



# Local Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Management in Viet Nam

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# Situating climate change adaptation in a landscape of risk

- Viet Nam is seen to be a model in terms of taking climate change adaptation seriously
- But this new “success story” can be best understood in the historical context of adaptation to climate risk and the evolving social contract
- Responding to climate disasters is central to state legitimacy in Viet Nam; but this does not mean following standard CCA recommendations
- CCA in Viet Nam is closely intertwined with disaster risk management



# Shifting national and local roles

- At national level the Vietnamese government is heavily engaged in CCA with different but overlapping roles for different ministries (MARD and MONRE)
- Disaster management has long been “owned” by MARD; whereas CCA has been spearheaded by MONRE
- These divisions and overlaps have different characteristics within implementation processes at provincial and district levels



# The social contract at national and local levels

- In Viet Nam (as in many countries) agricultural authorities are seen as service providers whereas environmental authorities lack capacities at local levels and/or are seen as regulators and planners
- Disaster management involves chains of command and clear accountabilities at each level of government
- CCA is seen more as “talk” and a hope for future investments; accountabilities are vague and responsibilities centralised



# History of disaster risk management in Viet Nam

- In the Red River pre-colonial development based on “hydraulic civilisation”
- Long history of river and sea dykes
- Opposition to colonialism strong in areas with high disaster risk
- With *doi moi*, dykes and preparedness began to weaken along with the social contract
- Extreme floods in 1999 constituted a critical juncture follow by a renewed social contract



# Disaster risk management today

- Strong systems and capacities for disaster preparedness and response
- Weaker with regard to recovery and longer-term disaster risk reduction
- Except for infrastructure...
- Growing interest in disaster risk reduction related infrastructure due to hopes of increased CCA investments
- Model mangrove/community based efforts, but uncertain broader influence



# Climate change adaptation today

- Focus is on developing provincial CC action plans: adaptation oriented and focused on disaster risk management (infrastructure)
- On district level there is initial awareness but little engagement in these plans
- District agriculture authorities are advising on climate risk (questioning production targets), but this is not seen as CCA
- Pre-existing structures for dealing with climate (and disaster) risk dominate



# Climate change maladaptation

- Economic development always trumps CCA, and probably disaster risk management (underpinning relief bias?)
- Urbanisation, loss of agricultural land, etc. continue unabated, despite recognised risks
- CCA is a matter of working around rather than against maladaptation trends
- Focus on disaster response, preparedness and the “solution” of infrastructure distracts attention from “problems” of maladaptation





# Merging of CCA and disaster management at local levels?

- Yes and no
- CCA agenda being absorbed within pre-existing investment structures (province) and implementation (district)
- Accountabilities for response are clear, whereas accountabilities for adaptation to climate scenarios are not, thus continued emphasis on disaster risk
- Models for integrated perspectives show no signs of taking centre stage



# Local accountability for CCA and disaster risk management?

- The social contract for adaptation in relation to existing hazards and extreme events is strong (with the Party enforcing this)
- Local (agricultural) authorities are accountable due to broader reforms in agricultural services
- Nobody at local level is held accountable for responding to scenarios and research reports
- Nobody is accountable for maladaptation