



COUNTRY BRIEF

ACCELERATING GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH EMPOWERED CSOs

Capacity Needs Assessment in Vietnam

Photo: Rostasedlacek

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES

KEY GENDER LEGISLATIONS AND ACTION PLANS

- > **National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021- 2030** is successor to the same policy from the period 2011-2020. The strategy aims to respond to the existing and emerging gender-based challenges and to provide an action plan for achieving the gender equality goals in the 2030 Agenda.
- > **Law on Gender Equality – Law 73/2006/QH11**, came into force from 01 July 2007. It legalizes gender equality in all fields such as politics, economy, work, education and training, science and technology, culture, communication, sports, public health, and family relationships. It also provides guidance on gender mainstreaming in the legislative formulation, and promotion of gender equality by state agencies, ministries, organizations, and families.

KEY FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

- > **National Strategy on Climate Change Response (Decision 2139/QD-TTG) 2011**. This long-term strategy aims to ensure food, energy and water security, poverty alleviation, gender equality, social security, public health availability and access; enhance living standards; conserve natural resources in the context of climate change; achieve a low carbon and green economic growth trajectory; strengthen scientific and technological capacities and human resources; create opportunities for climate compatible social and economic development; and collaborate with international stakeholder to address climate change effectively.
- > **Action Plan on Climate Change Response of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in the Period 2011-2015 and Vision to 2050 (Decision No. 543/QD-BNN-KHCN)** aims for a climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Photo: Le Manh Thang



THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

2013, in its Article 9 Article 26, states

"Female citizens and male citizens have the same rights in every aspect of politics, economy, society, and family." This constitution provides a strategic basis to make gender equality more realistic in the social and political context of Vietnam.





CLIMATE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (CPEIR) in Vietnam examined the policies and climate change expenditure for the period 2010–2013 of the ministries of Natural Resources and Environment, Industry and Trade, Agriculture and Rural Development, Construction, and Transport in the provinces Bac Ninh, Quang Nam and An Giang. The review pointed that expenditure from the five ministries was largely focused on climate change delivery, and less on scientific, technology and social capacity building. The review also concluded that the spending was not fully aligned with the objectives of Vietnam’s National Climate Change and Green Growth Strategies.

FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- > **Social and Economic Development Strategy 2021-2030** is in preparation and will guide the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 of the country. The strategy seeks to develop an integrated, efficient and sustainable economy and will be implemented by two five-year Socio-Economic Development Plans.
- > **National Green Growth Strategy 2011-2020 with Vision 2050 and National Action Plan on Green Growth 2014-2020** were adopted in 2012 and 2014 respectively. The National Green Growth Strategy recognizes green growth as an integral component of sustainable development and aims at a low carbon transition to sustainable economic development with a Vision 2050 of mainstreaming these green strategies as the business-as-usual way to economic growth. National Action Plan on Green Growth comprises four main themes: setting up institutions and formulating green growth action plans; reducing the intensity of GHG emissions; greening production; and greening lifestyle and promoting sustainable consumption. These themes have 12 groups and 66 activities.

KEY LEGISLATIONS

- > Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control 2013
- > Law on Environmental Protection 2014
- > The Law on Forestry 2017

Sources: MoPI Vietnam 2015; Nachmany, et al. 2015; UN Women 2016; UN Women 2019 and scoping studies done under EmPower project.

CAPACITY GAPS

I. TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE NEEDS IN PROJECTS

These include all the technical knowledge gaps that the organizations experience in improving their project engagements. Strengthening technical knowledge of CSOs enables them to design and implement gender-responsive (and going forward, gender-specific and gender-transformative) projects.

THEMATIC AREAS

- Understanding of climate and disaster risk, human rights and gender equality;
- Sector-specific approaches for resilience, highlighting impacts and strategies for engagements;
- Fundamentals of integrating gender in climate and disaster risk reduction projects;
- Conducting evidence-based research - methods, processes, key issues, good practices for gender assessments, overcoming data limitations;
- Preparing gender action plans and indicators for monitoring and evaluation (M&E); and
- Strengthening the role of women and enhancing their leadership capacity.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- > There is a need for a wide spectrum of technical skills because of the cross-cutting nature of gender and its importance across all sectors.
- > Technical skills of staff are important. However, without specialized focus on leadership skills of women-led CSOs, it will be difficult to leap-frog from gender-neutral to gender-transformative climate action.
- > Building strong CSO networks is one way to give collective voice to many smaller organizations. Technical know-how, information and resource sharing, and collaborations for complementing skills are some of the functions. This would need significant support from donor agencies.



Photo: T.B. photo.

- Gender-responsive budgeting and contribution of CSOs to ensure it is included in all tiers of policy planning.
- Strategies to strengthen partnerships with government agencies.

2. LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES

These highlight the gaps at the leadership end of senior management in civil society organizations (CSOs). They must be supported by custom-designed leadership programmes to drive transformational change in gender-responsive climate change and disaster risk reduction policy and planning at all levels.

THEMATIC AREAS

- Knowledge of regional best practices in climate resilience, and orientation to successful gender-responsive projects and project ideas in climate change and disaster risk reduction;
- Understanding of international policy and finance architecture for climate change, disaster risk and the gender mandates, and the entry points for CSOs;
- Linking organization's operations and project activities with international and regional commitments;
- Gender-responsive proposal writing and project design skills;
- Enhanced skills in gender analysis and understanding of human rights approaches to guide and mentor colleagues and peer organizations;

3. ADVOCACY NEEDS

Engagement with stakeholders, such as provincial and district authorities, beneficiaries, peer organizations, change makers, community leaders and others, are a part of day-to-day project activities. Advocacy needs identified by CSOs are to influence local governments and public bodies to mainstream gender, such as in gender-responsive budgeting and and to ensure inclusive processes.

THEMATIC AREAS

- Knowledge of CSO networks and how CSOs can engage with existing networks;
- Linking organization's operations and project activities with international and regional commitments;
- Strengthened network and partnerships with external stakeholders, organizations and government bodies; and
- Training on policy advocacy skills: Emerging issues in climate change, disaster risk reduction, gender, regional experiences, mainstreaming gender, gender-responsive projects and policies, community resilience planning, gender-responsive budgeting and preparation an annual advocacy plan.



KEY CHALLENGES IN OPERATIONS:

- > The policy processes are not backed by evidence-based advocacy and in-depth research about gender. Gender analysis is often missing from strategies. Stakeholder engagement is limited to some experts who may not know details of ground level vulnerabilities. Availability of sex-, age-, disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), in particular, at sub-national levels, is poor.
- > Representation of women is poor at levels of policy-making. Male domination continues to be a challenge. Establishing trust among local communities and driving social and cultural change takes time. Even when you train women change makers, their work is limited and influenced by the male members of the family.
- > Understanding of difference between gender equity and equality, and other knowledge of gender related issues, is poor among public officials, particularly at local and provincial level. As a result, it becomes difficult to bring them on board.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

These highlight the gaps in organizations' operations and management capacity, which is an important complement and a necessary condition to implement projects.

THEMATIC AREAS (LOCAL CSOs)

- Improving documentation of climate and disaster risk reduction projects;
- Orientation to good practices on transparency, particularly those that are in agreement with international practices; and
- Long-term strategy for organizational development, including organizational level gender practices and policies.

5. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

These show gaps in resources, both financial and technical, that the CSOs experience to fund their activities and expand their scope of work. Other than knowledge of funding opportunities and donor criteria, resource mobilization depends upon overall capacity strengthening of the CSOs to design and implement gender-responsive projects, communicate results, and strengthen their partnerships with external stakeholders.

THEMATIC AREAS

- Awareness about donors, financing criteria, objectives and interests;
- Gender-responsive proposal writing and project design skills;
- Improving documentation of climate and disaster risk reduction projects; and
- Understanding of international financing architecture and domestic policy landscape for climate change, disaster risk and the gender mandates, and the entry points for CSOs;



EXTERNAL SUPPORT BEYOND TRAINING NEEDS

- > A communication tools package comprising flyers, flipcharts and videos in local languages can help advance the work of CSOs in community-based adaptation action.
- > Establish mechanisms for robust gender analysis, with opportunities for CSOs to contribute to the process. A detailed gender analysis to be a pre-requisite for formulation of policies, plans and strategies.
- > Establish a framework for M&E indicators.
- > Identify and build a national level CSO network to share resources and information, and collectively advocate for change.
- > Financial and technical support to mainstream gender in commune level investment and development plans.
- > Dedicated funds for women-led CSOs.



Photo: Marie Shark.

One of the important ways highlighted by CSOs to strengthen their work is by organizing them into a network or coalition of partners. Collaboration through networks helps them build on each other's competencies, and, in the future, also design projects of the right scale and scope.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

These recommendations are for the policy makers to create an enabling environment for CSOs to operate and accelerate grassroots climate action, and to meet their finance, technology and capacity building needs that are not covered by trainings on technical knowledge gaps. The short- to medium-term recommendations are relatively low-cost interventions that are achievable in the time frame of three years. The medium- to long-term recommendations are high on complexity and budget requirements, but are also high-impact interventions.

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-3 YEARS):

- 1. Communication tools package:** One of the urgent needs of the CSOs is to have more innovative information, communication and educational tools to engage with local and indigenous communities for promoting climate-resilient behaviour; orienting them to climate risks, vulnerabilities and gender issues; and encouraging action. Creating a communication tools package in partnership with communication experts that has flyers, flipcharts and videos in local languages can help advance the work of CSOs in community-based adaptation action. This can be a standard package accessible to all CSOs operating in the field and be made available on demand from the CSOs. Another alternative is to do a detailed needs assessment and custom design the package for different issues and geographies.

2. Information platform: Language is a big barrier for local CSOs, inhibiting their access to resources; and quite often, they are not aware where these resources can be accessed from. A common information platform can serve as a resource repository of technical material in the local language and as a channel for sharing updates with the subscribers.

3. Periodic assessments: This study is a one-off regional assessment. A periodic assessment, even a rapid one, on issues and capacity gaps of CSOs can be included in the climate strategy. This will ensure that strengthening capacities of CSOs is encoded as a strategy for achieving climate goals. It will also ensure that regular action plans are prepared for strengthening capacities of CSOs. This is also important because the needs for local and national CSOs cannot be generalized. Their scale of operations, nature and scope of work, and the extent of community engagement will determine what they require to strengthen their work.

4. Participation in external events: CSOs also expressed the need to participate in regional and international fora that give them opportunities to know about international frameworks and best practices. A grant fund can be made available for CSOs that have interesting outcomes to showcase. This can be done on a pilot basis, and an evaluation of the pilot can suggest whether a regular grant mechanism should be pursued. National delegations to international and multi-lateral engagements can include CSO representatives. Both of these options would entail setting up some criteria for CSO participation.

MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (3-6 YEARS):

1. CSO networks: One of the important ways highlighted by CSOs to strengthen their work is by organizing them into a network or a coalition of partners. As this is a very resource-intensive task, the efforts until now have not yielded good networks. For the government and public bodies as well, building a network and providing them

a tech-based platform for operations can be a resource-intensive task. It is recommended that a detailed assessment be done on mechanisms to build CSO networks and pilot test such a network to see if it is operable and if it is meeting the agreed objectives. If successful, then the long-term goal should be to make the network self-sustaining. Until that happens, interim funding provisions can be made; and in the long run, funds earmarked from specific sources can be dedicated to sustain the CSO network.

2. National M&E system: A national framework for monitoring and evaluation of climate change adaptation will strengthen gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive program action. This is a resource and data intensive work. However, many countries have initiated work in this direction in pursuit of monitoring progress towards the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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