a result, there is little analysis of REDD+ in the media and a perceived lack of civil society and marginalized groups' voices in most media coverage (Pham Thu Thuy 2011: 9).

Current forms of civil society involvement	Opportunities for further involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on climate change projects by environmental journalists • Internet-based campaigning and virtual networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted media advocacy campaigns on particular issues • Training for journalists on climate change reporting and representation of voices of vulnerable groups

Integration of Climate Change into Other Development Projects

Development programs, like government ministries, are practically, though somewhat artificially, divided into “sectors.” Climate change, in the Vietnamese system, lies between the environment and agriculture sectors, with strong links to the disaster preparedness sector as well. Among donors and NGOs, civil society is also frequently treated as a sector, not a strategy. Consequently, most organizations implement separate climate change projects, livelihood projects, and/or civil society projects.

One way to break out of a siloed approach to development is through identification of “cross-cutting issues” or themes, which are then integrated into all of an organization’s program areas. Many NGOs treat gender equity in this fashion, for example, and given the breadth of the impacts and challenges of climate change, there are strong arguments for a cross-cutting approach here as well, provided that it is substantive integration, not window-dressing. Among the few VNGOs that work in multiple sectors, SRD has adopted a policy of mainstreaming climate change into all of

its livelihood projects. COHED, a health-focused NGO, has integrated climate responses into a community health project in Hoa Binh province. And the Capacity Building Project organized a workshop on gender and climate change in September 2011 (CCCB 2011a). Yet civil society development projects and climate change projects have largely remained in their respective silos.

One positive example of climate change–civil society integration is occurring in CARE’s CASI program to involve civil society in sustainable development in the northern mountain region. Climate change is a new component in CASI’s Phase III, added to an existing component on strengthening civil society. CARE has provided VNGO partners with training on assessment and integration of climate resilience into their ongoing development activities, together with support for advocacy to integrate climate change and DRR into local SEDPs. VNGOs have shared their vulnerability assessments with MARD and MPI as a way of bringing community experiences into national policy formulation.

Current forms of civil society involvement

- Integration of climate change response into livelihood and health programming

Opportunities for further involvement

- Mainstreaming of climate change as a cross-cutting issue in NGO programs
- Inclusion of civil society strengthening components in climate response program designs

Green Office and Behavior Change Initiatives

Educational campaigns to change individual and organizational behavior are a form of climate change mitigation, since they aim to reduce emissions measured as “carbon footprints.” They are considered here as advocacy activities due to their strong community outreach and campaigning orientation. International and local organizations working in this area have joined the CCWG’s Awareness and Behavior Change (ABC) sub-group and implemented community, school, and office-based programs with modest donor funding. The

ABC group has organized joint campaigns and activities on paper and energy saving, green transportation, reductions in use of plastic bags, air conditioning, and promotion of recycled stationery (CCWG 2010).

Action for the City has formed a series of “Green Living Teams” in Hanoi wards and expanded to include teams in Hue, Danang, Quang Nam, and Ho Chi Minh City in partnership with SDRC and local mass organizations. Similar initiatives are

being carried out together with C&E for junior secondary schoolchildren (see Table I), working at school, district, and provincial levels, with connections to MOET for national advocacy. Participants have documented CO₂-equivalent reductions in emissions from garbage and energy use as a result. At the household level, these projects have been non-controversial, since energy savings are in line with government priorities. When local groups begin to strengthen and form CBOs, some local authorities have expressed reservations.

Green Office campaigns have been initiated with a number of VNGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies taking part. Participating organizations form in-office action teams and set targets for reductions in electricity use, travel and transportation, garbage and paper, among other possible topics. The voluntary campaigns raise awareness and encourage participation of staff while resulting in

real cost savings and emissions reductions. On the more informal side of civil society, students and online volunteer groups have organized campaigns to reduce use of plastic bags and straws in Ho Chi Minh City, Danang, and other cities. The Green Generation network, initiated by Live & Learn Vietnam, has connected youths in over 15 provinces to join self-organized campaigns on Earth Hour, Let's Join Eco-Handprints, and green initiatives at two National Summits on Youth and Sustainable Development (Live & Learn, undated). These events build enthusiasm and environmental consciousness, contributing to the formation of many volunteer groups nationwide. Green office projects, meanwhile, have reached NGOs and other development agencies but have not yet had an impact on the private or government sectors, such as creation of car-free zones or policies on office thermostat settings.

Current forms of civil society involvement

- Voluntary Green Office campaigns
- Green Living clubs in neighborhoods and schools

Opportunities for further involvement

- Expand campaigns to private sector and government offices
- Advocate for city or national policies on energy saving

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

The examples of climate change involvement presented in this paper show that Vietnamese civil society is more diverse and active than at any point in the recent past. More organizations and networks have arisen in more locations, performing a wider range of functions than was documented by researchers in the mid-2000s (Nørlund 2006, Hannah 2007). Climate change response has been a particularly vibrant area for civil society action for a combination of reasons. It is politically non-controversial, offering numerous openings for engagement with communities and government. As a new issue that has emerged in the past five years, there is space for entrants into the sector. International NGOs and donors have provided funding and encouraged the involvement of Vietnamese civil society. It is also significant that the technical demands of the sector fit well with the skills and experience of many VNGO and research center staff.

There are also many opportunities to develop civil society at the community level. The risks of climate change affect everyone, and people naturally assemble together to address common problems (as seen in responses to natural disasters). Organizing around climate change thus creates a potential win-win scenario for civil society where there is clear need, government support, available resources, and growing capacity to respond. Interview respondents find that cooperation between VNGOs, INGOs, and government agencies has been good overall. VNGOs and INGOs have joined in networks such as the CCWG and REDD+ Network and participated in joint projects including the CCCB. International and Vietnamese NGOs cannot be neatly separated: some larger, policy-oriented VNGOs resemble INGOs in terms of staff capacity and local knowledge, while some INGOs are led by Vietnamese staff and work directly with communities. Such INGOs tend to find greater value added from partnerships with provincially or locally based VNGOs and research centers, rather than with VNGOs in major cities which are

not significantly different from themselves.

The analysis in this white paper shows that Vietnamese civil society has contributed to climate change response across a wide spectrum of activities. Efforts to build awareness and knowledge about climate change have been a main focus, as has programming linking mitigation and adaptation to agriculture and livelihood programming. On the whole, VNGOs and research centers have placed more emphasis on educational and economic resilience activities than on the energy, transportation, and forestry sectors, although this is beginning to change.

The emphases of civil society activities reflect organizations' and networks' areas of interest and expertise, as well as existing donor priorities. Directly implemented projects have concentrated on agriculture, biogas, climate change education, and initiatives linking adaptation and mitigation in rural and coastal livelihoods. In most cases, it is too soon to judge the sustainability of these efforts, since they are at a pilot or small scale with few widespread, systematic models. Many projects are donor-driven and of limited duration. Some may have strong climate impacts but little civil society involvement, while others are implemented by civil society actors with an unclear climate impact. There are reasons for optimism, however, that farmers will continue to implement climate-friendly practices once they have seen evidence of their value, and that adaptation planning and payment for environmental services are beginning to be integrated into national government programs.

Geographic coverage of existing civil society programming is generally balanced. Following analyses of climate vulnerability, most attention is to the Mekong and Red River deltas and the typhoon-prone north-central coast. More projects are underway in the Northern Mountains than in the Central Highlands, reflecting the concentration of NGOs and research centers in Hanoi

and the relative openness of northern provincial authorities. The only projects identified in the Central Highlands are the new REDD+ pilot in Kon Tum and the PFES project in Lam Dong. Also under-represented is the south-central coastal region from Quang Ngai to Binh Thuan, with only a few adaptation activities to date in Binh Dinh and Ninh Thuan.

Interview respondents identify the greatest strength of civil society engagement as a participatory approach to development and community engagement. VNGO staff and leaders believe that their training methods are superior to the top-down and theoretical approaches often used by government officials. As a representative example,

the Phase II CCCB proposal states, “The strong points of NGOs are always walking closely with communities, understanding the community and best meeting the community’s needs... the skills and capacity building methods of NGOs for communities are the best” (SRD 2012a).

Not all civil society groups, of course, are equally effective. Claims about NGOs’ participatory methodologies should be documented and not simply assumed. While civil society groups have strengths in some areas, there are also significant gaps in their capacities and strategies, as well as numerous opportunities to increase their involvement. Table VII summarizes key issues identified in the above sections of this white paper:

Table VII *Gaps and Opportunities for Civil Society Programming*

	Gaps	Opportunities
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited participation of local civil society (farmers groups, forest users) in REDD+ and PFES • Limited documentation of emissions reductions attained • Few projects in renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society as REDD+ and PFES monitors and watchdogs • Promote community management of forest land, cultural and social rights • Facilitate local community groups in affected areas • Expand locally relevant mangrove restoration • Collaborate with private sector on marketing of energy initiatives
Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of civil society in city and provincial planning • Climate resilience in upland areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research to contribute to adaptation planning • Monitor implementation of adaptation plans • Preserve and exchange indigenous knowledge related to the environment and natural resources
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and civil society projects in separate sectors • Voices of women, ethnic minorities, other vulnerable groups are limited • Network advocacy strategies are unclear or incomplete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate civil society strengthening into climate response projects • Expand Green Office and behavior change programs to government and private sector • Planned, targeted media and Internet advocacy campaigns

These findings are echoed in PanNature’s (2012) evaluation of civil society impacts on environmental protection in Vietnam, from a presentation to a UNDP-sponsored workshop:

High impact	Medium impact	Low impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering communities • Capacity strengthening • Building social capital • Livelihood programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy advocacy • Focus on meeting needs of marginalized populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights promotion • Accountability • Acting as advocates for constituency groups

PanNature also notes limitations of Vietnamese civil society in policy assessment, research capacity, and networking. The weakness of networking might seem a surprising finding, since there are many networks active in the climate change sector (Tables IV-VI). Yet the focus of most networks has been on information sharing and capacity building of others, not on joint programming or strengthening of the network's own internal systems. With the exception of CCWG, NGO and NGO-led networks have had weak voices on advocacy. Few networks have received support or facilitation for their development as networks, again excepting CCWG, which arguably needs it the least. There are positive signs that this is changing through support by INGOs such as CARE for some new climate-related networks.

The emphasis on “building capacity about climate change for CSOs” is based on an assumption that civil society groups are already formed, but simply lack information on climate change. As a result of CCCB Phase I and other projects, organizations and networks now have more knowledge and experience about climate issues, but this does not automatically translate into greater capacity as civil society actors. Indicators and analysis of civil society impact are notably missing from project designs and evaluations of capacity building projects. One interview respondent questions whether further capacity building is necessary: “There are a lot of roads to build up knowledge. We don't need a separate project on this. What we need is help with our organization's staffing and management!” A 2011 scoping report for USAID found that the level of awareness of climate change in Vietnam is actually relatively high and recommended that interventions in “awareness raising” and education should acknowledge this high level of awareness and capitalize on local knowledge (US Forest Service 2011: 25).

Cross-sectoral networks such as the Vietnam REDD+ Network appear more active at present

than networks made up only of NGOs. Through collaboration with government and donors, VNGOs, are receiving greater recognition for their contributions to climate change response. As a result, government attitudes are changing, as seen through the signing of MOUs and invitations to civil society groups to participate in workshops and dialogue. VNGOs have also been able to use the space available surrounding climate change as a way to begin discussions of more controversial environmental issues: water governance, mining, pollution, and misuse of public space. By framing these issues in terms of climate change, civil society actors gain more traction in their advocacy.

Organized Vietnamese civil society now has seats at the table in national policy discussions. How does this benefit informal civil society and community groups? One VNGO respondent argues, “it's important to develop links with community-based groups and grassroots networks, not just Hanoi-based NGOs.” The Vietnamese staff of an international NGO concurs: “If we really want to build capacity of local communities, we need to work with local civil society, as well as with the government.” In this view, the role of civil society is primarily to support community groups and informal networks, something that local NGOs can do most effectively and at lowest cost. Instead of “waiting for networks to be created from above,” like-minded local NGOs and CBOs should take initiative to reach out to others and start working together: “Even if it's only three or four like-minded groups, this is still a network. We need to seek our own partners.”

NGOs need to cooperate with government structures in order to implement projects in Vietnam. Without official backing of some kind, no organization can succeed in working in a community in the long term. Mass organizations can be valuable allies, especially in the early stages of entry into a community. But if they delegate

implementation to these structures, the outcomes may strengthen the state system more than community capacities. Local government-managed programs may achieve real climate impacts, but they rarely involve civil society actors or develop new community leadership.

Donors can support greater community representation through identifying and funding VNGOs and networks that are already implementing community-based models of climate change response. While networking should be encouraged, it may be more strategic to fund activities of network members, rather than the central coordinating body of a network, with the condition that grantees use a portion of their funds to support the network and carry out collaborative projects with other network members. Large-scale funding for networks is not needed and may actually be harmful, as it risks creating gatekeepers and attracting opportunists. “If there is less money,” says one activist, “more will get done. Donors should encourage organizations to work flexibly, pool their resources, and do their own local fundraising: that is the path to sustainability.” Smaller, more targeted grants require more involvement from donors, who should develop multiple, longer-term partnerships in place of large project contracts. Subcontracting can be effective if it is transparent, but must be “delicately done,” due to inherent risks of abuse of power, conflicts of interest, and corruption.

No single organization is strong enough to engage in all climate change-related activities. Interview respondents agree that VNGOs and other civil society groups are too small on their own to have much impact on climate change or government policy. They need to unite to be effective, while maintaining specializations in distinct areas and employing a diversity of strategies and tactics (Wells-Dang 2011: 295).

Civil society actors should also examine their own motives and behavior relating to climate change. In emphasizing changing agricultural and livelihood practices of the poor, are organizations perpetuating an expert-led, technical approach to development? Does collaboration with government agricultural extension services and forestry management boards continue directive models that, as some scholars have argued, have affected local cultures and livelihoods in the past? Networks can and should be learning fora to discuss these and other crucial issues, alongside information updates and training. Critical reflection and discussion will be key to determining whether the professional, organized segment of Vietnamese civil society can link with informal and community-based groups to form the beginnings of an inclusive national movement responding to the challenge of climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To Vietnamese civil society

- Focus on strengthening capacity of networks and organizations, not only knowledge and awareness of climate change.
- Engage in cooperative partnerships with international NGOs and donors, not only project funding.
- Work with informal community groups in project sites, as well as with local governments. Address and resolve local complaints, not only reporting on them.
- Form new networks among like-minded organizations and individuals, while continuing to take part in existing networks.
- Develop a constituency base of local supporters to increase sustainability and local representation.

To international NGOs and donors

- Consider partnerships with Vietnamese civil society groups in all climate change initiatives.
- Foster and identify new models that are specific to climate change response, in addition to meeting standards of quality development programming
- Strengthen the organizational and operational capacity of local civil society, including provincially-based VNGOs, CBOs, and informal community groups.

- Embark on longer-term and more intensive partnerships with civil society groups that extend beyond a single project.
- Support growth of new VNGOs outside of Hanoi and major cities.
- Consider matching-grant arrangements to encourage alternative fundraising strategies of civil society groups.
- Facilitate and coach emerging networks on climate change response in multiple regions of Vietnam.
- Give smaller grants to a wider variety of groups, and invest in in-depth quality monitoring.

To Vietnamese authorities

- Continue to promote involvement of the whole society in climate change response.
- Strengthen mechanisms for communities and Vietnamese NGOs to provide input and comment to policies regarding climate change, forestry, and land tenure, such as inter-ministerial working groups and networks.
- Strengthen land tenure laws and implementation, including implementation of provisions of the Law on Forests allowing for community management.
- Consider amendments to tax and advertising regulations to facilitate domestic fundraising by registered social organizations.

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Nguy Thi Khanh	Director	GreenID
Le Thi Hoa Sen	CRD	Hue University of Agriculture & Forestry
Nguyen Thi Hong Ha	Vice-director	CCRD
Do Duc Khoi	Director	PED
Vu Van Nam	DRAGON Institute	Can Tho University
Vu Thi Thao	Climate change officer	MCD
Vu Thi Bich Hop	Director	SRD
Dao Thi Nga	Director	WARECOD
Nguyen Viet Dung	Vice-director	PanNature
Trine Glue-Doan	Consultant	WWF / CCWG core group
To Xuan Phuc	VN Representative	Forest Trends
Dang Huong Giang	Director	Action for the City
Dang Thu Phuong	Vice-director	Challenge to Change
Nguyen Quang Tan	VN Representative	RECOFTC
Nguyen Thi Yen	Climate Change Coordinator	CARE / chair of CCWG

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