



## FACT SHEET

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# Climate Change Cooperation



*Vietnamese farmers experiment with climate-smart rice varieties with USAID support. Photo: USAID*

“Climate change is an urgent, complex, and far-reaching global challenge that affects a broad range of U.S. foreign policy goals, yet it also presents opportunities to transform our economy and strengthen U.S. security and economic interests... Without decisive action now around the world, the impacts from climate change will worsen in coming decades.”

– Secretary of State, John Kerry

Vietnam is one of the world’s most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change. Climate change threatens long-term economic growth, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. Vietnam’s vulnerability is increased by its already existing exposure to climate-related natural hazards, its geography, pattern of economic development, and densely populated deltas and coastal areas, as well as vulnerable minority populations in remote upland watersheds. Increasing temperatures, worsening droughts and floods, sea level rise, and increased frequency of storms threaten food security, livelihoods, and lives for millions of Vietnamese.

Climate change is a convergent issue of interest for the United States and Vietnam. Together we are preparing Vietnam to adapt to a changing climate, mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving energy efficiency, and reduce risks from disasters. The United States and Vietnam are working closely together to tackle some of the most difficult environmental challenges of our day.

U.S. Government interventions accelerate Vietnam’s transition to climate resilient and low emission sustainable economic development in accordance with U.S. Government and Government of Vietnam strategies. The U.S. Government supports the implementation of the U.S. President’s Global Climate Change Initiative and Executive Order on Climate Action, and the U.S. Asia Comprehensive Energy Partnership. Vietnam is a focus country for the U.S. Government Enhancing Capacity for Low Emission Development Strategies (EC-LEDS) program, the U.S. Government’s multi-agency effort to support partner countries’ efforts to develop long-term strategic approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while accelerating sustainable economic growth. Through engagement across sectors, the U.S. Government aims to improve health and well-being in Vietnam through climate-smart development and disaster mitigation. In addition to bilateral support to climate change and disaster risk reduction, the U.S. Government supports regional initiatives, including the Lower Mekong Initiative where Vietnam and the U.S. co-chair the Environment and Water Pillar.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Vietnam is addressing

climate change challenges through an integrated mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction approach. The current bilateral program is \$54 million (FY 2013 to FY 2018). At the end of the current Global Climate Change program, Vietnam is expected to make measurable progress towards the transition to climate resilient, lower emission, sustainable growth. To achieve this, USAID partners with a broad range of Vietnamese stakeholders and development partners to invest in low carbon growth and reduce emissions, build resilience and protect climate-vulnerable populations. USAID shares technology and knowledge while assisting Vietnam's efforts to better assess, plan, and take action on climate change. Interventions highlight the important roles of civil society and NGOs, women, and vulnerable groups.

USAID assistance contributes towards:

1. Strengthened sustainable low emissions economic development. Vietnam will be able to implement, fund, and monitor the Vietnam Green Growth Strategy and its accompanying national and sub-national action plans that together make up Vietnam's low emission development strategy;
2. Increased clean energy investments and energy efficiency to increase energy security, curb greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and spur economic growth, following the establishment of market incentives and increased availability of and access to funding;
3. Decreased emissions resulting from improved land use practices through strengthened alternative incentive approaches such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), Payments for Forest Environmental Services, and improved alternative livelihood options; and
4. Strengthened rural and urban resilience to climate change and disaster risk reduction.

## SUPPORTING LOW EMISSIONS DEVELOPMENT

Over the past last decade, Vietnam has experienced rapid economic growth and has risen to the status of a lower middle income economy. Vietnam's Green Growth Strategy (VGGs) sets targets for the country to achieve low emissions development with aims to reduce poverty, protect natural resources, enhance capacity to reduce emissions, and help Vietnam contribute to the international community's efforts to mitigate climate change. Vietnam is a focus country for EC-LEDS. USAID/Vietnam coordinates programs closely with the U.S. Department of State on LEDS efforts, as well as other agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of the Interior to translate the VGGs into practical, measurable, and transparent activities. While many U.S. Government programs contribute to LEDS efforts, one focuses on Vietnam's LEDS specifically.

- **Strengthening Capacity and Institutional Reform for Green Growth and Sustainable Development in Vietnam** (2014-2018) is a key instrument to help Vietnam pursue a green growth, low emission development pathway through the implementation of the Vietnam Green Growth Strategy (Vietnam's LEDS) and Green Growth Action Plan at the national and provincial levels. Implemented through a partnership with the United Nations Development Program, the project's Government of Vietnam counterpart is the Ministry of Planning and Investment.



## INVESTING IN CLEAN ENERGY

Vietnam faces tremendous challenges in meeting its growing electricity needs, with consumption expected to more than triple between 2010 and 2020. To reduce the growth in emissions from the energy sector, USAID's clean energy interventions improve the enabling policy environment for clean energy and increase market incentives for the adoption of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies. Assistance includes practical measures to increase investments in the clean energy sector, working with various stakeholders to ease the process of investing in and implementing renewable energy and energy efficient practices.

- **Vietnam Clean Energy - Energy Efficiency Program** (2012-2017) helps Vietnam promote energy efficiency in one of the highest energy use sectors, the building sector. The program enhances Government of Vietnam and other stakeholder capacity to acquire, manage, analyze, and use energy sector data in decision-making, as well as assists in the development of construction sector green growth action plans. The Government of Vietnam counterpart is the Ministry of Construction.
- **Vietnam Low Emission Energy Program** (2015-2020) strengthens the foundation for low emission energy systems. The project is developing a low emission strategy for the energy sector while working to enhance capacity and improve the enabling environment for renewable energy development. It aims to increase energy efficiency adoption and compliance in energy-intensive sectors. The Government of Vietnam counterpart is the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND RESILIENCE

Sustainable landscape management is essential to curbing global emissions. USAID/Vietnam supports activities in the forestry and agriculture sectors and protection of livelihoods, watersheds, and biodiversity. Activities include strengthening incentive systems for forest protection and improving livelihoods and land use practices for forest- and agriculture-dependent communities. Adaptation and disaster risk reduction assistance build resilience in both cities and rural areas to minimize climate and disaster risks to human life and sustain communities' livelihoods and businesses.

- **Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program** (2012-2017) accelerates Vietnam's transition to climate-resilient, low-emission, sustainable development by helping to reduce and reverse emissions from deforestation and degradation of forests and agricultural landscapes and increases climate change resilience in the Red River and Mekong Deltas. The program's Government of Vietnam counterpart is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- **Red River Delta Adaptation and Youth** (2015-2018) strengthens provincial capacity to adapt to future climate change impact through the active participation of youth in assessing risk, planning, and implementing climate resilient initiatives. The project is implemented by a local organization, Center for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development.
- **Climate Resilient and Sustainable Urban Development Program** (2015-2019) improves the policy and institutional framework for climate resilient and sustainable urban development. USAID supports the Government of Vietnam through the Asian Development Bank in the development of a National Urban Development Strategy and a National Target Program for Urban Climate Change Resilience.
- **USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance** supports disaster risk reduction components of USAID/Vietnam's climate change programming with the objective to build

## TRANSFORMING LIVES

Following the new practices she learned at a Vietnam Forests and Deltas training, Ms. Le Thi My Dung was able to double her rice yield and earn \$900 more than previous seasons.



Photo: Winrock International

“Before, I did not know how to balance the fertilizers; I applied fertilizer very often, especially when I saw my rice leaves were less green compared to the neighbor’s. Now I know too much fertilizers do not bring more yield but can even lead to rice disease, I do not look at the neighbor’s field any more, I just do as what I learned from the training.”

resilience across Vietnam through community-based disaster risk management, early warning, and business preparedness for disasters. These three areas are key components of Vietnam’s 2014 Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control.

## REGIONAL PROGRAMS

The USAID/Vietnam portfolio is further strengthened by extensive regional programs managed by the USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia. USAID plays a leading role in supporting the Asia LEDS Partnership, which provides training, knowledge sharing, and cooperation to more effectively use LEDS tools and practices in development decision-making and financing. In addition, USAID supports research on the impacts of regional trade and investment flows on forests, and efforts to strengthen civil society networks in the Lower Mekong region to more effectively engage in forestry-related policy decisions. Work in clean energy aims to promote regional collaboration to improve clean energy policy decision-making and innovation and accelerate investment in clean energy technologies. In adaptation, regional USAID projects support capacity building programs to help communities and governments reduce the negative aspects of climate change. Programs focus on building resilient communities and capable government agencies, which understand the trends and vulnerabilities, and can develop effective adaptation strategies.

## GLOBAL PROGRAMS

USAID/Washington programs also complement bilateral efforts. Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research, a global USAID competitive grants program, supports research partnerships between developing country scientists and U.S. National Science Foundation-funded collaborators in the Lower Mekong Region, including researchers in Vietnam in the environment sector. USAID has also developed and tested innovative tools and approaches for integrating climate change considerations into planning and development decision-making and has provided land cover data generated from satellite observations to build climate resilience, improve techniques to monitor greenhouse gas emissions, and develop land use practices that reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation of carbon emitting landscapes. USAID support has been provided through U.S. Government technical agencies, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S. Department of Energy.

A one-meter rise in sea-level will inundate approximately nine percent of Vietnam’s territory, directly affecting an even larger percentage of the nation’s population, with economic damages costing 10 percent of the gross domestic product. Climate change also threatens food security, water resources, and human health, especially for poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups. USAID climate change support in Vietnam lays the critical foundations for long-term, low emissions development, promoting economic growth while slowing the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, and protects ecosystems, livelihoods, and lives. Climate change cooperation contributes to the realization of the bilateral Comprehensive Partnership between the two countries, announced by Presidents Obama and Sang, which have a deeply shared recognition on challenges imposed by climate change.

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