

Annex D: Methodology

Overall approach

The focus of the evaluation is, as explained in the introduction, the success (or lack thereof) of the Danida strategy and support for Vietnam, through application of a theory-based approach to contribution analysis. Within this overall framework, the performance of two distinct analytical tasks has been core: one focusing on identifying and assessing the change and results brought about through the Danish support, with emphasis on accountability; the other focusing on analysis of the transformation of the partnership between Vietnam and Denmark and the implications thereof, with emphasis on extracting lessons learned in a forward-looking perspective. While the two levels of analysis are interlinked and to some degree build on a common pool of data, they have also entailed distinct traits, challenges and requirements.

Assessing the contribution to longer-term changes and specific results:

Regarding the analysis of the Danish **contribution to results**, the approach has focused on identifying changes at the overall level of relevance of the Danish support. At this overall level, it has from the outset been seen as less feasible to isolate the Danish contribution or attribute specific results to Danish interventions (see also remarks in ToR regarding the scope and modalities of Danish support). Rather, the links between the identified changes and the Danish support have been the main focus, working from an understanding of the **theory of change** (see Annex E) and by following the chain of outcomes of the Danish interventions as closely as data have allowed. In this way, the evaluation has worked towards a holistic contribution including assessment of its strength and credibility.

While the core focus has thus been on the identification and assessment of contribution to change, as well as any important issues of sustainability of the results, data collection and analysis have also aimed to capture the significance of the Danish strategies and ways of working for both achievement of results as well as for the evolving partnership. Part of this has included the identification and elaboration of **relevant cases** that illustrate the core traits and experiences of the Danish support, not just with regard to illustrating the contribution story, but also to feed into the analysis of partnership transformation (more on this below).

Investigation of the transformation of the Danish Vietnamese Partnership:

While the results framework and strategy for Danish support for Vietnam provides a yardstick against which to assess the identified changes, and with a possibility of unpacking the theory of change underpinning this, the analysis of the transformation process and its implications has represented a more **fluent object of analysis**. The transformation has been underpinned by the exit strategy and plan from 2007 but has also entailed a more incremental process of dialogue, opportunities and emergent issues. By implication, this part of the evaluation has also drawn on the **evolution analysis** and the unpacking of the Theory of Change.

Data sources, tools and methods

In line with the scope and objective of the evaluation, a broad range of data has been gathered through multiple sources. These include:

In-depth documentary review: this work was initiated prior to the scoping mission in order to prepare the field mission activities, and continued throughout the evaluation phase. The documents reviewed include programme documents, reviews and RAMs, programme and project completion reports, the strategies and policies of the Government of Vietnam as well as of Danida, and existing research and evaluations.

Analysis of existing quantitative data along the results chain: The evaluation has used both programme monitoring data from Danida and partners, as well as existing surveys and statistical material from Vietnamese partners. While quantitative data were as expected insufficient in their own right, they formed an important part of the foundation.

Structured Interviews: The interviews were prepared with interview guidelines adapted to the stakeholders to be interviewed. The field investigations included site visits, interviews with final beneficiaries, local project management, Danish task managers, national counterparts, and possibly other implementation partners.

Focus groups (FGD): FGD were a valuable tool in helping the team better understand processes and motivations that underpinned actions and decisions in specific sectors. Focus groups at province and local levels were organised to collect points of view and discuss specific issues of major importance for the evaluation, and also helped ensure feedback from divergent opinions.

Case studies: these were included to illustrate a change or result that was worth highlighting and could be communicated to the public. They form an integral part of the sector analyses and build on data cutting across the above-mentioned sources in line with the ToR ten case studies focusing on investigating contribution to results and five aimed at exploring the partnership transformation have been included. The case studies add value to the evaluation as they helped to:

- establish a deeper understanding of the change processes leading to contributions to results,
- provide richer and more detailed exemplification of Danida's work and its strengths or weaknesses,
- help explore and illustrate the partnership evolution, and
- illustrate the links between former support for Vietnam and the current situation and the implications of the partnership transformation.

Criteria for selection of case studies

The ToR suggested overall priorities for case selection focusing on sectors and geography. These initial priorities were discussed and confirmed, as they reflect core areas of support and were suitable for providing insights across results, sustainability and transformation. It was suggested that an additional sector be included, so as to be able to explore a more diverse range of support areas. The following sectors were thus selected:

- Governance; Fisheries; Water Management; Environment/climate; the business sector

To also reflect different conditions, cases from within these sectors were selected to include provinces where significant support has been provided - including one from the Central Highlands and one from each of the South and North of Vietnam and representing both poor and more economically-developed regions. The ToR¹ suggestion was deemed appropriate, and the final selection was as follows:

- Dak Lak and Quang Nam in the Central Highlands;
- Ben Tre, Ho Chi Minh and Cao Tho in the South;
- Lao Cai in the North.

¹ The ToR proposed Ben Tre, Dak Lak and either Lao Cai, Dien Bien Phu and Lai Chau for the North provinces. Lao Cai is deemed to be the best option since it is easier in terms of logistics. And according to the RDE it has a better coverage of Danida sectors. Dien Bien Phu and Lai Chau have much less activities and capture less sectors. Three additional provinces have been added (Ho Chi Minh, Cao Tho, Quang Nam) to the field visit further to the RDE suggestion.

Field visit approach

Core issues regarding the field visit² approach are covered elsewhere in this section, and will only be briefly summarised here:

- data collection and case studies for learning, exemplification and depth: A core element of the field visit approach was to gather data, in particular for case studies but also to allow for triangulation, validation and supplementation of other elements of analysis;
- engagement and participation: an essential part of the field visit approach has been to ensure sufficient direct contact with stakeholders and final beneficiaries;
- validation and consultation: for each district visit and for the country visit as such, debriefing notes and presentations were elaborated and shared, to aid dialogue and validation;
- each expert focussed on an area of expertise in order to maximise the efforts during the mission, namely Jörn Dosch on Governance, Culture and Private Sector, Joe Ryan on Fisheries, Climate Change, Water and Sanitation and Green Economy. Le Duy Binh provided support for all sectors. Many interviews were carried out jointly to seek synergies. Silvia Cifarelli supported the team throughout the mission and collected relevant data in order to finalise the portfolio.

Methods for validation of conclusions and consultation

An important element in validation of the conclusions has of course been that of ensuring the soundness of data and analysis. Here, the evaluation built on both triangulation of data and on validation with stakeholders. The triangulation of the information has been a continuous process, starting during the data collection phase and continuing during the data analysis and synthesis phases.

Secondary data collected through document analysis were validated through interviews; unclear data were also validated or clarified through the field visits; quality data from interviews and direct observation were analysed in a comparative way, using only the most frequent or common findings as global evidence.

In addition, debriefings with stakeholders and contact with the ERG (evaluation reference group) were seen as important elements for validation and consultation to ensure both accuracy and relevance. At the end of the field mission the Team Leader prepared a debriefing for the presentation and validation of the preliminary findings. Preliminary findings were also presented in an ERG meeting in Copenhagen for further consultation.

² The field visit is foreseen for the period 14-31 March for the Team Leader (Joern Dosch) and the Research Assistant (Silvia Cifarelli) while the International Expert (Joe Ryan) will arrive in the field a week later and thus complete the field visit by the 8th of March, see workplan below. The National Expert (Le Duy Binh) will support the team throughout the whole mission.