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Research how to establish a policy to respond to climate change in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

As a response to global warming and climate change, climate change adaptation aims to lessen the susceptibility of social and biological systems to relatively abrupt change and so counteract the effects of global warming. Openness and cooperation are key tenets of an adaptation strategy; as a result, mechanisms for a wide range of stakeholders are included in the creation and execution of adaptation strategies.

However, few poor nations have made a point of involving stakeholders in decision-making processes for climate change adaptation. In many regions of the world, there is a notable dearth of concrete plans to include stakeholders in the adaptation of policy-making and implementation. This study uses Vietnam as a case study to evaluate the level of stakeholder involvement in climate change adaptation strategies. The findings demonstrate that the Vietnamese government has adopted a "top-down" decision-making strategy, in which the government plays the primary role, communities and NGOs have a minimal impact on the creation and implementation of policies, and the private sector is only involved in the implementation phase. Stakeholder participation has generally been acknowledged in Vietnam, although the country's national climate change policies have not been adequately implemented.

As a result, the policies for adaptation are unlikely to be effective in the unique settings of diverse places and may not be embraced by all stakeholders, which may ultimately limit adaptation activities. Viet Nam is advised to encourage participation by many stakeholders in the formulation of policy. Other countries can adopt the lessons from Vietnam while creating their adaptation policies.

Keywords: *climate change response, climate change adaptation, policy process, get feedback*

1. Introduction

Understanding how people, communities, and natural systems may get ready for and react to a change in climate at the local level is essential for adaptation to the effects of climate change to reduce susceptibility. Effective adaptation involves disaster risk reduction strategies for current climatic extremes and will aid in controlling and lowering the hazards associated with climate change. Public policy-making and decisions by stakeholders, such as people, groups, organizations, and their networks, are what lead to adaptation. As a result, involving stakeholders in research and policy development on climate change adaptation has become crucial. "Participation" entails opening up formal organizational processes to include pertinent and interested stakeholders in decision-making and problem-solving, according to Dixit and Foti (2013). In studies on climate change, the term "stakeholder" refers to decision-makers, supervisors, communities, scientists, and managers in the industries that are most at risk (Conde et al., 2004, p. 50). Relevant parties must be gathered in the adaptation to climate change context to determine the best forms of adaptation (Shakil & Bhuiya 2014; Blue 2015). Stakeholder involvement generally increases the responsiveness, proactivity, adaptability, durability, and robustness of adaptation decision-making (Dixit & Foti, 2013). This is because many stakeholders have specific experiences that are required for dealing with climate change. Additionally, community involvement can aid in the development of adaptation solutions by fusing scientific information with local expertise (Conde et al., 2004). When knowledge, resources, networks, and the desire to find solutions are strengthened, adaptive capacity is increased (Twigg, 1999). It's critical to note who takes part in an adaptation process at each level. Participants frequently comprise both groups who would be directly impacted by an anticipated climate impact and those that can influence the adaptation process.

Additionally, the identified stakeholders must be open to taking part in the process (Conde et al., 2004). Potential Adaptation Policy Framework stakeholders under the UNFCCC include the following, according to Aguilar (2001) cited in Conde et al. (2004):

- National government and ministries
- Local authorities
- Local environmental/development NGOs;
- National/Regional Research Centers; Universities;
- Local Communities; People Affected by Climate Risks and Damages.

Although governments in many developing nations have failed to do so, involving stakeholders in adaptation decision-making necessitates rigorous mapping of the stakeholder landscape and identification of important players at various levels. Additionally, it could be challenging to promote public participation, which might not promote long-term thinking. To address these issues, it is necessary to think about how

to incorporate stakeholder input into adaptation policy choices, and its implementation must take note of previous criticisms of participatory processes in other contexts (Few et al., 2007). According to the government (2011), Viet Nam is one of the nations most impacted by climate change. As a result, the Vietnamese government created various policies to deal with this issue.

The National Target Program Response to Climate Change was the first national climate change policy issued by the Vietnamese government in 2008. The overarching program is this, designed to coordinate the creation of sector-specific, national plans for both mitigation and adaptation (GOV 2008). The National Climate Change Strategy was enacted in 2011 and served as the foundation for long-term development planning and other policies (GOV 2011). In response, the Vietnamese government in 2012 adopted the National Action Plan to Combat Climate Change. To coordinate all of the country's adaptation efforts, Vietnam has not yet finished its National Adaptation Plan (NAP). While all provinces were required to create their adaptation action plans at the local level, the national policies have not established cross-sectoral goals aligning with the government structure for adaptation action or the involvement of different stakeholders to coordinate a national plan. At present, all provinces across the country have accepted the Provincial Action Plan Response to Climate Change (PAPs-RCC). This might result in more policies that overlap, replicate existing administrative divisions, and promote "silo" behavior such as a lack of information sharing (McElwee, 2010). There isn't much information in the literature about stakeholders' involvement in Vietnam's adaptation to climate change. As a result, little is known about how much stakeholder involvement is taken into account and included in climate change policies and processes. The goal of the article is to evaluate the degree to which stakeholder participation has been utilized in Vietnamese climate change policies. This will be done by evaluating a wide range of climate change regulations, from the national to local levels, as well as conducting in-depth interviews with various stakeholders.

2. Methods

By creating and conducting a critical evaluation of information, policy analysis seeks to comprehend and enhance public policies (Pal, 2014). It is debatably too soon to evaluate changes or results that have resulted from adaptation policy because it is still in its infancy (Vogel & Henstra, 2015). As a result, the policy analysis conducted in this study is concentrated on the content of policies for climate adaptation, which serves as a starting point for research on policy change, and the adaptation policy process, which can provide insightful information about the quality of policies as well as the factors that support or restrict their development and implementation (Vogel & Henstra, 2015). Reviewing three chosen Vietnamese climate change policies at the national and provincial levels as well as 14 chosen Provincial Action Plans in Response to Climate

Change (PAPs-RCC) allowed for an evaluation of stakeholder involvement in the policies' content.

TABLE 1. Vietnamese climate change policies at the national level

The National Action Plan to Respond to Climate Change in 2012–2020	The National Climate Change Strategy.	The National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change.
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TABLE 2. The 14 selected Provincial Action Plans Response to Climate Change (PAPs-RCC)

• An Giang (AGPC 2010)	• Dong Nai (DNPC 2012)
• Ho Chi Minh City (HCMPC 2013)	• Thai Nguyen (TNGPC 2012)
• Binh Dinh (BDPC 2012)	• Quang Ninh (QNPC 2011)
• Binh Thuan (BTPC 2012)	• Hai Phong (HPPC 2014)
• Kien Giang (KGPC 2013)	• Ba Ria Vung Tau (BRVTPC 2012)
• Bac Lieu (BLPC 2012)	• Dong Thap (DTPC 2011)
• Lam Dong (LDPC 2013)	• Cao Bang (CBPC 2010)

The Vietnamese government's 'The Guiding Framework on Development of Local and Sectoral Action Plan Response to Climate Change' was contrasted with Nepal's 'The National Framework on Local Adaptation Plans for Action', which is a comparable strategy. These regulations were chosen for comparison because they serve as the legal frameworks for local governments in Vietnam and Nepal, which have both had a considerable impact on the processes and substance of local regulations. In-depth interviews with chosen respondents who have experience and knowledge in developing climate change policies in Vietnam were performed to get insight into the process of developing climate change adaptation policies. We conducted interviews with 40 people, including five central government officials, fifteen local government officials, fifteen academic specialists, and five representatives of non-profit organizations. Face-to-face and phone interviews were conducted as well as recorded for policy analysis.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 National-level climate change adaptation policy-making process

The five steps of Vietnam's national climate change policy-making procedures, including various stakeholder engagements, are shown in Figure 3. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is the main government organization in charge of creating national policy for coping with climate change at this level. MONRE participates in all phases of policy formation and serves as the primary coordinator between various stakeholders. The academic institution employing climate change specialists has been hired to collaborate with the MONRE climate policy draft committee to develop policies throughout the process. Agenda-setting, policy-making, and execution are handled by the relevant government organizations, which include

various ministries and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) at the province level. DONRE serves as a consultant during the policy-making process and offers suggestions for the policy draft before it is finished. NGOs are also involved in the majority of the stages and have a significant impact on networking with various actors and soliciting the involvement of many stakeholders, particularly local communities and the commercial sector.

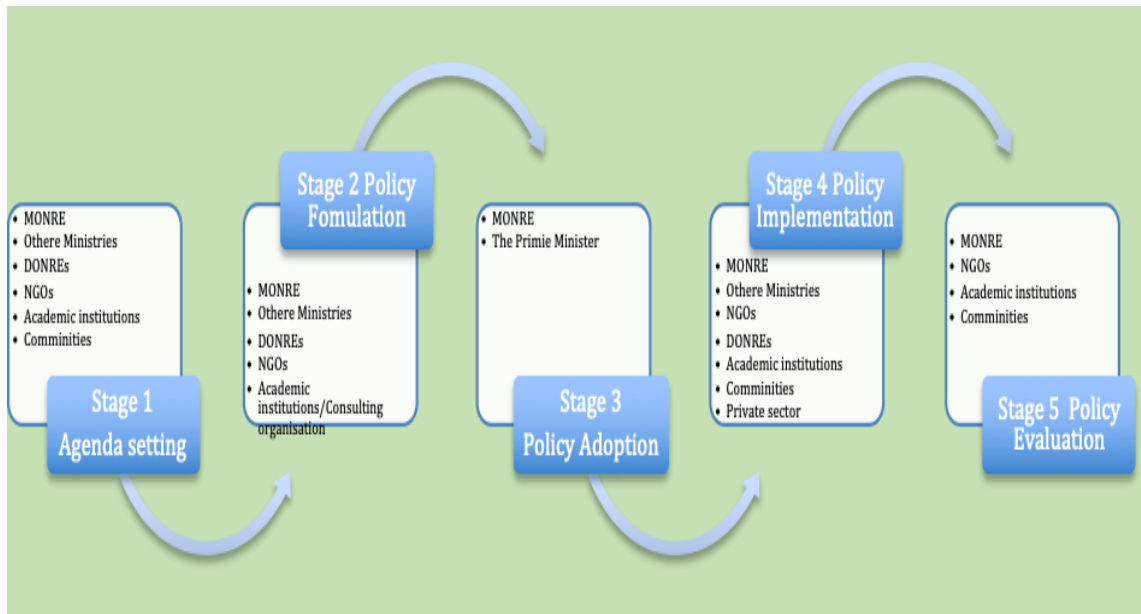


Figure 1. Climate change adaptation policy process at the National level

The findings of the study demonstrate how little local communities and the private sector are involved in the formulation of national policy. Local communities play a role in agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy implementation, whereas the private sector solely participates in the policy execution stage. Government websites provide access to policy drafts so that the public can remark and offer input before the policy is implemented. Only a small percentage of citizens are interested in, knowledgeable about, or able to contribute to the design of policies.

3.2 Local government decision-making around climate change

Provincial policies on climate change follow a similar procedure to federal policies. Figure 4 has been used to illustrate this. The establishment of provincial climate change policies is significantly aided by DONREs. To create policy, DONREs work with a consulting company. At this point, the consulting firm creates the policy draft, and DONRE coordinates and oversees the policy draft because of the DONREs' limited capability. This suggests that the consulting company is the main player in the formulation of policies. At stage 2, referred to as "Policy Formulation," government organizations are involved, including various sectoral departments and the district Natural Resources and Environment Divisions under the province.

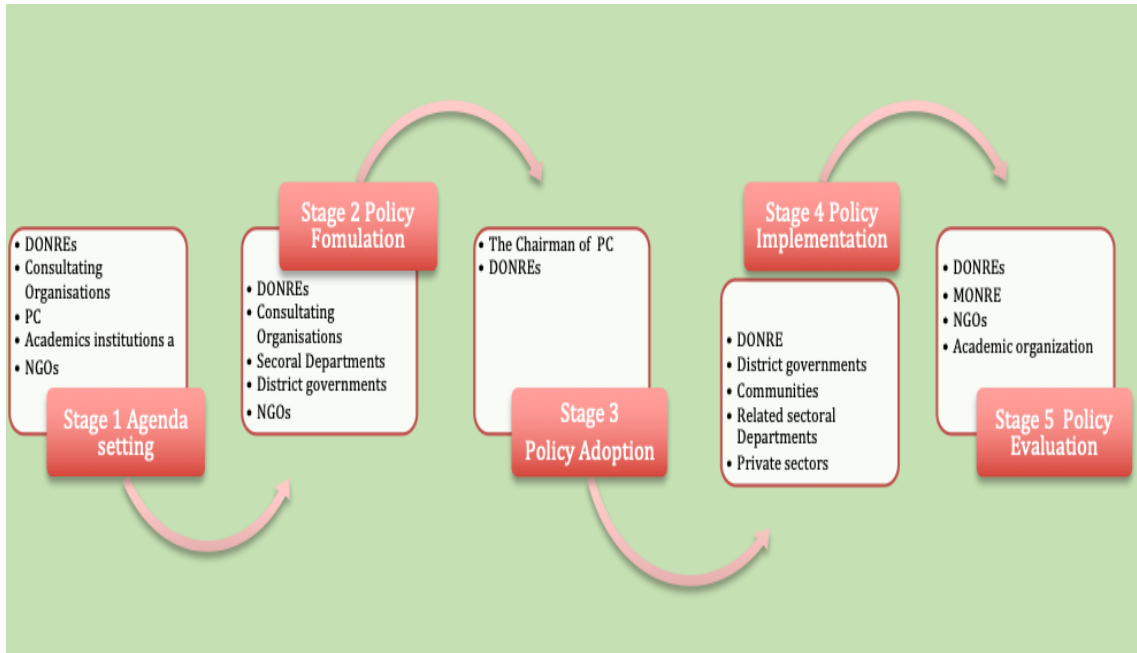


Figure 2. Shows the local level's climate change adaptation policy process.

Unlike at the federal level, there is little room for NGOs to participate in provincial policymaking. NGOs are not involved in the majority of policymaking processes, except policy implementation. Furthermore, there is little involvement from the public and private sectors. The framework for communities to establish PAP-RCCs was adopted by The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) (2009) during the process. This framework demonstrates that there are nine steps in the creation of a PAP_RCC, covering the first stages of target identification, planning, data collection, vulnerability assessment, the proposal of mitigation strategies, completion of the draft, public input, and policy approval. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) and the provincial government will share responsibility for policy creation under this system. Before the policies are approved, various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil groups, academic institutions, local communities, and the commercial sector, will only take part in workshops for public consultation. Up to 61 provincial governments have currently produced climate change policies within the top-down framework of scenario-driven methods for localities, but no district or community plans have been created. The 14 provincial Action Plans for Responding to Climate Change (PAP-RCCs) were analyzed, and the results revealed that all of the provincial action plans acknowledged stakeholder involvement in the policy-making process, particularly during the implementation phase, which involved both government actors and civil organizations and communities. But there is no clear plan or direction for involving them in the creation of action plans. Additionally, each PAP-RCC contains a list of projects, but no stakeholders are mentioned for involvement in any of the projects.

A comparison of Nepal's National Framework on Local Adaptation Plans for Action (LAPA) with other countries reveals that Nepal strongly advises combining a top-down strategy with a bottom-up approach. Throughout the entire process of developing policies, they used a bottom-up strategy and emphasized the necessity for community-based adaptation. Plans for socioeconomic development and local climate change were also scaled up by the framework. The seven steps in Nepal's LAPA Framework are climate change sensitization; assessment of climate vulnerability and adaptation; prioritization of adaptation options; formulation of LAPA; integration of LAPA into planning processes; implementation of LAPA; and assessment of LAPA progress. In the LAPA Framework, various stakeholders are involved at various phases of the process to identify information linked to scale, including local planners, decision-makers, climate-vulnerable households, and communities. The framework highlights that an essential first step in planning for adaptation is educating stakeholders on the effects of climate change and available adaptation alternatives (GoN, 2011). The LAPA Framework served as a framework for the creation of community and district planning for the negative effects of climate change.

According to the aforementioned findings, the majority of Vietnamese policies, both at the national and local levels, have acknowledged and underlined the importance of stakeholder participation. There are, however, very few concrete strategies to include stakeholders in the modification of policymaking and execution. Additionally, several stakeholders are noted in the policies' content to take part in only the public consultation and policy implementation phases of the policy design stage. Vietnam also stresses the top-down method of developing and implementing policies. Vietnamese policy's top-down and scenario-driven approaches to adaptation may help to lessen vulnerability to climate change, but they might miss out on addressing the unique needs and worries of weaker populations, particularly the poor.

As a result, it is crucial to develop adaptable policies that can take into account both "bottom-up" and "top-down" methods. For instance, a bottom-up model should be used to evaluate the degree to which vulnerable communities and households can access the climate-resilient services provided by these systems and resources, whereas a top-down approach is used to evaluate the status and quality of resources and systems at the village level (GoN., 2011). Local knowledge, experiences, and insight into the communities will be constrained in adaptation strategies in the instance of Vietnam where community participation in climate change policy processes is limited. Given that the majority of Vietnamese policies have acknowledged and underlined the significance of stakeholder input, lessons learned from Nepal can be implemented in Vietnam to integrate "top-down" and "bottom-up" methods in its policy formation processes. This shows a genuine desire to find ways to deliver the policy more effectively. The process of stakeholder participation will be fully accomplished if the nation sets forth explicit criteria for how this engagement should be carried out.

Additionally, community-based adaptation should be used to improve communities' and ecosystems' resilience to better cope with the negative effects of climate change (UNDP., 2010). Although Vietnam is an example of decentralized climate change adaptation, as shown by the creation of all local (provincial) action plans, the involvement of local people and the business sector in the creation of local policies are constrained. Due to the potential harm to local or indigenous populations, if community practices are not taken into account when developing new legislation, these deficiencies are likely to create hurdles to climate change adaptation in Vietnam (Vincent et al., 2013). One of the best ways to guarantee that decisions are more orientated toward their goals and to provide communities with better control over the choices that affect their lives is through public engagement (Few et al., 2007).

Although NGOs and the corporate sector are referenced in the policies' text, their involvement is likewise modest. Vietnam's national climate change plans were aided by NGOs, although their involvement at the local, provincial level is quite limited. Furthermore, despite being mandated to take part in policy implementation, the private sector appears to be largely excluded from the policymaking process. As a result, it appears that the private sector is underutilizing its ability to support the creation and execution of plans for adapting to climate change.

An examination of policy-making procedures reveals that government systems, particularly those at the provincial level, have little ability to interact with stakeholders. When the DONRE is unable to create policies, it delegated the responsibility to consulting firms. As a result, the quality of the policy cannot be ensured. A high-quality final policy for adaptation is not guaranteed even though a variety of participants from provincial and district government organizations participated in the workshop and offered comments on the policy draft. This is because the majority of local government stakeholders lack knowledge of climate change. DONRE proposes the policies for adoption directly to the chair of the provincial people committee, bypassing any higher or more qualified authorized institution. To increase the effectiveness of the policies for climate change adaptation, it is necessary to raise the knowledge and ability of all stakeholders by proposing a plan for integrating various stakeholders, notably community and private players.

4. Conclusion

Stakeholder involvement is not properly implemented in Vietnamese policies for adapting to climate change, but the manner it is taken into account in these processes and policies shows that this will improve in the future. Stakeholder participation in the policy's contents is just mentioned and listed, with minimal emphasis on local communities and the private sector's involvement. As a result, a detailed plan must be created for the integration of stakeholder participation. To make sure that every member

of society may be active in and contribute to climate change adaptation in Vietnam, stakeholders, including NGOs and the commercial sector, need to be encouraged and mandated to participate in policy formation and implementation.

Additionally, there aren't many bottom-up strategies, and different stakeholders don't participate as much in any of the policymaking process' five stages. A flexible mix of top-down and bottom-up strategies with increased public involvement is essential. It is important to encourage effective engagement, awareness-building, and capacity development for all stakeholders at various levels. From this study, Vietnam and other nations can learn how to increase stakeholder involvement in climate change adaptation. Although potential adaptation solutions are receiving more attention, there is still a lack of awareness of the role of stakeholder participation, which can hinder the effectiveness of adaptation as a response to climate change. Vietnam should therefore alter its strategies for coping with climate change to increase stakeholder involvement. To encourage stakeholder participation, several lessons are identified, including (i) developing specific plans to involve various stakeholders in the various policy formulation and implementation stages to ensure the process is more sustainable due to ideas being tried, tested, and refined before adoption; (ii) developing adaptable combinations of both "bottom-up" and "top-down" approaches to adaptation in Vietnamese policy; and (iii) encouraging the participation of local citizens.

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