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**CCWG**



# **CCWG POSITION PAPER ON NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN**

## Key Points

The NAP can help Vietnam to close the adaptation gap. It provides a process and policy framework under the UNFCCC for countries to assess and address adaptation needs, and to coordinate climate resilient development.

The four steps of the NAP are a chance to improve adaptation in Vietnam, by aligning activities and overcoming current gaps and deficits.

The NAP's added value to existing climate policy lies in a) basing adaptation planning on vulnerabilities, b) bringing existing evidence, available knowledge and relevant actors together, and c) enhancing implementation capacities.

Critical for the NAP to deliver added value and enhance the country's adaptation response are

- the participation of civil society and integration of their expertise
- a focus on vulnerable groups, and maintaining ecosystems on all levels

- strengthening the capacity of communities and local governments

MONRE's DCC Adaptation Division should:

- Establish a NAP dialogue and multi-actors working group
- Enable a participatory stocktaking and assessment of vulnerabilities and adaptation options
- Use the NAP to make the NDC operational and mainstream climate adaptation into all SEDPs
- Identify and prioritize vulnerable groups, such as poor, women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, children, and old people
- Link top-down with bottom-up processes
- Strengthen local adaptation initiatives and funding access

### Addressing the adaptation challenge through civil society participation and a focus on vulnerable groups in the National Adaptation Plan process in Vietnam

There is a sobering gap between adaptation needs and the current reality of adaptation. This holds not only with regards to finance, but also with respect to technology, knowledge, and capacity, as recent UN reports reveal.<sup>1</sup> Given that global warming proceeds faster than predicted<sup>2</sup> and that ambitious mitigation actions are not being taken, the need for adaptation will be increasing. This will widen the current adaptation gap even more and it means bad news for countries like Vietnam that are already highly vulnerable to climate change.

Governments need to act to close this gap and enable large scale adaptation of people and ecosystems across sectors and regions, that is equitable, effective, and gender-sensitive. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) is a means to enable adaptation planning on all levels based on a strategic outlook, available knowledge, and assessed vulnerabilities. It also helps making it operational in the national context and aims for integrating it with development processes. Therefore, NAPs can enable countries to close the gap regarding current, adaptation needs and narrow it towards future needs.

This paper shows how the government in partnership with civil society and private sector can achieve this goal, what difference the NAP can make, and what results the process can deliver.

The approach of this paper follows the existing NAP technical guidelines issued by the UNFCCC's Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the Southern Voices Joint Principles for good adaptation planning and practice.

## What is the NAP?

NAPs are a process and policy instrument under the UNFCCC for countries to assess and address adaptation needs, and to coordinate climate-resilient development. Rather than coming up with a one-time planning document, NAPs are about undertaking a longer-term process for transformational change towards better adaptation capacities and results: NAPs help countries to conduct comprehensive medium- and long-term climate adaptation planning, by providing a framework, process, as well as guidance on a set of steps and relevant activities, similar to a national program. "The activities and steps of the NAP can be clustered into work streams, that would be managed by different stakeholders. Together, these work streams would build a national program that would be the 'NAP process.'"<sup>3</sup>



### The NAP...

- is a means for **comprehensive medium- and long-term climate adaptation planning**
- is **process focused** and **flexible** (“iterative, not prescriptive”)
- needs to **build on assessed vulnerabilities** and a country’s existing adaptation activities
- helps to **integrate a comprehensive climate change response into national decision-making and development planning**

## What is the NAP’s purpose and stages? Why is it relevant for Vietnam?

The Paris Agreement states the agreed **objectives of the NAP** process are:

“(a) To **reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience;**

(b) To facilitate the **integration of climate change adaptation**, in a coherent manner, into relevant new and existing policies, programs and activities, in particular, development planning processes and strategies within all relevant sectors and at different levels, as appropriate.”<sup>4</sup>

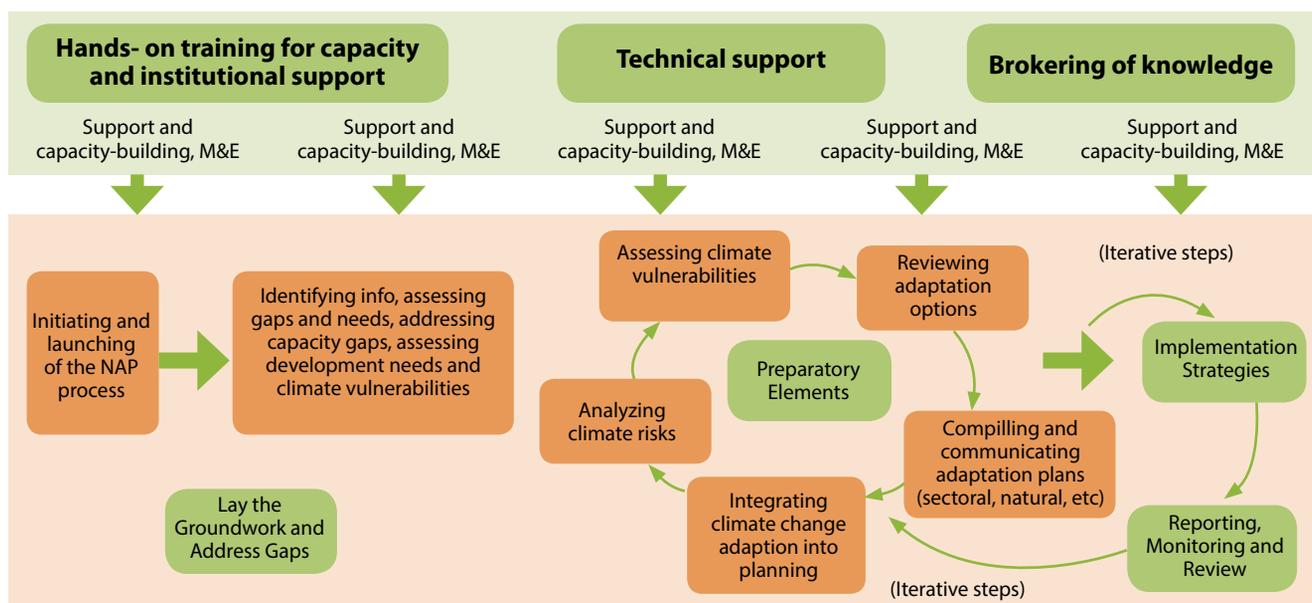


Figure 1: The NAP process as proposed by the LEG technical guidelines. Source: UNFCCC LEG 2012, The National Adaptation Plan Process. A Short Overview



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These objectives are **extremely relevant to close the “adaptation gap”<sup>5</sup> of presently unmet needs of adaptation** and preparing as good as possible for the increasing adaptation demands developing countries will be facing as global warming progresses. The availability of adaptation funding serves to illustrate this point. Annual adaptation costs for developing countries are estimated to reach 280 - 500 billion USD by 2050. This is 12x all international spending on adaptation for developing countries in 2014.<sup>6</sup> These figures clearly show that the demand for adaptation support will surely outstrip its availability even if the Paris Agreement’s 100 billion USD annual contribution for adaptation should become a reality. This is bad news for countries like Vietnam, which are highly vulnerable to climate change but not in the priority list for global adaptation support such as Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

In this situation, **the government cannot afford to waste resources and spend money on the “wrong” adaptation measures. Regarding investments in adaptation, the Vietnamese government must ensure that resilience gains are maximized. To make Vietnam’s population as resilient as possible, the greatest vulnerabilities must be addressed, benefits maximized, as well as interlinkages / synergies promoted.** Following the LEG guidance, the NAP’s step by step, evidence-based process provides for generating maximum resilience benefits in two ways: (1) by improving the quality and directedness of adaptation, and (2)

### **Colombia: Establishing Climate Change Regional Nodes as platforms linking national and sub-national adaptation planning and action<sup>13</sup>**

A key element of the NAP process is the incorporation of adaptation in sectoral, territorial, and municipal planning processes. To facilitate this, nine regional nodes have been established, comprising of government representatives, private sector actors, research institutions, universities, and civil society stakeholders.

The regional nodes are not decision-making bodies, but function as multi-stakeholder platforms for information sharing and collaboration on climate change, including both adaptation and mitigation. They act as a link between the national and sub-national levels.

through enhancing the quality and sustainability of development. **This way it can be ensured that the funds available for adaptation are spent in such a way as to generate the biggest impact possible and to deliver the most desired results.**



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## Recommended process for the NAP

The UNFCC’s Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) provides a guideline for developing NAP, that identifies 4 phases, with 17 steps, key questions and indicative activities (as depicted in Figure 1 on page 3). The phases are outlined below:

1. **Laying the groundwork and addressing gaps:** a “readiness” phase to assess available climate information, identify capacity gaps for implementation, and take stock of development needs and climate vulnerabilities.
2. **Preparatory steps:** establishing more detail about future climate scenarios and options for adaptation at different levels, and actually compiling the NAP.
3. **Implementation strategies:** prioritizing adaptation actions and developing the strategy for implementing them, including public dissemination.
4. **Reporting, Monitoring, and Review:** deciding what to monitor and how this is used to revise the NAP.

There is a lot of flexibility how governments can decide to address those as the guideline calls for country-driven approaches.

**Cambodia: Demonstrating “the effectiveness of local government investment in climate change adaptation and resilience”:**

### The local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL)<sup>13</sup>

LoCAL channels international climate finance to local government through existing fiscal transfer systems, providing additional funds to cover the increased costs associated with adaptation investments, based on vulnerability assessments and local adaptation plans that are linked with development plans.

Performance-based climate resilience grants (PBCRGs), which ensure programming and verification of climate change expenditures at the local level, are combined with technical and capacity-building support, (e.g. to enable local actors to use the funds from budgetary allocations effectively. Audits have verified that the funds have been used appropriately and expected adaptation results achieved).

## At what point is the NAP in Vietnam?

Vietnam has started the NAP process in 2017. It forms part of the roadmap of the Vietnamese Government to implement the Paris Agreement (Prime Ministers Decision No. 2053/QĐ-T Tg, 28/10/2016) and is expected to be concluded before 2019.



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## What is the added value of a NAP in the Vietnamese context?

### a. Basing adaptation planning on vulnerabilities

Though national adaptation activities have been carried out in Vietnam, they have not been based on large-scale vulnerability assessments and have not focused on the vulnerabilities of people, but sectors or geographical regions. **By bringing together a climate risk approach and taking into account the social, economic, environmental, and geographical factors that make people vulnerable against climate change effects, the NAP can provide the information required to understand who is especially vulnerable and why, and what needs to be done to make people more resilient.**

### b. Bringing together existing evidence and available knowledge

The stocktaking process of the **NAP brings together existing evidence on climate risks, vulnerability, adaptation gaps, and adaptation activities.** This way, it creates a **baseline and solid foundation for basing adaptation decisions on existing evidence and appropriate actions to address identified**

#### Contributions of Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) to the NAP:

1. *Providers of adaptation-related technical expertise regarding adaptation technologies, tools, approaches, and good practices*
2. *Experts and facilitators on gender topics and mainstreaming in planning and implementation*
3. *Contributor of evidence, based on existing vulnerability assessments, studies and realized adaptation activities*
4. *Providers of methodologies, tools and approaches, e.g. resilience approach*
5. *Mediators connecting the national with subnational levels*
6. *Facilitators bringing in views and realities of vulnerable groups and local communities*
7. *Co-organizer of Consultations*
8. *Feedback giver in consultations*

**needs.** It also allows to create a **national repository to pool all available adaptation knowledge** from government, civil society organizations, academics etc. and use it in the process. This is important since it does not only provide a general overview on what types of information exists, **but helps to clarify the question of which kinds of information is required by specific actors to fulfill their tasks.**

### c. Overcoming current shortcomings of adaptation-relevant policies

The early acknowledgement of the country’s climate vulnerability by the government has led to an extensive body of climate change and adaptation relevant policies being in place in Vietnam<sup>7</sup>. The absence of an effective alignment process produced challenges regarding climate change and adaptation policies, such as inconsistencies, overlaps, and contradictions; a lack of linkage and integration of actors, scales and sectors; as well as predominantly top-down approaches. **The NAP provides room for an alignment process. It allows climate change policies to be matched with adaptation needed, helping decide where revisions and adjustments are required. By providing means to addressing inconsistencies, maximizing synergies and avoiding duplication, it helps to strengthen the country’s climate change response.**<sup>8,9</sup>

### d. Improving implementation capacities

Adaptation needs to become a routine in government actions and a necessary component of planning at all levels, but **it depends on the quality of implementation how climate change is eventually dealt with.** This requires developing capacity on all levels, as well as institutional arrangements and mechanisms for interaction and linkage, including combining bottom-up with top-down processes. **Channeling more funding to the local level is a key component in this, such is improving the availability and accessibility of downscaled climate information.**

### Making the difference - Joining forces, pooling knowledge, maximizing impact in the NAP:

**Why participation of civil society, a focus on vulnerable groups and ecosystems, and strengthening the local level are important**

Addressing climate change requires systemic approaches. Since **the challenges adaptation poses are beyond the capacity of any single stakeholder group**, new ways of cooperation between government, civil society organizations, academics, and the private sector are required. **To find solutions, it is necessary to pool their complimentary knowledge, expertise, and capacities.** The ownership of stakeholders and their participation at an early point in time has been described as a critical factor for success of a NAP<sup>10</sup>. Cooperation needs interaction. This is why **multi-stakeholder processes involving non-state actors and representatives from the local level** are so important. They can contribute expertise, ideas, perspectives, resources, approaches, tools, methodologies and bottom-up feedback. This way, **governments can expand capacity and resources for problem-solving, enabling them to tackle the adaptation challenge.**

The LEG guideline lists specific principles for NAP development to ensure the biggest possible impact and calls for a planning process that is **“gender-sensitive, participatory, and fully transparent.”** No further information on how to make this operational is provided. Countries must find their own ways to realize these principles and fill them with substance in their national context. Here, **civil society representatives like CCWG can make a strong contribution and help to make these principles operational in the specific stages of the NAP process.** For example, by linking the guideline’s principles with the Southern Voices Joint Principles for Adaptation<sup>11</sup>.

NAP Principles	Joint Principles on Adaptation
Participation	A. The formulation, implementation and monitoring of adaptation policies and plans is participatory and inclusive
Transparency	B. Funds for adaptation are utilised efficiently, and managed transparently and with integrity
Accountability	C. All government sectors and levels of administration have defined responsibilities and appropriate resources to fulfil them
Participation	D. Local adaptation plans are developed through approaches that build resilience of communities and ecosystems
Gender sensitive / equality of opportunities	E. The resilience of groups who are most vulnerable to climate change is promoted
Empowerment	F. There is appropriate investment in the building of skills and capacities for adaptation, as well as in physical infrastructure.
Evidence-based and resilience oriented	Plans and policies respond to evidence of the current and future manifestations and impacts of climate change



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This helps to unpack the rather abstract guidelines and contextualizes them in an adaptation planning and implementation setting. **Thanks to their localized adaptation experience in the Vietnamese context, NGOs can then help to further advance the NAP process and give it substance through their technical expertise, good practices, and process competencies.**

Involving civil society organizations from the beginning, provides the government with additional capacities and enables it to take advantage of, and integrate their experiences and knowledge of technical topic and process management right from the start. **This is why it makes sense for the Vietnamese government to engage civil society and the private sector already in the planning and development of the NAP, not just when the first draft is finished.**

#### **A focus on vulnerable groups and ecosystems**

Governments need to act to close the adaptation gap. As the NAP objective suggests, this can be done by assessing and addressing vulnerabilities and through improving adaptive capacity to build resilience. **From a resilience perspective, it is not enough to just assess the vulnerability of sectors and geographical zones, but it is essential to assess and mitigate the vulnerability of people and ecosystems.** As vulnerability depends on several factors and varies according to location, socio-economic capacities, and other factors, some people are more vulnerable than others. **Evidence from**

**projects and studies have shown that this means targeting the poor, ethnic minorities, women, people with disabilities, children and elderly people<sup>12</sup>.** Those groups within the wider populations who are the least able to protect themselves against or cope with climate change must be identified, and the underlying factors determined that lie at the root of their vulnerability. **The NAP then needs to target and prioritize those groups in planning and action to overcome their vulnerabilities and address underlying causes comprehensively.**

Ecosystems provide services that most people depend on directly for their survival and livelihoods, form the bases for all economic processes, and protect people against climate change impacts. Ecosystems are a keystone in enhancing people's adaptive capacity, particularly of the poor. As they are crucial not only for the Vietnamese population, but also for the survival of the planet and all species, **NAPs also need to prioritize the maintenance and protection of ecosystems.** In sum, the NAP requires an adequate **balance of infrastructure and non-infrastructure measures.** This will have to include **investments in participatory processes and community based adaptation, in climate resilient livelihoods, awareness raising, capacity building and adaptive social protection.**

**Strengthening the local level: Vertical Integration and empowering local communities and governments**



Good adaptation planning is necessary, but not sufficient to improve resilience. The best NAP in the world will have no impact if the climate change response it proposes remains on paper only. Adaptation actions need to happen where climate change hits: at the local level. **Local governments must be able to implement the adaptation actions that the NAP lays out, and through these actions be able to meet local adaptation needs and urgencies.** Vertical integration is key for this. This requires enhancing the role of local governments and communities. It means ensuring implementation happens at the grassroots level by equipping local governments with a mandate and clear responsibilities, room for decision-making, as well as building their capacities, and providing resources needed to fulfill their mandate. But empowering local governments also requires improving coordination, interactions, and flows of information. **For this, establishing both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms for interaction and exchange between the national and sub-national levels are crucial. Bottom-up processes will ensure that the NAP reflects local realities and helps to address local adaptation priorities.**

The NAP process allows for comprehensive climate risk management. It does so by identifying climate risks, vulnerabilities, and adaptation needs. It helps to address these by developing the best strategies and activities, and by ensuring climate adaptation to be systematically planned, implemented and integrated into policies on the local, provincial, and national level. This makes the **NAP a milestone towards overcoming the adaptation gap. But to fully deliver the desired adaptation benefits in an effective and equitable way the NAP needs to**

**take a resilience approach that is participatory and empowers local governments and vulnerable groups. Failing to do so cannot be justified, both from a climate and social justice perspective.**

The Vietnamese government needs to act now to address the adaptation challenge. It must prevent leaving millions of poor behind in the struggle against climate change, to which they have contributed very little, and which poses an existential danger to their lives, families, and livelihoods. The below suggestions illustrate how the NAP process can help to achieve this goal.

**With the below recommendations, CCWG is calling out to the Head of the Adaptation Division of the Department for Climate Change (DCC) of the Ministry for Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE), leading the NAP process in Vietnam to ensure a NAP process that realizes the added value and the maximizes above benefits to enable Vietnam's population to better adapt to climate change.**

## General Recommendations:

- As a first step, carry out a **participatory stakeholder analysis** to identify all relevant stakeholders and **define their roles and responsibilities throughout the NAP process**, including participation and co-lead of work streams.
- Establish a **multi-stakeholder working group / coordination team** that brings together government, civil society, academics, and the private sector **for managing and bringing forward the NAP process**



- Initiate a **participatory national stocktaking** on climate risks, vulnerabilities, adaptation gaps and options, which **provides a baseline of the climate risk gap, and the most pressing adaptation needs** in the country to serve as a **basis for informed decision making**
- Enhance **capacity for implementation by paying attention to the policy, organizational, institutional, and operational levels** required to make planning operational and **synchronizing the NAP to relevant national and sectoral budget allocations and processes**
- **Identify and consider the information needs of different actors throughout the process** of planning and implementation, in particular on **actionable and user-friendly climate service information for the local levels**

### Maximize NAP benefits by linking to and enhancing existing adaptation relevant policies and evidence:

- **Link the NAP to relevant policies** such as sectoral and provincial climate change action plans and the Green Growth Strategy. Use **evidence generated by the NAP to adjust their content**. Use the NAP **to achieve mainstreaming of adaptation in all Vietnamese Socio-Economic Development Plans**.
- **Enrich existing hazard maps through** adding additional **layers on vulnerability by using a resilience approach** in the NAP that is **based on adaptive management** and **addresses the root causes of vulnerabilities** of different groups and sectors.
- **Use the NAP process to make the adaptation component of the Vietnamese NDC operational**, especially sections (1) "Respond pro-actively to disasters and improve climate monitoring", (2) "Ensure social security", (3) "Responding to sea level rise and urban inundation". Use it **to identify required specifications and adjustments in section 3.4 on climate change adaptation** in the period 2021-2030 and before.
- Include **ecosystem biodiversity and ecosystem services as one work stream** into the NAP.
- Establish **mechanisms for dialogue, coordination, and information sharing between government representatives at national and subnational levels and different**

**types of stakeholders throughout the NAP process** to ensure continued and broad-based stakeholder engagements including Monitoring and Evaluation.

### Integrate a focus on vulnerable groups as a crosscutting and priority topic in the NAP process:

- **Identify and prioritize vulnerable groups in planning and implementation on all levels**. This includes determining **targets and indicators, tracking the progress towards achievement, specific actions to empower them, and addressing their critical vulnerabilities**. Promote the **participation of vulnerable groups**.

### Empower local communities and enhance vertical integration:

- **Local/community-based perspectives and input on vulnerability, priorities, local knowledge, desired actions, and required information** must be given attention to in the analysis, and embedded in the process.
- **Combine bottom-up and top-down approaches** in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Include **a community-based adaptation national programme and community-based climate change initiatives** in the NAP.
- Enhance the availability of **funding for adaptation for local governments through finance for NAP implementation, funds resulting from mainstreaming adaptation from other sectors, and by setting up local climate and adaptive finance facilities**.



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## Endnotes

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3. Least Developed Countries Expert Group. 2012. *National Adaptation Plans. Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process*. Bonn: UNFCCC secretariat.
4. Decision 5/CP.17, paragraph 1.
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7. In Vietnam this has included or includes a National Strategy on Climate Change, A National Target Programme on Climate Change, the Support Platform for Response to Climate Change, various laws, e.g. regarding disaster risk reduction and Climate change action plans by the line ministries and all provinces. A repository of legislation, strategies and plans can be found here: <http://chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies>
8. See p. 25 in: Dazé, A., Price-Kelly, H. and Rass, N., 2016. Vertical Integration in National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Processes: A guidance note for linking national and sub-national adaptation processes. International Institute for Sustainable Development. Winnipeg. Available online at: [www.napglobalnetwork.org](http://www.napglobalnetwork.org)
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11. Southern Voices Joint Principles of Adaptation are a set of standards for good adaptation practices, developed by civil society actors around the world and are listed as official supplement material to the LEG technical guidelines. See <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap/Guidelines/Pages/Supplements.aspx> and <http://southernvoices.net/en/home/sv-on-adaptation/669-joint-principles-for-adaptation.htm>
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