



CURRENT STATE OF SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION IN VIETNAM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT PREPARED FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
CONSULTATION ON 23 APRIL 2019 IN HANOI, VIETNAM

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1. INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND IN VIETNAM

Vietnam has achieved rapid economic growth since its transformation from a planned economy to embrace a market economy through Doi Moi policies in 1986. Compared to the per capita GDP growth rate of less than 2% from 1955 to the early 1990s, it has achieved a high growth rate of 8-9% from 1992 to 1997 (Tho, 2003). Economic growth in the past few decades has transformed Vietnam from one of the poorest countries into a lower middle-income country. The economy maintains its growth and in the first half of 2018, GDP is estimated to have grown by 7.1%. Economic growth in 2018 is boosted by export growth in manufacturing sector, agriculture output growth from the growth in export of fishery, and service sector from retailer growth in buoyant private consumption and tourists (World Bank, 2018a). Moreover, 97.6% of the enterprises are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which have played a vital role in economic growth in Vietnam (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2014).

Vietnam is also experiencing demographic and social transformation. The population grew from 60 million in 1986 to reach 95 million in 2017 (World Bank, 2018a). Life expectancy has increased from 70.5 years in 1990 to 76.5 in 2017 and the Human Development Indicator has increased from 0.47 in 1990 to 0.69 in 2017 (UNDP, n.d.). The poverty rate has declined by 13% in the past decade. Currently, about 70% of the population is economically secure and 13% of the population is considered as middle class. Economic growth in the past decades has created jobs rapidly. In recent years, rising demands from the export sector and domestic consumption demands have kept creating jobs especially in manufacturing, construction, retail and hospitality sectors (World Bank, 2018b). Vietnam has achieved remarkable success in poverty reduction and improved standard of living in the past few decades thanks to the growth in labour intensive export sectors and the investment in human capital (World Bank, 2018b).

The economic progress in Vietnam has also generated environmental and social challenges. The volume of CO₂ emissions has doubled from 4 million tons in 1980 to 80 million tons in 2005 (World Bank in Shahbaz, Haouas and Hoang, 2019). In a densely populated country, Vietnam is already facing challenges due to the lack of arable land and environmental degradation from rapid economic growth will keep adding pressure to the natural environment (Clausen, Vu and Pedrono, 2011). Extensive logging and slash

and burn agricultural practices cause deforestation and soil degradation, water pollution threatens marine life, groundwater contamination limits potable water supplies, and air pollution damaging health, especially in rapidly urbanising and industrialising cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh, provide evidence the environment is degrading rapidly (CIA, n.d.). Moreover, Vietnam is identified as among the 5 to 10 most climate-vulnerable countries in the world (Bruun, 2012) particularly because of the socioeconomic damages that would occur (McElwee et al., 2010) from natural disasters. Moreover, land degradation due to industrial development is making coastal zones more vulnerable to flooding (Davis, 2016). SMEs still have limited capacity to comply with environmental laws and regulations in Vietnam. For instance, among the 615 industrial clusters, only 5% of the SMEs have concentrated wastewater treatment systems (ASEAN CSR Network, 2017).

For social challenges, most of the population has benefited from the economic prosperity and yet some ethnic minority groups still have slower progress and a larger poverty rate compared to the national average (World Bank, 2018). The improved technological capacity of SMEs would be vital for the improvement of environmental and social issues, but also an opportunity for Vietnam to upgrade its industries to enhance its competitiveness in the global economy.

2. SCP PROGRESS IN VIETNAM

2.1 SCP in the Global Context

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) has emerged as a practical and systemic approach to sustainability issues in the global context. It started in the 1970s as an end-of-pipe solution to address the effects of industrialisation on the environment and society, culminating in the first UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 (Akenji, Bengtsson and Schroeder, 2017). Gradually SCP evolved towards a cleaner production approach to policy making in the 1980s to increase the efficiency of natural resources use and waste minimisation and to reduce pollution impacts in the manufacturing sector. Towards the 1990s, SCP shifted towards a more systemic approach involving eco-efficiency through the life-cycle approach to analyse the impacts of products and services through the involvement of all stakeholders and in all stages of production and consumption. Moreover, the modern concept of SCP considers integration of the environment and development to address the dual challenges of environmental crises caused by modern civilisation and to improve the living and wellbeing of those in low-income countries. SCP also enriches and broadens the discussion on national development trajectories to open the conversations about different options in different countries (Akenji, Bengtsson and Schroeder, 2017). Thus, the framing, needs, priority areas and means to achieve SCP or sustainable development differ from one country to another.

2.2 The Evolution of SCP in Vietnam

The Government of Vietnam has emphasised SCP as an important way to connect development and environmental issues. Understanding fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable factors for achieving sustainable development.

To implement the 10-year Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production Program of the United Nations (10YFP), Vietnam has issued many legal and institutional documents supporting policies towards SCP in Vietnam, such as: (i) signing the International Declaration on Cleaner Production in 1999; (ii) promulgating the National Action Plan for Cleaner Production in 2002; (iii) issuing strategies and regulations on cleaner production in industry; (iv)

legal documents relating to consumer protection; (v) Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy; (vi) Vietnam Sustainable Development Strategy for the period 2011-2020; (vii) National Strategy for Green Growth in the period 2011-2020 and vision to 2050; (viii) National Action Plan on Sustainable Production and Consumption up to 2020, with a vision to 2030, among others.

SCP activities have also been implemented widely in Vietnam over the past 10 years. To date, there are over 1,200 production facilities in many sectors and localities in Vietnam implementing cleaner production.

In addition, activities such as building sustainable production models in industry and sustainable product design have also been initiated, mainly with support of international development partners such as UNEP, UNIDO, DANIDA, EU and others.

Programmes related to green products such as the Eco-label Program (MoNRE), Energy-saving labels (MOIT), and Eco-labels for tourism have also been deployed. In addition to green labelling and energy-saving labelling for electrical and electronic products, Vietnam is in the process of applying sustainable public procurement practices according to green economic standards.

3. EXISTING POLICY FRAMEWORKS ON SCP IN VIETNAM

3.1 Voluntary National Review

In Vietnam's Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the considerable progress in establishing the legal and policy foundations for SCP were outlined (Government of Vietnam 2018). The Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy, National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2011-2020), the National Strategy on Green Growth (2022-2020), Vision to 2050 and Strategy on Cleaner Industrial Production until 2020, and National Action Plan on Sustainable Production and Consumption up to 2020, with a vision to 2030 are key policies related to SCP/SDG12.

The use of green labels and energy ratings for appliances, sustainable public procurement, natural resource taxes, environmental fees and taxes are cited as major achievements. In addition, the Vietnam Sustainability Index, which evaluates the sustainability performance of 20 companies, was introduced to the Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange in 2017.

The review balances this rosy perspective by noting that "sustainable consumption activities have been limited, with mainly awareness raising activities, which remain fragmented with small-scale impacts".

3.2 Cleaner Industrial Production Strategy

The Cleaner Industrial Production Strategy until 2020 has been implemented nationwide to attract more than 9000 enterprises. Vietnam has initially used "green" and energy saving labels for electric and electronic devices, and the sustainable public procurement

practices according to green economic standard have been also in the process of applying. The Viet Nam Sustainability Index (VNSI) was introduced by Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange in July 2017 to evaluate the sustainability performance of 20 companies listed on the stock market. Some companies (big or multi-national ones) have implemented sustainability practices and integrated sustainability information in periodic reports. To orient consumption towards sustainability, Viet Nam has applied economic tools such as natural resource taxes on mineral mining and water resources, an environmental protection tax and environmental protection fees on waste water. However, sustainable consumption has been paid little attention. Sustainable consumption activities have been limited, with mainly awareness raising activities, which remain fragmented with small-scale impacts. (Vietnam's voluntary national review 2018).

3.3 Socio-Economic Development Plan and Action Plan

SCP is also backed by Vietnam's Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020), the Government's Action Plan on Implementation of the National Assembly's Resolution on the Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020), and the National Action Plan for Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (Government of Vietnam 2017).

3.4 National Action Plan for Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Vietnam's Ministry of Industry and Trade has set out 15 objectives over 5 years from 2015 (Table 1).

Table 1 Ministry of Industry and Trade Targets (2015-2020)

No.	Target	Indicator
1	Ratio of enterprises developing and implementing a roadmap for application and renovation of clean technologies	60 – 70%
2	Ratio of industrial production entities applying EE and cleaner production measures	50%
3	Successful implementation of pilot project on ecological renovation (enterprise, industrial zone, industrial cluster)	42 – 45% GDP
4	Contributed value of the green industry, environmental industry, waste recycle	
	Reducing waste in distribution activities	

No.	Target	Indicator
5	Developing the model of green supply chain	50%
6	Increasing the share of environmentally friendly products and services in export goods	65%
7	Providing information, instruction to support application of management system, environmental standards of some export markets	50%
8	Ratio of recycling waste materials, paper, oil and steel/iron	90%
9	Ratio of recycling household solid waste	85%
10	Ratio of recycling non – hazardous solid waste	75%
11	Ratio of recycling, recovering construction waste	50%
12	Developing the model of green supply chain	
13	Increasing the share of environmentally friendly products and services in export goods	
14	Providing information, instruction to support application of management system, environmental standards of some export markets	
15	Providing information to consumers about environmentally friendly products	

The National Action Plan for Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda refers to 115 targets (out of the 230 global targets) including 9 for SDG12—sustainable production and consumption. These include:

- i. Implement a 10-year framework of programmes on SCP in accordance with international commitments; creating the legal framework to encourage participation of individuals, organizations, enterprises in investment, implementation of areas related to sustainable consumption and production;
- ii. By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; reasonably exploit and economically, sustainably utilise mineral resources; improving community awareness, enhancing capacity of enterprises in sustainable consumption and production;
- iii. By 2030, halve per capita amount of food waste and reduce food losses along the production and supply chains, including by minimising post-harvest losses; ecological renovation: application of product life-cycle approach;
- iv. By 2020, adopt and implement a lifecycle management approach to chemicals and wastes in accordance with international commitments that Vietnam has signed, in order to reduce soil, water, air pollution and their adverse impacts on human health and the environment; promoting production and supply of environmentally friendly products and services to meet the need for sustainable consumption;
- v. By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation and increase the economic value of waste resources through prevention, reduction, recycling, reuse, and recovery of energies from waste treatment; Developing a sustainable distribution system (Greening the distribution system and developing distribution channels and green shopping network);
- vi. Encourage the business community to adopt sustainable practices, including the use of cleaner production technologies, effective use of natural resources and environmental protection; implement social accountabilities with regards to the poor and the vulnerable; and integrate sustainability information into periodical reports; Developing sustainable supply chains;
- vii. Ensure sustainable public procurement practices; enhancing competing capacity of export enterprises and ability of export enterprises and ability to approach markets, participate in the global supply chain;
- viii. By 2030, ensure that citizens everywhere have relevant information on and proper awareness of sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature; green public procurement; and
- ix. Improve taxation and pricing policies on fossil fuels and, at the same time, adopt appropriate policies to protect the poor and other individuals and groups who are vulnerable to likely negative impacts; plan for reducing, recycling, and reusing waste (3R) (SCP, MOIT, 2018).

Implementation is to be undertaken by the National Council on Sustainable Development and Competitiveness Improvement. The Council, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, is tasked with advising the Government and the Prime Minister in building and implementing strategies, policies, plans, programmes, tasks and measures for the effective implementation of the National Action Plan for Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The Chairman of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry is Vice Chair of the Council. To ensure private sector participation, a Committee on Public-Private Partnership, chaired by the Chairman of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with a representative of the Vietnam Association of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises as Vice Chair, was created in 2018 as a professional body of the Council.

Note also that SCP is not entirely captured by SDG12. Other relevant goals include: zero hunger (SDG2), clean water and sanitation (SDG6), affordable and clean energy (SDG7), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG9), sustainable cities and communities (SDG11), and climate action (SDG13) among others.

3.5 National Green Growth Strategy and Action Plan

The Vietnam Green Growth Strategy has overall objectives to achieve a low carbon economy, enrich natural capital, and direct sustainable economic development. The objectives would be achieved by accelerating the process of economic restructuring in order to use natural resources efficiently, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through research and application of modern technologies, developing infrastructure to improve the entire efficiency of the economy, coping with climate change, contributing to poverty reduction, and driving economic growth in a sustainable manner.

The strategy sets out tasks for the period 2011–2020:

- i. reduce the intensity of GHG emissions by 8–10% as compared to the 2010 level;
- ii. reduce energy consumption per unit of GDP by 1–1.5% per year; and
- iii. reduce GHG emissions from energy activities by 10–20%. The orientation towards 2030 is to reduce annual GHG emissions by at least 1.5–2% and to reduce GHG emissions in energy activities by 20–30% (Prime Minister No.1393/QĐ-TTg, 2012).

The Vietnam Green Growth Strategy focuses on three priorities: climate change mitigation, green production, and green lifestyles. The solutions that have been identified include the construction of necessary infrastructure, technological innovation and the creation of an enabling environment through the elaboration of appropriate policy mechanisms, standards, technical regulations, and the rational use of natural resources including fossil fuels [LEDS, 2014]. Mainstreaming of cleaner production is especially endorsed by the Prime Minister in the 2009 Decision no.1419/QĐ-TTg on “Strategy on Cleaner Production (CP) in Industry Towards 2020.” The CP strategy is based on the approach of disseminating the CP concept to 63 provinces and cities nationwide via communication and mass media, technical assistance, CP networking, and financing mechanisms, which are to promote all industrial production facilities to participate in CP application. It targets at least 50% of industrial businesses, who would be made aware of the benefits derived from applying CP methods, and at least half of them would be expected to apply to reduce energy and material consumption by 2015; the strategy also wants to raise the figure to 90 and 50% respectively by 2020.

However, household level enterprises are large in number and as such pose a significant threat to the environment as they are not included in the overall efforts to ensure sustainable production. There is a general lack of knowledge on environmental techniques and practices in these micro-enterprises, added to which is their limited resources, capacities and infrastructure, and the vulnerability of local communities in which they operate.

Green consumption and sustainable lifestyles refer to the regular consumption of environmentally friendly products that do not cause any damage to human health and do not threaten the functions and working of any natural ecosystem. Changing today’s consumption patterns in order to preserve future opportunities is one of the themes for sustainable development.

The Green Growth Strategy sets out targets and actions for promoting sustainable consumption and building green lifestyles, including:

1. Promoting eco-labelling and disseminating information on environmentally friendly products to the entire society (e.g., formulating a roadmap towards 2020 to initiate green procurement);
2. Regulating public expenditure leading to the

development and use of green economy standards (e.g., from 2015, all public works and projects should adhere to green economy standards, and from 2017 all motorised vehicles purchased by public budget will meet emission standards); and

3. Other activities such as excise duty, environmental taxes and fees to adjust excessive consumption and information technology for e-government.

3.6 National Action Plan on Sustainable Production and Consumption up to 2020, with a Vision to 2030

On 11th January 2016, the Prime Minister of Vietnam, has issued the Decision No. 76/QĐ-TTg on approving of “The National Action Plan on Sustainable Production and Consumption up to 2020, with a vision to 2030”. By approving this Action Plan, the Government of Vietnam has recognised and highlighted the important role of mainstreaming and integrating sustainable production and consumption in the existing programs, strategies and plans in: (i) ensuring fast and efficient economic development; (ii) contributing to environmental protection; (iii) poverty reduction and restructure of economy. It has been stated that SCP must be applied in all stages of product lifecycle aimed at encouraging technological innovation; improving equipment and management system for ensuring resource use efficiently; minimising waste and environmental

impacts; and finally changing consumer behaviour during purchasing, using and disposing of products. Participation from all stakeholder groups in society in implementing SCP is clearly mentioned, with an emphasis on the significant roles of businesses/enterprises and consumer groups.

Overall objectives of the Action Plan are gradually change production and consumption patterns toward improvement of efficient resources and energy; increase in consumption of sustainable products and renewable energy sources; reduce, reuse and recycle waste at all stages of product lifecycle. In order to achieve these objectives, 6 groups of main tasks have been identified, including: (i) develop and improve legal framework and policies to implement SCP; (ii) promote production and economic restructure toward sustainability; (iii) greening distribution system and develop supply chain of sustainable products; (iv) improve market access and promote key export products towards sustainability; (v) change consumption behaviour toward sustainability and boost sustainable lifestyles; (vi) implement waste reduce, reuse and recycle activities.

Moreover, the Action Plan has identified 9 prioritised programs for implementing by 2020 with clear time frame, objectives, main activities, coordinating and relevant ministries/agencies, and possible sources of budget for the implementation of each program. The list of prioritised programs are mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2 Priority Programs for the National Action Plan

No.	Program title	Main objectives	Ministries/agencies
1	Develop and improve legal framework and policies to implement SCP (2015-2020)	Create a legal framework to encourage the participation of individuals, organisations and enterprises to invest in and implement SCP activities	MOIT and MONRE, in cooperation with MOF and MPI
2	Raise awareness and implementing capacity of SCP to all stakeholders (2016-2020)	Raise awareness and implementation capacity of community, officials, enterprises and related stakeholders about SCP	MONRE and MOE, in cooperation with MPI and MIC
3	Ecological Innovation (2015-2020)	- Apply innovation at all stages of product life cycle in order to improve efficient resources and energy saving utilisation, increase in competitive capacity to enterprises and ensure environmental protection and sustainable development. - Restructure industrial parks and industrial clusters toward ecological industry	MOIT, in cooperation with MPI, MONRE, MARD, MOC and MOT

No.	Program title	Main objectives	Ministries/agencies
4	Develop sustainable products production (2015-2020)	Promote the production and supply of sustainable products to meet sustainable consumption demand	MOIT, in cooperation with MONRE, MOF and other specific ministries
5	Develop sustainable distribution systems (2015-2020)	Greening distribution system and develop sustainable products distribution channels	MOIT, in cooperation with provinces and cities
6	Develop sustainable supply chain (2015-2020)	Ensure sustainable supply of products from farm to table and encourage enterprises in all stages of supply chain employing sustainable practices	MOIT, in cooperation with MARD
7	Promote sustainable exports and improve sustainable export competitiveness capacity to enterprises in key export products (2015-2020)	- Improve competitive capacity of export enterprises and market access to participate to global sustainable supply chain for key sustainable export products of Vietnam. - Restructure export sector towards more sustainability.	MOIT, in cooperation with MARD, MOF, MONRE, MOST
8	Green public procurement (2015-2020)	Increase proportion of sustainable products procurement in public procurement from state administrative authorities and enterprises in order to promote SCP	MOF, in cooperation with MOIT, MPI, specific ministries and related provincial, cities under central government people's committee
9	Waste Reduce, Recycle and Reuse Program (3R) (2015-2020)	Promote sustainable waste management	MONRE, in cooperation with related provincial, cities under central government people's committee

Source: Decision 76/QD-TTg on National Action Program on SCP, 2016.

Note: MOIT: Ministry of Industry and Trade; MONRE: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; MOF: Ministry of Finance; MPI: Ministry of Planning and Investment; MARD: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; MOC: Ministry of Construction; MOET: Ministry of Education and Training; MOST: Ministry of Science and Technology; MIC: Ministry of Information and Communication; MOT: Ministry of Transport.

3.7 Assessment of the current state of implementation of SCP in Vietnam

One of the major SCP achievements in Vietnam has been the saving of energy. “Vietnam’s Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals” on the review of SDG12 assessed energy saving, waste management, food production, green labels, business community, sustainable public procurement system, sustainable consumption and public awareness raising (Government of Vietnam, 2018).

Regarding implementation of SCP in Vietnam, at the industry-level, SCP practices continue to be

implemented at the small-scale and pilot project level. There are some programmes on sustainable industrial production and sustainable product design, but implementation remains small-scale with the support of development partners. One major achievement, however, is in energy saving, as Vietnam saved 5.6% in energy during 2011–2015. For waste management, similarly, projects on reusing material waste and slag ash into construction material and energy production remain at the pilot stage. Treatment of solid waste and industrial waste are yet to be implemented in an integrated manner (Government of Vietnam, 2018). Investment to upscale the existing small-scale and pilot projects, combined with strengthening compliance and enforcement by local government,

would be important for mainstreaming SCP practices in industries.

Table 3 shows the progress made in terms of awareness and implementation of cleaner production in industrial production and the available support of Department of Industry and Trade in supporting

cleaner production. It demonstrates that the awareness gap is still high, and implementation is lagging. Thus, more efforts are needed to facilitate the implementation process through not only the potential for resource and cost saving, but also by creating higher value-added products in domestic and global markets.

Table 3 Progress on Cleaner Production (2010-2020)

Indicators	Target of the Strategy		Implemented in 2015
	During 2010 - 2015	During 2016 - 2020	
Percentage of industrial production units aware of CP application benefits (percent)	50	90	55
Percentage of industrial production units applying CP and able to cut down the consumption of energy, fuel and raw materials per product unit (percent)	25	50	24
Percentage of medium- and large-sized enterprises with on-site focal points responsible for CP (percent)		90	-
Percentage of DOITs having full-time cadres fully capable of providing guidance and advice on CP application (percent)	70	90	73
Reduced consumption of energy, fuel and raw materials per unit of production (percent)	5-8	8-13	Varied

Source: Vietnam Cleaner Production Centre

The achievement of SCP practices in food production is promising. For rice production, methods of rice intensification have been applied in 395,000 ha, with enhanced technology leading to higher yields, reduced input costs and declining GHG emissions. Technologies are also being improved in aquaculture and fisheries practice. In seaweed and shrimp farming, there are standardised farming methods of bio-products, no chemicals, antibiotics controls, and ecological fish farming which are being implemented in various provinces (Government of Vietnam, 2018). Efforts to demonstrate the demand for more sustainably produced food in domestic and global markets could incentivise the scale-up of existing practices.

For green labelling, MoNRE has published criteria for nine product groups, which include packaging for washing powder, printing ink, batteries, electric

lamps, office equipment and construction material. In 2011, the Prime Minister's Decision 51/2011/QD-TTg issued a compulsory requirement for energy saving labelling for electric and electronic products. In 2017, home appliances, office and trade equipment, industrial equipment and means of transport are added to the list for energy labelling and to apply the minimum level of energy efficiency. Moreover, energy labelling is also required for cars with seven seats or less and with seven-nine seats. For motorbikes, compulsory labelling will be added from 2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2018). Education of consumers regarding the value of green labels through formal and informal education systems could potentially increase the demand for these products and services thus providing increased incentives for company investment.

Green public procurement is applied to energy saving products based on the Prime Minister's Decision 68/2011/QĐ-TTg. Regulations are still needed to guide government agencies in applying green public procurement, as well as the standards and regulations on green public investment and spending (Government of Vietnam, 2018). Green labelling programs should be linked to the identification of green public procurement, and education on sustainable consumption increased, so that companies will innovate and meet the standards of green labels as a comparative advantage.

For the engagement of the business community in SCP, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry published its Corporate Sustainability Index as the evaluation base to measure the sustainability of companies in Vietnam. The sustainability performance evaluation was conducted on 20 companies in the Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange in 2017, which have relevant targets and report on their sustainability aspects regularly. Nevertheless, such practices are limited (Government of Vietnam, 2018). Sustainability commitments should not only be considered as corporate social responsibilities, but also as valuable opportunities for companies to embrace the best technology to innovate and upgrade their products and services.

To encourage sustainable consumption, Vietnam uses a range of taxation measures. The Law on Environmental Protection 2010 identified eight groups that are subject to an environmental tax: gasoline, lubricants, coal, hydro-chloro-fluoro-carbon liquid (HCFC), plastic bags, herbicide, termiticide, forest product preservative, and restricted warehouse fumigants. Moreover, the Law on Natural Resources added eight groups that are subject to taxes: metallic minerals and non-metallic minerals; oil, natural gas, coal gas; products of natural forest (excluding animals); natural aquatic products, including marine plants and animals; natural water (groundwater and surface water); and natural swallow's nests. Due to the low taxation rate these measures have not yet made a significant impact on consumption patterns, so the Government plans to revise the Law on Natural Resources and to increase the taxes. Importantly, Vietnam has stopped direct fossil fuels subsidies and is phasing out indirect ones.

In terms of consumer awareness on SCP, Vietnamese consumers are considered to have the highest orientation towards sustainability in Southeast Asia (Government of Vietnam, 2018). This high awareness of the public could be effectively utilised to adapt

SCP and upgrade enabling conditions for actions that could be taken by the public and private sectors.

In addition, based on an assessment of the implementation of SCP in industry and trade in Vietnam 2017–2018 by the Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Trade and Industry, current efforts are focused on seven areas: (i) development of legal framework, (ii) enhancing awareness and implementation capacity, (iii) ecological renovation, (iv) development of environmentally friendly products and services, (v) development of sustainable distribution systems, (vi) development of sustainable supply chain, and (vii) enhancing competing capacity and promoting export (Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Development Department, 2018). As most efforts were still in the research and assessment phase in 2017–2018, future efforts should include taking the outcomes from the seven areas into implementation arrangements to actively involve and incentivise companies, scale up existing good practices, strengthen the standards and criteria for SCP, uncover the economic potential of sustainably produced products, create consumer awareness and demands for green products, enhance the coordination of the stakeholders, and create the foundation for a systematic monitoring and evaluation process.

3.8 Applying economic and technical instruments to encourage sustainable consumption

Developing greener consumption patterns requires cooperation from consumers, communities, and civil society. However, green lifestyles are not yet topical for the research agenda and media programmes in Vietnam. Comprehensive research on aspects of green consumption using various framework approaches is needed, such as economic, psychology, sociology, and culture. In 2012, the European Commission (EC), through SWITCH-Asia, sponsored an initial project of GetGreen Vietnam (detailed in Box 13.2) to promote sustainable living and working styles. However, this initial project was limited to consumers in only four cities (Hanoi, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, and Can Tho). Further efforts are needed to mainstream sustainable lifestyles throughout Vietnam. (SCP in Vietnam, Thong, 2017)

Specific targets were also in place through the National Green Growth Strategy (2011-2020). Key targets for green production towards 2020 are: "high technology and green technology will make up 42-45% of GDP; commercial manufacturing facilities

that meet environment standards will reach 80%; application of clean technologies will reach 50%; development investment for supporting sectors to protect the environment and enriching natural capital will reach 3-4% of GDP” (Government of Vietnam 2014). Consumption targets relate to wastewater collection and treatment, pollution reduction, solid waste collection and treatment, increased tree cover in urban areas, public transportation, and green urban standards. Policy changes and proposed solutions are also outlined. The Strategy on Cleaner Production in Industry towards 2020 should be matched by an approved national technology innovation programme.

The National Action Plan on Green Growth in Vietnam (2014-2020) includes 66 specific activities, including:

- i. Reducing the intensity of GHG emissions and promoting the use of clean and renewable sources of energy (20 activities);
- ii. Greening production (25 activities); and
- iii. Greening lifestyles and promoting sustainable consumption (13 activities).

3.9 Other Relevant Plans

Other relevant plans include the Master Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam up to 2020, vision to 2030, approved in 2012, and the Master Plan on Fisheries Development in Vietnam up to 2020, vision to 2030 approved in 2013 (UNEP 2016).

4. PREVIOUS SWITCH ASIA PROJECTS INVOLVING VIETNAM

4.1 Regional Projects

In 2016, the 9th ASEAN+3 Leadership Programme on Sustainable Development Goal 12 – “Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns” was held in Hanoi, Vietnam. Hosted by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Vietnam Environment Administration as part of Vietnam’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the 2016 Leadership Programme focused on promotion of appropriate policies, measures, strategies and actions for SCP through sustainable value chains across ASEAN +3 countries. The Leadership Programme included Vietnamese case study examples of SCP application, including some of those below.

Other regional projects in which Vietnam was engaged include:

- i. Promotion and deployment of energy efficient air conditioners in ASEAN;
- ii. Sustainable Product Innovation in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos;
- iii. Sustainable Freight Transport and Logistics in the Mekong Region;
- iv. Establishing a Sustainable Production System for Rattan Products in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam; and

- v. Sustainable and Responsible Trade Promoted to Wood Processing SMEs through Forest and Trade Networks in China, India and Vietnam.

4.2 National Level Projects

National level projects include the following:

4.2.1 Scaling up of Ethical BioTrade initiatives within phytopharmaceutical sector in Vietnam

Traditional Vietnamese remedies rely on natural resources, but this natural resource base is dwindling. This project aimed to scale up the sustainable ethical biotrade business model to the natural ingredient sector and make Vietnam an internationally recognised supplier of such products to the phytopharmaceutical, cosmetic and food supplement industries.

4.2.2 Helping Vietnamese SMEs Adapt and Adopt CSR for Improved Linkages with Global Supply Chains in Sustainable Production

This project to aimed to improve the environmental and social performance of Vietnamese small and medium enterprises (SMEs), thus helping them to integrate into global supply chains through “increased awareness, understanding and adoption of triple-bottom-line corporate social responsibility (CSR)”. As Vietnamese SMEs often have difficulty in meeting European standards, this project helped to

strengthen cooperation between Europe and Asia.

4.2.3 GetGreen VN - Sustainable Living and Working in Vietnam

This project aims to identify alternative consumption choices of Vietnamese consumers and train a large number of change agents for the transition towards sustainable consumption. Ultimately, the supply side would be linked to these changed consumer preferences.

4.2.4 The Sustainable Product Innovation Project (SPIN project)

The SPIN project was implemented in Vietnam by the agencies of Vietnam Cleaner Production Centre (VNCPC), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and Asian Institute of Technology in Vietnam (AITVN). This project aims to promote the potential innovation in the industry and increase social and environmental quality of the products produced in Vietnam. After four years of implementation, in Vietnam, 170 enterprises have been supported for (i) technology introduction and transfer; (ii) product innovation; (iii) strategic consultation; and (iv) training on CP application. Around 1,000 products have been developed by the end of 2013 and many of them have been realised (VNCPC, 2013).

4.2.5 Establishing a Sustainable Pangasius (catfish) supply chain in Vietnam Project (SUPA)

During 2015-2016, the project started operation of the model farm, developed advanced resources efficiency and cleaner production options and transferred production by SMEs. RECP assessments of processing SMEs have also been conducted and 14 SMEs were selected for further technical support with staff training on RECP and in-depth consultation. VNCPC jointly with WWF Vietnam carried out a quick assessment for 50 farms of pangasius production and hatcheries. Until now 140 SMEs are engaged in the project with 5 billion VND and saved 28.5% water use, 28% wastewater discharge reduction, 18.6% reduction of electricity use and 2,000 tonnes of GHG reduction per year per SME (VNCPC, 2015) (Eco-innovation and SCP in Vietnam, Park, 2017).

4.2.6 Mainstreaming Energy Efficiency through Business Innovation Support Vietnam (MEET-BIS Vietnam)

The project aimed at promoting sustainable production of urban-based SMEs by supporting development

of sustainable markets for affordable water and energy efficiency technologies. The project works with private sector suppliers to develop commercially attractive business innovation packages targeting SMEs, particularly in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

4.2.7 Sustainable and Equitable Shrimp Production and Value Chain Development in Vietnam

Shrimp production employs more than one million people in Vietnam. About 80% of shrimp production in Vietnam is by small-scale producers who are fragmented, lack financial access and are inefficient, thus impacting the competitiveness of the sector. Moreover, the reliance on saline water ecology produces environmental and socioeconomic damage. The project improved access to finance through the promotion of the participatory Social Impact Assessment (p-SIA) and Biodiversity Environment Impact Assessment (B-EIA) criteria of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) standards for shrimp producers and processors.

5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MAINSTREAMING SCP IN VIETNAM

5.1 Economic Growth Based on Unsustainable SCP?

Open Development Mekong (2018) claims that “early acceptance of SCP has not translated into continued strong progress along this path in the Asia-Pacific region. Economic growth has been founded on unsustainable consumption and production patterns that make inequality and environmental degradation worse. Progress on SCP has gone backwards, and the region urgently needs to reverse material consumption and footprint trends to meet SDG 12, despite progress on individual targets.” Is there sufficient evidence in Vietnam to counter this claim?

5.2 Specific Challenges in Vietnam

Population growth and unsustainable development are big challenges for Vietnam in realising SCP. Sustainable consumption has not been paid enough attention to and implementation activities are limited. Consumer habits are dominated by custom and economic ability. The few activities that have been implemented to raise community awareness regarding eco-products, such as eco-friendly plastic bags and 3R, were mainly individual activities with limited target groups, so the impacts have been limited. Ecological products do not have a foothold in the market; sustainable consumption habits have hardly been oriented in the whole society. Sustainable production has been initiated, but progress is limited. Production technology and management skills and qualifications are not high, so the use of raw materials has not been efficient. SDG implementation demands huge financial inputs, while the State budget remains limited and ODA is contracting as Vietnam has become a lower middle-income country.

Although there are regulations on the SCP framework, a specific policy for SCP still needs to be developed and issued with specific objectives, targets and actions. A set of criteria for assessing the level of sustainability in production and consumption as the basis for determining the specific activities to be implemented still needs to be developed. Due to the cross-sectoral nature of SDGs, it is challenging to implement the SDGs. In addition, most current plans and strategies in Vietnam only set targets to 2020 and visions to 2030, but do not set quantitative targets for evaluation purposes. Many SDG indicators do not have metadata and must be freshly collected, with complicated calculation methods and data from non-

conventional sources. Therefore, it is a big challenge for Vietnam to monitor and evaluate implementation of the 17 SDGs. (Vietnam’s voluntary national review 2018).

The regulations on SCP are general and dispersed across many different documents, not yet creating a strong legal basis. Resources are not properly evaluated, so they have not created the motivation for conserving material resources. The technical assistance implemented to date has not yet met the real needs.

Performance of SCP in Vietnam is still weak and faces many constraints in production, distribution, consumption and disposal processes (Eco-innovation and SCP in Vietnam, Park, 2017). Therefore, to effectively implement SCP activities. Vietnam needs to have specific policies and actions with the following objectives: (i) reduce raw materials and energy consumption throughout the production and consumption system by increasing efficiency; and (ii) changing and optimising production and consumption patterns to continuously improve life quality.

Among the ASEAN countries, however, Vietnam is the only one to have incorporated SCP in its Environment Law. Under the Law, “Article 44, Eco-friendly production and consumption” identifies responsibilities for manufacture and consumption of eco-friendly products and services, green procurement by government, and promotion of eco-labelled products and services. Vietnam is also recognised for its national chemical inventory and banning/phasing out hazardous pesticides. Is Vietnam, therefore, the exception in ASEAN?

Some of the challenges noted in implementation of the SDGs (Thuy, 2017) include:

- i. Continued dominance of low-value added and labour-intensive production, with limited technology transfer;
- ii. Increasing migration, urbanisation, and an ageing and growing middle class, contributing to greater inequality;
- iii. Despite poverty reduction gains, it remains prevalent in remote and mountainous areas and ethnic minority communities;
- iv. Climate change has become more visible, with

- frequent natural disasters and consequent loss and damages;
- v. Natural capital is degrading, and environmental pollution is increasing;
- vi. The institutional framework for monitoring and report is weak, and statistical capacity needs to be strengthened; and
- vii. Almost half of the SDG indicators are either infeasible or have no data.

As noted above, many sustainable consumption activities have been identified but implementation has been limited, with mainly fragmented awareness raising activities and limited impact.

5.3 Recommendations for mainstreaming SCP in Vietnam

The 10-year Framework of Programmes on SCP set out focus areas and priorities for the period 2021 - 2030:

- i. Incorporate SCP as a key business opportunity for the industry, especially SMEs in Vietnam to upgrade their products and enhance its competitiveness in domestic and global market. The demonstration of economic success from pilot projects could potentially incentivise other SMEs to follow good practices.
- ii. Capacity building for local authorities in incorporating SCP to address the local needs of socioeconomic and environmental issues, for instance: resilience to climate change, livelihood for business opportunities, waste management concern, ecological degradation and so forth.
- iii. Target and nurture specific talents such as the youth and young professionals that particularly have the appetite to innovation, such as start-ups to create innovative disruption to the industries through SCP practices to target key industries such as food, textile, and so forth.
- iv. Developing environmentally friendly products, services and technologies: integrating product and service development into development strategies, planning and master plans in industry and services; ecological design by life cycle assessment method; market development for ecological products; promote the 3R economy (also known as recycling / reuse economy);
- v. Provide product information to consumers: test products conscientiously; ecological labelling; green shopping - government sustainable procurement; green shopping in businesses;
- vi. Information, training and awareness raising: campaign to raise awareness about production and rehabilitation; building initiatives on SCP; and
- vii. Place SCP as the core in achieving all SDGs to effectively utilise the resources in systemically address SCP issues in implementation.

An assessment of the results of the implementation of the 10-year Framework for SCP Program and National Action Plan on Sustainable Production and Consumption should be conducted and then solutions will be identified to accelerate implementation.

To make these recommendations more concrete and timebound, Table 4 outlines a possible action plan for 2021-2030, as a starting point for discussions in the multi-stakeholder consultation.

Table 4 Proposed SCP actions 2021-2030

Actions in the 10-year framework	Possible specific actions	Time frame
1. Incorporate SCP as a key business opportunity for the industry, especially SMEs in Vietnam to upgrade their products and enhance its competitiveness in domestic and global market. The demonstration of economic success from pilot projects could potentially incentivise other SMEs to follow good practices.	i. Identify top 10 business opportunities for SMEs that will promote SCP in Vietnam;	2021-2022
	ii. Mobilise funds to conduct pilot projects for these 10 opportunities;	2021-2022
	iii. Open call for proposals from interested SMEs to participate in these pilot projects and select 5 SMEs for each opportunity;	2022
	iv. Implement and monitor outcomes of these 50 pilot projects; and	2022-2025
	v. Develop an action plan to scale up the successful models.	2026

Actions in the 10-year framework	Possible specific actions	Time frame
2. Capacity building for local authorities in incorporating SCP to address the local needs of socioeconomic and environmental issues, for instance: resilience to climate change, livelihood for business opportunities, waste management concern, ecological degradation and so forth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Prepare capacity building modules on SCP (training materials, brochures, infographics, videos) suitable for local authorities; ii. Test the material developed in 2-3 provinces and make adjustments as needed; iii. Mobilise funds for a national roll out of the capacity building program; and iv. Roll out the capacity building program to all provinces in Vietnam, covering civil society groups as well as local officials. 	<p>2021-2022</p> <p>2023</p> <p>2024</p> <p>2025-2030</p>
3. Target and nurture specific talents such as the youth and young professionals that particularly have the appetite to innovation, such as start-ups to create innovative disruption to the industries through SCP practices to target key industries such as food, textile, and so forth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mainstream SCP into the college and university curricula; ii. Conduct an annual “shark tank” at provincial and national levels to allow young entrepreneurs to pitch their SCP ideas to industry leaders (national and international); iii. Identify the top runner ideas for 10 young leaders and provide start-up funding support for 2 years; iv. Monitor success of these start-ups and provide assistance in accessing normal funding, such as from national banks. 	<p>2021-2022</p> <p>2022-2025</p> <p>2023-2027</p> <p>2025-2030</p>
4. Developing environmentally friendly products, services and technologies: integrating product and service development into development strategies, planning and master plans in industry and services; ecological design by life cycle assessment method; market development for ecological products; promote the 3R economy (also known as recycling / reuse economy).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Prepare promotional material on eco-design and life-cycle planning, specifically aimed at some of the medium-large industries in Vietnam; ii. Based on demand from industries exposed to this material, provide international product design experts to assist these industries to change their product lines; and iii. Promote these eco-designed products through trade fairs and government-led green procurement programs. 	<p>2021-2022</p> <p>2023-2025</p> <p>2026-2030</p>
5. Provide product information to consumers: test products conscientiously; ecological labelling; green shopping - government sustainable procurement; green shopping in businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Examine the effectiveness of current product labelling systems in Vietnam to provide accurate information on SCP to consumers; ii. Propose changes in current labelling requirements to ensure that consumers can safely choose “green” products; and iii. Monitor the effectiveness of these changes and adjust as necessary. 	<p>2021-2022</p> <p>2023-2024</p> <p>2025-2030</p>
6. Information, training and awareness raising: campaign to raise awareness about production and rehabilitation; building initiatives on SCP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Prepare a national information campaign on SCP; ii. Conduct a trial run of the information campaign and assess effectiveness in changing behavior; iii. Modify the campaign and roll it out nation-wide, through all available media. 	<p>2021-2022</p> <p>2023</p> <p>2024-2025</p>
7. Place SCP as the core in achieving all SDGs to effectively utilise the resources in systemically address SCP issues in implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. (i) Map SCP actions against all 17 SDGs and identify current gaps; ii. (ii) Adjust current SDG action plans to incorporate SCP actions; and iii. (iii) Include reporting on SCP actions in VNRs and at the High Level Political Forum. 	<p>2021-2022</p> <p>2023-2024</p> <p>2025-2030</p>

Actions in the 10-year framework	Possible specific actions	Time frame
8. An assessment of the results of the implementation of the 10-year Framework for SCP Program and National Action Plan on Sustainable Production and Consumption should be conducted and then solutions will be identified to accelerate implementation.	i. Develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation program and identify specific responsibilities for all SCP actions;	2021-2022
	ii. Prepare an annual progress report on implementation of the SCP Action Plan 2021-2030;	2022-2030
	iii. Utilise this progress report for inclusion in the VNR and other international reporting obligations.	2022-2030

6. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

6.1 Objectives

The SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility has organised this Multi-stakeholder Consultation (MSC), with the following objectives:

- Bring the concerned stakeholders together including ministries- Environment, Industry, Planning, others as relevant as well as industry, industrial federations, NGOs, think-tanks, UN agencies and other key actors at national and sub-national levels, to create a productive and constructive interactive exchange between stakeholders for which outcomes and results will deliver positive impacts and improve the country's SCP/SDGs landscape;
- Identify needs, challenges and national priorities, together with follow up actions, particularly for the 2020-2030 period;
- Formulate steps to address the national priorities and SCP issues in the country, to further mainstream SCP in Vietnam's national strategies on sustainable development; and
- Identify needed support, particularly from SWITCH-Asia and its SCP Facility, to implement relevant national priorities and deliver expected change and impact.

6.2 Approach

The first step at the MSC, therefore, is to conduct a thorough mapping of what each stakeholder group is doing to promote SCP (and the SDGs) in Vietnam, using the National Action Plan as a guide. Then through further discussion on needs and priorities for SCPs, the MSC should identify current gaps and explore future plans of the stakeholders represented to address these gaps. Through this process, specific openings for SWITCH-Asia support will become clearer.

Some of the specific questions to be addressed at the MSC are as follows:

- What has been the dissemination/socialisation process for the Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy, National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2011-2020), the National Strategy on Green Growth (2022-2020) and Vision to 2050 and Strategy on Cleaner Industrial Production until 2020, to ensure that the average citizen understands their role in implementing SCP? And is there any evidence of greater awareness and conformity to the plans than a decade ago?
- If sustainable consumption activities remain "fragmented with small-scale impacts", as noted in the VNR, what is being done to accelerate and scale up actions in this area?
- Under SDG12, strengthening scientific and technological capacity (target 12.A) and tools to monitor sustainable tourism (target 12.B) were not included in the National Action Plan for Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Are these seen as lower priority?
- As the National Action Plan on Green Growth in Vietnam (2014-2020) included 66 specific activities, how is progress in relation to these proposals being monitored? What are the results after 5 years of implementation?
- What are the barriers for international transfer of green technologies that would enhance Vietnam's SCP ambitions and what is being done to overcome these barriers?
- If almost half of the SDG indicators are either infeasible or have no data, and Vietnam has only adopted 115 out of 230 SDG targets, which indicators on SCP require additional work, and what measures are in place to collect the additional data?

6.3 Expected Outcome

The expected outcome of the MSC is a consultation report which would be an input for various stakeholders to better understand Vietnam's current policies, national priorities and efforts in the areas of SCP for future work areas under the SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility. A revised Concept Note will provide a summary of key recommendations for next actions and where SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility can provide support as necessary based on the discussions during the MSC. Table 4 will help to start the discussions on the larger national action plan for SCP for 2021-2030.

The MSC will also make participants aware of the recently released call for proposals for grant funding and hopefully encourage preparation of successful grant applications for the next round.

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