

Independent Review *Vietnam Community-based Climate Change Action Grants (CCCAG)*

REPORT

April - June, 2014

Author's Details

The CCCAG Review was undertaken by Donna Leigh Holden, Ly Phuong, Nguyen Huu Thien and Phil Cohn who act as Independent Consultants. As such, the views presented are their own and do not necessarily represent the views of DFAT nor bind it to action.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the DFAT Climate Change Teams in Vietnam and Canberra, AMNEP and CCCAG implementing for your investment of time in engaging with us, for your insights, reflections and practical responsiveness throughout the review process.

Special recognition must be made to the people of Vietnam who have shared their stories, experience, and perceptions. We trust we have done justice to them.

Aid Activity Summary

Aid Activity Name			
AidWorks Initiative Number	INK473		
Commencement Date	12 March, 2012	Completion Date	30 June, 2015
Total Australian \$	\$15 million		
Delivery Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ EDF ✘ SNV ✘ Save the Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Oxfam ✘ CARE ✘ Red Cross 	
Country/Region	Vietnam		
Primary Sector	Climate Change	Disaster Risk Reduction	

Summary of Evaluation Criteria Ratings

Ratings against DFAT Evaluation Criteria relate to the mid-term performance of the overall program. Individual projects are not rated¹.

Evaluation Criteria	Rating (1-6)
Relevance	5
Effectiveness	4
Efficiency	4
Sustainability	3
Gender Equality	4
Monitoring & Evaluation	4
Analysis & Learning	4

Rating Scale

Satisfactory		Less than Satisfactory	
6	Very high quality	3	Less than adequate quality
5	Good quality	2	Poor quality
4	Adequate quality	1	Very poor quality

¹ In line with DFAT M&E standards. Impact is not rated at mid-term

Acronyms and Abbreviations

1M6/5R	One must six reductions/five reductions
AMNEP	Australia Mekong NGO Engagement Platform
ARC	Australian Red Cross
CBDRM	Community Based Disaster Risk Management
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCCAG	Community-based Climate Change Action Grants
CSFC	Committee for Storm and Flood Control
CSO	Civil Society Organisation/s
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EDF	Environmental Defence Fund
EOPO/s	End of Program Outcome/s
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GoV	Government of Vietnam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
NGO	Non Government Organisation/s
NTP-RCC	National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change
PLWD	People Living With Disability
PQRG	AMNEP Program Quality Resource Group
SC	Save the Children
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
tCO ₂ e	Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
ToC	Theory of Change
VANGOCA	Vietnam-Australia NGO Cooperation Assistance Program
VGGS	Vietnam Green Growth Strategy
VNRC	Vietnam Red Cross
WU	Women's Union

Definitions

Climate Change Adaptation refers to the adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. Various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including anticipatory and reactive adaptation, private and public adaptation, and autonomous and planned adaptation².

Climate Change Mitigation refers to an intervention or activity to reduce the anthropogenic forcing of the climate system. It includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance greenhouse gas sinks³.

Civil Society Organisation (CSO) refers to a wide range of non-government and non-market organisations through which people organise themselves to pursue shared interests

² [IPCC TAR \(2001a\) in OECD. International Energy Agency. Adaptation to Climate Change - Key Terms. Ellina Levina and Dennis Tirpak, OECD, May2006](#)

³ Adapted from IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007, Glossary.

or values in public life⁴. This includes organisations such as registered charities, village and community based organisation/s (CBO/s), non-government organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisation/s (FBOs), women's organisations, co-operatives, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups, disabled people's organisations (DPO/s), indigenous groups, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes and the not-for-profit media.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters, reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improving preparedness and early warning for adverse events are all examples of DRR⁵.

Partnership: In the context of AMNEP, partnership is not seen as a specific way of operating, but as a broader approach to the way in which DFAT and NGOs do business. Because AM-NEP addresses multiple sectors across a regional portfolio, a range of partnering approaches is expected. In this context partnership is defined as an ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared. A partnership is based on principles of equity, transparency and mutual accountability. In practical terms this means that each partner is involved in co-creating projects and programs, committing tangible resource contributions and mutual accountability⁶.

Social Inclusion: Social inclusion is a **value, process and outcome** in which notions of equity, empowerment and rights are placed at the core of the development paradigm. Inclusion means that marginalised people (i.e. those who are usually excluded from decision making) gain access to and control over public spaces, resources and decision making affecting their lives, and that government service delivery is cogisant of and responsive to their different and unique needs so that all citizens have equitable opportunities to access services

⁴ DFAT: Australian Aid Civil Society Engagement Framework p.2

⁵ [UNISDR Portal](#)

⁶ DFAT [AMNEP Design Document](#) p. 3

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Context	6
Program Performance – Headline Findings	6
Summary of Recommendations	7
Section 1: Introduction	10
1. Activity Background	10
1.1 Community-based Climate Change Action Grants.....	10
2. Policy Context	10
2.1. Vietnam.....	10
2.2a DFAT Australian Aid	11
2.3. The Australian Mekong Engagement Platform	12
3. The Review	12
3.1 Scope and Objectives.....	12
3.2. Key Questions	12
3.3. Methods	13
3.4. Limitations	13
3.5. Review Team	13
SECTION 2: REVIEW FINDINGS	13
4. Findings Against DFAT Evaluation Criteria	14
4.1. Relevance	14
4.2. Effectiveness.....	15
4.3. Efficiency.....	19
4.4. Impact.....	20
4.5. Sustainability.....	21
4.6. Gender and Social Inclusion	24
4.7. Monitoring and Evaluation	26
4.8. Analysis and Learning	28
5. Partnership Observations	29
6. Civil Society Engagement	32
SECTION 3: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	35
7. Concluding remarks	35

Executive Summary

Context

Climate change is a major development challenge that **threatens to destabilise economic growth, exacerbate food shortages and erode recent gains in poverty reduction** in Vietnam.

The Government of Vietnam places high strategic importance upon understanding and managing its climate related risks. This priority is reflected within Australia's commitment to the Environmental Sustainability pillar of the *Vietnam - Australia Joint Aid Program Strategy 2012-15*. Additional to its wider commitments under this strategy, Australia has recognised the importance of building resilience to climate related risks at the community level, and the important role that NGOs play in facilitating this.

Australia's Response

DFAT's Community-based Climate Change Action Grants (CCCAG) facilitate this recognition by providing **\$15 million in grants to six international NGOs** and their local partners to support community based adaptation and mitigation initiatives including:

- ✦ four **adaptation partnerships**, led by Australian Red Cross, CARE Australia, Oxfam Australia and Save the Children that promote an integrated approach to climate change **adaption and disaster risk reduction at the community-level**; and
- ✦ two **mitigation partnerships** led by Environmental Defence Fund (EDF) and the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) that **build the capacity of smallholder rice producers and provincial agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve benefits from rice production** in Vietnam's Mekong Delta and Central Region.

Together, these partnerships aim to **directly benefit around 240,000 vulnerable people** through **improved resilience** to the unavoidable risks of climate change and natural disasters and through new agriculture practices to reduce GHG and improve livelihoods.

The Review

DFAT commissioned this Independent Progress Review to assess the performance of the CCCAG partnership in Vietnam, draw lessons to inform DFAT thinking on the scope and priorities for future investments in the sector, and make recommendations on how to strengthen the partnership drawing on AMNEP resources.

Program Performance – Headline Findings

CCCAG is aligned with the **joint development priorities** of the Government of Vietnam and the Government of Australia, and **represents a strategic and targeted investment** in supporting the Government of Vietnam to address the **very real threats of climate change to its development gains** of recent years.

CCCAG and its constituent projects have **made progress towards delivering on an ambitious set of approaches and activities** in a new area of focus for DFAT and many of the NGOs involved.

Mitigation investments have demonstrated that community based mitigation in the rice production system is **critical to achieving national emission reduction targets** and has **significant potential for high economic and social impact**.

Adaptation investments have enabled DFAT and its NGO partners to consider the **complex interactions and relationships between climate change, poverty, vulnerability, risk and resilience**. Specifically, it has enabled them to **leverage** past work and relationships and to **test new and innovative approaches** to addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation at the community level.

CCCAG has a strong focus on gender and social inclusion and makes **direct investments** in the **economic empowerment of women**, people living with **disabilities** and **the poor**.

Relationships have been built with relevant national and subnational government agencies, academic institutions and civil society (e.g. Vietnam Red Cross and Women's Union) which will **contribute to the potential for sustainability and replication**.

DFAT has used the opportunity presented by CCCAG to make **targeted and strategic investments** through the Australia Mekong NGO Engagement Platform (AMNEP) to **deepen engagement with** NGOs. This engagement is **paying dividends** for DFAT in its wider bilateral and multilateral engagements and for NGOs in mobilising their respective strengths to strengthen **development effectiveness** and **aid performance**.

Summary of Recommendations

This Review represents a key process in capturing lessons from CCCAG to inform the next stage of DFAT's community-based climate change investment in Vietnam. We hope that the combined efforts of all engaged in the Review can support DFAT and its CCCAG partners to reflect on progress made to date, refine the delivery of activities for the remaining duration of the program, and underpin critical analysis of future climate change adaptation and mitigation funding investments.

We present our recommendations in two forms:

- ✦ **Proposed Immediate Actions:** Actions that can be taken in life of the current program.
- ✦ **Forward Considerations:** Considerations and actions proposed to inform the design of DFAT's next investment in community based climate change in Vietnam.

Proposed Immediate Action - CCCAG Current Term	
Program Level	
The efforts that all partners (DFAT, NGOs) are making to the partnership are valuable and are paying dividends! Keep going! ☺	Partnership Efficiency Analysis & Learning
Partnering meetings should provide an opportunity beyond information sharing and lessons learned from programming, for DFAT and partners to spend time reflecting the evolution of the partnership itself and capture what is being done in new ways and what gains are being made.	Partnership Analysis and Learning Efficiency
We recommend that AMNEP engage with partners regarding practical steps it may take to support the joint advocacy plan. This may move beyond resourcing partners for specific activities, to considering innovative ways of identifying opportunities that do not place operational burden on existing partners/projects.	Partnership
The Partnership needs to consider how to support the development of a deeper shared understanding of key themes such as resilience, the relationship between DRR and CCA etc. Investments in the development of common frameworks would be valuable contributions however the extent to which this is feasible (time, resourcing, opportunity costs and tradeoffs) at the current term is an issue for the Partnership. This may be an opportunity	Effectiveness M&E Annex 7

Proposed Immediate Action - CCCAG Current Term	
for strategic investments by AMNEP or could be linked to the design process of the new program so as not to create an overburden on already busy partners. ⁷	
We strongly recommend that AMNEP consider a strategic investment into an analysis on the potential engagements with Vietnamese civil society in future climate change action and that this be used to inform the design of the future program.	Civil Society Sustainability
DFAT and partners should consider how they can better integrate a gendered analysis and a promotion of women's leadership within their advocacy plan as practical action towards promoting a stronger inclusive voice at the national level.	Gender Annex 10 Partnership
Project Level	
<p>There is need for attention by all partners to pay attention to the collection of <u>systematic, verifiable and non-contestable</u> evidence to support their analysis of development outcomes and indeed to inform future programming in an emergent sector. Specific examples have been provided in project summaries.</p> <p>Mitigation projects can further strengthen M&E and reporting by capturing the broader social benefits of these projects including gender, social and poverty inclusion, and resilience.</p> <p>Adaptation projects could be strengthened by paying more attention to the systematic recording of agronomic and economic data at the household level.</p> <p>M&E efforts for community development/empowerment, gender and social inclusion can be considerably strengthened by moving away from project led monitoring and analysis, to engaging the community more actively in articulating and measuring development outcomes beyond the targeting of vulnerable people as recipients of aid.</p>	Effectiveness Sustainability M&E Gender & Inclusion
There is a need for partners to strengthen the intervention logic around awareness raising and behavior change and develop more robust systems to evidence outcomes related to these.	Effectiveness Sustainability M&E
Partners should pay more systematic attention to capacity building and institutional strengthening. In particular to more clearly articulating and measuring the intended changes and desired capacity building outcomes of specific actors – individuals, communities, systems, institutions.	Effectiveness Sustainability Impact M&E

Forward Considerations - Future Program	
Characteristics of Future Design	
The design of the future partnership mechanism should be of sufficient duration and resourcing to enable NGOs to deliver and evidence sustainable outcomes.	Effectiveness Sustainability M&E
A program level Theory of Change will bring congruence to a future partnership and should be a feature of the future design.	Effectiveness M&E
The engagement of partners in the development of this program logic is fundamental to developing a shared understanding of the purpose of the	

⁷ We have tried to keep recommendations to a minimum for the current term. Partners have a lot to do with their existing projects. The design of the new program will also provide opportunities as well as additional burdens.

Forward Considerations - Future Program	
investment and better articulating their contributions to shared high-level outcomes. It will also provide a framework through which they can orientate interventions, focus capacity building and advocacy.	
A shared M&E framework at the <u>results</u> and <u>outcome</u> level should be a key feature of the future design.	M&E Effectiveness
Proportionality should be a consideration in determining both the characteristic of the mechanism and the scope of investments.	
The future design should provide a clear articulation of the purpose of partnering. Ideally, the design architecture would provide a mechanism to support partnership, analysis and learning. This would include M&E arrangements for the overarching partnership and analysis and learning efforts.	M&E Partnership
The design should clearly articulate and provide space for a meaningful role for Vietnamese civil society – NGOs, mass organisations – beyond service delivery.	Civil Society
Design architecture should build on lessons learned from past DFAT NGO partnerships and AMNEP guidance and seek to ensure that management arrangements reflect appropriate levels of business transactions while maintaining value for money and accountability considerations.	Efficiency Partnership
Scope of Future Design	
Future investments in adaptation and resilience need move towards a more nuanced integration of CCA and DRR, and extend beyond the current focus of DRR efforts on emergency preparedness and response.	Relevance Effectiveness Annex 7
The strong performance and potential for high impact warrants ongoing investment in community based mitigation activities as part of DFATs future climate change funding priorities in Vietnam.	Relevance Effectiveness Sustainability Impact
In the context of the new aid policy, these investments should explore how market linkages can leverage private sector investment into low emission products and services delivered through community-based initiatives.	
CCM partners need to consider a number of key threats to sustainability in the design of the next stage of investments in green rice cultivation	Annex 9
Gender and social inclusion should be a key feature of future investments. Particular attention should be paid to how to develop womens' leadership for climate change action.	Gender Impact Annex 10
Technical Quality of Future Design	
DFAT should consider mobilising AMNEP support to strengthen partner capacity for (logic and evidenced based) design and M&E. This could be extended to additional common issues or agency specific priorities on a needs basis.	Effectiveness Sustainability M&E
Future designs and M&E need to pay stronger attention to capacity building development and the articulation of capacity building plans.	Effectiveness Sustainability M&E Civil Society
Sustainability plans should be clearly articulated within future designs.	Sustainability Effectiveness Annex 9

Section 1: Introduction

1. Activity Background

1.1 Community-based Climate Change Action Grants

Community-based activities play an important role in helping developing countries respond to climate change, while also contributing to poverty reduction and enhancing livelihoods. By working directly with communities and using local knowledge, activities can be targeted to address community priorities and build the capacity of communities to respond to climate change challenges and development needs.

Recognising the important role that non-government organisations (NGOs) play in developing and implementing community-based climate change responses, the Australian Government committed up to AUD\$30 million for Community-based Climate Change Action Grants (CCCAG)⁸ in South East Asia and the Pacific. These grants fall into two main categories:

- a) Community-based **adaptation** grants, to help build the resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change; and
- b) Community-based **mitigation** grants, to help communities reduce or avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, while addressing key development priorities.

In Vietnam, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) secured \$15 million to support six projects over 2.5 years from July 2012 to December 2014⁹. This includes:

- ✦ four adaptation partnerships, led by Australian Red Cross (ARC), CARE Australia, Oxfam Australia and Save the Children (SC) that promote an integrated approach to climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) at the community-level; and
- ✦ two mitigation partnerships led by Environmental Defence Fund (EDF) and the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) that build the capacity of smallholder rice producers and provincial agencies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improve benefits from rice production in the Mekong Delta and Central Regions.

Together, CCCAG projects aim to directly benefit around 240,000 vulnerable people through improved resilience to the unavoidable risks of climate change and natural disasters and through new agriculture practices to reduce GHG and improve livelihoods.

2. Policy Context

2.1. Vietnam

As a country **particularly affected by the adverse impacts of climate change**¹⁰, the Government of Vietnam (GoV) sees climate change as a major development challenge that threatens to destabilise economic growth, exacerbate food shortages and erode recent gains in poverty reduction, all of which would negatively impact progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As such it has developed a range of laws,

⁸ These grants form part of Australia's \$599m three year 'fast-start' commitment (2010 - 13), see ToR (Annex 1)

⁹ In April 2014, DFAT approved the extension of CCCAG projects to end of FY 2014/15 pending the outcomes of the Independent Progress Review and the design of a future program of support for climate change in Vietnam post CCCAG.

¹⁰ UNFCCC (2009). Vietnam and Climate Change. <http://www.un.org.vn/en/feature-articles-press-centre-submenu-252/1020-viet-nam-and-climate-change-a-discussion-paper-on-policies-for-sustainable-human-development-viet-nam-and-climate-change-a-discussion-paper-on-policies-for-sustainable-human-development.html>

strategies, and programs for responding to climate change.

The National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC) lays the foundation for sectoral and local action planning and coordination and is overseen by Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE). The strategic objectives of the NTP-RCC are to assess climate change impacts on sectors and regions and to develop action plans to effectively respond to climate change in both the short and long-term to ensure the sustainable development of Vietnam, to take opportunities to develop towards a low-carbon economy, and to join the international community's efforts in mitigating climate change and protecting the climatic system.¹¹

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Action Plan Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector (2008-2020) aims to enhance the GoV's capabilities for adaptation and mitigation to minimise its adverse impacts and to ensure sustainable development of the agriculture sector.

The Vietnam Green Growth Strategy (VGGs 2012) has high-level political support, overseen by the National Committee on Climate Change headed by the Prime Minister. Its strategic tasks are: i. low carbon growth, ii. greening production; and iii. greening lifestyles and sustainable consumption. As such, consideration of low carbon economy and green growth are seen as key principles for achieving sustainable development, and the reduction of GHG emissions and increased capability to absorb GHGs are set to become a mandatory indicators in Vietnam's social and economic development¹².

Vietnam has a sound legislative basis with regard to gender and climate change. The Law on Gender Equality (2007) and National Strategy on Gender Equality (2011-2020) oblige all sectors and Ministries to mainstream gender and develop Action Plans for gender equality. The NTP-RCC recognises the potential climate change impacts on women and underlines gender equality as a guiding principle. The National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation further highlights the negative impacts of disasters on vulnerable groups such as the old, disabled people, women and children¹³". As such, the extent to which interventions are able to support gendered analysis and action on the effects of climate change upon women and indeed all segments of Vietnamese society is fundamental in supporting the GoVs action on climate change.

2.2a DFAT Australian Aid

The Australian Government has committed to play its part in the global response to climate change. This work is being progressed through the 'building resilience' priority of its new aid policy which states that Australia will "work with countries in the region to build resilience to climate-related shocks and manage the impacts of climate change¹⁴"

Climate change is a key focus of Australia's development cooperation with Vietnam identified by both countries as a priority under the Environmental Sustainability pillar of the *Vietnam – Australia Joint Aid Program Strategy 2010-15*. DFAT has developed a delivery strategy to guide Australia's climate change assistance to Vietnam. Broad stakeholder consultation including with Vietnamese civil society and international NGOs active in climate change emphasised the need for community-level engagement to build community resilience and reinforce and inform national and sub national policies.

¹¹ [IFAD, Climate Change Analysis and Adaptation Responses](#).

¹² [VGGs](#)

¹³ Socialist Republic of Vietnam, [National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation](#)

¹⁴DFAT [Australian Aid Policy \(2014\)](#)

Support for NGO engagement on climate change builds on DFAT's experience under Vietnam-Australia NGO Cooperation Assistance (VANGOCA) where it partnered with NGOs to develop Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) approaches. CCCAG expands on this approach by looking beyond the immediate risk of natural disasters to consider the broader impacts of climate change on people's livelihoods.

2.3. The Australian Mekong Engagement Platform

The Australia-Mekong NGO Engagement Platform (AMNEP) is a DFAT initiative that supports DFAT and NGOs to deliver effective aid by providing high-quality technical expertise, resources for better monitoring, evaluation and risk management and access to policy dialogue and learning events to NGO partnership programs.

AMNEP has provided a range of supports to both DFAT and NGOs as they work together to build an effective partnership for climate change in Vietnam.

3. The Review

3.1 Scope and Objectives

DFAT has commissioned an Independent Progress Review to:

1. Assess the performance of the Vietnam CCCAG partnership and projects in order to make any necessary adjustments to maximise the benefit of the partnership/ projects;
2. Provide recommendations on how to strengthen NGO partnerships across projects, drawing on AMNEP resources;
3. Draw out key lessons which will inform DFAT thinking regarding the scope and priorities of any future funding to the sector beyond the life of the current program¹⁵.

3.2. Key Questions

The key evaluation questions established in the Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 1 are:

1. To what extent are the Vietnam CCCAG program and projects likely to achieve their stated goal, objectives and outcomes? What are the positive/negative changes directly or indirectly by the project on the women and men in achieving project objectives and outcomes?
2. Do beneficiaries (communities, provincial government, etc) have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources required to achieve the intended results?
3. How successful are the CCCAGs in working together to share lessons and experience across projects and at the national level to allow the program to add up to more than the sum of its parts?
4. To what extent will the Vietnam CCCAG partnership/projects lead to positive sustainable impacts for Vietnam? To what extent are the Vietnam CCCAG partnership/project outcomes likely to be adopted more broadly, including within provincial planning?
5. Do beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to maintain the outcomes after Australian Government funding has ceased? Are there any actions that can be taken now that will increase the likelihood that the initiatives will be sustainable?

¹⁵ The TOR refers to an assessment of projects ongoing funding. Since the writing of the TOR, DFAT has moved forward with extensions to 2015. As such the review has not made recommendations regarding future funding of existing projects.

6. What are the key characteristics of successful initiatives under the program, and how can these be adapted to other contexts or opportunities for replication and larger scale implementation?
7. To what extent do the Vietnam CCCAG partnership and projects ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable groups, by gender, ethnicity, disability and other relevant factors, have been adequately considered.

Given that CCCAG has sought to draw upon the lessons learned from earlier DFAT-NGO partnerships in Vietnam¹⁶, the Review also examines the extent to which these have been implemented and the added value of these new approaches.

3.3. Methods

The Review was guided by a detailed Review Plan developed by the team in consultation with DFAT and CCCAG partners. The mixed methods approach adopted aimed to support the building of the partnership, verify progress and emerging outcomes, and contribute to the analytics undertaken by DFAT and partners throughout implementation.

Methods included a desk review of key documentation, a three week field mission (see Annex 2) during which targeted consultations were held with a range of key actors (see Annex 3), discussion on key strategic issues with DFAT and CCCAG partners, and analysis of primary and secondary data provided by partners. A multistakeholder workshop, as well as debriefings with each partner were held at the end of the field mission, during which the Review Team was able to discuss the preliminary findings and seek clarification and feedback. A list of consultations is provided at Annex 4.

3.4. Limitations

The challenge for any review of multi-partner grant programs, delivered in geographically diverse locations, is the extent to which it can fairly make detailed assessment of the performance of individual partner activities based upon short visits to single locations. As such, the Review has focused upon the performance of the overall CCCAG Vietnam program and the contributions of each partner to it. We have not made a substantive assessment of individual projects or approaches¹⁷.

Key informants were selected by CCCAG partners in each location. CCCAG partners and DFAT Officers attended all consultations and field activities. This is not unusual for a mission of this nature, and the team sought to take the potential of any bias into account in the formulation of lines of inquiry and analysis of outcomes of consultations.

3.5. Review Team

The four person Review Team brings a wide range of Vietnam and regional experience in climate change adaptation and mitigation, civil society, community development, gender and inclusion, and extensive practical experience in evaluation and learning. Bios of the team members are provided at Annex 5. DFAT Officers from both Vietnam Post and Canberra transitioned in and out of the mission, which was also accompanied by implementing partners, and a local translator.

SECTION 2: REVIEW FINDINGS

The observations of the Review are assessed against DFAT quality standards. Ratings have been provided within the Executive Summary. **Our assessment takes into account that**

¹⁶ DFAT [VANGOCA Review](#) (2009)

¹⁷ We have developed brief summaries of each CCCAG project to highlight our observations regarding the progress and challenges facing each partner. Due to time constraints and the configuration of the mission, these **do not** represent substantive reviews of projects and are internal documents provided to DFAT and partners to inform implementation.

projects are at mid term and recognises the requirement of time to explore new approaches and relationships within a new sector. Our findings therefore are based on an **assessment of what is reasonably expected at this point in time.**

4. Findings Against DFAT Evaluation Criteria

4.1. Relevance

Program Level Observations

CCCAG demonstrates a **very high degree of relevance at the program level.** Climate change is a significant development concern in Vietnam which “threatens to destabilise economic growth, exacerbate food shortages and erode recent gains in poverty reduction – all of which would negatively impact progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals¹⁸”

The investment of \$15 million for community based mitigation and adaptation is in **line with Vietnam’s national priorities** established in the NTP-RCC and other GoV policies and programs (see 2.1), and which are reflected within the GoV/GoA joint development plan.

Importantly, CCCAG’s ***pro-poor approach and strong attention to wider crosscutting development issues, policies and safeguards*** such as gender equality and disability inclusive development align with GoV and DFAT policy and fill gaps created by the focus of national programs (e.g SP-RCC) on infrastructure and sectoral-based adaptation.

CCCAG further ***brings civil society voices to the adaptation process*** and builds upon an understanding of the ***specific strengths of NGOs in working directly with communities***, including the most vulnerable to ensure that they can reap the benefits of development assistance. This builds on the work of NGOs in supporting CBDRM approaches under DFAT’s VANGOCA program from 2004 - 2009.

The Review recognises that reducing people’s vulnerabilities to the shocks of climate related disasters is an important factor in building resilience and adapting to climate change. A key challenge for DFAT and its partners beyond the life of CCCAG, will be the extent to which they are able to **extend beyond the current focus of DRR on emergency preparedness and response and take into account a broader definition of resilience and adaptive capacity**, and plan activities which consider the impacts of a changing climate across a range of domains e.g. agriculture, health, infrastructure and natural ecosystems.

This issue is complex and created considerable debate throughout the Review. Ongoing debate is warranted to inform the design of the future program. We propose that a staged framework could be considered, in which disaster preparedness remains valid for addressing immediate and short-term hazards in the most vulnerable areas. However for the medium and long term, DRR efforts should move progressively towards addressing root causes and building the resilience of communities. In order to support this debate, we have provided a more detailed discussion on the issue and the opportunities in Annex 7.

Project Level Observations

The **mitigation projects are clearly aligned with the GoV’s climate change and agricultural development strategies** which have established targets of 20% productivity improvement and 20% reduction in GHGs by 2020. In 2000, total emissions in Vietnam were 150.9 million tCO₂e, of which 65.1 million tCO₂e was from agriculture. Nearly 60% of agricultural emissions were accounted for by methane and nitrous oxide emissions from rice

¹⁸ DFAT: Australia – Vietnam Climate Change Delivery Strategy p.4

cultivation¹⁹. With over 7 million hectares of rice under cultivation in rural areas, this source of emissions has been identified as the key to pro-poor agricultural GHG mitigation²⁰.

The **mitigation projects are strongly aligned with the objective of the Australian Aid program to promote prosperity and reduce poverty**²¹. DFAT's Vietnam Climate Change Delivery Strategy 2011- 2016, articulates outcomes relating to green growth and the application of clean technologies, with specific reference to low-carbon rice production techniques²². Both projects are implementing activities that contribute to the outcomes listed in the Strategy's Performance Assessment Framework.

Adaptation efforts practically respond to the objectives of the NTP-RCC, VGGS and other GoV policies and programs to identify measures to respond to climate change; enhance public awareness, responsibility and participation and develop human resources to respond to climate change; promote international cooperation to support climate change; and mainstream climate change issues into socio-economic, sectoral and local development strategies, plans and planning.

CCCAG adaptation projects are trying to compliment and add value to the wider set of development priorities (including poverty alleviation, gender equality and DRR) **by contributing to government planning systems and programs, and working through mass organisations**. Partners have supported participatory capacity and vulnerability assessments which have been integrated within the Social and Economic Development Planning (SEDP) process and plans at the commune and district levels. The use of pro-poor approaches seek to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are identified and addressed.

4.2. Effectiveness

Program Level Observations

The Review found **evidence of progress by all partners against their own objectives and the CCCAG Result Areas**. Emerging outcomes include:

- ✦ 'Green' rice production (EDF, SNV) demonstrate increased yields and lower inputs which has provided economic benefits for households while reducing GHG emissions;
- ✦ Mitigation projects have worked with universities and government agencies, developing a rigorous approach to scientific research and data collection which has enabled the development of a strong evidence base which is being used to inform policy dialogue at provincial and national levels;
- ✦ Enabling opportunities for civil society actors to engage with local government to test community based approaches to adaptation;
- ✦ The development of guidelines for participatory capacity and vulnerability assessment and the piloting of these processes at the community level has led an increased voice for vulnerable people and the integration of these approaches within local development plans (SEDP);
- ✦ The promotion of gender and socially inclusive practices, particularly with regard to the targeting of women and other vulnerable groups including People Living with Disability (PLWD), female headed households, the poor, landless and ethnic minorities;

¹⁹ Vietnam's 2nd National Communication to the UNFCCC, MONRE 2010

²⁰ Salas, W. et al, 2012. "National-level Crop Mitigation Potential for key Food Crops in Vietnam". [IFAD-IFPRI Partnership Program - Climate Mitigation Activity](#).

²¹ [Australian Aid Policy \(2014\)](#)

²² *Australia – Vietnam Climate Change Delivery Strategy 2011-2016*. Australian AID, <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/vietnam-climate-change-strategy-2011-16.aspx>

- ✘ Access to pro-poor financing for vulnerable groups including through loans from the Bank for the Poor (OXFAM), and the development of new microfinance instruments managed by the Womens' Union ((WU) (CARE);
- ✘ The development of quality, child-centred climate change communications materials and teaching resources (SC) and support for the integration of climate change and DRR into school curricula (ARC, PLAN, SC).

Additional examples are dispersed throughout the various sections of this report. In response to the key evaluation questions, Annex 8 provides a summary of the characteristics of successful initiatives to support future design considerations.

Factors Impacting Effectiveness

The structure of CCCAG as a grant mechanism financing stand-alone, short-term investments in an emerging sector presents challenges to both DFAT and its partners in demonstrating effectiveness. Three interrelated issues impact effectiveness: i. striking a balance between testing and delivering results; ii. the absence of an overarching program logic/Theory of Change (ToC) and iii. the short implementation period.

While in fairness, the intended purpose of CCCAG and its supported projects, would best be viewed as an early investment aimed at engaging DFAT and its partners in an emerging sector, allowing them to test potential approaches and key relationships, this was not made explicit. There was a level of **mixed messaging between the opportunity presented by "fast start" funding and the expectation that projects would deliver high level results in a short timeframe.** This contributed to some mismatch between projects and the funding mechanism.

"The whole process / design of CCCAG created a lot of challenges.

We didn't have clarity. It was not clear if we wanted innovation or to address quantity.

We really do need to have clearer expectations next time ... "

Anonymous (DFAT)

The Review views this mismatch as a two-way responsibility based on **multiple trade-offs by DFAT and NGO partners alike.** NGO partner designs were highly ambitious both in terms of scope and targeting for short-term interventions. This is partially accounted for by the competitive nature of funding²³ and a desire to engage in an emerging sector. It is also most likely a reflection of the expectations of GoV and communities for NGOs to focus on service delivery or capacity building. Funding contracts were however put in place around approved project proposals, assessed against DFAT quality at entry criteria. The funding mechanism did not clearly articulate expectations of what it felt could realistically be expected in a short timeframe, and raised expectations regarding ongoing resourcing and encouraged partners to design beyond the life of the CCCAG window²⁴. For DFAT we recognise the considerable downward pressure for the quick release of funds from a centrally created funding window which resulted in a short design window. We also note that DFAT wanted to capitalise on the opportunity presented by the existence of CCCAG funds to engage a range of partners who could test different approaches to both the adaptation and mitigation.

The result of these mixed messages and tradeoffs is an ambitious scope which creates pressure for partners to meet targets, deliver services and engage with of multiple actors

²³ Minutes of CCCAG Review Presentation.

²⁴ AusAID (2010) Community-based Climate Change Action Grants Guidelines p.7

in a short period of time. This risks a lack of focus, poor integration of results at the program level and a limited ability to deliver models that can be feasibly replicated or upscaled which is a stated (albeit ambitious) expectation of the funding window.

In learning from this it is important to acknowledge that the way in which donors finance NGO activities significantly influences how NGOs are able to deliver aid. Lessons learned through VANGOCA identified the need to ensure that NGO funding is of sufficient scale and duration to enable meaningful development impact and effectiveness:

“It is important to allow time to develop relationships, trust, build capacity, observe impact, learn lessons, and recalibrate implementation strategies to maximise impact.²⁵”

The DFAT Office for Development Effectiveness Review of civil society financing similarly proposes that longer-term engagement and partnership models are likely to have a strong impact upon effectiveness and sustainability highlighting that

“One-off grants for 12 months or less achieve little in terms of development outcome ... Indeed, the same might be argued about grants for 24 months²⁶”

The short-term nature of the CCCAG funding mechanism contributes to further to the **mismatch between the ambitions of both partners and DFAT to deliver development outcomes, in a short space of time**. This has played out particularly for the CCA projects, all of which have long term goals relating to community development, building resilience, capacity building and the testing of adaptive livelihoods models, This is discussed in more detail in the in Project Level Observations for CCA partners below.

Finally, the **lack of an overarching program logic and ToC for CCCAG creates challenges** for DFAT and its partners to articulate the intended outcomes of the program, the linkages between the two result areas (mitigation and adaptation), illustrate synergies across the portfolio of projects and the ability to evidence partners' specific contributions against clearly articulated and shared End-Of-Program-Outcomes.

Given the advanced stage of CCCAG and DFAT's intent to proceed with the design of a new community based climate change program in the immediate future, it is not feasible to take action on this issue within the current program. We do recommend however that a program level ToC should be a key feature of the new investment.

Project Level Observations

Mitigation projects have successfully introduced, and seen growing adoption of new low-emissions rice cultivation techniques by farming communities. In addition, both projects were able to demonstrate an increase in yields and reduction in inputs costs thereby increasing farmer profitability. In the case of the EDF project, M&E results have shown average yield and profit increases of 11% and 41% respectively.

M&E of several crops has demonstrated reductions in GHG emissions. EDF's results, whilst highly variable between locations and crops, indicate an average of 8 tCO₂e/ha have been reduced through adoption of the One Must Six Reductions (1M6R)²⁷ cultivation technique. Similarly, SNV monitoring of the summer 2013 crops in Quang Binh and Binh

²⁵ [VANGOCA Review \(2009\)](#)

²⁶ Hall and Howell, [ODE Working Paper: Good Practice Donor Engagement with Civil Society](#) (2010) p. 26

²⁷ 1M6R or “One must, six reductions”: Must use certified/quality seeds; plus reduction of seed density, fertiliser, herbicide, water, post-harvest loss and GHG emissions.

Dinh indicated that System of Rice Intensification (SRI)²⁸ growing methods reduced GHGs by 4tCO₂e/ha.

The **efficacy of other elements of the mitigation projects are difficult to assess due to their early stage of implementation.** The short timeframe means it will be challenging for partners to deliver significant results in relation to the market based aspects of the projects be that carbon, renewable energy or “green rice”. Market based interventions require significant testing and development that is likely beyond the scope of the project timeframes. However, the initial efforts to build market-based activities have the potential to form the foundations of successful future initiatives pursued through DFAT, or other donor funding. For example, access to carbon markets requires development and approval of an appropriate methodology and subsequent project accreditation. This is beyond the scope of the projects in the short-term, however, the GHG monitoring results obtained have the potential to form the basis of further investigation of the feasibility of this potential revenue stream for farmers.

The program wide challenges discussed above appear to have played out most significantly within the adaptation projects which have made varying levels of progress towards their objectives. **All partners have been impacted in some way by the short implementation period.** Obtaining programming approvals²⁹, establishing baselines for M&E, implementing vulnerability and capacity assessments, and assessing suitable interventions all take considerable time. The need to work through local partners, or align with government planning cycles, further shortens the effective programming period.

The impact of this is most visible within the livelihoods work. The need to undertake detailed analysis of adaptive livelihood opportunities, address seasonality and align with the work plans and priorities of local government partners are key considerations which affect the ability of partners to identify test and roll out adaptive livelihoods approaches in a short space of time. The implication of this for CCCAG is that livelihoods interventions have only begun in the second year of programming. In some cases these have not yet commenced or are being tested in inconsequential numbers. Despite the extension of CCCAG to 2015, this still does **not allow sufficient time for evaluating the (sustained) success of these interventions overtime in terms of adaptiveness** or impacts on household economy/poverty³⁰.

The wide scope lack of overarching program logic/ToC for CCCAG has contributed in some cases in poor and unfocussed design. Project designs are generally ambitious, seeking to reach significant numbers of beneficiaries and addressing a wide range of climate change and DRR challenges which are as yet poorly integrated.

Common challenges that have influenced our assessment of the effectiveness of project level interventions at this stage of implementation include³¹:

- ✘ **Lack of shared clear articulation of key concepts:** While each have their own specific targets, approach, set of relationships and local contexts, climate change adaptation (CCA) projects tend to engage in a similar suite of activities: i. raising awareness of climate related risks and desired behaviours; ii. capacity building, iii. adaptive livelihood interventions, and iv. advocacy. There is an observable lack a clear

²⁸SRI uses a similar approach of reduced inputs and alternate wetting and drying of paddies.

²⁹ Projects require GoV approval which can take varying periods. The norm would be 3 months. In the case of SC, approval was not yet granted at the 9-month milestone forcing the selection of a new location.

³⁰ This issue is taken up further in the Sustainability and M&E sections of this report.

³¹ Note, not all of these apply equally to all partners. Partner specific observations have been provided separately within project summaries.

definition and purpose for each of these across projects. This undermines their ability to demonstrate performance at the outcome level. Attention to building a deeper shared understanding of key themes and the development of common frameworks would strengthen effectiveness.

- ✘ **Less than optimal attention to analysis:** Projects tended to focus on assessment aligned to the delivery of predetermined outputs as opposed to wider analysis. There was evidence of some deficit-based assessment of issues, capacities and competencies and a tendency to address immediately visible problems and symptoms rather than root causes. This in turn has led to specific predetermined and immediately achievable interventions rather than exploration of longer-term interventions including, for example management of the natural environment or working on strengthening primary producers bargaining power. This may be a symptom of the need to build early relationships with local stakeholders. Incremental changes in approaches and interventions over time would indicate progress.
- ✘ **Understanding capacity building:** All partners are engaging in capacity building. A variety of approaches are being used ranging from institutional strengthening, advocacy, training and mentoring to community empowerment and mobilisation. However there is limited articulation of whose capacities are being built, and for what. The ability to evidence planned capacity building outcomes will be a key factor in determining success (see 4.5 Sustainability and 4.6 M&E).
- ✘ **Lack of strategic attention to behavior change:** The implicit logic of current interventions is that the act of imparting information will result in increased knowledge that will lead to behaviour change. This is both tenuous and contestable. There is a need for partners to develop more systemic and integrated strategies for awareness raising and behaviour change, and develop robust systems to evidence outcomes. This also implies the need to identify the most relevant messaging for climate change awareness raising for poor and vulnerable people. Awareness raising has so far focused on the causes of climate change and its large-scale impacts. Proposed actions tend to be high-level "Save the Planet" messages rather than those linked to opportunities for vulnerable people to protect their own livelihoods, manage their natural environment etc. We do recognise that for some partners such messages are not within their immediate control, and that it will take time for them to work with local partners and communities to develop more nuanced local messages.

4.3. Efficiency

Program Level Observations

Based on emerging outcomes and lessons, CCCAG has provided a valuable vehicle through which DFAT and its partners can test approaches to both community based CCA and mitigation in what is a new programming space. This represents a **valuable first investment into testing the effectiveness of interventions and approaches to CCA and mitigation in order to inform future programming priorities.**

Significantly, DFAT Vietnam's efforts in advocating strongly for the inclusion of mitigation investments within its CCCAG portfolio have resulted in a **widening of Australia's engagement in the climate change sector in Vietnam and allowed opportunities for testing the appetite for and feasibility of community based mitigation.**

DFAT has made concerted efforts to build on the recommendations of the VANGOCA review and resources principles of AMNEP (see 2.3) to **seek a deeper programmatic engagement with its NGO partners.** This includes, ensuring adequate resourcing and

delegation of team responsibilities to enable regular monitoring of CCCAG activities and engagement of DFAT Program Managers in dialogue with partners about contextual and implementation issues as opposed to a focus on contract management. This is bringing positive internal and external benefits to DFAT (see 5: Partnership) as it builds its engagement within the climate change sector in Vietnam.

Despite the issues relating to the design of CCCAG discussed previously, the **management arrangements have been appropriate and commensurate with the investment**. CCCAG partners recognised DFAT efforts to minimise transaction costs while maintaining a high level of accountability. In particular the development of a common reporting framework, streamlined reporting and regular partnership meetings enabled partners to develop some cross program synergies including the sharing of climate change communications materials, the replication of livelihoods strategies³², and joint analysis and advocacy.

"The approval process was consultative, the DFAT team was very involved and responsive to partner queries and the contracting process was easy."

"Compared to other donors the reporting is easier and more focused."

Anonymous CCCAG Partners

Project Level Observations

Detailed assessment of efficiency at the project level was outside of the scope of the Review. Aside from the inception and progress of some partner projects being delayed by GoV approvals and the need to align with government planning systems and partner mechanisms, the Review did not identify any major issue related to efficiency. It further recognised that **all partners are experienced NGOs who have sufficient internal management systems in place to manage operations and risks**. We also note that appropriate measures are in place to manage key safeguards e.g. fraud, child protection, environmental protection.

4.4. Impact

While premature to assess impact at this early stage of implementation³³, in the interests of learning, the Review has identified a number of potential impacts which may assist DFAT and its partners in considering their investments in the context of a future program.

Both **mitigation projects** have made strong progress towards their stated objectives in relation to the implementation of low-input, high yield, low-GHG rice cultivation in their target communities. Rice cultivation in Vietnam accounts for 25% of national GHG emissions³⁴, with approximately 9 million or 65% of rural households involved in rice production³⁵. As such, **community based mitigation in the rice production system is critical to achieving national emission reduction targets and has significant potential for high economic and social impact**.

The cultivation methods promoted by project have been effectively implemented and adopted in target communities. Due to the strong quantitative M&E capabilities of partners they have evidenced positive development impacts even within the relatively brief implementation period. Table 1 summarises the encouraging positive results delivered

³² ARC plans to expand some of the adaptive livelihoods strategies developed through the CARE project are planned

³³ In line with DFAT M&E Guidelines, impact is not rated at mid term

³⁴ Vietnam's 2nd National Communication to the UNFCCC, MNRE 2010

³⁵ *Production Survey of Paddy in Vietnam*, General Statistics Office – Ministry of Planning & Investment. http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/ess/ess_test_folder/Workshops_Events/APCAS_24/PPT_after/APCAS-12-20-Rice_Production_Viet_Nam.pdf

by the projects in terms of both GHG mitigation and household economy.

Table 1: Emerging Results – Mitigation Projects³⁶

Project	Emission Reductions (per ha)	Emission Reduction (%)	Increased Income/per ha (VND)	Increased Income/per household (VND)
EDF	8 tCO ₂ e	60%	8.0 million	10.74 million
SNV	4 tCO ₂ e	23%	400,000	615,000

Based on current engagements, scope and emerging outcomes identified in 4.2, the Review anticipates the most likely impacts of **adaptation projects** to emerge through:

- ✦ The extent to which sub national government and civil society actors will be able to continue to implement participatory hazard, capacity and vulnerability assessment and integrate these with local planning;
- ✦ The extent to which these processes will engage the most vulnerable as actors as opposed to recipients of assistance;
- ✦ Evidencing adaptive livelihoods options which deliver results in terms of building the resilience of vulnerable households. This evidence would extend beyond increased income, and take into consideration a range of factors including seasonal resilience, reduction in crop failure, diversification of income sources and increased bargaining power or access to markets.

As such, **the demonstration of impact will be contingent upon systematic attention to articulating and measuring intended capacity building outcomes** particularly at the commune level, and the ensuring the **measurement of both economic and social outcomes (positive and negative) from livelihood interventions** at the household level.

4.5. Sustainability

Program Level Observations

Measuring sustainability presents significant challenges in multi-partner initiatives with broad objectives and targets. This is made more complex by the lack of an overarching ToC for CCCAG, the diversity of geographic locations and short delivery timeframe. DFAT sought to address these challenges at the outset by encouraging partners to build on existing programs and relationships, and to test interventions which could be further expanded through ongoing programming opportunities beyond the life of CCCAG.

Our assessment of sustainability at mid-term focuses on the extent to which CCCAG projects have established key relationships, a sufficient level of ownership, capacity and resources to enable local actors to achieve their intended results, and the extent to which this positions them to take forward relevant actions beyond the life of the program. The Review has observed the following progress in these areas.

All partners have made **conscious efforts to align with and work through government policy and planning systems**. Projects have established local ownership and encouraged approaches which seek to integrate climate change considerations into wider government programs such as SEDP, DRR, agricultural extension and environmental

³⁶ Note that the results presented in the table above are aggregated over multiple crops and regions based on data reported by the partners. There is significant variation between crops, within and across different districts, however, these results do give an indication of the potential impact possible if these production techniques were replicated at scale.

programs. In addition, they have encouraged citizen's engagement through the adoption of participatory approaches and modeling of desired behaviours and practices.

Specifically, partners have worked closely with relevant government agencies (e.g. MARD/DARD extension services, MONRE and Storm and Flood Control Committees) to assess climate change risks and identify appropriate mitigation and adaptive livelihoods strategies. Partners working on CCA projects have engaged with local government bodies (e.g. Peoples' Councils) to integrate participatory capacity and vulnerability assessment into the SEDP process and are advocating upward to the district level. While doing so they have contributed to strengthening the capacity of government service providers and civil society actors such as the WU and Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) to support the facilitation of these processes.

Given the increasing role of people's participation in the formulation of public plans, and an expectation that public service provision will become more demand driven in the process of decentralised governance in Vietnam³⁷, **building demand for citizen's engagement in community based planning processes (e.g SEDP and CBDRM) is highly relevant** and is likely to have wider application beyond the scope of current interventions.

CCCAG partners are working to develop a sense of ownership by local partners. In all field locations, local actors (government and civil society) were able to discuss their local climate change challenges and their impacts on members of the community. They were also able to clearly present the objectives of their activities and report progress.

The choice of partners to **work with mass organisations** (e.g. the WU, VNRC and Youth Union) **also supports sustainability**. Mass organisations have extensive reach into communities coupled with a high degree of legitimacy with government. They also experience internal and external tensions which incentivise performance and downward accountability³⁸. As mass organisations have the potential to drive significant change at both institutional and social levels. As movements, they have characteristics of volunteerism, high turnover, bureaucracy and variable capacity that also mean that change can take time. This highlights the special value of high levels of engagement, embedded approaches (e.g. ARC) and a focus on institutional strengthening.

Longer-term considerations for sustainability

While the analysis of sustainability at the mid-term focuses on relationships, ownership and capacity, the Review has been asked to comment on the likelihood for communities and government to implement program activities in the longer term.

While sustainability is a clearly articulated principle within all partner designs, **sustainability planning is as yet limited** to efforts to raise awareness and change behaviours at the individual and household level, the selection of partnerships for project approvals and administration, field level service delivery (delivery of project interventions), capacity building for local service delivery (e.g. community assessment and planning, DRR emergency and response planning etc) and the identification advocacy opportunities.

NGO partners commonly articulate sustainability as a consideration for exit planning. Sustainability is however, significantly more complex, influenced by a range of interrelated factors e.g. capacity (institutions), competency (individuals), resources, leadership and policy. For example, capacity building efforts delivered through training or awareness raising may have some immediate effect at the individual level, the capacity of local institutions to sustain and further these practices is significantly more challenging. There is a need for **partners to pay stronger attention to evidencing and sustaining capacity**

³⁷Kirchmann, K (2006) "[Participatory Planning in Communes](#)"

³⁸ [Holden et al: World Bank, Peduli](#)

building. This is likely to necessitate stronger attention to institutional strengthening efforts than are currently evident.

A further future challenge will be the extent to which resourcing is commensurate with the capacity of local government or civil society partners to continue with activities beyond the life of CCCAG intervention. To extend project activities beyond their current reach, partners need to have worked towards the development of models that are replicable by government agencies at scale, and within their own costing and resourcing capacity, or targeted interventions that can be delivered by civil society actors (mass organisations and local NGOs) within their own programs.

As such, strengthening **sustainability (where there is an expectation of replication) is an issue for design and requires significantly clearer articulation in future initiatives.** Annex 9 has been developed to provide some more detailed considerations on how DFAT and partners may wish to frame sustainability considerations as they move towards completion of current initiatives as well as in the planning and design of future interventions.

Engaging women

SNV and EDF have sought to empower both woman and men farmers in championing the adoption of new rice cultivation techniques, and use of renewable energy technologies.

EDF has taken affirmative steps to secure the participation of women within core farmer groups - the vehicle through which transfer of the new low-emissions rice cultivation techniques are delivered to households. This means that women are engaged in providing technical guidance to the communities. In many cases, women have become mentors or "invisible leaders" who work with community members to encourage the application of the new cultivation techniques.

SNV has engaged women to play crucial roles to promote and test the use of new technology such as rice husk residues in cookstoves as renewable energy alternatives to fossil fuels.

Project Level Observations

The **sustained replication of the low-emission rice production system appears feasible.** There is significant ownership and capacity in relation to the promotion of low-input, high-yield, low GHG rice cultivation. Local extension teams have a clear understanding of the farming protocols and have demonstrated capabilities in recruiting farmers to trial the techniques. Both SNV and EDF have been able to demonstrate to farmers that the low-emissions production techniques delivered higher yields and greater profit. Both projects have seen the diffusion of these new growing approaches to adjacent farms and experienced a willingness of new farmers to 'opt-in' purely on the basis of demonstrated positive results. Farmers engaged in these projects were clear that they would continue to utilise the cultivation techniques promoted even after the projects ceased. This was a result of a well-developed M&E / reporting framework whereby producers participated in the collation of production data, and shared results (peer-to-peer) within the local farming community.

Both projects have been able to generate government support at district, province and national levels. Cultivation techniques have been incorporated into larger scale provincial government led pilot programs. If scaled nationally, these cultivation techniques would have a significant impact on the viability and livelihoods of millions of small-scale rice farmers.

Factors that have strengthened the potential for the sustainability of mitigation projects include a focused and clearly articulated design combined with robust attention to testing interventions and creating an evidence base to inform national and provincial

policy. The projects have also created links with appropriate local experts and institutions (e.g. national and sub national government departments Universities, science and agricultural extension agencies) and paid attention to the creation of multistakeholder fora through which results can be communicated and shared to support replication. The Review identified four challenges to the sustainability of low-emissions rice cultivation efforts that should be considered in the design of future interventions. These are discussed in Annex 9.

In contrast, CCA partners utilise a community development, as opposed to a commodity/sector-based approach. This means they work with relevant local institutions (e.g. commune, district, provincial councils, mass organisations, CSOs), government line departments, and citizens, to assess local climate change risks, vulnerabilities and sensitivities in order to identify contextually suitable adaptive livelihoods interventions. This takes time. As a result livelihoods interventions have only just started on a small scale in some areas. The implication of this is that there has been **insufficient time as yet to enable partners to test the appropriateness and sustainability of adaptive livelihoods interventions in a meaningful and systematic way**. CCCAG partners are aware of the need to undertake more detailed analysis of livelihoods interventions throughout the life of the projects. In order to support this analysis, Annex 9 contains discussion on factors that partners may wish to consider as they assess the efficacy and sustainability of adaptive livelihoods interventions in the remaining period.

4.6. Gender and Social Inclusion

Program Level Observations

DFAT policy and CCCAG guidelines place emphasis on the importance of gendered and socially inclusive approaches to addressing development and climate change, as well as ensuring the participation of women and other vulnerable groups including PLWD, children, ethnic minorities and the poor in project planning, decision making and implementation. This is a strength of CCCAG.

The fact that DFAT made the **targeting of the most vulnerable an explicit priority of the funding mechanism**, and a criterion for selection and appraisal of projects is an important factor in creating this success. This is supported by the fact that CCCAG partners have **strong institutional focus and mandates to work with the poorest of the poor and marginalised or vulnerable groups**.

CCCAG partners are cognisant that **the risks associated with climate change threaten to erode progress made towards gender equality, reinforce inequity** and exacerbate issues such as women's limited mobility, poor access to land and other resources.

Project Level Observations

All partners have mainstreamed gender and social inclusion. This includes undertaking gender analysis before the intervention, demonstrating the active targeting of women as beneficiaries of aid and supporting women's participation in planning, service delivery and capacity building. Specific contributions by partners includes:

- ✘ The prioritisation of livelihoods assistance to women, including vulnerable and poor women, and female headed households (SC, CARE, Oxfam);
- ✘ The identification of livelihoods models that are suitable for women, as well as other marginal groups such as the landless, PLWD etc (CARE, SC, Oxfam);
- ✘ The inclusion of women in microfinance activities that aim to increase their economic resilience (Oxfam, CARE, SC) and the development of new loan products for poor women to be administered by the WU (CARE);

- ✦ The development of child-centred CCA and DRR communications materials (SC, ARC) and the active targeting of women for awareness raising (all partners);
- ✦ Efforts to make vulnerable community members including PLWD and female headed households more visible within their communities, and including them in community planning for a (Oxfam, CARE, SC) and disaster response plans (ARC).

Through these efforts, **partners have promoted socially inclusive development planning** at the commune level, **the prioritisation and delivery of inclusive agricultural extension services** by government agencies, **and social welfare services** through the WU, Commune and District Councils that are responsive to the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups. It is expected that this will result in ongoing practice change within these organisations and agencies (see Box).

“Addressing gender inequality requires us to work closely together”

Ms Dang Thi Trinh shared with us how gender training offered by the VNRC to district government helped her to understand that climate change impacts women and men differently, and to see that women and men have differing priorities, responsibilities and decision making abilities within households and the community.

“Once we understand gender, we see the challenges in different ways - from the experience of women and from the experience of men.

So, as Officer in Charge of Labour and Social Affairs, I provided advice to the district authority to increase the budget for gender equality activities.

I see that I need to work closely with Red Cross and the District Women’s Union to promote the participation of women in the community in general, not only just for climate change!

We need to spread gender equality messages to different villages and explain why women’s voices need to be considered and consulted.

As mothers, women may bring different experiences for protecting their children during disasters and their experience may be different to their husband.

So, as local authorities we need to understand their needs and try to promote participatory approaches when we plan interventions for the community”.

Discussion with the Emergency Response Team of the Commune CFCS, Dong Huong Commune, An Ninh district, Kien Giang province.

The key challenge for social inclusion will be the extent to which future initiatives and efforts are able to **move beyond the targeting and participation of the most vulnerable in project activities, and extend towards supporting local government institutions to make genuine efforts to promote the meaningful engagement of the most vulnerable in development planning**. This process of genuine empowerment would take place through more detailed and nuanced gendered and socially segmented analysis, leadership development, providing opportunities and platforms for women’s and ethnic minority voices and strengthening the downward accountability of local planners and service providers.

We recommend **increased attention to the promotion of women’s leadership on gender and climate change**. In all areas visited, women were actors within their communities and already contribute effectively to resilience of their family and communities, but were excluded from wider engagement in DRR and CCA planning and management at the community level and beyond. We have provided some key principles and observations

within Annex 10 to assist DFAT and partners to consider how to frame these future engagements.

CCCAG **partner's engagement with the WU is strategically valuable** on account of its respected position with government and at the community level, its strong information dissemination capabilities, ability to reach large numbers of women, and the potential for key climate change and DRR messages to be integrated within its wider program. While partnerships with the WU currently tend to focus on service delivery and project implementation, there is strong potential to use these partnerships to promote women's leadership on climate change and advocate for a stronger inclusive voice at the national level and sub national levels. We acknowledge the work that CARE has commenced in exploring how the WU can take a more active role in role in developing womens' leadership for climate change action.

In summary, the CCCAG partnership provides a valuable forum within which DFAT and its partners can undertake shared learning and better integrate gender analysis within their efforts to influence policy. Joint advocacy efforts, for example provide a strategic opportunity for the sharing and analysis of good practice and lessons on gendered approaches to support women's leadership on climate change within higher policy fora.

4.7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Program Level Observations

The absence of an overarching program logic and ToC for CCCAG means that it is **challenging to clearly articulate emerging outcomes at the program level**, and partners struggle to articulate their own contributions towards a higher purpose. Despite this siloed structure, **DFAT has made solid efforts to bring some congruence to the program by working with partners on the development of shared indicators**. These indicators assist DFAT to aggregate CCCAG results at the program level so that they feed into results reporting against the Vietnam Climate Change Delivery Strategy³⁹.

The development of shared indicators against high-level program results and a streamlined reporting framework is a great start. It evidences DFAT's responsiveness to lessons learned from previous NGO programs⁴⁰ and capitalises on AMNEP technical support⁴¹. It does not however, capture the breadth of activity and program learning undertaken, nor allow for a more systematic analysis of development outcomes that would be made possible by the existence of program level outcome indicators.

The **size of the CCCAG funding envelope** coupled with the number of partners implementing discrete interventions presents an **issue of proportionality**, where the performance that DFAT would expect for a program of this value, is not commensurate with the M&E requirements of \$1.5 - 3 million projects. Proportionality will be as important consideration for the design of the future program and in the context of the new aid policy and performance framework. DFAT will need to consider (at design) practical ways in which it can work with partners to ensure sufficient congruence across the program to enable partners to evidence clear development outcomes. Ensuring this level of M&E quality will require sufficient resourcing for documentation, analysis and independent/peer review at both the program and project levels.

Project Level Observations

CCCAG partners have paid independent attention to M&E at the project level. These

³⁹ This is consistent with the lessons from the Review of the previous VANGOCA program

⁴⁰ DFAT; VANGOCA Review Report (2009)

⁴¹ AMNEP provided support for the development of common indicators.

efforts have been mixed⁴² and there is limited uniformity in M&E across the portfolio. Activity and output level monitoring and reporting across all projects meets DFAT standards. While there is evidence of progress towards the intended project objectives being achieved, there is significant room to strengthen the evaluative (measurement, analysis and learning) functions at the outcome level across all projects.

By nature of their focus on the science of low-input rice cultivation, the **mitigation projects have a stronger evaluative focus** particularly in terms of the quantification of results relating to increased yields, emissions reductions and improved income. As such they are able to clearly demonstrate and communicate tangible results, particularly to farming communities and local government agencies. SNV and EDF have also secured opportunities to communicate their results within provincial and national government fora.

Whilst agronomic (yield) and economic (income/profit) data is captured through M&E, mitigation projects pay less attention to more qualitative socio-economic outcomes. There is an opportunity to **further strengthen M&E and reporting by capturing the broader environmental and social benefits of these projects.** Developing stronger analysis of gender and inclusion, the extent to which the interventions have led to changed relationships between farmers, their organisations and the market, or changes in the bargaining power of primary producers, would enable mitigation projects to report more fulsomely on how they are delivering benefits to vulnerable households by reducing poverty and impacting on some of the social dynamics within the communities and rice value chain.

Conversely, adaptation projects could be strengthened by paying more attention to the systematic recording of agronomic and economic data through for example the use of farmer log books or household income/expenditure or borrowing records in order to evidence the viability and impact of new livelihoods interventions, loan products etc.

Adaptation project designs tend to be articulated in terms of objectives and activities as opposed to outcomes. This leads to a tendency for M&E to focus on measuring and reporting at the activity/output level. There is **limited rigour around qualitative measurements and the systematic collection of evidence at the outcome level.** A greater M&E focus on program outcomes may contribute to deepening our understanding of the climate change risks facing communities in Vietnam, identifying adaptive measures which can strengthen resilience to these risks, understanding the obligations of various actors, and in turn how civil society (including international and national NGOs) are best positioned to support these.

While terms such as capacity building, behavior change, awareness raising, gender equality etc are commonly expressed as intended objectives of all projects, there is limited articulation of what successful outcomes for these would look like. As such indicators for the measurement of these outcomes have either not been established or are poorly formulated. This results in a lack of systematic attention to qualitative data collection and poor selection of appropriate tools and methods for measurement and analysis at the outcome level. A common example is the use of pre and posttests to evidence raised awareness linked to behaviour change. Similarly, while all partners are paying excellent attention to the collection of gender disaggregated data and recording the participation of various vulnerable groups in project activities, there is less gendered analysis of emerging outcomes or project impacts which would lead to a stronger understanding of the ways in which the interventions are contributing positively or negatively to the lives of men, women or other vulnerable groups.

⁴² DFAT QaI reporting indicates considerable variation in M&E capacity amongst CCCAG partners

Given the intent of CCCAG as a first step towards supporting NGO partners to scale up existing successful community-based climate change activities or to build a climate change component into existing community development activities⁴³, **the focus on implementation and the delivery of outputs ahead of testing and analysis of outcomes is a missed opportunity**. Not only should M&E efforts seek to systematically document evidence (e.g. the use of farmer log books, organisational capacity frameworks etc) but they should also seek to foster stronger analytics and critical development discussions within and between partners and DFAT.

4.8. Analysis and Learning

Project Level Observations

CCCAGs strategic value is in the opportunity that it provides in acting as a vehicle through which DFAT and its partners can test new engagements and approaches for community based climate change in a new sector.

The partnership model seeks to bring congruence to the six CCCAG projects by providing opportunities through which partners can share information and learn from each others experience. DFAT has made a systematic effort to engage partners in this information sharing and cross-program analysis and learning through the implementation of:

- ✦ Six monthly partnership meetings that provide a structured opportunity for:
 - ✦ NGOs to share lessons, discuss key common concerns, cross cutting issues and identify synergies and potential shared actions; and
 - ✦ For DFAT to provide briefings and consult on emerging policy issues and bring the experience of NGOs to wider bilateral and multilateral fora (discussed further in 5.)
- ✦ Undertaking joint monitoring visits, where DFAT staff join the routine monitoring visits of CCCAG partners, or key learning functions and events;
- ✦ Facilitating joint analysis and action planning through investments into the development of a joint advocacy plan (see discussion under 5. Partnership);
- ✦ Identifying opportunities to foster linkages between CCCAG partners and those within its wider climate change portfolio in Vietnam – e.g. the ADB and GiZ, and other Australian initiatives such as ACIAR.
- ✦ In April 2014, DFAT worked with the CCCAG partners to develop a presentation on the partnership to the International Institute for Environment and Development 8th Community-based Adaptation to Climate Change (IIED CBA8) Conference;
- ✦ The Independent Progress Review is also an example where DFAT and partners have worked collaboratively together to build a shared analysis of the lessons emerging and opportunities presented for their ongoing engagement in community based climate change in Vietnam.

We liked the way that DFAT prepared for the knowledge and learning workshop in Katmandu. We hope that this kind of process is ongoing and we can share case studies and other lessons.

Anonymous (CCCAG Partner)

The Review did not find any evidence that partners felt overburdened by the expectations of the program around learning. In fact, reflections on management

⁴³ DFAT: CCCAG Program Specific Guidelines p.3

arrangements, learning and partnership all highlighted the positive value that partners placed DFATs efforts to facilitate learning. It should be highlighted that DFAT also valued the commitment of CCCAG partners to engage with them in this new way.

This Review highlights that the opportunity presented by the existence of CCCAG has resulted in **significant learning which is informing the development of new tools and approaches** to engaging in community based climate change in Vietnam, and which can inform future investments, as well as new ways in which donors and NGOs can engage around shared interests.

Project Level Observations

Partners have **established systems for the exchange of information and learning** at the field level. All partners have undertaken foundation studies such as gender analysis, livelihoods assessments, hazard and vulnerability assessments, and baseline studies. They have used these to inform decision making on project interventions, targeting, training content etc. They have shared them with their own partners and within the CCCAG Partnership.

Organisations however learn and value learning in different ways. As such, and not unexpectedly, there is variation in the way in which learning efforts manifest across the different partners. For example, the methodologies and tools used and the quality of analyses undertaken, many of which have been discussed previously (see 4.2. Effectiveness; 4.6. Sustainability and 4.7 M&E).

An interesting observation that evidences learning is the extent to which **partners are making adjustments to their interventions in response to learning at the field level**. This can be as simple as small adjustments to contextual differences between districts or target groups. For others who are perhaps having to work outside of their institutional competence on account of the geographic spread of the program and the requirement for integrated approaches, this is evidenced for example in the manifestation of strategic relationships which build on the relative strengths of other CCCAG partners.

Our discussion M&E (see 4.7) has highlighted the need for partners to pay increasing attention to more detailed and systematic **analysis** at the field level as they move along the project cycle, in order that they can add further richness to learning at both the project and program level.

5. Partnership Observations

Practical Support for Partnership Development

From the outset, **DFAT Vietnam seized the opportunity presented by CCCAG to progress the regional agenda of strengthening its engagement with NGOs**. DFAT team members have responded well to the new ways of working in partnership and made **concerted efforts** to build on the recommendations of the VANGOCA Review and principles of AMNEP to design and manage an efficient partnering mechanism (see 3. Efficiency).

DFAT Vietnam **has drawn upon resources available through AMNEP to build the partnership**. This includes support for the appraisal and selection of projects, the facilitation of pre-design workshops, project level design support, technical support for the development of common results and reporting frameworks to support strengthened M&E at the program level, and the provision of technical advisers to this Review to enable a nuanced reflection on the investment in partnership approaches.

Observable Benefits for Different Partners

In assessing the contribution of partnering efforts, we have sought to understand the

extent to which the partnership adds value to partners i. individually, and ii. collectively. Our assessment also takes into account the stage of the partnership. Lessons learned through AMNEP highlight that it is challenging at the outset for partners to arrive at a shared vision of what the partnership can tangibly achieve. Most often, recognition of the real potential of the partnership comes in to play as institutional relationships develop, and there exists a deepened trust and understanding of each other's mutual interests.

Partnering efforts are providing benefits to different partners. From the outset of Review planning and through field visits and debriefing sessions, we noted openness in the dialogue between DFAT and its partners. In various fora, DFAT and NGOs were prepared to raise issues and concerns, provide opportunities for all partners to present their views and work collaboratively towards solutions or shared understandings. This is a strong indication that the **trust required for deepening the functionality of the partnership in the longer term is developing.**

DFAT staff communicated that they have a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the work of their partners and of sub national contexts. This **deeper engagement enables DFAT to draw upon field observations and emerging lessons in its wider policy conversations with the GoV and other key development actors.** Consultations held with GoV and external stakeholders throughout the Review, indicated that **Australia was seen as a credible and engaged actor** within the climate change sector.

"We appreciate the way DFAT engages in our monitoring - not as a big donor visit but more low key, talking to our field staff and partners and understanding the local realities."

"We need to think about how we can better engage our HQ in the partnership"

Anonymous (CCCAG Partner)

A second important benefit of this increased engagement is the extent to which it enables DFAT staff to **act as internal brokers**, who are able to advocate the strategic value of community based climate change investments within a changing policy context. This role extends to promoting effective approaches for example, supporting resilience through integrated approaches to CCA, poverty alleviation and DRR; the strategic value of working through civil society; and the importance of working through local government and strengthening inclusive community planning systems.

NGOs value a collaborative working relationship with DFAT and a reduction in the transaction costs to reporting and contractual arrangements. There are also multiple examples of where NGO **partners have identified opportunities for collaboration around common needs.** This is most reflected in at the project level where partners are beginning share lessons, resources and in some instances implement joint activities such as training. There is some evidence that partners are mobilising the relative strengths of others to add value to their own efforts. Some partners have for example drawn on SC's expertise in child centred approaches. ARC is drawing upon CARE's expertise in rural development, as it takes its own early steps in this sector. Oxfam has partnered with local NGO Marinelife Conservation and Development Fund (MCD) and is drawing on their expertise in coastal management.

Not all partners are working collaboratively toward common interests. Synergies at this stage of partnership tend to be opportunistic and influenced by a range of factors, and do not exist across the portfolio. There is limited collaboration for example between the mitigation projects despite shared interests in low emissions rice cultivation. SC and MDF/Oxfam are also working in the rice sector, but have not drawn on the strengths and

extensive technical expertise of EDF and SNV. There is limited collaboration between SC and Oxfam despite working with the same partners in Tien Giang.

Is the Partnership Moving Forwards?

A further consideration in assessing partnership is the extent to which there is evidence that the partnership is evolving. The following case studies have been provided to illustrate our observations about how different interests may drive the development of the partnership.

The Joint Advocacy Plan: A major contribution of AMNEPs support for the CCCAG partnership has been investment into the development of a joint advocacy plan. The process of arriving at this plan has been challenging for all partners. It has taken considerable time to agree advocacy priorities. While DFAT perhaps expected the identification of two or three key messages and targets, the resulting plan appears to reflect the key advocacy interests of each partner. It further engages those partners as the lead agencies within their own spheres of interest. This indicates a siloing of responsibility for existing programmatic or institutional interests rather than a reflection of a higher opportunities or crosscutting level analysis.

There is a sense that the impetus for this plan was driven by DFAT, and more specifically the wider regional agenda of seeking bring the experience of NGO programs to wider bilateral and multilateral policy dialogue which drove the development of AMNEP. As such, while partners engaged in the development of the plan, we did not observe a tangible sense of ownership to drive collective advocacy efforts forwards. Indeed, our observation is that this advocacy plan is seen as being the output of the partnership, as opposed to an outcome of the convergence of shared interests.

This raises a critical point. That the achievement of a successful outcome in terms of the intended higher level purpose of this strategy will rely heavily upon whether the partnership itself can mobilise the level of cross-program learning and analysis that will enable all partners to be sufficiently cognisant of the key issues and advocate outside of their own specific areas of institutional interest and/or competence. This will require a deepened understanding of each other's approaches, joint analysis and assessment of successes and failures. It requires a high level of trust and openness that enables reflection and action to move well beyond institutional ownership. It further requires attention to field level dialogue, information sharing and analysis.

It also requires resourcing. Partners highlight that the advocacy initiative came about after CCCAG projects had commenced. They did not feel that they had sufficiently planned for resourcing joint advocacy efforts. While we understand that AMNEP may have some resources available to support efforts under this plan, this may not account for the tradeoffs that senior staff of partner organisations need to make between advocacy and management responsibilities, nor the fact that NGOs tend to leave 'little gravy' at the field level.

There is strong expectation expressed by CCCAG partners for DFAT to play a stronger role in brokering partnerships for climate change in a new program.

"While efforts on the joint advocacy plan are commendable, the plan is more a joint information sharing and learning plan than an actual advocacy strategy. A plan for joint information sharing and learning should be designed from the beginning of the program, including a plan for collaboration between partners.

DFAT can play a constructive catalyst role in bringing organisations and projects together into a more coherent program.⁴⁴

This is a sound indication that **CCCAG partners are prepared to start to consider how to take the partnership forwards to its next stage.**

CCCAG Issues Paper: Prior to the field mission, CCCAG partners came together of their own accord to reflect on their experience. The outcome of this reflection was an Issues and Options Paper summarising the partners reflections on the achievements and lessons of CCCAG, and the options for the design of the future program. The Review Team then met with DFAT, AMNEP and partners to discuss the observations.

“The partnership model has the greatest potential for building on each organisation’s comparative advantage and strengths and can overall increase the technical quality of the program as well as the impact at different scales. As it combines national and sub-national interventions, links from the activity level to the programmatic objective and goals is more direct. Advocacy will be more evidence based, strategic and leveraging the partnership and its resources better increasing the potential for influencing national policies and programs on CCA/M and DRR.”

CCCAG Partner Issues and Options Paper.

The experience of the development of the Issues Paper is an indication that, **not only are partners prepared to move to a new level of partnership, but that they are actively considering the shape and form of that partnership and seeking to influence it.**

Aside from evidencing the **value of the investments of all** partners in the partnership, it presents an opportunity for DFAT and its NGO partners to use the design for the next stage of DFAT’s community based climate change investment to take the partnership to its next level. Annex 11 provides some ideas about where NGOs and DFAT may consider partnering investments in the immediate term and longer term. We also acknowledge that both partners and DFAT have great ideas and encourage an ongoing dialogue on partnering investments.

6. Civil Society Engagement

In the context of an NGO partnership we think it valuable to make some a few observations with regard to engagement with Vietnamese civil society. The United Nations in Vietnam claims that:

“To achieve significantly enhanced awareness (for climate change) will require coordinated efforts at an even larger scale by several ministries, mass organisations and both national and international NGOs, and will require involving more stakeholders than those identified in the NTP-RCC⁴⁵”

This highlights that DFAT’s commitment to **a funding window that facilitates the engagement of NGOs in community based climate action is both relevant and strategic.**

This report has highlighted that CCCAG partners have formed important partnerships with mass organisations (e.g. the VNRC and the WU) who will be key actors for replicating and sustaining CCA efforts. This represents a **valuable first step in terms of supporting the mainstreaming of CCA within wider government and social programs, and creating the**

⁴⁴ CCCAG Partners: Issues and Options Paper (May, 2014)

⁴⁵ UN (2009) Vietnam and Climate Change: Discussion Paper on Policies for Sustainable Human Development p.24

space for civil society action. However, this will not happen simply through a programming engagement. Strategic investments in the capacity building of these partners is warranted, with consideration of their dual roles as i. service providers and ii. citizens' organisations.

Engaging with local Civil Society in the South

Civil society engagement in climate change in the South is nascent.

CCCAG partners are positively trying to support the development of the South Mekong Climate Change Working Group. While we see this is valuable, the network is currently attended largely by CSOs, and acts as an information-sharing forum amongst like-minded actors. The absence of policy makers, and actors with other divergent interests that would enable critical debate presents as a missed opportunity for CCCAG partners to add value by facilitating opportunities for local stakeholders to debate climate change issues and influence policy at the sub national level.

When this issue was raised with CCCAG partners, they indicated that this was because their focus on engagement with that forum was capacity building, although we have not yet been able to identify a plan for how that will happen.

This example, poses some key questions that we encourage DFAT and partners to reflect on as they consider future engagement with local civil society in the context of a new program:

- ✘ What is the role of civil society actors for climate change action in Vietnam in the future (community planning - service delivery - community mobilisation - policy dialogue)?
- ✘ Are these mutually exclusive?
- ✘ Are we supporting them to engage with each other, or with us?
- ✘ Are we using the right vehicles for building the right capacities?
- ✘ Do we have the capacities required to build capacity?
- ✘ Do we have a plan, agreed with these actors for what capacities building?

CCCAG partners are also engaging with Vietnamese NGOs, albeit to a lesser degree. Where this is happening, engagements appear to focus on the implementation of project interventions⁴⁶. While CCCAG partners stress their own role as capacity builders of these organisations, the Review has not been able to evidence any documented institutional assessments or capacity development plans. Our discussion on effectiveness, sustainability and M&E highlight the need to more **clearly articulate the purpose and targets of capacity building** in order to better measure outcomes and impact, and so that opportunities for wider partnership are not lost (see box).

In summary, the engagement of civil society Vietnam is a complex issue. The engagement of civil society in climate change action in Vietnam is however, also fundamental the success of a future community based climate change program.

“The time has passed in Vietnam for funding international NGOs to do more of what they have always been doing.”⁴⁷

We recommend that a detailed and objective analysis of the potential ways in which DFAT and its partners could engage with Vietnamese civil society be undertaken as part of the pre-design analytics for the future program.

⁴⁶ This is with the possible exception of Oxfam's engagement with MCD where MCD is expected to provide some technical transfer on natural resource management to Oxfam, although we have not seen evidence that that has happened.

⁴⁷ Anonymous Donor Representative

We also recommend that this analysis be used to assist DFAT and its partners to develop a clear strategy for how to engage with local civil society as development and climate change actors, of which capacity building may be an activity rather than the objective.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A table containing the Recommendations of the CCCAG Progress Review has been provided at the beginning of this report.

7. Concluding remarks

CCCAG and its constituent projects have made progress towards delivering on an ambitious set of approaches and activities in a new area of focus for DFAT and many of the NGOs involved. All partners have attempted to align their work with appropriate government agencies, such as those involved in social development planning and agricultural extension services, and have supported sub national governments to better understand their climate risks and to implement localised climate change action.

CCCAG has enabled DFAT and partners to consider the important interactions and relationships between climate change, poverty, vulnerability, risk and resilience, and to test approaches to addressing these. It has enabled the development of new relationships and partnership between DFAT, implementing partners, their local partners in turn, and promoted opportunities for them to share their experience in sub national, national and international climate fora.

In the absence of a clear overarching program logic and ToC that brings the six investments into congruence, there is a risk that the key learnings and achievements of CCCAG projects will not be fully captured and used to support sustained development models, or bring sufficient evidence to higher level policy dialogue.

This Review has been a key process in trying to capture and focus that learning to inform the design of future climate change investments in Vietnam beyond the life of CCCAG.

It is hoped that the combined efforts of all engaged in the Review can support both DFAT and the CCCAG partners to reflect on the progress made to date, refine the delivery of activities for the remaining duration of the program, and underpin critical analysis of future climate change adaptation and mitigation funding.