



NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS IN VIETNAM

Nationally Determined Contributions represent Vietnam's goals and ambitions in responding to the impacts of climate change. It will be difficult to succeed without financial and technical support from international organizations. The participation of the people and the network of social organizations plays an important role in ensuring this process is open and transparent.

Vietnam is one of the pioneering countries participating and actively in the updated NDCs. On 29 September 2015, Vietnam submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to the UNFCCC. In 2020, Vietnam submitted its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), reconfirming the Government's commitment to its climate goals specified in the previous INDC. Just two years later, on 8 November 2022, the country submitted its second NDC, showing more ambitious mitigation targets compared to the previous NDC. The NDC 2022 includes a target of reducing GHG emissions by 15.8% and 43.5% against the BAU scenario in the domestically supported and internationally supported scenarios, respectively. Vietnam also aims to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 and reduce its methane emissions by 30% in 2030 compared to 2020 levels. The second updated NDC includes update on economic and non-economic losses and damages that occurred in the past and those expected to occur in the future. It also indicates Vietnam's financing needs to implement unconditional GHG reduction target which amounts to USD 21.7 billion. The financing needs for climate change adaptation in 2030 is estimated to be over 3% to 5% of 2020 GDP (MONRE, 2022).

The development and implementation of policies and activities to respond to climate change in NDCs in Vietnam rely mainly on domestic human and financial resources.

Comparing the country's financing needs estimated in the NDC with the total amount of international financing received over the 2015-2021 period—approximately 5.9 billion USD, one can see that the financial support Vietnam has received from international providers only accounts for around 27% of its actual needs in order to fulfill its NDC ambitions. As about two thirds of climate change funding coming from the country's own resources (Pannier et al., 2020), it could be roughly calculated that the combined international and domestic financial resources cover about 80% of Vietnam's needs. While this may seem like a significant percentage, the effectiveness and efficiency of projects funded by these resources could be questioned, leading to potential risks of capital overruns, especially given that inefficient implementation and overcapitalization of public investment projects are not uncommon in Vietnam.

Over the evolution process of Vietnam's NDCs, some contents on efficiency monitoring and transparency have been included in these documents. While the INDC and the NDC 2020 already mention the establishment of measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems, which would serve as the primary mechanism for tracking progress of mitigation projects, but do not go into detail, the NDC 2022 includes a more comprehensive MRV plan, outlining data collection, reporting procedures, and independent verification mechanisms. Besides, while it was not yet mentioned in the INDC, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems for adaptation projects were introduced in the following two NDCs.

Table 1: Evolution of Vietnam’s NDCs and their contents of MRV and M&E systems

NDC and year of submission	Contents of MRV and M&E systems
INDC 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The INDC only briefly mentions the establishment of “a national GHG inventory system, and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system at all levels” without elaborating on its specific components or procedures. • The emphasis was on setting up the institutional framework for MRV, “to meet the data requirement for examination and periodic reports as required by the UNFCCC”. • The timeframe for implementing the MRV system was not clearly defined. • No clear mention of M&E or specific evaluation plans.
INDC 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2020 NDC specifies key stakeholders for implementing MRV systems. Particularly, the MONRE coordinates and operates the national MRV system. Relevant ministries and sectors are responsible to operate their sectoral MRV systems. • It provides a more detailed outline of the MRV system, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measurement: For each level, GHG reduction is measured and calculated using internationally recognized methods informed by competent authorities. - Reporting: The MONRE synthesizes reports on GHG reduction and the emitter responsible for emission reduction. - Verification: The MONRE may coordinate with a third party to verify the reported GHG reduction. • It introduces concepts related to M&E and key stakeholders. Specifically, the National Committee on Climate Change (NCCC) instructs and promotes coordination among ministries, sectors and localities. The MONRE coordinates, operates the systems and sets up result-based evaluation indicators of projects, providing guidance to develop reports using set indicators. The MPI guides the integration of result-based report and report templates for project funded by the state budget and ODA.
INDC 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NDC 2022 builds upon the previous plans with more comprehensive and robust MRV and M&E systems. Training on MRV and M&E for state managers is mentioned. • Stronger emphasis on transparency and accountability, with regular reporting to the UNFCCC and public access to emissions data and progress reports..

Source: Research team’s synthesis from Vietnam’s NDC.

Although consultations on NDCs did involve CSOs, the selected ones for these consultations are limited to large international organizations that are long-established and have built strong connections with the Vietnamese Government. For each NDC update, the Government organized consultations with technical experts, government agencies, and selected CSOs. NDC Partnership members GIZ and UNDP played a key role in supporting the Government. World Bank, UNICEF, UN Women, and other partners also provided support for the Vietnam's updated NDC (NDC Partnership, 2020). However, local small-scale organizations are apparently sidelined; their role of channeling citizens' opinions and recommendations to the competent authorities is neglected. This may be because given their practical experience with communities, having witnessed examples of poor policy implementation and management by local governments, local CSOs could be somewhat more critical towards the climate change-related strategies and plans, especially regarding budgeting and monitoring, that are outlined by the central government. In addition, it is clear that even the mentioned pre-approved pool of CSOs could only engage in technical consultations rather than express their perspectives over financial matters, such as the process of planning, approval, allocation and monitoring of climate funding.

From the analyzed shortcomings in the field of NDCs, we propose the following recommendations to the stakeholders in Vietnam:

For the Government:

Recommendation 1: It is necessary to take advantage of international support in realizing NDCs, especially ODA sources. However, the government need to be careful in choosing because not all ODA sources are provided at a cheap cost. At the same time, publicity and transparency in receiving and using capital sources from the budget or ODA for NDCs need to be implemented seriously and fully with strict supervision.

Recommendation 2: The government needs to actively involve local CSOs in the process of updating NDCs, especially in the development and consultation stages. These organizations usually have practical experience in climate change response projects with communities, so they can contribute valuable feedback on the government's policy implementation and management in reality, and recommendations to improve them.

Recommendation 3: Proactively provide information and increase people's participation in the NDCs process. It is possible through CSOs to propagate and disseminate information and knowledge to the masses. It is difficult to achieve the goals in NDCs without the companionship, support and assistance of the people as well as the network of social organizations.

For local CSOs in Vietnam:

Recommendation 1: In a context where direct participation is not favorable, local CSOs can contribute indirectly through international organizations that cooperate with the Vietnamese government in the process of implementing NDCs. At the same time, it is necessary to increase the updating of knowledge and understanding of NDCs not only in Vietnam but also in countries around the world to ensure effective contribution and participation in this process in the country.

Recommendation 2: CSOs can act as facilitators of communication between citizens and policymakers, researchers, and NGOs working on NDCs. This exchange of knowledge and expertise not only can enhance the quality of policy decisions, but also provide citizens with valuable insights into the policy making process and a sense of social responsibility and inclusion.

Recommendation 3: To strengthen CSO networking in NDCs as well as climate finance, there should be more platforms, including online ones, to share best practices, challenges, and opportunities related to climate finance between Vietnamese CSOs and international counterparts. These platforms also help to gather advocacy efforts of different organizations to form a greater voice towards policymakers.



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