UCR-CoP
Urban Climate Resilience
Community of Practice

UCR-COP SHARING EVENT

Update Efforts and Share Experiences on Building Urban Resilience in Vietnam

Time: 14:00-17:00, May 16, 2017

Venue: Asian Development Bank Office, 3rd Floor, Cornerstone Building, 16 Phan Chu Trinh Street, Hoan Kiem District, Hanoi

Participants: ADB, GIZ, ISET and other UCR-CoP members

Meeting notes

1. Introduction

Ms. Mai (ISET-Vietnam) introduced the purposed of the sharing event, which is to share findings of a peri-urban resilience research, share work on action plan and indicators for urban resilience in Vietnam, and discuss gaps/opportunities to continue supporting urban resilience works in Vietnam.

2. Action plan for urban resilience and roadmap to establish practical urban resilience indicators for Vietnam – Presentation by Dr. Tim McGrath, GIZ

Dr. McGrath shared about GIZ's programs in Vietnam, with details about:

- The draft of the Action Plan for urban resilience in Vietnam, which was developed by GIZ in collaboration with the Agency of Technical Infrastructure, Ministry of Construction (MOC). The action plan aims to provide leaders and officials from the government at central, provincial and city levels, development partners and consultants with the evidence and analysis to support the range of actions necessary to improve urban resilience in Vietnam. The draft action plan document will be shared with the other members for comments before finalizing and approval by MOC.
- "Urban resilience indicators for Vietnam", which a new project by GIZ focusing on the water sector, including flood drainage, urban sanitation and wastewater management.

Please find more details about the above projects in Dr. McGrath's presentation here.

Discussions:

Q: How is GIZ's indicator project related to ISET's VNCRI project and other indicators projects (such as those by UN-HABITAT, GGGI, WB)?

A: This project has just started, and it is our hope that these sets of indicators can complement but not compete with one another. GIZ's project has a particular focus on the water sector, including urban drainage planning, sanitation, and wastewater management. No new indicators will be introduced. We'll look at existing ones and try a small set of about 20 most practical indicators purely based on the government system so that they can be taken up and applied in practice by our government stakeholders.

Q: There are many sets of indicators as mentioned above (TAF/ISET, GGGI, UN-HABITAT, GIZ, WB). How do they fit together and how can they be formalized in the Government system? Data will need to be collected at the local levels, so if there are different definitions or different instructions on data collection procedures, there will be a lot of confusion at the local level.

A: More information about other indicator projects:

- VNCRI (TAF, UDA and ISET): Development, pilot and rollout training on a set of indicators on urban climate change resilience. UDA is collecting the data from 28 rollout cities, which is expected to finish by the end of July. This project applies the City Resilience Framework by the Rockefeller Foundation and ARUP.
- Green Growth Indicators (GGGI with UDA): The project aims to develop a set of indicators for Green Cities in Vietnam. MOC is going to issue a circular providing guidelines to the cities on how these indicator data should be collected and reported. The project is also working with The General Statistics Office (GSO) to promote the adoption of these indicators by the GSO.
- Urban Prosperity Indicators (UN-HABITAT with UDA): These indicators (covering areas of urban population, labor, housing, and infrastructure) will be integrated in GSO's 5 and 10-year census.
- Urban management and development indicators (WB with UDA).

Each of the indicator sets actually focuses on a particular aspect of urban resilience: economic growth, green growth, climate change resilience, urban management, and water. According to Resolution no. 1210 by the National Assembly on urban classification, there must be a formal set of indicators with data updated every year to support the assessment and classification of Vietnamese cities. UDA has a working group dedicated to coordinating all work related to indicators with these partners. All relevant indicators will be integrated into the General Statistics Office's regular data collection, and used to provide data and criteria for classification of cities and towns. These indicators will be integrated in a single database and software for calculation and update.

In addition, to avoid confusion, especially for people who are not familiar with all the above projects, GIZ should consider changing the name of the indicator set to be more sector-specific (water). The labeling will be helpful for a broader circle.

Q: On which experience or framework are the GIZ indicators based?

A: We will be looking at existing sets of indicators, framework and experience to review the indicators, starting with what is available in the government system.

Q: Do you plan to conduct pilot investigation for data collection at the local level (which will be a challenging task)? Will you use existing data from the water sector?

A: We currently have to plan for pilot investigation. The project will involve 16 provinces and so the amount of work will be large. We plan to involve UDA in Phase 2 of this project.

Q: ATI is supported by WB to develop a website for water sector indicators. Will the GIZ project have a similar website?

A: The project will consider this depending on actual demand.

Q: Regarding UN-HABITAT indicator integration into GSO system: When can provinces start to collect data for these? When will the indicators be used for planning and build resilience in their provinces?

A: GSO censuses are conducted every 5 years (2009, 2014, 2019…). Some of these indicators already exist in the GSO system. UDA and UN-HABITAT are working with GSO to promote the adoption of additional indicators from this project (e.g.: Area of construction land in urban areas).

Q: Please cite some examples of potential project selection criteria (in the urban resilience action plan). It is certainly that CCA and urban resilience building require better data, capacity and finance. However, more financial resource does not always mean better action. In many cases, decision-makers ignore important information and vulnerable people are excluded from the decision making process. For example, most climate change funding in Vietnam has been for large infrastructure projects (due to the use of historical data and the lack of uncertainty considerations). What type of criteria will help to overcome these problems and contribute to urban resilience?

A: I totally agree. Some of the mentioned issues will be covered in our analytical report. In additional to mandatory criteria, some selection criteria to address these issues will be offered as optional ones, and those that will help cities fast tracking towards a loan or government project.

Q: What about the use of construction standard vs. the urban resilience approach?

A: We're also working on that, for example developing cost norms and technical specifications for these new elements, which were not considered in the past. It is always easier to define technical requirements and how they can be monitored, but when things fail it's usually the institutional side.

3. Climate risk in peri-urban area: A policy agenda – Presentation by Dr. Stephen Tyler, ISET

Dr. Tyler shared findings from ISET's case studies of urban flooding and urban planning process in peri-urban areas of Vietnam and what they mean for local and national policy-making:

- Causes of increased flooding: City expansion and development in areas inherently prone to flooding; incentives to over-expand when financial resources are limited; failure of natural drainage and floodway due to infrastructure development; inconsistencies in planning and implementation; poor staging of large-scale investment; outdated technical standards; lack of coordination, etc.

- National policy issues: lack of coordination among different ministries; city ranking criteria; data sharing, etc.
- Local policy issues: lack of coordination among different sectors and levels; infrastructure investment phasing; investigation and transparency; role of the private sectors and community; etc.
- Suggested measures: MOC guidelines on urban climate risk assessment and urban climate action planning; more hierarchically consistent planning across sectors; qualitative measures for city ranking; urban finance reform; integrated urban planning; public engagement; coordination and oversight, etc.

Flooding is caused not only climate change but related to planning and coordination between sectors. It is also not just about lack of funding but how resources are used.

More information can be found in Dr. Tyler's presentation here.

Discussions:

Q: There are challenges in bringing departments together and setting common goals. Decision making at the local level where food risks and environment impacts might be caused by actions elsewhere or at a higher level. What kind of structure is needed and what is the resource to maintain the structure – is there a mechanism for success?

A: This is a difficult question:

- Provincial government is the key player. They are interested in economic development, investment, and growth—the question becomes how to strengthen the security that provincial governments can offer to investors in terms of flood risks or transportation links or pipelines risks. These are economic incentives for them to do a better job. On the other hand, not all decisions require all to be involved, for example regarding the issue of road construction over floodplains—DOC and DOT are the relevant players who need to talk.
- Donors are coordinating local projects, and they set out project approval criteria. This incentivizes certain mechanisms to be adopted and formalized, for example for departments to collaborate, to apply project development process, to share their information and data, etc.

Q: In most of the cases, economic investment is driver. Then how can we make sure the most vulnerable population is given an equal voice, and the right people are present at the table?

A: Transparency is needed in the process: objectives must be explicit; there should be clear space for consultation, participation, and sharing. A checklist could serve this well.

Q: How are these results used to fit to other national policies and help build urban resilience?

A: ISET is advising UDA on details of Decision 2623 risk assessment process and to use of results in provincial urban planning guidelines. There is also the legal reform underway: new urban management law, planning law—it is a good time for these recommendations to be raised. We have practical examples of how these can be useful, and will be exploring opportunities over the coming years.

Q: The presentation mentioned the need for urban development committee? Could you explain how this can be useful?

A: DOC has no authority over decision by other departments—thus little information or control over, for example, the scale and design of highways in their own city when these are national level projects. The first step to go about this is for projects on the same sites to share the same data. A committee chaired by DOC would be helpful to make sure this coordination and sharing happens.

Q: There seems to be a particular concerns with transportation infrastructure?

A: Each flooding situation is slightly different, but very often increased flooding and inundation in urbanizing and urbanized areas is found to be the result of new construction of transportation infrastructure without an adequate drainage system incorporated because the technical design standards specify about elevation but not drainage. Thus roads are designed to save money with fewer drainage culverts underneath, leading to blockage of flows and deeper flooding. Drainage is not considered because of lack of information and awareness of how this can be problematic in the context of urban development and climate change.

4. Updates and sharing from other UCR-CoP participants

- UDA: Working on drafting the urban management and development law, urban development and climate change database (urban Atlas), and capacity building for staff on climate change
- GGGI: Action plan on urban green growth
- MDF: Training, capacity building and awareness raising, guidelines on urban risk assessment and urban climate action planning
- AREP: consultancy in urban planning and architecture
- GIZ: Drainage, urban planning and early warning system in the Mekong delta

5. On venues for future UCR-CoP events

- Special thanks to ADB and its staff who provided the venue and support in organizing this event.
- UCR-CoP is looking for potential venues for its future events and welcome member organizations to volunteer hosting.
- UDA can provide the meeting room for some small events.

Thanks to all participants and meeting close.