

TACKLING A CRISIS OF “TOO DIRTY, TOO LITTLE, TOO POLLUTED” TOWARD A BETTER WATER FUTURE FOR VIETNAM

KEY UNDERLYING CHALLENGES - KEY CAUSES FOR CHALLENGES



Legal framework improvements for water management: Comprehensive and is gradually being improved; 12 laws are relevant for water resources management and usage; more legal instruments are under preparation to implement the 2012 Law on Water Resources by MONRE; further instruments are required – but outstanding – from other ministries.



Institutional challenges: Highly decentralized responsibilities to local authorities; weak capacities at local institutional levels; some overlaps in tasks between Ministries; coordination between ministries and within ministries between central and local levels within an integrated framework is weak.



Difficulties and delays in planning for water resources: Water resources assessments are underway but face implementation problems. Development of the master plan on water resources is delayed, resulting in some provinces and sectors preparing their own plans - risking an unintegrated and piecemeal approach. Sector needs to integrate within the recently approved Law on Planning in 2017 that aims to streamline and unify planning.



Challenges to implementing Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM): The framework provides for integrated water resource management but integrated planning is proving a challenge.



Challenges to implement adopted Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). Integrated planning remains a challenge; development of intra-provincial river basin planning remains slow; establishment of river basin organizations (RBO) only limited success; existing RBOs are not fully empowered as they are not state management agencies and are dependent on state budget allocations.



Restricted financing for water resources management: Budget for water resources management is insufficient; MONRE under-resourced to fulfil its mandates; economic policy instruments - both charges and subsidies – are levied but do not cover costs water resources management and environmental protection; farmers – previously exempted – must pay the irrigation services fee from 2018.



Low incentives for water conservation and protection: Economic policy instruments are levied but not yet designed to incentivize water users' behavior; additional incentives are provided for in law but still need to be fully enforced.



Low enforcement of water pollution prevention and control: required self-monitoring of wastewater discharge only complied by less than half of industrial parks; quality of inspections - infrequent and predicable – results in low levels of compliance; institutional structure may limit DONRE's ability to enforce environmental compliance; limited water quality monitoring stations prevent systematic identification of non-compliant polluters; some legislative documents overlap and prevent effective and efficient implementation.



Lack of information access and availability: Initial database for water resources has been established, but the data are still lacking; data sharing across ministries as well as with other stakeholders faces challenges; pressing need to strengthen information to allow for informed decision-making

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KEY UNDERLYING CHALLENGES - THE WAY FORWARD

Vietnam is confronted by a host of water challenges that risk jeopardizing future growth. Particularly water pollution and environmental damage create high risks. Solving these challenges requires incentives, investments and innovation.

Taking decisive action now is therefore essential for Vietnam's sustainable socioeconomic development, especially as infrastructure and demand management solutions to avert the impending water crisis are at hand and feasible.



Key recommendations for the way forward based on the study results:

RECOMMENDATION

1

Improve water resource management institutions

RECOMMENDATION

2

Manage Vietnam's water at the basin scale through inclusive governance arrangements

RECOMMENDATION

3

Increase the value produced by water in agriculture

RECOMMENDATION

4

Give the highest policy priority to reducing the devastating levels of pollution

RECOMMENDATION

5

Improve risk management and disaster response and strengthen resilience

RECOMMENDATION

6

Develop and scale-up market-based financing and incentives

RECOMMENDATION

7

Strengthen water security for settlements