

Country and Government Context

Viet Nam is in Southeast Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, the Gulf of Tonkin, and the South China Sea, and sharing international borders with the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). Its population is about 85.847 million.^a The capital is Ha Noi, in the north of the country, although the most populous city is Ho Chi Minh City in the south. Viet Nam is a single-party socialist republic.

Viet Nam is a densely populated developing country that, in the last 30 years, has undergone a great deal of change, including recovering from conflict, losing financial support from the former Soviet bloc, and evolving away from a centrally planned economy. Viet Nam is now committed to economic liberalization and international integration. Viet Nam authorities have implemented structural reforms to modernize the economy and to produce more competitive, export-driven industries. Deep poverty has declined significantly, and the country is working to create jobs to meet the challenge of a labor force that is growing by more than 1 million people every year. This rapid economic progress had put Viet Nam into middle-income status by 2008.^b However, the country remains a rural society, with over 70% of the population living outside the cities.

^a Government of Viet Nam. 2009. *Population Census*. Available online from the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=599&ItemID=9788&bcsi_scan_55D74968579FC0A1=BNfiFi6S5GBdSLieSWsctXjATjIEAAAAAU4cAA==&bcsi_scan_filename=default_en.aspx

^b According to the World Bank classification system, available online at <http://data.worldbank.org/country/vietnam>

Civil Society: An Overview

In the years after reunification in 1975, Viet Nam did not recognize civil society as a sphere independent from the party-state. The state conducted people's mobilization through large "mass organizations" that remain connected to the state from the central to the village levels. The *doi moi* (renovation) of 1986 was a turning point in Viet Nam and marked a new period of relative openness, including to civil society. During the 1990s, a substantial number of international nongovernment organizations (NGOs) began operations in the country, alongside increased foreign investment. Vietnamese local NGOs have also existed since 1990, although organizations that fit an NGO profile are only a small part of civil society in Viet Nam.

CIVICUS¹ describes civil society in Viet Nam today as very broad-based—many people are members of one or more civil society organization (CSO), and numerous CSOs of varying levels of independence are active in the country.² However, this high level of participation is offset, in the CIVICUS study, by a lack of civil society independence and potentially limited impact. Not all organizations are deeply anchored in civil society; for example, some members of Viet Nam's mass movements automatically become members through their public sector employment. There are few advocacy NGOs, although some informal groups exist, and some large NGOs have begun to play an advocacy-like role by commenting on certain laws in advance of Parliamentary ratification (although it is arguable that this role will be allowed to continue).

CIVICUS identifies four general types of CSOs in Viet Nam:

- community-based organizations (CBOs)
- mass organizations
- professional associations
- Vietnamese NGOs

Mass organizations are party-sponsored and so do not fit within some definitions of civil society,³ particularly as membership does not necessarily imply activity or participation. Membership of a mass organization can come through public sector employment, for example. However, mass organizations have very strong grassroots links and large memberships, and have become increasingly independent since doi moi. This is especially the case for the Farmers' Association, Women's Union, and Youth Union.

Vietnamese NGOs have only recently begun to be referred to by this name. In early studies of Vietnamese civil society, they are called "civic organizations," "issue-oriented organizations," or "science and technology development organizations," depending on the legal framework at the time and current thinking about indigenous civil society's permissible role and contributions to Viet Nam's civil society.⁴ According to the "Forms of Engagement" study, however, terminology around NGOs and civil society is now used more often in Vietnamese official life and by NGOs themselves.

Development-focused local NGOs are typically urban and fulfill various roles: service delivery, policy and law making, monitoring and holding officials accountable, and channeling citizens' concerns.⁵ A number of strong, local NGOs are regionally and internationally linked; however, the fragmented legal environment has allowed a level of laxity over which organizations are entitled to call themselves NGOs, including in application of the not-for-profit principle. From the mid-1990s, some research institutions, described as science and technology research organizations, also began to emerge within this category. However, a change in regulations in 2009 closed off areas in which independent organizations started by individuals were allowed to work.⁶ This curtailed one of the more dynamic spheres in Vietnamese civil society.

In 2006, there were 320 professional associations, including business associations and umbrella groups or networks.⁷ They include "official" organizations, such as the Red Cross and journalists' associations, as well as nonstate, socioprofessional associations that cross over into the category of Vietnamese NGOs, because they do some humanitarian or development work, as well as being organized around a group of professionals or businesspeople.

CBOs can be informal or associated with official organizations but, as grassroots movements, are generally accepted by local authorities. CBOs usually have started with a local development aim in mind—for example, water use, credit, or assistance for a marginalized group such as the disabled—and may

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incorporate members of the local administration and/or mass organizations. The core activities of these CBOs are in the fields of poverty reduction, humanitarian relief, self-organization, and professional development. However, only in the 2000s did CBOs in Viet Nam begin to receive funds from international sources. Agricultural CBOs are formed under a Law on Cooperatives, and about 15,000 had registered by 2005. A broader kind of voluntary community-based association, rural collaborative groups, is present in many locations in Viet Nam. By some estimates, there are 200,000 of these, with varying focuses and membership.⁸

About 500 international NGOs were working in Viet Nam by the end of 2010, some with representative offices in the country, but the majority were only funding or implementing projects without establishing a presence in-country. International NGOs have more of a technical, specialized service delivery role than in other countries, reflecting a complementary role they have carved out alongside government and mass organizations. This technical character is changing as international and Vietnamese CSOs become more interlinked, and as more civil society actions become permissible in Viet Nam. Many international NGOs now have strong networks with local organizations and are staffed by Vietnamese nationals; some are moving toward becoming Vietnamese NGOs. International NGOs in Viet Nam have, historically, not been critical of government; on the contrary, they typically cooperate closely with government and other local partners, including local CSOs.

While the number of NGOs and the space in which they operate have grown, there is no generalized understanding of civil society or its potential role. NGOs are usually perceived as nonprofit organizations committed to the common cause of national development, with a focus on service delivery and

voluntarism. The term “civil society” has some remaining sensitivity in Viet Nam. Usually, Vietnamese refer to associations or people’s organizations, or civic organizations, although in recent years, the term “civil society” has begun to be used more in media and by government and by the organizations themselves.⁹

Government–Civil Society Relations

The Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO)–NGO Resource Centre published a report in 2008 entitled, *Forms of Engagement between State Agencies and Civil Society Organizations in Viet Nam*.¹⁰ This report focuses on Vietnamese NGOs and is based on original research, a review of existing research, and media sources. The report concludes that the impact of CSO–state engagement is modest at the national level (and mostly focused on the mass organizations), but shows more progress subnationally. The most concrete areas of impact at the subnational level are conveying local citizen concerns to government, providing services, and monitoring the behavior of authorities.

One important milestone in Vietnamese NGO–government cooperation was the Grassroots Democracy Decree, passed in 1998. This decree opened the space for more active participation in decisions at the commune and village levels. The decree was revised in 2005, and gives the right to the rural population to be informed and to carry out, discuss, and monitor decisions of importance to their communities. Mass organizations and professional associations also have a role under this decree, and several international and some local NGOs have begun to support various transparency and participatory planning activities under this decree. A people’s participation working group, supporting the implementation of the Grassroots Democracy Decree, is one of the formal development partnership groups, contributing to the consultative group process. Its membership is open to government, NGOs, and development partners (through www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/121).

International NGOs have an accepted place in the country’s development cooperation structures, including formal representation in the consultative group process. International NGOs are seen as important donors to Viet Nam (see below). The three main national agencies working with international NGOs are the Committee for Foreign NGO Affairs (COMINGO), the People’s Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM), and VUFO.

COMINGO brings together key government ministries and other bodies to assist the Prime Minister in guiding and addressing issues relating to foreign NGOs in Viet Nam. It is a high-level body providing guidance,

monitoring, and oversight for the implementation of laws and policies relating to the operations of foreign NGOs. It also considers the issuance, amendment, or withdrawal of international NGO permits (for operation, for establishing a project office, or for establishing a representative office) according to the regulations on the operation of international NGOs in Viet Nam.

PACCOM was established by the Prime Minister to address questions relating to international NGOs. The VUFO president has been assigned as an executive member of the committee, and while VUFO bears the principal responsibility for aid mobilization and for relations with foreign NGOs, PACCOM’s role includes facilitating administrative and legal aspects of international NGO registration and activities in Viet Nam and assisting local organizations in their relationships with international NGOs.

VUFO is a nationwide, sociopolitical organization whose main function is to establish and promote friendly and cooperative people-to-people relations between Viet Nam and other countries. It also acts as the standing agency of the Committee for Foreign Non-Governmental Organization Affairs and, therefore, has a role in mobilizing and enlisting material aid from peace, solidarity, and friendship organizations; humanitarian NGOs; corporations; and individuals in other countries with a view to contributing to socioeconomic development of the Vietnamese.

All three organizations—COMINGO, PACCOM, and VUFO—share office space and contact details:

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Legal Frameworks for Civil Society

A number of different laws and regulations apply to Viet Nam’s CSOs, and a relatively high level of government discretion exists over whether to register an organization, particularly if it works in a more sensitive field. The dynamics of slowly opening up to more areas of permitted civil society activity have been played out through successive amendments to the legal framework, while the boundaries of nonregulated activity have been set through various measures taken by government and security agencies.¹¹

In terms of numbers, most groups identified as CSOs in existing research are unregistered. However, legal

recognition is important for those organizations that seek foreign funding or engage in policy dialogue. Registering as a Vietnamese NGO, and therefore gaining legal recognition, can be very time consuming as a large number of administrative steps must be followed. Once an organization is legally registered, they may also run into difficulties establishing project approval, if foreign funds are involved, and this may take months to resolve. Legal dealings with local CSOs are described as a “permission granting”¹² regime which introduces a number of constraints and retards the growth of civil society. Local CSOs now debate on what should be done to improve the regulatory environment, and on whether it is wise to push for law reform at present.¹³

International NGOs are considered under separate legal frameworks, and are administered by the government organizations COMINGO, PACCOM, and VUFO.

Umbrella and Coordinating Bodies

There are various civil society umbrella organizations, some of which have an unclear role and performance, according to CIVICUS. The most prominent umbrella body is the VUFO–NGO Resource Centre, established in 1993 through a partnership between international NGOs working in Viet Nam and VUFO. The objectives of the resource center are the following:

- Promote, facilitate, and contribute to the sharing of information, resources, and experiences within and between international NGOs, their partners, and local organizations to improve the quality and impact of their work in Viet Nam.
- Strengthen the relationship and enhance the dialogues between international NGOs and other development actors in Viet Nam, including government agencies, donors, and local organizations.

In 2010, the resource center had 130 international NGO members. It also hosts working groups on various sectors and whose level of activity ranges, and e-mail groups associated with these groups that have a much higher distribution and participation. Working groups are listed at www.ngocentre.org.vn/workinggroups and mailing lists at www.ngocentre.org.vn/maillinglists. The mailing lists have open membership and can be used to share information, mobilize, and consult with NGOs working in more than 25 sectors.

The Viet Nam Union for Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA) is an umbrella association for research and professional associations. VUSTA has about 1.5 million individual members across the country. It has

56 central associations in different disciplines, and 37 local VUSTA associations with 540 membership associations.¹⁴

Mass organizations and umbrella organizations sit under the Fatherland Front. The organization is described as “the political base of people’s power.” It is intended to have a significant role in society, promoting “national solidarity” and “unity of mind in political and spiritual matters.” Many government social programs are conducted through the Fatherland Front, which is intended to supervise the activity of government organizations. Because it is based around mass participation and popular mobilization, the Fatherland Front is seen as a representative of the people.

Local NGOs and CBOs network within sectors; however, these networks are less formal than those for international NGOs, vary depending on sectors and the individuals involved, and function at a lower level, according to CIVICUS.¹⁵ They have less internet presence in English. In some sectors, such as climate change, Vietnamese NGOs appear to have more substantial national networks, as well as strong regional and international links. While these NGOs are not officially part of the NGO Resource Centre, many subscribe to the mailing lists, as these are open to anyone for membership. The mailing lists can, therefore, be used to contact international and local organizations focused on a given sector.

NGO Principles, Mandates, and Standards

NGO self-regulation is limited, and no general codes of conduct exist. Mass organizations and some Vietnamese NGOs have charters that determine general parameters of their conduct. Professional associations also tend to have rules of conduct for their members. However, according to the 2008 study of the VUFO–NGO Resource Centre,¹⁶ some members of Vietnamese civil society feel that some CSOs abuse their position and that the government should take a role in identifying and distinguishing between those Vietnamese NGOs that work well and in accordance with nonprofit principles, and those that are operating as some other kind of organization.

Funding of Civil Society Organizations

In 2008, official development assistance (ODA) accounted for only 2.9% of gross national income,¹⁷ and is declining in relation to private flows. However, ODA funds a large share of public sector investments, and government regards it as an important catalyst for other investment

flows and a key source of finance for the development of social and economic infrastructure.¹⁸

In 2009, international NGOs brought about \$260 million to Viet Nam. However, as Viet Nam officially moves to being a lower middle-income country, it is expected that less finance will be available to NGOs. This change of status may result in the withdrawal of some poverty-focused donors, and a possible change of strategy for bilateral donors, away from international NGOs as proxies for service delivery. The NGO Resource Centre has noted a decrease in international NGO funding sources through 2010, resulting from the change in bilateral funding priorities with Viet Nam's growth. NGOs are seeking creative ways to access new funding streams with this status change, including working closely with the private sector, becoming involved in social enterprise, and providing consultancy services.

A survey of local NGOs, conducted in 2000, indicated they received funding from one of four main categories: service fees, foreign funding, government, and private sources. These NGOs are more able to access foreign funding as they are becoming better organized, more independent, and well-known. Several donors, including the World Bank, fund these NGOs through grants and as consultants in project operations.

Directories

Until 2008, the NGO Resource Centre printed a hard copy directory of international NGOs, their projects, budgets, sectors, and locations of work. This is now available on the NGO Resource Centre website (www.ngocentre.org.vn/ingodirectory).

There is no comprehensive directory of Vietnamese NGOs, but they may be contacted relatively easily through the sector working group and mailing lists associated with the NGO Resource Centre, through umbrella organizations, such as the Fatherland Front and VUSTA, or through government agencies, such as PACCOM. A directory, including a range of key local and international CSOs as well as development partners, was published in 2008 by the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies Movement and is available online.

ADB–Civil Society Cooperation

ADB opened the Viet Nam Resident Mission (VRM) in 1996. VRM is the first point of contact for CSOs in Viet Nam; coordinates high-level policy dialogue and aid; and assists with administration, country

programming, portfolio management, project administration, project processing, and technical assistance. In addition, VRM maintains a regular dialogue with NGOs and CSOs on ADB assistance in the country, including consultations during the formulation of the country partnership strategy (CPS) and during new project formulation processes. VRM has a staff member designated as NGO anchor, who is responsible for relationships with civil society in Viet Nam and can provide advice on which NGOs to meet with for the various areas of ADB work.

ADB's work with Viet Nam is agreed in advance with the government and outlined in the CPS. A sector breakdown of cumulative lending in Viet Nam, up to the end of 2010, is provided in the table.

ADB-Supported Activities Involving Civil Society

ADB recognizes CSOs, including NGOs, as significant players in development and cooperates with them to improve the impact, sustainability, and quality of its services. NGOs add value in promoting sustainable development through (i) innovation—identifying new approaches and models for specific development activities and drawing upon their close knowledge of local communities; (ii) accountability—helping ensure that project components are implemented as envisaged and planned; (iii) responsiveness—encouraging the implementation of projects to respond to local needs; (iv) participation—serving as bridges between project authorities and affected communities, and providing structures for citizen participation; and (v) sustainability—nurturing continuity in project work, especially when implementing agencies lack capacity or when staffing changes.

Viet Nam: Cumulative ADB Lending as of 31 December 2010

Sector	Loans (no.)	Amount (\$ million)	% ^a
Agriculture and Natural Resources	26	1,311.66	14.13
Education	12	460.50	4.96
Energy	11	2,033.99	21.91
Finance	10	502.00	5.41
Health and Social Protection	8	268.20	2.89
Industry and Trade	5	128.50	1.38
Public Sector Management	10	946.40	10.19
Transport and ICT	21	2,843.90	30.63
Water Supply and Other Municipal Infrastructure and Services	13	579.82	6.24
Multisector	6	210.00	2.26
Total	122	9,284.97	100.00

ICT = information and communication technology.

^a Total may not add up because of rounding.

Source: ADB. 2011. *Asian Development Bank and Viet Nam: Fact Sheet*. Manila.

In Viet Nam, ADB has supported several projects that draw on these civil society strengths. For example, the design of the Song Bung 4 Hydropower Development project includes an NGO to monitor the project as an independent third party.¹⁹ The project is a large initiative that will affect more than 24,400 people currently living in Quang Nam Province along the reservoir site, including about 70% of ultra-poor Co Tu ethnic minority groups. ADB provided a grant to the Canadian NGO CHF to build the capacity of two government-based resettlement management and implementation units to design and deliver a sustainable livelihoods program with the men and women who will be resettled as a result of dam construction. The project is intended to provide the beneficiaries with technical skills and knowledge in livelihoods areas, such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry, and income generation, in gender-sensitive resettlement and project management, and in participatory land-use planning and inclusive decision making.

One recently completed project contracted eight international NGOs in four project provinces to work with facilitators and community groups in the Central Region of Viet Nam on a wide-ranging livelihood improvement project. Village and commune development plans were prepared for 1,197 villages and 153 communes and being implemented since 2006. The project had a focus on participation of ethnic minorities in project planning, decisions, implementation, and benefits. Attention was paid to improve understanding and appreciation of local culture, indigenous knowledge, and livelihood strategies; and to make implementation more compatible with their priorities, language skills, and learning styles.²⁰

Another project supported the Government of Viet Nam in preparing guidelines for benefit-sharing mechanisms for people adversely affected by power generation projects. This involved preparing a pilot-tested policy framework as an initial step in developing a national policy for benefit-sharing mechanisms for improving the well-being of the people affected by power projects. The mechanisms included the allocation of a certain percentage of revenue from the project to mitigate the long-term adverse social impacts of such projects to help the project-affected people improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner. Collaboration with local and international CSOs, including representatives of affected communities, is considered an important part of ensuring that benefits from the project go back into communities in a way that reflects their priorities.²¹

Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction

The Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) is an untied grant facility established by the Government of Japan and ADB in May 2000. From an initial contribution

of \$90 million, the Fund now stands at well over \$392 million, of which \$335 million has been committed. JFPR assists ADB clients to provide direct relief to the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society while building up their capacities for self-help and income generation. Specifically, JFPR initiates and supports innovative programs with high potential for improving the affected countries' situations; provides relatively rapid, demonstrable benefits through initiatives that can be developed and sustained in the long term; and helps local populations and civil society design and implement programs. JFPR provides an opportunity for local communities and CSOs, including NGOs, to actively participate in development.

NGO participation is deeply ingrained in JFPR operations. JFPR is widely recognized as one of the primary grant facilities available to NGOs. NGOs and community groups are routinely involved in the different stages of an ADB project cycle. They take part as an executing agency, implementing agency, resource NGO providing information, community organizer or some other specialized service provider, or a consultant to ADB during the project's implementation.

The Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) was involved in one JFPR project to complement a larger agriculture sector project. Both projects worked with local institutions and communities to increase agricultural income and contribute to reduced rural poverty by strengthening the country's agriculture science and technology system in terms of its research, extension, and education components. The project provided (i) increased opportunities for grassroots application of new agricultural techniques for poverty reduction in the mountainous districts of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces, and (ii) important feedback and lessons learned on the effectiveness of pro-poor approaches and participatory planning techniques for community-based extension and training. The practical experience of CECI, a Canadian international NGO, which had previously worked successfully in other districts of Thanh Hoa Province, was important to ensuring the sustainability of this project.²²

The French international NGO GRET worked with the Viet Nam Women's Union on a child and maternal nutrition project in Viet Nam. The goal of the project was to reduce the incidence and severity of malnutrition among low-income, vulnerable, and primarily rural children by expanding access to improved feeding practices, including fortified complementary foods for children 6–24 months of age. Based on an alliance of government, food producers, and NGOs, the project enabled the National Institute of Nutrition to further develop an innovative model to increase production capacity by expanding sales, reducing unit costs, and

lowering the price to consumers, thereby improving prospects for sustainability.²³

Ethnic minority youth were equipped with post-basic education qualifications and community leadership skills, as part of a project to improve the life skills and opportunities of ethnic minorities in Viet Nam.²⁴ The project aimed to (i) reduce socioeconomic barriers for ethnic minority youth accessing and completing upper secondary schooling and teacher training, and (ii) enhance their readiness for teacher training colleges and job opportunities of a teaching profession in their provinces. Participation and contribution of the local communes, NGOs, and school–parent associations in the program’s activities were crucial for successful implementation. At every stage of the program—from identifying target youth to finalizing the program design—activities were implemented in consultation with local partners.

Another project provided direct access to assets and affordable infrastructure services for individuals or community groups undertaking small-scale investments and who otherwise would not have access to such services in Thanh Hoa Province.²⁵ Indirectly, these assets and services allowed greater productivity of the urban poor and, along with complementary capacity development activities, will generate income growth. The mechanism, involving community-based organizations, was designed to be replicable in other cities and towns not covered under the project by institutionalizing partnership mechanisms between local governments, communities, and partners. The management team and consultants conducted extensive consultations with communities, trained community-based organizations to participate and contribute ideas, and proposed small-scale infrastructure components through a participatory approach.

An early childhood project aims to improve health, nutrition status, and cognitive and social development of children, drawing on the experience of the international NGO Save the Children Alliance.²⁶ The aim is to identify an integrated early childhood care and development model, especially for children under 3 years of age, with a community and poverty targeted focus for selected ethnic minorities and migrant workers. The specific objectives are to (i) identify and pilot cost-effective programs that are accessible for these poor target groups; and (ii) strengthen the capacity of central and local governments in planning, financing, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of integrated early childhood care and development interventions.

NGO Concerns about ADB Initiatives

ADB recognizes NGOs as development partners, and aims to document and respond to any NGO concerns that materialize during the design and implementation of ADB-assisted projects and other initiatives. ADB’s NGO and Civil Society Center collaborates with operational departments to inform senior staff, members of the Board of Directors, and Management of any issues and to obtain feedback on how NGO concerns are being addressed. Specific concerns in the past have included safeguards implementation and arrangements in the Song Bung 4 Hydropower Project.²⁷

Endnotes

- 1 CIVICUS is the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, an international network of members and partners, which aims to support civil society and its development.
- 2 CIVICUS. 2006. *The Emerging Civil Society: An Initial Assessment of Civil Society in Vietnam*. Ha Noi.
- 3 While CIVICUS included mass organizations within its study, other studies of civil society in Viet Nam have excluded them from analysis because while mass organizations fulfill some civil society roles, their primary line of accountability is to the state and not communities, citizens, or members.
- 4 The report may be found online at www.ngocentre.org.vn/files/docs/Forms_of_Engagement_FINAL_COMPLETE.pdf
- 5 This typology is used in VUFO–NGO Resource Centre. 2008. *Forms of Engagement between State Agencies and Civil Society Organizations in Viet Nam*. Ha Noi.
- 6 Prime Minister’s Decision 97/2009.
- 7 CIVICUS. 2006.
- 8 See Endnote 5.
- 9 See Endnote 5.
- 10 See Endnote 5.
- 11 M. Sidel. 2010. Maintaining Firm Control: Recent Developments in Nonprofit Law and Regulation in Viet Nam. *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*. Volume 12, Issue 3.
- 12 See Endnote 5.
- 13 See Endnote 5.
- 14 CIVICUS. 2006. p. 33.
- 15 CIVICUS. 2006. p. 50.
- 16 VUFO–NGO Resource Centre. 2008. p. 14.
- 17 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee. *Viet Nam Official Development Assistance*. Available online at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/13/14/1883363.gif (Accessed 15 February 2011).
- 18 Asia-Pacific Aid Effectiveness Portal. Vietnam Country Profile. Available online at www.aideffectiveness.org/Country-Vietnam.html (Accessed 20 February 2011).
- 19 ADB. 2008. *Song Bung 4 Hydropower Development Project*. Manila.

- ²⁰ ADB. 2001. *Central Region Livelihood Improvement Project*. Manila.
- ²¹ ADB. 2006. *Developing Benefit Sharing Mechanisms for People Adversely Affected by Power Generation Project*. Manila.
- ²² ADB. 2005. *Community-Based Agricultural Extension and Training in Mountainous Districts*. Manila.
- ²³ ADB. 2006. *Nutritious Food for 6–24 Month Old Children Vulnerable to Malnutrition in Poor Areas*. Manila.
- ²⁴ ADB. 2006. *Expansion of Learning Opportunities for Ethnic Minority Youth*. Manila.
- ²⁵ ADB. 2007. *Thanh Hoa Province Small Scale Infrastructure Investments and Services in Urban and Peri-Urban Areas*. Manila.
- ²⁶ ADB. 2008. *Community-Based Early Childhood Care and Development*. Manila.
- ²⁷ ADB. 2008. *Song Bung 4 Hydropower Development Project*. Manila.

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For more information on ADB's work in Viet Nam, visit www.adb.org/publications/viet-nam-fact-sheet

Definition and Objectives of Civil Society Collaboration

Civil society is a very important stakeholder in the operations of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and its borrowers and clients. It is distinct from the government and the private sector and consists of a diverse range of individuals, groups, and nonprofit organizations. They operate around shared interests, purposes, and values with a varying degree of formality and encompass a diverse range—from informal unorganized community groups to large international labor union organizations. Of particular relevance to ADB are nongovernment organizations, community-based organizations and people's organizations, foundations, professional associations, research institutes and universities, labor unions, mass organizations, social movements, and coalitions and networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) and umbrella organizations.^a

ADB recognizes CSOs as development actors in their own right whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector, and who play a significant role in development in Asia and the Pacific. ADB has a long tradition of interacting with CSOs in different contexts, through policy- and country strategy-level consultation, and in designing, implementing, and monitoring projects.

In 2008, ADB launched Strategy 2020, which articulates the organization's future direction and vision until 2020.^b Above all, Strategy 2020 presents three complementary strategic agendas to guide ADB operations: inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. These agendas reflect the recognition that it is not only the *pace* of growth, but also the *pattern* of growth, that matters in reducing poverty in the region. In this new strategic context, partnerships with a range of organizations, including CSOs, will become central to planning, financing, implementing, and evaluating ADB projects.

^a ADB. Forthcoming. *Strengthening Participation for Development Results*. Manila.

^b ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila.

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