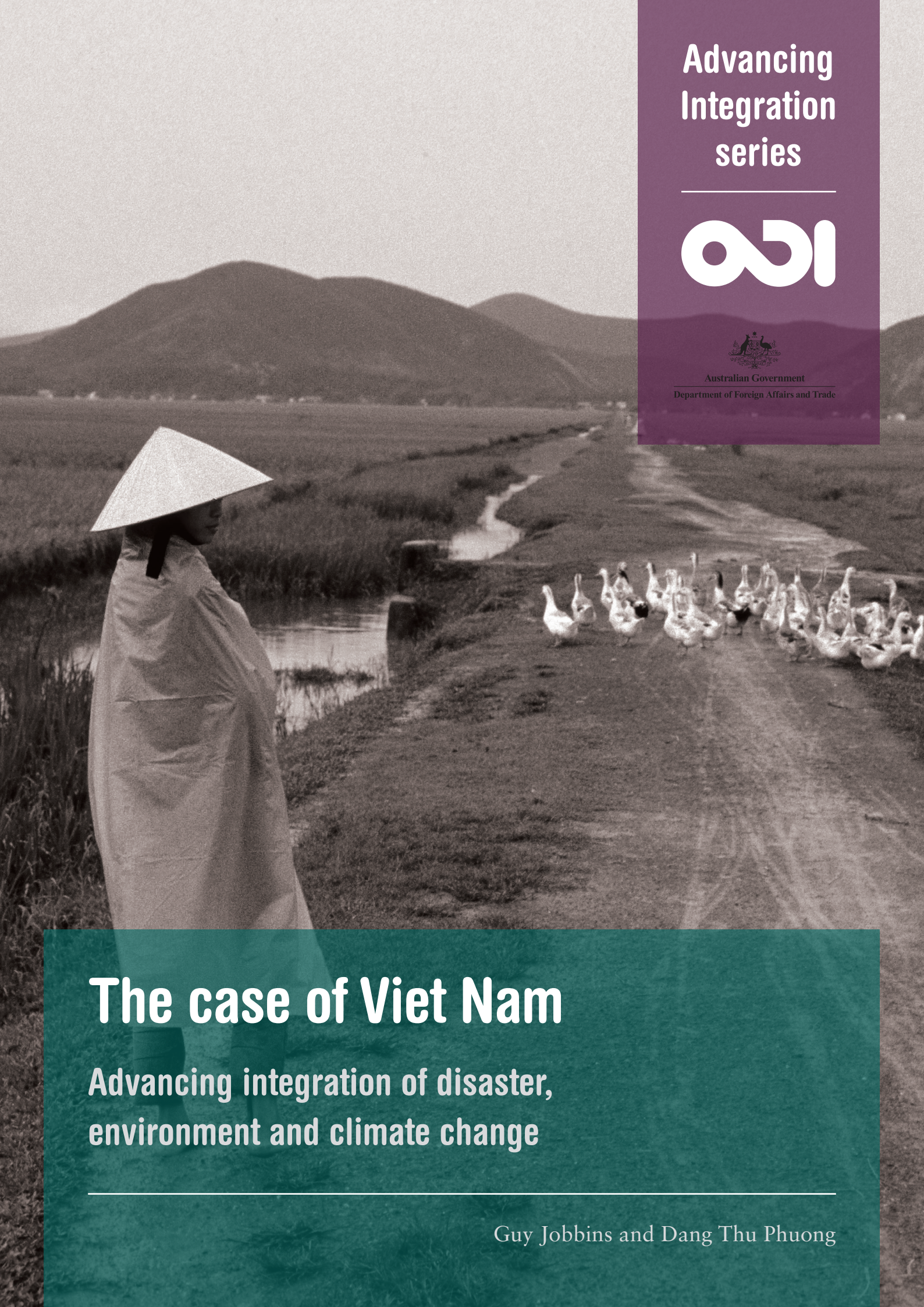
Advancing Integration series



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The case of Viet Nam

Advancing integration of disaster, environment and climate change

Guy Jobbins and Dang Thu Phuong

Preface: Advancing Integration

Donors supporting developing countries in the pursuit of sustainable development know that not all risks and eventualities can be predicted, managed and accounted for. Yet it is important to try and reduce these risks by understanding: the complexity of the context in which aid dollars are spent; and the routes to achieving better development outcomes, by adding value to what is already being done by partner governments.

In 2012, Australian aid* and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) established a partnership to strengthen the way natural hazards, environment and climate change risks are considered in development programmes and decision-making processes. Tools, guidance and new evidence was generated to improve integration of disasters, environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation (DEC) in aid programming. The Advancing Integration programme (2012–2014) began with an assessment of *Existing knowledge* and consideration of *How to measure progress*. This draws on the latest evidence on how best to integrate DEC and provides staff managing overseas aid programmes with guidelines on how to identify opportunities for making further progress on integration.

Policy priorities and programme strategies are set within a complex web of relationships between donor headquarters, donor country offices and recipient country governments. Development priorities are identified in country programmes; and it is here that the opportunities and barriers to DEC

A map of our journey

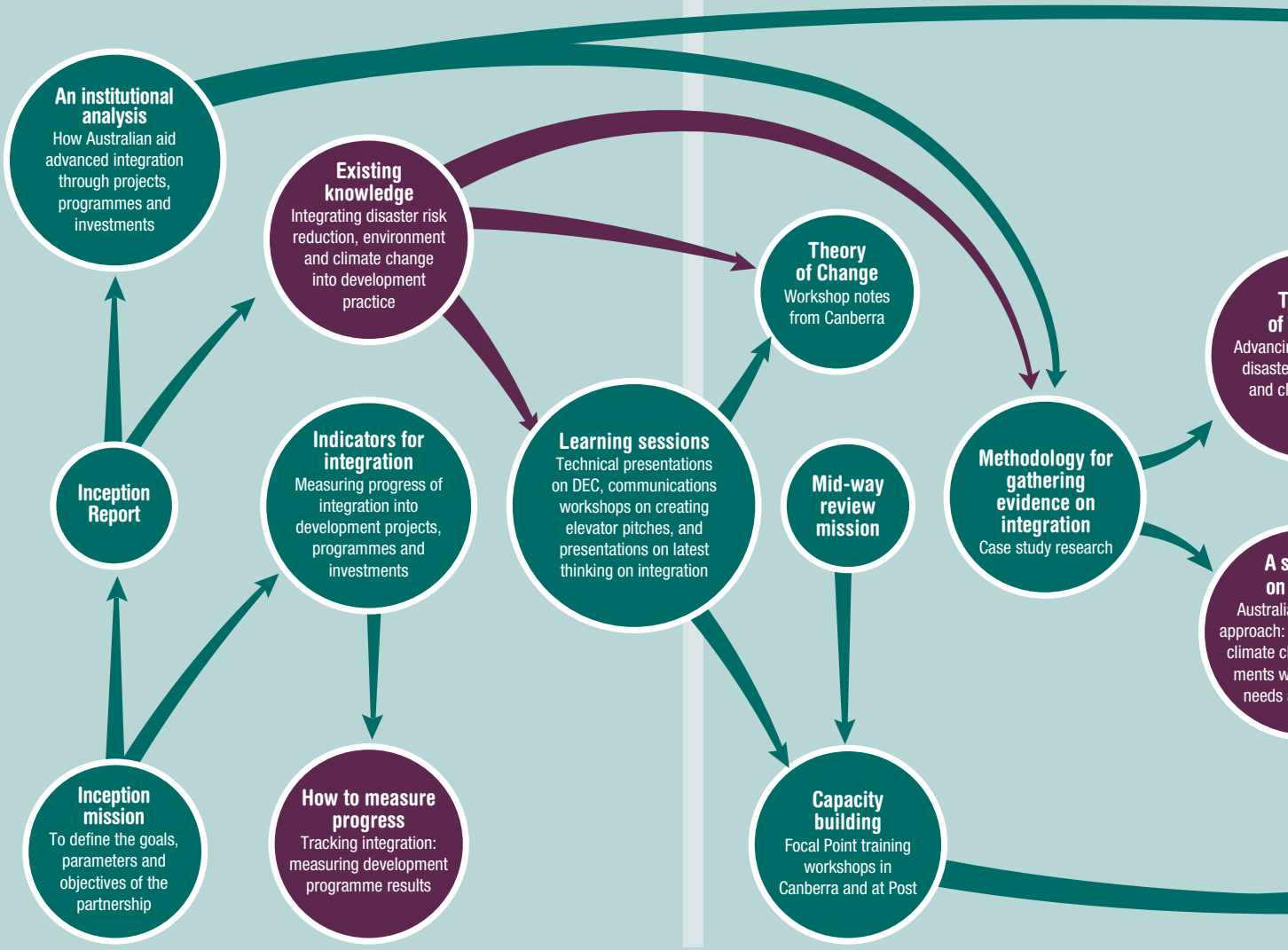
Integrated approaches to development: disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation (DEC integration)

FIRST

Investigate and learn from past experience to make the most of existing knowledge and define how to measure integration

SECOND

Challenge existing knowledge through grounded research an



integration need to be considered. Original research was thus undertaken in a number of locations, including: *The case of Vanuatu* and *The case of Viet Nam*, as well as secondary research putting *A spotlight on South Asia* and *A spotlight on Kiribati*. Together, this material helped to ground and inform a set of products (see map of our journey) which reflect the reality of aid programming in a range of different, complex contexts.

A set of tailor-made tools and guidance notes have been created to enable staff managing Australian aid to strengthen DEC integration and improve the sustainability and effectiveness of development programmes.

A how-to handbook for integration, for example, guides staff through assessment, analysis and action, and includes a directory of tools for further resources.

As the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) harness opportunities to integrate DEC in the future, the journey and progress made over the duration of the partnership will provide valuable insights into the lessons and challenges of integration for like-minded donor governments. A synthesis report of *Reflections and lessons* provides useful insights for others searching for a more systematic way to incorporate disasters, environment and climate change issues in their work.

Katie Peters, Research Fellow,
Overseas Development Institute

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*Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) was the Australian Government's implementing agency at the time the programmes were reviewed and since 1 November 2013 is incorporated with the DFAT.

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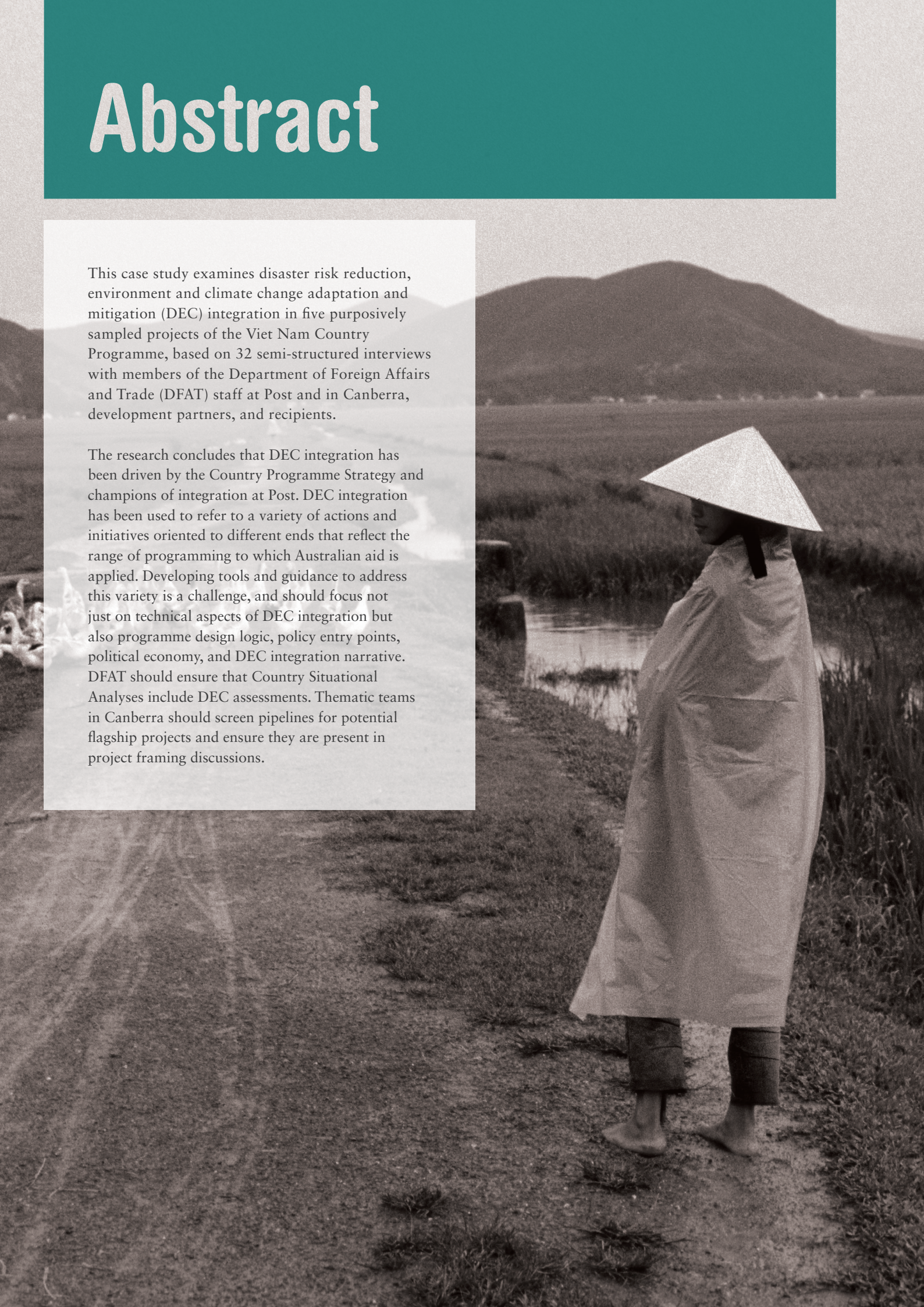
Acronyms

AAS	Australia Awards Scholarships
ADB	Asia Development Bank
AM-NEP	Australia Mekong NGO Engagement Platform
CCCEP	Climate Change and Coastal Ecosystems Programme
DEC	Disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EPBC Act	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
HRD	Human Resources Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTP-WASH	National Target Programme for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
QAI	Quality At Implementation
VANGOCA	Viet Nam-Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

Abstract

This case study examines disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation (DEC) integration in five purposively sampled projects of the Viet Nam Country Programme, based on 32 semi-structured interviews with members of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) staff at Post and in Canberra, development partners, and recipients.

The research concludes that DEC integration has been driven by the Country Programme Strategy and champions of integration at Post. DEC integration has been used to refer to a variety of actions and initiatives oriented to different ends that reflect the range of programming to which Australian aid is applied. Developing tools and guidance to address this variety is a challenge, and should focus not just on technical aspects of DEC integration but also programme design logic, policy entry points, political economy, and DEC integration narrative. DFAT should ensure that Country Situational Analyses include DEC assessments. Thematic teams in Canberra should screen pipelines for potential flagship projects and ensure they are present in project framing discussions.



Executive summary

Disasters, environmental degradation and climate change pose significant and increasing threats to the achievement and sustainability of positive development outcomes. Synergies between these threats and development trajectories are complex. For example, increasing climate variability raises the magnitude, intensity and frequency of extreme events, triggering more disasters. And while infrastructure projects could positively affect resilience to disasters and climate change, their environmental impacts can negatively affect resilience. Failure to adequately account for DEC can leave beneficiaries of interventions with increased exposure and vulnerabilities to disaster, climate, and environmental impacts.

Viet Nam is recognised as one of the 20 nations most vulnerable to disasters, and climate change is expected to negatively affect both the frequency and intensity of disasters such as tropical storms, floods, and storm surges. As a result, disasters and climate change are afforded a high priority by both the Government of Viet Nam and DFAT's Country Programme. The inclusion of an Environmental Sustainability pillar – including climate change and disaster risk reduction – in the Viet Nam Country Programme Strategy has been the key driver for DEC integration in Post, including in significant flagship projects. Viet Nam provides a strong example for DFAT as to how DEC integration can be pursued within a country programme. However, unless DFAT institutionalises DEC integration, the progress achieved by the Viet Nam programme is at risk.

Different initiatives and sector teams have conceptualised and operationalised integration in various ways suited to their respective contexts, approaches and objectives. This provides a range of different experiences with and approaches to integration that offer useful lessons and insights. However, the variety of approaches taken does not help provide a clear articulation of what it means and how it can enhance positive development outcomes.

In most cases it is external partners who are operationalising DEC integration. Post staff is engaged in framing DEC integration in terms of programme logic at the concept and design stages, monitoring and evaluating implementation, and – notably – leveraging results from the field into policy dialogues.

Guidance on DEC integration usually assumes a blank sheet of paper. In reality, projects are generally not designed from first principles but are developed opportunistically in a space defined by feasibility, affordability, and demand, in complex policy and institutional environments. Technical considerations and cost/benefit assessments appear to follow, rather than drive, programming. This implies that capacity building for programme staff should focus on identifying narrative hooks and policy entry points for DEC in their sector, and on raising awareness on the potential benefits of DEC integration.

Country Situational Analyses, Country Programme Strategies, and Sectoral Delivery Strategies are the most significant opportunities to frame DEC issues in programming. DFAT should ensure these documents are informed by assessments of DEC, in terms of both the substantive issues and their political economy.

Thematic teams in Canberra would benefit from early identification of potential flagship projects for DEC integration. Engagement in framing discussions will be more effective than reviewing proposals at the concept design stage, implying it would be useful to monitor the project pipeline to identify potentially strategic projects.

Post staff did not express interest in online learning tools, and noted that questions in AidWorks may support compliance but are not well-timed to drive creative thinking on DEC integration. Staff expressed preferences for simple-to-use tools giving practical, step-by-step guidance, and improved availability of and access to knowledge resources within the organisation. It was noted that staff might find useful tools and guidance on political economy, communication and programme design logic, rather than solely the technical aspects, of DEC integration.

The demonstrated importance of peer learning implies that DFAT should consider how to further develop its DEC integration community of practice. A strengthened role for regional knowledge sharing, particularly where regional countries share similar problems, such as the Mekong or South-East Asia, should be considered.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This report is an outcome of the Advancing Integration project. This project supports the systematic consideration of disaster risk reduction (DRR), environment, and climate change adaptation and mitigation across DFAT's investments, policies and programmes.

Advancing Integration is developing conceptual and empirical underpinnings of DEC integration within DFAT, capturing existing knowledge, lessons, and experiences. Case studies of DEC integration are providing the main evidence base to inform a number of products, including the policy tools and guidance.

This paper reports on the findings of a case study, carried out in the Viet Nam Post from 13-23 May 2013. The case study research in Viet Nam has four objectives:

1. Document progress in DEC integration.
2. Identify success factors and barriers to DEC integration.
3. Understand DFAT's comparative advantage on DEC integration in Viet Nam.
4. Assess the need for additional tools and resources to support integration.

Section 1 provides background on DEC integration and the methodology used in this report. Section 2 provides an overview of engagement in Viet Nam. Section 3 examines DEC integration in the context of specific projects. Section 4 is a synthesis of findings, and Section 5 provides conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 DEC integration

Disasters, environmental degradation and climate change pose significant and increasing threats to the achievement and sustainability of positive development outcomes. Synergies between these threats and development trajectories are complex. For example, increasing climate variability raises the magnitude, intensity and frequency of extreme events, triggering more disasters. And while infrastructure projects could positively affect resilience to disasters and climate change, their environmental impacts can negatively affect resilience. Failure to adequately account for DEC can leave beneficiaries of interventions with increased exposure and vulnerabilities to disaster, climate, and environmental impacts.[1]

Until recently, DRR, environment, and climate change adaptation and mitigation have been dealt with separately. For many development organisations, integration of DRR, environment, and climate change adaptation and mitigation (henceforth abbreviated as DEC integration) in programming is challenged by low awareness of risks, institutional and capacity constraints, gaps in evidence base of integration benefits, and, most importantly, no clear framework or definition of 'integration' (ODI, 2014). The current working definition of integration is:

Integration means the management of disaster risk reduction, climate change impacts and environment as part of development programmes and policies.[2]

1 E.g. Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T. and Davis, I. (2004) At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability and Disasters. Routledge, London.

2 AusAID (2012). Integration in Practice Guidance Note. AusAID, Canberra.

While highlighting the three component aspects of DEC issues in programming and policy, this definition does not provide objectives, outcomes, or approaches for integration, allowing DEC issues to be addressed as appropriate in different sectoral and national contexts.

This report does not adhere to any specific conceptual model or definition of DEC integration. It focuses on positive questions of what has been achieved, while asking more normative questions about what might be achieved in the future as integration advances.

1.3 Methodology

The case study focused on DEC integration experiences within specific projects, as well as the broad context of the Viet Nam Country Programme. Analysis focused on processes for integration within projects rather than an evaluation of DEC outcomes. Three projects (the Community-based Climate Change Action Grants Programme, the Cao Lanh Bridge, and the Australia Awards Scholarships) were selected for review based on perceived success in integrating DEC issues, and cover all three Core Areas of the Country Programme. Two further projects (Rural WASH, and the Climate Change and Coastal Ecosystems Programme) were included due to specific features of interest, but were not analysed in the same depth.

Data was collected from documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews with staff at Post and in Canberra, and development partners in Hanoi. Attempts were made to triangulate sources of information whenever possible, integrating the perspectives of both staff and implementing partners in the analysis.

The research team consisted of the team leader (Guy Jobbins) and research support (Dang Thu Phuong). Canberra-based staff from the Environment and Climate Change team (Susie Byers and James Roop) and the East Asia Division (Wendy Conway Lamb) also accompanied the research team's mission to Hanoi.

1.4 Constraints and limitations

The research team was extremely well supported by the Climate Change team at Post, who arranged both internal and external meetings and were readily available for consultations during the mission. The research team also appreciated the engagement of staff from both Post and the Regional Hub, who made themselves available at a busy time of year despite competing priorities.

The case study provides a perspective on integration experiences where there are strong, high-level drivers of DEC integration in the Country Programme, and is thus not representative of the organisation's general experience. The projects and initiatives reviewed in this case study were suggested by Post as positive examples of DEC integration, and the case study focuses on lessons from them rather than providing a critical evaluation of integration in the Viet Nam programme. The case study draws largely on the experiences and perspectives of staff at Post and in implementing organisations in Hanoi. Discussing these complex issues with different stakeholders, such as government officials, might have developed new lines of thinking.

2 DEC integration in the country programme

2.1 Entry points for DEC integration in the country programme architecture

The Viet Nam Country Joint Aid Programme Strategy 2010-2015[3] has three pillars:

- Human resource development.
- Economic integration, including infrastructure.
- Environmental sustainability, including climate change, disasters, and water and sanitation.

These pillars align with the key priorities of Viet Nam's Social and Economic Development Strategy 2011-2020 and the Viet Nam Development Goals. The environmental sustainability pillar, incorporating climate change as well as disaster risk reduction, provides an obvious entry point for DEC issues.

Another key entry point is the inclusion of humanitarian and disaster response as one of five core goals for work in Viet Nam. Hanoi Post is building on long-term engagement in disaster response and risk reduction, reflecting Viet Nam's exposure to natural hazards. Viet Nam is most vulnerable to weather-related hazards, and Section 3 will show examples where Post has used this as an entry point for integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The Australia-Viet Nam Climate Change Delivery Strategy 2011-2016 identifies two strategic outcomes. The first is strengthened resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable communities to climate change and weather-related disasters. The second is low carbon growth through clean technologies and low carbon measures in the energy sector, reflecting Viet Nam's concerns as a transitional economy. These strategic outcomes integrate DEC issues – particularly climate change and disasters – into statements of positive development outcomes.

The Delivery Strategy also commits Post to integrate climate change across the three pillars of the Country Programme Strategy, including infrastructure investments, and to integrate climate change with other cross-cutting issues including gender, disability, and anti-corruption.

2.2 Operationalisation of DEC integration at Post

Compliance

As expected, Post follows compliance requirements. This includes legal compliance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) to consider environmental impacts of infrastructure investments. The Cao Lanh Bridge project in Viet Nam was the first project to be referred to the Australian Department of the Environment under this law, a process led from Canberra (as part of the Whole of Government Review) in consultation with Post.

In line with organisational requirements, all new initiatives loaded into AidWorks (the proprietary project management software) require the responsible officer to answer a series of questions related to environmental sustainability, vulnerability to climate change and disasters, and potential for environmental impact and carbon emissions prior to approval. Discussions with Post staff indicated that these questions had limited influence in advancing DEC integration beyond compliance with the organisation's standards and environmental safeguards. This is partly a matter of timing in the project development cycle: in most cases an initiative's key parameters will have been established

3 http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/81_1838_8042_1384_6380.aspx

by the time it is due to be entered into AidWorks, just prior to approval. Where these questions identify issues that do not breach safeguards policies but which do offer possibilities for improved DEC outcomes, there are disincentives for officers to reconsider the design of initiatives at that stage.

AidWorks therefore may function as an effective vehicle for compliance, but not for otherwise advancing DEC integration, simply due to the timing at which DEC issues are raised.

DEC integration in Thematic Sector Programmes

Some thematic sector teams and projects have specific mandates for DEC integration that follow from the Country Programme Strategy or from other policy documents. For example, the commitment to ensure a climate-resilient design for the Cao Lanh Bridge comes from both the Joint Aid Programme Strategy and a bilateral agreement signed with the Ministry of Transportation during the 2010 visit of Prime Minister Julia Gillard.[4] The Annual Programme Performance Review Report 2011[5] notes that progress in achieving environmental sustainability was discussed in the Quality at Implementation (QAI) reports of all three ongoing infrastructure initiatives.

DEC integration champions

The Climate Change team is one of four thematic sector teams at Hanoi Post. This incorporates the portfolio for disasters, and is aligned under the Environmental Sustainability pillar of the Country Strategy. With this orientation, motivated individuals within the Climate Change team have been key to initiating and supporting DEC integration efforts at Post, including providing staff time for the DEC Focal Point, and engaging with external development partners.

Internal networking and resource mobilisation

The Climate Change team has been able to raise the profile of DEC integration in Post by leveraging its mandate for environment, disasters and climate change programming into activities that more broadly affect Post. For example, the Climate Change team successfully lobbied for Regional DEC training to be held in Hanoi in early 2011, and this was followed up by the Post DEC Focal Point participating in training for the DEC Focal Point network held in 2011 (Canberra) and 2013 (Fiji). This training at Post raised awareness of DEC integration among staff, and identified key entry points and some simple actions that could be undertaken by all thematic sector teams. The Climate Change team has also used an active role in organisation-wide dialogue both to raise the profile of DEC in Hanoi Post and raise the organisational profile of Hanoi Post on DEC issues.

DEC Focal Point and cross-team working

The Climate Change team has supported efforts by other thematic sector teams on DEC integration, with the DEC Focal Point playing a key role. For example, the DEC Focal Point has supported the Human Resources Development (HRD) team to integrate DEC into its Australia Awards Scholarships. The DEC Focal Point is not intended to be a technical advisory role, although it offers considerable scope for 'learning by doing' and peer-to-peer learning through the DEC Focal Point network. The DEC Focal Point has helped sector teams frame objectives for the DEC Integration Action Plan (see below), reviewed Terms of Reference for engaging external DEC expertise, and can connect sector teams with technical resources elsewhere in the organisation, such as at Desk or in thematic teams in Canberra. Rather than strong technical expertise, an awareness of the fundamentals, useful questions to ask, where to locate additional resources, and the ability to identify entry points for DEC integration appear to be the attributes of Focal Points that programme staff find most useful. Sections 3 and 4 will explore this in more detail.

DEC Integration Action Plan

The DEC Focal Point in Hanoi Post has developed an annually reviewed and updated DEC Integration Action Plan, a tool for agreeing and monitoring DEC integration activities with each thematic sector team in Post. It is neither a formal requirement nor considered a driver of integration by staff, but was identified as a useful tool for raising awareness and building dialogue around options for DEC integration with other teams.

A specific suggestion to strengthen the Action Plan's effectiveness was to include agreed actions as items on Individual Performance Plans, which would strengthen ownership, follow-up and implementation. Another suggestion was that more frequent reference by Senior Managers at Post to the Action Plan would raise its profile and empower

4 http://aid.dfat.gov.au/countries/eastasia/vietnam/Documents/cao-lanh-statement-principles-pds.pdf

5 http://aid.dfat.gov.au/publications/pages/vietnam-appr-2011.aspx

those responsible for it. More consistent and early engagement by teams on the plan, rather than around the preparation of annual QAI reports, was also identified as a key opportunity. This would help reduce episodic stresses on the Climate Change team around the QAI period, while also supporting more consistent thinking on DEC within Post.

While Post management can strengthen the role of the DEC Integration Action Plan through positive reinforcement of messages and behaviours around its use, institutionalisation of the Action Plan requires leadership from Canberra. If formally adopted and institutionalised, the tool could be a relatively efficient and effective vehicle for advancing integration across the organisation.

2.3 Experiences with integration in other domains

Interviews with the Focal Points for Gender, and Humanitarian and Emergency Response (HER) identified four key success factors from their experiences of integration:

- Dedication of resources to attend training events and Focal Point meetings.
- Visible championing of the issue by senior managers who empower Focal Points.
- Having access to technical expertise from East Asia Division and the Gender Unit in Canberra.
- Having a dedicated relationship with external supplier of technical support (UNWomen and local NGOs).

Both Focal Points noted that compliance requirements for new projects could be a starting point for integration, but achievement of meaningful outcomes required deeper analysis in project design.

3 Examples of DEC integration in initiatives

3.1 Community-based Climate Change Action Grants programme

The Community-based Climate Change Action Grants Programme (CCCAG) was launched with Fast Start funds in 2012. It supports 15 projects in 9 countries for a total of AUD$34 million over 2013-2014.[6] Six of these projects are in Viet Nam; while the other projects have mainly been managed from the Policy and Sector Division in Canberra, the Viet Namese projects are managed in Hanoi. The programme funds climate change action by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) selected through a competitive proposal application process.

The six projects in Viet Nam cover a range of topics from community-based adaptation in the Mekong to low-carbon rice cultivation. Four focus on intersections of community-based DRR and climate change adaptation. This review examined two in detail: Viet Nam Child-Centred Climate Resilience Programme (VCCRP)[7] with Save the Children Australia, and the Partnership for Equitable Resilience to the Impacts of Climate Change of the Coastal Communities in Deltas of Viet Nam (PRC Project)[8] with Oxfam Australia.

Multiple senses of DEC integration

Both VCCRP and the PRC Project build on previous disaster risk management projects through the Viet Nam-Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement (VANGOCA) programme. CCCAG funding has supported the integration of climate dimensions into this work. In one sense integration in these projects has been a conjoining of climate and disasters. In another sense the projects and their antecedents have integrated both climate and disaster resilience into the achievement of strengthened community development, a more fundamental development outcome.

Shared responsibilities for DEC integration

Responsibility for DEC integration in CCCAG was shared by three key sets of actors: the recipient NGOs, staff in the Canberra Climate Change team, and the Climate Change team in Post.

NGO staff integrated DEC in the design, conceptualisation and implementation of their particular projects, starting at the proposal stage, without substantial technical assistance. Indeed, a key justification for the Australian Government funding these NGOs was their field experience and technical expertise, including on intersections between disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change. Staff from Canberra and Post provided the logical basis for DEC integration through the concept design of CCCAG and the selection criteria of the competitive process. For example, the decision to include environment and conservation NGOs in the competition provided opportunities for integration of environmental aspects (such as the Nature Conservancy project in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon and Marshall Islands). One vital aspect of this was communicating to proponents the desirability of environmental sustainability, DRR and sustainable livelihoods in project outcomes. Another vital aspect was establishing the logic, expectations, and evaluation criteria for the programme to demonstrate effectiveness and value for money.

In the programme design and launch phase, Canberra thematic staff led the programme logic and design of CCCAG, and technical review of individual proposals. Post actively participated in the design

6 For more information on CCCAG see http://aid.dfat.gov.au/aidissues/climatechange/Pages/cbccag.aspx

7 http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/sca-ccag-design.aspx

8 http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/oxfam-ccag-design.aspx

and technical review, and experience from the VANGOCA programme influenced the design of the CCCAG programme. Key contributions of Post to the implementation of CCCAG projects have been: providing linkages between the projects through forums and workshops, linkages to national level institutions and policy processes, and linkages to other initiatives (e.g. CCCEP, see below); and supporting the visibility, reach and policy impact of the projects through use of AusAID's[9] political capital. A good level of knowledge of, rather than technical specialisation in, DRR, climate change and DEC integration issues has been important for Post staff in pursuing these duties.

Monitoring and evaluation

Each recipient project has its own Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system: the VCCRP and the PRC Project utilised participatory M&E approaches, including capacity-building on M&E for local partners. The six projects in Viet Nam also agreed to adopt a set of shared indicators to be integrated into the M&E framework of each project. These indicators relate to Hanoi Post's Climate Change Delivery Strategy and, in turn, the Annual Programme Performance Review. Successfully negotiating consensus amongst all the partners to adopt a joint set of indicators should be regarded as a significant achievement.

Within Viet Nam, the Australia Mekong NGO Engagement Platform (AM-NEP) is providing technical and administrative services to support DFAT in managing its NGO partnerships under the Community-based Climate Change Action Grants. This includes a range of services including logistical support, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and access to technical expertise to enhance programme quality. In addition, six monthly meetings between NGO partners and DFAT staff provide regular opportunities for knowledge exchange and learning.

3.2 Cao Lanh Bridge project

The Cao Lanh Bridge is part of a larger road network improvement and series of bridges linking rural people to markets and securing a crucial transport corridor through the Mekong Delta. The Cao Lanh Bridge project is a flagship investment worth AUD$160 million, including AUD$26 million in technical assistance, and falls under Hanoi Post's economic integration pillar.[10] A statement during the visit of then Prime Minister Gillard provided a strong political driver for DEC integration in design of the Cao Lanh Bridge, which was one of the first large infrastructure investments to integrate climate change.

The main DEC integration objective was to make the bridge resilient to climate-driven disasters and damage, particularly downstream floods and sea level rise. Climate change is projected to affect the frequency and intensity of such disasters, and funding was contingent on the incorporation of climate risk projections in the bridge's design. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), the coordinating development partner for the project, funded consultants to conduct a climate risk study for AUD$170,000. The study found that increasing the bridge's design height by 0.75m would strengthen its resilience to 20-year flooding events, and this specification was duly adopted by the bridge design team.

The climate change consultants also recommended that the associated road network be raised by 0.6m, twice the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's 'official' climate scenario which projects a sea level rise of 0.3m by 2050. An incremental approach will immediately raise the height of the road by 0.3m, with plans to raise it by a total of 0.6m over the course of the next decade as the road is upgraded to an expressway.

The bridge was also the first project referred to the Australian Department of the Environment under the EPBC Act. At the time of writing, the referral was still under discussion.

Conceptualisation of integration

The stated DEC objective of the Cao Lanh Bridge was to ensure resilience to climate-driven disasters and sea level rise, and the focus was therefore on technical specifications for risk management. A different framing of DEC integration objectives could well have led to different design elements. For example, if reduction of greenhouse gas emissions had been the integration objective, different choices might have been made in engineering or construction materials.

While climate and disaster risks were factored into bridge design as one aspect of DEC integration, environmental issues were captured by the

9 AusAID was the Australian Government's implementing agency at the time the programmes were reviewed; on 1 November 2013 it was incorporated in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

10 For more information on the Cao Lanh Bridge project, see the inception report http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/501_9669_8977_4775_4404.aspx

project's referral under the EPBC Act as well as the environmental and social compliance standards of ADB. Both of these can be considered aspects of integration, although one is focused on compliance (the EPBC Act referral) and the other on integration of DEC into project outputs and outcomes (integration in bridge design).

These different ways in which integration can be understood and conceptualised underline the challenges in clearly articulating what DEC integration is, and how it is, or should be, pursued.

Operationalisation of integration

Engaging in such a significant infrastructure investment is always a challenging undertaking, and more so when introducing novel aspects such as climate resilience. In principle, the technical specifications based on climate and hazard vulnerability assessments would be available prior to commissioning the bridge's design team. In practice, staff were – as is so often the case – operating in a fast-moving environment in which the bridge project was gathering momentum with other donors and the Government of Viet Nam. As a result, some processes early in the project ran in parallel, and the timing of information flows between the climate change technical consultants and the bridge design team led to some minor delays. Having climate projections and risk reduction recommendations prior to the design phase would also have helped increase buy-in from the Ministry of Transportation and other key stakeholders, and strengthen their capacities for understanding and managing uncertainties in climate projections. As it was, staff played a crucial role in accompanying the project and promoting DEC integration within it, compensating for the imperfect timing of integration with skills in diplomacy and negotiation.

Guidance for DEC integration usually assumes that DEC integration is considered at the earliest stages of project conceptualisation. The example of the Cao Lanh Bridge demonstrates that DEC integration in practice is not such an idealised process, particularly in a complex, multifaceted, and large-scale investment project with multiple actors. DEC integration may be easier to pursue in small- to medium-scale infrastructure investments where DFAT has more direct control over project development and management. However, the success of this large project has led to a high political profile in Viet Nam, which smaller projects would struggle to achieve. Additionally, much of DFAT's business is conducted in situations similar to that of the Cao Lanh Bridge. Guidance should be developed that supports the integration of DEC issues into projects that are in advanced stages of planning or even in implementation.

Who pays for integration?

Integration does not happen in a policy vacuum, perhaps particularly with infrastructure projects. The Government of Viet Nam was cautious of the increased costs resulting from climate proofing this loan project. Raising the road could have had cost implications for the wider road network by potentially introducing a new engineering standard, which would affect other roads, both existing and planned. As loans replace grants with Viet Nam's transition to middle income status, there are questions of who will pay for the incremental costs of upgrading existing infrastructure to be climate-resilient. This is a broader issue that donors and governments need to confront, but it also has implications for expectations of integration in certain projects, and how it is negotiated.

Value added by building communication and engagement bridges

Australia created a window for action through this project, raising the issue of climate resilience, and strengthening the experience of climate adaptation in Viet Nam. DFAT's key contribution was leveraging their relationships and negotiating with involved stakeholders, including the Government of Viet Nam. This has included both providing reassurance around climate uncertainties and insisting on climate integration as a critical element of their financial support. The ability to reach high-level political actors has been crucial, as have the personal networks and negotiation abilities of staff.

Although it was Austrlian aid staff who identified the opportunity to improve the bridge's climate resilience, the organisation's comparative advantage in the project was political, not technical, expertise. Success depended on the ability of staff to negotiate around agreements to incorporate climate change in the bridge's design, not to produce, define, or evaluate technical specifications. If the DEC technical consultants had not been contracted by ADB, Post would have benefited from the advice of thematic experts in Canberra in developing Terms of Reference for DEC integration experts and evaluating reports.

Monitoring and evaluation

So far as the research team could determine, DFAT primarily evaluated the success of DEC integration in terms of whether or not technical recommendations were incorporated into the design of the bridge and the surrounding road network, such as height specifications and measures to mitigate environmental impact. The bridge's – potentially highly significant – positive contribution to the resilience of the national economy and/or local communities is not systematically captured in evaluation. The social impact assessment would identify some related aspects for the local community, principally to recommend means of mitigating adverse impacts in-line with compliance and safeguards policies. M&E of DEC has therefore focused more on the output level (technical specifications of the bridge) than benefits from increased social and economic resilience to climate change.

In this modality DFAT was largely reliant on ADB procedures for Environmental Impact Assessments and monitoring and social safeguards, as well as technical oversight of DEC integration efforts. The organisation's influence over technical aspects is therefore indirect, which is not a concern so long as competent contractors conduct the necessary work. This indicates the importance of early screening, and inclusion of relevant clauses in contracting to ensure partners comply with Australian aid priorities and policies. DFAT's insistence that ADB include in the Project Committee an additional specialist on resettlement is an example of how Australian aid can strengthen monitoring of priority issues when it wishes to.

3.3 Australia Awards Scholarships in Viet Nam

Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS), managed by the HRD team, facilitates access to education in Australia in order to support Viet Nam's economic development with a strengthened cadre of specialists. It intends to fund up to 250 postgraduate scholarships per year, 20% of which are for PhD programmes. AAS targets officials from national and provincial government, as well as academics and those working in the development sector. HRD in Post coordinates closely with a central unit in Canberra responsible for setting global policy and disbursing funds.[11]

As part of its commitment to the Environmental Sustainability pillar of the Country Strategy, HRD has developed a thematic opening for applications to study environmental subjects, including climate change. This has been a popular choice, attracting 11% of applications in 2011-2012, and supporting 14% of successful applicants.[12]

Approach to integration

The primary tool HRD have adopted is to make thematic funding available for environment (including climate change) and disaster-related post-graduate study. AAS therefore integrates DEC into its programming streams and the outputs of AAS. This approach contrasts with CCCAG and the Cao Lanh Bridge, where DEC issues are integrated into development outcomes, such as increased community resilience.

Given the modality of AAS, it would be extremely difficult, or perhaps even impossible, to conceptualise and operationalise DEC integration into development outcomes. Viet Nam is the second largest recipient of scholarships from Australian aid, and the numbers of applications being processed and managed imply a significant logistical exercise. HRD is also required to integrate a number of other dimensions, including gender, disability, and anti-corruption. There is therefore a premium on efficient solutions for DEC integration that do not impose significant time and resource demands on the team.

Another approach to integration might be to earmark funding for environment, climate change and disasters within existing funding streams such as engineering, health and economics. This would support the mainstreaming of DEC issues into more traditional policy and development sectors: sustainable economic development in Viet Nam would benefit from specialists with expertise in environmental economics, for example. Earmarking funding in this way would also be difficult to enforce, however. Once candidates have been approved for courses, HRD does not supervise the selection of specific modules or areas of study, which are left for the student and academic

11 For more information on AAS in Viet Nam see the design document http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/9877_876_5477_657_9538.aspx or midterm review, http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/9968_1539_743_477_2398.aspx

12 AusAID (2012). Annex 2: Selection Report. In: Australian Scholarships for Development in Viet Nam Programme, 3rd Annual Report. http://aid.dfat.gov.au/countries/eastasia/Vietnam/Documents/asdiv-annual-report-11-12.pdf

supervisors to agree, as is normal academic practice. Insisting that candidates take certain modules would change the demand-driven character of AAS.

Monitoring and evaluation

Evaluation of DEC integration in AAS is challenging, as outcomes of education tend to be long-term and support to the environment sector is relatively recent. HRD M&E activities include conducting cluster/tracer studies, which in 2013-2014 will look at the environmental sector and which offer an opportunity for strategic thinking around DEC integration in HRD programming. HRD also conducts longitudinal studies on individuals, 30 of which have focused on returning awardees in the environmental sector. In addition to these activities, HRD also recognise the need for a more systematic M&E framework in their forthcoming Sector Strategy. Thematic Climate Change staff or Canberra staff might be able to help HRD develop DEC indicators appropriate for AAS.

An outlier case?

AAS is tangibly different to the other initiatives covered by this case study. It demonstrates the considerable difficulties in achieving DEC integration in some types of programming. It also is an example of a programme where DEC issues are integrated as a discrete output rather than integrated into outcomes; i.e. funding is provided for environmental studies, but AAS is not reoriented towards new goals.

BOX 1

National Target Programme for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (phase 3)

Australian aid is one of three donors that provide US$120 million in budgetary support for the National Target Programme for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (NTP-WASH), which by 2015 will provide 5 million people with access to clean water and provide 2 million additional household latrines.

In the Country Programme architecture, NTP-WASH is housed under the Environmental Sustainability pillar, in-line with the housing of WASH targets under Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7. This positioning within the Country Programme appears to have no substantial impact on operations, however: the NTP-WASH programme would conduct the same activities if it were housed under a public health or infrastructure pillar.

NTP-WASH is operationally managed by the Government of Viet Nam, which includes environmental screening and management according to Government of Viet Nam regulations. In addition to budgetary support, donors provide technical assistance in their areas of comparative advantage. Work on environment and climate change integration has been led by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), with Australian aid supporting DEC issues in policy discussions.

At present, Australian aid does not monitor implementation of, or evaluate, DEC integration in the NTP for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation. The NTP has a set of M&E indicators, including environmental indicators, but climate change and disaster indicators are not used. Discussion with the WASH team leader indicated that because infrastructure works under NTP are vulnerable to climate change, the climate change and disasters mainstreaming component in the NTP requires strengthening.

As DANIDA and the Department for International Development (DFID) withdraw from Viet Nam, continued engagement on WASH is likely to require leadership from Australian aid on DEC integration in the NTP. Given the vulnerability of WASH infrastructure to climate change and disasters, there is an opportunity for Australian aid to address these as core areas rather than cross-cutting issues. This will require greater technical support from DEC experts in Post and Canberra, particularly in the design of research and pilot projects intended to influence Government of Viet Nam and provincial decision-makers.

For more information about NTP WASH see http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/250_2593_7301_1970_2098.aspx

BOX 2

Climate Change and Coastal Ecosystems Project

The Climate Change and Coastal Ecosystems Project (CCCEP) is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) with funding from Australian aid and Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The key objective is to rehabilitate coastal mangrove forests that contribute to disaster and climate change risk reduction. CCCEP integrates DRR, climate change and environment together, and the project is oriented towards DEC outcomes. GIZ has also used CCCEP to leverage additional work on community-based disaster risk reduction and exploring carbon sequestration in mangrove forests .

Due to these overlaps between DEC issues, CCCEP could have been conceptualised in a number of different ways, and climate adaptation and disaster risk management was an easy entry point. Future work could strengthen outcomes by addressing drivers of mangrove degradation (e.g. corruption, land tenure) and climate vulnerability (e.g. poverty).

While GIZ provided the technical expertise for design and conceptualisation, Australian aid sourced internal and external expertise to review the proposal and evaluate the project during implementation. Australian aid's most significant contribution has been to link CCCEP with its wider engagement in policy, research and partnerships on climate change. This has included providing Australian volunteers, Australian Leadership Awards to provincial policy-makers, downscaled climate projections from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), and connections to CCCAG projects (see 3.1) whose work in villages complements CCCEP's work at the provincial level.

CCCEP has a well-developed M&E framework at both the provincial and project levels, with many indicators targeted at DEC integration. CCCEP has also been the target of a joint progress review conducted by Australian aid and GIZ staff with external consultants.

For more information about CCCEP, see
http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/4856_5966_3937_496_1592.aspx

4 Synthesis

4.1 Drivers of integration

A key driver of DEC integration in Viet Nam is the country context. Viet Nam is identified as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change.[13] It is also identified as one of the 20 most at-risk countries in the world due to a combination of high exposure and vulnerability to disasters, and weaknesses in coping capacities.[14] The Government of Viet Nam recognises that DRR, environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation are key to sustainable economic development. This has been reflected in joint negotiations with the Government of Australia over priorities for development assistance, and the inclusion of an Environmental Sustainability pillar in the Country Programme Strategy.

The Environmental Sustainability pillar has established the Climate Change team's mandate, and also provided a rationale for integrating DEC in the work of other sectors, such as HRD. By placing the disasters portfolio within the Climate Change team, and the WASH team under the Environmental Sustainability pillar, the Country Programme architecture has also institutionalised DEC integration at Post to some extent, given the absence of a broader corporate requirement.

Some initiatives integrated DEC in response to other policy demands, including the Cao Lanh Bridge and NTP-WASH. Both address Viet Nam's vulnerability to climate change, and build on Australian aid's long-term disaster risk management experience in Viet Nam. In both cases, the rationale for integrating climate change emerged around the same time as the Country Programme Strategy was being developed, so it did not happen in isolation.

In the case of CCCAG, DEC integration entry points were framed in Canberra, with Post providing reviews at the project concept stage and contributing to the design of selection criteria. Post responded strongly to the availability of funding, which enabled new programming on climate change aligned with the Country Programme Strategy. Funding was therefore an entry point for Post, not a driver.

Procedures in AidWorks were identified as providing safeguards and compliance processes rather than driving creative DEC integration. This was mainly because these compliance steps come after key parameters of projects have been framed, and officers are unlikely to return to aspects of project design if AidWorks questions identified opportunities for DEC integration beyond compliance.

With an innovative range of initiatives, the Country Programme Strategy has clearly been a supporting force for DEC integration in Viet Nam Post. However, the lack of institutionalisation of integration within Australian aid raised the question of how DEC integration can be advanced and sustained in country programmes that do not have Environmental Sustainability pillars. Although DEC integration is supported within Post, several factors for sustainability and institutionalisation are conditioned centrally in Canberra. These include the integration of DEC issues in organisational procedures, dedication of financial resources, M&E frameworks, and availability of strong knowledge management processes. For example,

13 E.g. Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (2011). Vulnerability, Risk Reduction, and Adaptation to Climate Change: Viet Nam. World Bank Group, Washington D.C.

14 Mucke, P (2012). Disaster risk, environmental degradation and global sustainability policy. World Risk Report. Alliance Development Works, Berlin.

the DEC Integration Action Plan currently is not institutionalised sufficiently to be more than a monitoring tool.

4.2 Conceptualisation of integration

There are clear entry points for environment, climate and disasters in Viet Nam. The Climate Change Delivery Strategy provides a strong conceptual linkage between climate and disasters in particular. Different sector teams and initiatives have used these entry points in their own programming in different ways.

For example, the Cao Lanh Bridge integrates climate and disaster risk into infrastructure design. The two CCCAG projects reviewed use climate resilience and disaster risk reduction as entry points for strengthening positive outcomes in community-based development. The innovation in those projects can also be understood in terms of integrating climate change into disaster risk assessments. The CCCEP project integrates resilience, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and rehabilitated ecosystem services, with integration almost considered an end in itself. AAS provides a funding stream dedicated to environmental higher education within a broader funding envelope to achieve programme integration, ensuring that HRD funding aligns with the priorities of the Country Strategy. As Box 3 summarises, this review identified different conceptualisations of why, how, and which aspects of DEC are integrated in investments.

DEC integration was not strongly conceptualised as a principal objective in any of the projects reviewed. Rather, projects focus on the specific aspects of climate change, disasters and/or environment they intend to address. The entry points for DEC issues in most projects were framed by operational and policy considerations rather than systematic analysis of how DEC integration opportunities could contribute to broader development goals. This was particularly the case for the projects reviewed in which the organisation is engaged with other donors on pre-existing initiatives (i.e. the Cao Lanh Bridge and NTP-WASH).

Clearly, different projects, initiatives, and sector teams have different opportunities and needs for

BOX 3

Typology of integration

Without a clear definition of DEC Integration, it has been used as a label for several different things. These include:

Architectural integration – placement of DEC elements together in the programme architecture, such as disasters under the Climate Change team or WASH under the Environmental Sustainability pillar.

Compliance – risk screening and safeguards for DEC issues.

Program integration – integration of DEC issues in programme logic, such as selection criteria in calls for proposals, outcome statements and evaluation frameworks.

Project integration – integration of DEC issues into design and implementation of interventions and operational areas; usually controlled by Australian aid external development partners.

Additional outputs as integration – provision for outputs addressing DEC, but without systematic integration into outcomes, e.g. AAS.

DEC as outcome, or DEC into outcomes – the CCCAG projects and CCCEP have the consideration of multiple DEC issues as a core project outcome; in WASH-NTP and the Cao Lanh Bridge, the core outcome is more resilient infrastructure leading to improved sanitation or economic integration.

Type of outcome – some projects are framed in terms of reducing DEC risks, others in terms of increasing resilience.

Single, double and triple wins – some initiatives just integrate one dimension of DEC, others integrate two or all three.

Braided or single strand integration – e.g., the CCCAG projects and the Cao Lanh Bridge both consider how climate change will affect characteristics of disasters; by contrast, AAS provides separate funding streams for disasters and climate change.

DEC integration. A single prescriptive conceptual approach or model might well struggle to meet all these different needs. However, clearer messages articulating the development objectives and benefits of DEC integration could support greater interest and engagement from staff, management, and development partners.

4.3 Programming integration

DEC integration is potentially complex. Particularly for sector teams not directly under the Environmental Sustainability pillar (e.g. Economic Integration and HRD) there is an understandable focus on core objectives, and a premium on the efficient programming of DEC issues. For example, integration of climate change and disaster risk considerations in the design of the Cao Lanh Bridge was facilitated by framing the Australian Government's aid contribution to the bridge's funding around climate-proofing. In practice, integration was delegated to ADB by ensuring that the contract with ADB established appropriate criteria for uses of technical assistance funds.

In the AAS programme, staff are responsible for managing a large number of small grants, and therefore place a premium on efficient options. In that case it was far simpler to allocate a single block of environmental funding than to attempt to integrate environmental options across their portfolio. Providing, programming, and evaluating tranches of funding to mainstream environmental studies within economics, engineering, and other programmes of study would have high transaction costs.

Through cross-team collaborations, Hanoi Post staff have also pursued integration in ways not necessarily captured by formal reporting systems. For example, the Climate Change team have collaborated with the HRD team to secure Australian Leadership Awards funding for provincial policy stakeholders of CCCEP, contributing to increased capacity, profile and buy-in for that project. This may be difficult to capture through monitoring and evaluation tools, but is important for understanding what is perhaps Australian aid's defining contribution to DEC integration in Viet Nam.

4.4 Project level integration

The role of Post and other staff in conceptualising and framing DEC integration occurs mainly in terms of programming, particularly in developing programme logical frameworks. At the project level, programme staff and external partners mainly characterised Australian aid's role in integration as supporting the work of others through their high-level policy relationships and convening power. Australia's respected reputation, long engagement in Viet Nam particularly on DRR, and strong relationships with a diverse range of actors including research, NGOs, and local to national government were identified as key to the organisation's comparative advantage in this field. The contribution to the field of climate change in particular, and DEC issues more generally, in Viet Nam was typically described in terms of leveraging the experience and technical expertise of its partners from the field into policy dialogues. Staff at Post characterised their key assets as relationship management skills, abilities to navigate and anticipate a complex policy environment, and abilities to influence key governmental stakeholders.

With the exception of the AAS, DEC integration in projects was primarily operationalised by development partners and recipients of Australian aid funding. In the case of AAS, integration was effected by the provision of funding for an environmental stream, and the organisation therefore had operational control of integration mechanisms. In the other projects reviewed, DEC integration was operationalised in project implementation by funding recipients.

Development partners in most projects also led DEC integration at a conceptual and/or supervisory level. For example, DANIDA had lead responsibility for climate change in the NTP-WASH arrangements, GIZ led with conceptualisation and design of CCCEP, ADB supervised technical assistance for the Cao Lanh Bridge, and proposals for the CCCAG projects were tendered by recipients in a competitive process. Direct technical inputs from the organisation into the conceptualisation, design and implementation of projects were limited. Support was mainly confined to providing technical consultants and in-house expertise for project peer reviews and evaluations. Internal and external expertise was provided at the proposal development stage of CCCAG projects, but this was mainly in the form of setting expectations for DEC integration rather than providing technical support.

4.5 Timing of integration

In many of the projects reviewed, DEC issues were framed early on. In terms of the project management cycle, the most common entry point for integration was at the concept note/inception stage of project development. However, particularly in collaborations with other donors, DEC integration was often conceptualised after key parameters of projects had been established. For example, support was already ongoing to the NTP-WASH and AAS when DEC considerations were included in subsequent phases, and in CCCAG the selected projects were building on previous experience in DRR with the same target communities. Similarly, the organisation engaged with, and brought issues of climate resilience to, the Cao Lanh Bridge after the project was already under discussion between the Government of Viet Nam and other donors.

Timing of integration appears to be a highly significant challenge given the way that the organisation does business with its development partners. In principle, programme officers, in collaboration with recipients and development partners, could design ideal projects from scratch that adhered to best practice in DEC integration. In reality, it appears that DEC integration is more often negotiated or retrofitted into initiatives already in motion. This is likely to be more challenging, in terms of negotiating with development partners, as well as in terms of conceptualising DEC integration pathways and outcomes that have substantive value.

Capacity building, including the provision of tools and guidance, for DEC integration should reflect DFAT's business models and experience rather than idealised versions of project development processes. This might include guidance and recommendations for retrofitting DEC issues into ongoing projects and relationships. More broadly, however, it speaks to the need to develop DEC integration reflexes among staff, and the knowledge and skills to identify and pursue DEC integration opportunities. This does not necessarily mean technical knowledge; an awareness of the issues and the right questions to ask, the exercise of good professional judgement in choosing between options, and the ability to mobilise external and internal partners all appear to be the skills most relevant to successes achieved by staff in Hanoi.

4.6 Resources for integration

Staff at Post operate under competing pressures with large workloads. Usually generalists, they do not necessarily have technical backgrounds in their team's thematic sector, let alone DEC. In addition, the clustering of DEC issues means that in many cases a range of technical expertise is needed to address each aspect. Individuals with knowledge of two or more aspects of disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change in a specific sector are uncommon. Knowledge of technical issues is generally developed through on-the-job learning and exposure over time. Few programme staff identified technical expertise as a key aspect of their job function, or technical knowledge as a key requirement for execution of their responsibilities. General awareness of DEC issues and knowledge of the questions to ask in framing and monitoring projects were felt to be more important.

Post staff did not prioritise additional technical resources in the form of guidelines or tools for DEC integration. Instead, staff identified options for improving specific support, including templates for procuring technical assistance in the form of generic and adaptable Terms of Reference for consulting assignments, and the sharing of DEC integration good practice examples from a range of sectors.

The DEC Focal Point is not intended to serve as a technical resource, but staff at Post did value their contributions in identifying and linking them to technical resources elsewhere in the organisation, advising on contracting consultants, reviewing proposals, and so on.

Viet Nam programme staff felt empowered to seek advisory support from Climate Change team colleagues and divisional and thematic staff in Canberra. It was clear that this was due to personal relationships, including those established during the DEC Focal Point training held in Hanoi.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Progress to date

- DEC integration efforts at Post have advanced in different directions, with both champions and allies within Post providing accumulated experience that is timely to reflect on.
- The Viet Nam Country Strategy Environmental Sustainability pillar and the Climate Change Delivery Strategy, incorporating climate change and DRR, provide strong mandates for DEC integration across the work of sectoral teams. This includes significant flagship projects.
- DEC integration is conceptualised and operationalised differently in different initiatives. This reflects the range of contexts in which programming takes place, and means lessons can be drawn from a variety of experiences.
- Post has made significant contributions to the DEC agenda in Viet Nam by leveraging the technical expertise and field experience of its partners into policy dialogues. The brokering and facilitation role is well recognised by development partners in Viet Nam.
- Post has been able to build synergies amongst sector teams that go beyond integration in projects. For example, HRD's support to stakeholders of CCCEP has increased buy-in from policymakers.

5.2 Challenges

- DEC integration in Post is highly dependent on the Country Programme Strategy's Environmental Sustainability pillar, and has been supported by key champions at Post. Without solid institutionalisation of integration by DFAT, it is not clear how DEC integration might be pursued in Country Programmes without relevant pillars or DEC champions.
- The development of a DEC Integration Action Plan is a useful model, and needs endorsement from senior management at Post to be a more effective management tool for DEC. Senior management in Post can refer to the DEC Action Plan earlier in planning new initiatives, and consider other ways to promote its usefulness beyond a monitoring tool. Similar Action Plans could be an effective vehicle for DEC integration if formally adopted and institutionalised by DFAT.
- Current safeguards procedures in AidWorks are not effective at advancing DEC integration beyond compliance, as they come after project framing.
- Depending on the modality, external partners are often responsible for conceptualising and operationalising integration. This reduces demands on Post to provide resources, but can also mean that staff have more limited opportunities to shape integration outcomes. It also implies that technical specialisation for Post staff may not be a priority, although staff clearly do benefit from raised awareness about DEC entry points, and knowing how and when to access appropriate technical expertise.
- The policy and institutional environment in which Post operates is complex. There are early positive outcomes arising from work on DEC issues at both local and policy levels, but mainstreaming DEC approaches within partner government systems will be a long-term objective.
- The different ways in which DEC integration has been pursued could cause confusion and difficulties in clearly articulating what it means and how it enhances positive development outcomes.

5.3 Opportunities

- The earlier that DEC issues are considered in new programming, the more effectively and meaningfully they can be integrated into design. There are opportunities for DFAT to incorporate DEC more systematically in forward-looking strategic assessments, country situational analyses, and framing discussions around new projects.
- The most significant opportunity for DEC integration to shape new programming in Viet Nam is the forthcoming Country Situational Analysis, and subsequent revisions of the Country Programme Strategy and sectoral strategies. It is strongly recommended that DFAT ensure these strategic documents are informed by literature on disasters, environment and climate change policy in Viet Nam. Identification and assessment of capacity needs, policy entry points, and the political economy around these issues in key sectors should also be key inputs to such strategic assessments.
- Early identification of potential flagship projects for DEC integration would benefit thematic teams in Canberra. Engagement in project framing discussions will be more effective and influential than reviewing proposals at the concept design stage. This implies it would be useful to monitor the DFAT project pipeline to identify projects that would be strategic for the thematic teams to engage with.
- Projects are usually developed opportunistically in a space defined by policy considerations, feasibility, affordability, and demand. Technical considerations and cost/benefit assessments usually follow, rather than drive, programming. This implies that capacity building for programme staff should focus on identifying narrative hooks and policy entry points for DEC in their sector, as well as awareness-raising on the potential benefits of DEC integration.
- Staff in different thematic sectors could also benefit from tools and guidance provided at the project framing stage that allow them to identify opportunities for DEC integration. These questions might be based more on the political economy and potential communication aspects than technical or substantive aspects of DEC.
- An alternative or parallel set of tools and guidance could be developed to help staff identify whether to engage technical assistance for scoping or monitoring DEC issues in programming. Guidance on procuring technical assistance or on how to draw on technical resources available in Canberra or elsewhere would also be valuable, and could include generic, adaptable Terms of Reference.
- Short, succinct examples of good practice in DEC integration for different sectors and different country contexts could demystify the subject for programme staff and provide concrete ideas to emulate. Step-by-step, process-based guides showing what programme staff did and how would probably be most useful.
- This review suggests that the awareness and knowledge of staff on DEC issues has been most effectively developed through face-to-face learning and learning-by-doing, not through the provision of written documentation or online training. DFAT should consider how to strengthen the in-house community of practice on DEC integration at different levels. For example, the DEC Focal Point network might be strengthened by a role for regional knowledge sharing, particularly where regional countries share similar problems, such as the Mekong or South-East Asia.
- Many donor partners, implementing agencies, and other development actors either have, or are beginning to develop, their own DEC mainstreaming and compliance procedures, standards, objectives and capacity. Working with these external partners requires knowledge of their strengths, weaknesses, and interests in order to understand their ability to support DFAT interests in DEC integration. DFAT should assess how to work more effectively and closely with partners, such as GIZ, who have substantial technical expertise in DEC.
- As DFAT will continue to work with the ADB and World Bank, particularly on flagship investments in infrastructure, thematic teams in Canberra should consider whether these arrangements should be priority targets for producing knowledge products and delivering capacity building to programme staff.

Annex 1: Persons interviewed

Name	Title	Sectors/Organisations
Kate Elliott,	First Secretary Hanoi Post	Climate Change team, Hanoi
Nguyen Tu Uyen	Senior Programme Manager/DEC Focal Point – Hanoi post	Climate Change team, Hanoi
DoanThuNga	Senior Programme Manager – Hanoi post	Climate Change team, Hanoi
Andy Isbister	Team Leader	Infrastructure team, Hanoi
Vu Duc Cong	Senior Programme Manager – Hanoi post	Infrastructure team, Hanoi
Neal Forster	First Secretary-Aid Effectiveness, Mekong and regional	Quality Monitoring, Hanoi
Mark Palu	Head of Cooperation	Hanoi
Nguyen Mai Chi	Senior Programme Manager	Governance, Hanoi
Simone Corrigan	Second Secretary	Human Resource Development, Hanoi
Nguyen Van Thuan	Senior Program Manager	Human Resource Development, Hanoi
Le Minh Nga	Program Manager	Human Resource Development, Hanoi
Ton Nu-Hue Chi	Senior Program Manager	Human Resource Development, Hanoi
Duong Hong Loan	Senior Programme Manager	WASH, Hanoi
Mel Bull	Senior Policy Officer	Climate and Environment Branch, Canberra
Kirsty McMaster	Director	Strategic Programming and Policy, Canberra
Paul Mitchell	Climate Change Advisor	Save the Children, Viet Nam
Doan Anh Tuan	Country Director	Save the Children, Viet Nam
Provash Mondal	Humanitarian Programme Coordinator	Oxfam International in Viet Nam
Nguyen To Uyen	Climate Change Adaptation Project Officer	Oxfam International in Viet Nam
FaridSelmi	Technical Advisor	GIZ Viet Nam
Juergen Hess	Programme Director	GIZ Viet Nam
Laura Altinger	Senior Environment Economist/Climate Change	World Bank Viet Nam
Anjali Acharya	Environment Cluster Leader	World Bank Viet Nam
TarekKetelsen	Environment System Engineer	ICEM
Jeremy Carew-Reid	Director	ICEM
Laura Sorkin	Climate Change specialist	ADB Hanoi
LorieRufo,	Climate Change Adaptation Officer	ADB Manila
RustumIshenaliev	Transport Specialist	ADB Manila
Astra Velasquezm	Environment Specialist	ADB Manila
KoosNeefjes	Climate Change Adviser	UNDP in Viet Nam
Dao Xuan Lai	Head of Sustainable Development sector	UNDP in Viet Nam
Bui Viet Hien	Programme Officer	UNDP in Viet Nam

EXTERNAL PRODUCTS

1. Existing knowledge
   Integrating disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change into development practice
   Emily Wilkinson, Elizabeth Carabine, Katie Peters, Emily Brickell, Catherine Allinson, Lindsey Jones, Aditya Bahadur

2. How to measure progress
   Tracking integration: measuring development programme results
   Paula Silva Villanueva

3. The case of Vanuatu
   Advancing integration of disaster, environment and climate change
   Katie Peters and Aditya Bahadur

4. The case of Viet Nam
   Advancing integration of disaster, environment and climate change
   Guy Jobbins and Dang Thu Phuong

5. A spotlight on South Asia
   Australia's integrated approach: development outcomes in water, food and energy
   Maylee Thavat

6. A spotlight on Kiribati
   Australia's integrated approach: matching global climate change commitments with immediate needs and capacity
   Maylee Thavat

7. A how-to handbook
   Integrating disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation into Australian aid projects, programmes and investments
   Aditya Bahadur, Guy Jobbins, Natasha Grist, Catherine Allinson

8. Reflections and lessons
   Unlocking policy reform and advancing integration: a synthesis of findings
   Emily Wilkinson, Aditya Bahadur, Elizabeth Carabine

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