



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Participant information sheet – Stakeholder Interviews

Project Title

Strategic spatial planning for social-ecological systems: Implementing the Mekong Delta Plan in Vietnam

Organisation

Northumbria University and Cantho University

Names of principal investigators

Dr Oliver Hensengerth, Dr Van Pham Dang Tri

Who is paying for the research?

Newton Fund / NERC / NAFOSTED

What is the aim of the research?

This research presents the final phase of the Newton-NERC-NAFOSTED funded project "Viet Nam: Slow Onset Hazard Interactions with Enhanced Drought and Flood Extremes in an At-Risk Mega-Delta (NE/S002847/1)." This research is a collaboration between Cantho University, Southampton University, and Northumbria University in the UK. As part of this, we aim to understand how governance arrangements modulate systems resilience.

Although deltas represent only one percent of the global land area, they are home to half a billion people. Tropical deltas are agricultural key areas that contribute significantly to national economies and food security (Szabo et al. 2016). The Mekong delta is Vietnam's key rice production area. However, due to climate change, sea level rise, salination, upstream hydropower development, and groundwater abstraction, the Mekong delta is both shrinking and sinking. This endangers the future economic and environmental sustainability of the delta.

In light of the increasing vulnerability of the Mekong delta, the Vietnamese government has passed a range of policies aimed to improve the environmental governance of the delta. This includes the 2013 Mekong Delta Plan, the 2017 Planning Law, and a proposed new regional governance mechanism.

To understand this evolving institutional environment and the impact on the sustainable development of the Mekong delta, we draw on insights from the literature on strategic spatial planning (Hersperger et al. 2019), social-ecological systems resilience (Wyborn and Bixler 2013), and policy implementation (Conteh 2011).

To operationalise these aims, we aim to understand changes to the governance architecture and opportunities and barriers to implementation. This focuses on the relationship between central government and provincial governments, with particular emphasis on three areas of enquiry:

- (i) How provincial officials understand and comply with central government policies to steer economic and environmental sustainability of the Mekong delta.

- (ii) How the re-organisation of the planning architecture, principally influenced by changes in the Law on Planning and the attempt to create a new regional governance mechanism, is perceived on the local governance level
- (iii) To understand the effectiveness of these planning changes and the position of local government towards them, and therefore to understand challenges and opportunities for implementation

How will the research data be used?

The research data will be stored securely at Cantho University and Northumbria University by the research team, and will only be accessible to members of the research team. It will be stored for a period of 3 years after completion of the last publication from the research project. At that time it will be destroyed in line with the universities' IT policies. Data from the interviews may be used in a range of other project outputs, such as project reports, academic research papers and conference presentations.

You can decide to withdraw from the interview at any time, without giving a reason, prior to publication of the results of this project. Your interview would not be used, and the data would be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw after the research has been published, we will do our best to withdraw your data from the public domain, but this will not always be possible. However, we would not use it in future publications. To withdraw from the research, you can contact vpdtri@ctu.edu.vn or oliver.hensengerth@northumbria.ac.uk.

Why have I been selected?

You have been asked to take part as we consider you to be a stakeholder who is central for making decision in relation to the future sustainability of the Mekong delta.

If I want to take part, what do I have to do?

You are asked to take part in an interview. We expect the interview to last no more than 45 minutes. With your permission, the interview will be recorded, and you may request a copy of the interview for your personal use.

Will my participation be anonymous?

Yes. Your name or government position will not be mentioned anywhere, nor any other information that would leave you identifiable.

Who can I contact for more information?

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Who can I contact if I have a complaint about this research?

Dr Arantza Gomez-Arana
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Verbal Consent Checklist – Stakeholder Interview

This form records that verbal informed consent has been obtained from stakeholder participants in interviews for the project *Strategic spatial planning for social-ecological systems: Implementing the Mekong Delta Plan in Vietnam*.

Participant's name: _____

☐

I have explained the nature of the research to the participant, including what the project will involve and what the research will be used for.

☐

I have explained that participation in the research is entirely voluntary and the participant is free to withdraw from the research at any stage, without giving a reason.

☐

I have supplied the participant with a copy of the research information sheet, and discussed the information with them.

☐

I confirm that the participant has had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and their participation in it.

☐

I confirm that the participant has verbally offered their informed consent to take part in the research.

☐

I confirm that the participant knows how to contact me after the interview if necessary.

☐

I have confirmed that the participant is happy with the use of direct quotes in fully anonymised form.

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: