



ADAPTATION FUND



UN-HABITAT

# MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT

**Project “Enhancing the Resilience Inclusive and Sustainable Eco-human Settlement Development through Small Scale Infrastructure Interventions in the Coastal Regions of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam”**

**November 2025**

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## ACRONYMS

AF	Adaptation Fund
CC	Climate Change
GVN	Government of Viet Nam
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MAE	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PMU	Project Management Unit
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
ICCG	International Center for Climate Governance
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NTP-RCC	National Target Program on Responding to Climate Change
PIPA	Plan for Implementation of Paris Agreement
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SEDP	Socio-economic Development Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
USAID	US Agency for International Development

# 1. ABSTRACT

This midterm review report (MTR) is about the performance of the project “**Enhancing the resilience inclusive and sustainable eco-human settlement development through small scale infrastructure interventions in the coastal regions of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam**”, HREMRD, after five years of implementation. The project, financed by the Adaptation Fund, implemented through a strategic partnership between UN-Habitat and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE)<sup>1</sup>, aims to reduce climate exposure and risks as well as enhance the resilience of coastal communities sustainably against climate change impacts in the coastal areas of Ca Mau and Vinh Long provinces<sup>2</sup> through a combination of soft and hard interventions, with consideration of the needs of the vulnerable.

The evaluation questions assessed the project’s performance toward its purpose across five domains: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues. The MTR used the 5Rs Framework to assess the project’s performance through the lens of results, roles, relationships, rules, and resources. Evaluation methods consisted of document research, an online survey of 19 out of 29 participants who were invited to the survey, and 4 key informant interviews from the key project stakeholders at MAE, provincial DAE, and beneficiaries, and a focus group discussion with the UN-Habitat team.

There is evidence that the project remains highly relevant and well aligned with national climate adaptation priorities, and has produced technically sound and valuable outputs during the initial phase, particularly in capacity building, policy support and development of planning tools. These achievements have laid an initial foundation for institutional strengthening, participatory planning and long-term resilience building

However, overall implementation progress has been slowed since 2023 due to a set of interrelated systemic factors. These include: (i) institutional restructuring and transition, (ii) prolonged and multi-layered approval processes, and (ii) reduced operational continuity at the PMU level. As a result, a substantial volume of work remains incomplete, raising concerns regarding the timely achievement of project objectives.

Despite these challenges, the project demonstrates strong potential for sustainability and replication, given its alignment with national policies, participatory approach, and an integrated model that combines institutional, community, and infrastructure interventions.

The review concludes that accelerating implementation, restoring PMU operational readiness, and ensuring timely approval and execution of workplans are critical to ensuring delivery of remaining outputs and consolidation of results in the remaining project period.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), the original government counterpart, has been merged with Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), to become the new Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) under the Government of Viet Nam’s 2025 administrative restructuring

<sup>2</sup> The project was originally designed and initiated in Tra Vinh and Bac Lieu provinces. Following the Government of Viet Nam’s 2025 administrative restructuring, these areas are now under the administrative jurisdictions of Vinh Long and Ca Mau provinces, respectively

## Acknowledgement

The MTR wishes to thank all stakeholders contributing to this MTR by devoting their time and insights into the online survey, during KIIs, and FGD. The MTR also wishes to thank the UN-Habitat team and all the government agencies and beneficiaries at the national and provincial levels for their support for the MTR and review of the report.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Despite its rapid economic and social development, Viet Nam is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, particularly in the Mekong Delta, where sea-level rise, prolonged and severe droughts, salinity intrusion, and coastal erosion are increasingly affecting livelihoods and economic stability. Coastal communities in Ca Mau and Vinh Long provinces are the most exposed.

The project “**Enhancing the resilience inclusive and sustainable eco-human settlement development through small scale infrastructure interventions in the coastal regions of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam**” aims to reduce climate exposure and risks as well as enhance the resilience of these communities through an integrate approach combining capacity building, participatory planning, and small-scale infrastructure, with consideration to the needs of women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities.

Approved by the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) in June 2020 and officially launched in December 2020, the project achieved initial progress in 2021-2022, particularly in capacity building and development of technical guidance. However, project implementation has since experienced delays and interruptions due to COVID-19 restrictions, evolving institutional arrangements and local context, and prolonged administrative processes. Three no-cost extensions have been approved by the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) with the first extension to a new project completion date of December 2024, followed by a second extension to December 2025, and the recent third extension to June 2027.

The Mid-Term Review (MTR), conducted in October – November 2025 assesses project performance across relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues, with a focus on identifying constraints and informing corrective actions for the remaining implementation period.

### METHODS

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach to obtain reliable data pertinent to each evaluation question:

- Document review of project documents, progress reports, surveys, and legal documents
- Online survey with 19 out of 29 key stakeholders at the national and provincial levels who were invited to participate. Some stakeholders invited declined to respond to the survey because they had been reassigned to new positions following the provincial mergers.
- 04 key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders
- 01 focus group discussion (FGD) with UN-Habitat project team

The relatively small sample size reflects reduced stakeholder availability due to administrative restructuring and implementation delays, which have affected stakeholder continuity and engagement.

The evaluation applied the 5Rs Framework as a lens to assess the project's performance and progress from different angles (Results, Roles, Relationships, Rules, Resources). In an evaluation, the 5Rs Framework helps to look systematically at how local actors engage and which resources and rules affect their interaction. It helps evaluate how local systems can be strengthened more effectively, thereby achieving sustained results more consistently.

## **FINDINGS**

Overall, implementation performance has been constrained by these systemic factors: (i) institutional restructuring and transition, including changes in project locations and intervention sites, (ii) prolonged approval and decision-making processes, and (iii) reduced operational continuity at the PMU level.

## **RELEVANCE**

The project remains highly relevant to Viet Nam's national and provincial climate adaptation priorities, aligning well with the National Determined Contribution (NDC), National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS), and the Mekong Delta Regional Master Plan. Its design – combining capacity building, participatory planning, policy integration, and small-scale protective infrastructure appropriately responds to the needs of vulnerable coastal communities and reflects both UN-Habitat's approach and the Adaptation Fund's mandate.

While implementation progress has been limited in recent years, the project design continues to reflect the priority needs of vulnerable coastal communities, particularly in strengthening adaptive capacity, participatory planning, and integration of climate resilience into local development frameworks.

## **COHERENCE/COMPLEMENTARY**

The project is well aligned with national programs and complementary to past and ongoing initiatives by partners such as GIZ, Aus4Adaptation, SNV, or the World Bank. It fills a distinct niche by linking community-based planning, policy integration, and small-scale infrastructure - areas less covered by larger sectoral programmes.

UN-Habitat's comparative advantage in integrated, eco-human settlement approaches has ensured that the project adds value rather than duplicating existing efforts, with strong alignment across national and provincial levels.

## **EFFECTIVENESS**

According to project reports and stakeholder survey responses, implementation progress remains a key concern among all stakeholders, as it has been stalled since 2023. As of January 2025, only 10 out of 42 targeted indicators (at both outcome and output levels) have been achieved, with most results delivered during 2021-2022.

These outputs and outcomes were assessed as high quality, relevant, applicable, and highly appreciated by stakeholders. However, the project's limited effectiveness is primarily attributed to prolonged administrative and technical adjustments, a lengthy approval process, and reduced operational continuity at the PMU level, which have significantly delayed activities and disrupted implementation. Consequently, translating these outputs into sustained outcomes and tangible on-the-ground impacts remains limited at this stage.

## **EFFICIENCY**

The approved project's design and institutional structure are appropriate and functioned effectively during the initial phase (2021-2022). However, project implementation efficiency has been significantly reduced since 2023 due to institutional restructuring, changes in roles and responsibilities, and operational disruptions. Key constraints include delays in approvals and decision-making, reduced PMU capacity and staff continuity, and increased coordination complexity, particularly for the infrastructure component.

This has resulted in a mismatch between planned progress and actual delivery, raising concerns regarding implementation efficiency and value for money.

## **CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

Cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, inclusion of vulnerable groups, and environmental protection, have been effectively integrated throughout the project's design, planning, and early implementation, particularly during the initial phase (2021-2022).

Women hold over 50% of positions in the Project Management Unit (PMU) and technical roles, with strong participation in training activities. Vulnerable groups have been considered in planning and assessment. Nature-based solutions and environmental and social safeguards have been consistently applied in infrastructure design and field assessment.

However, continued and more systematic operationalization of these priorities is needed in the next phase.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

The project has established an initial foundation for sustainability through capacity building, policy integration, and participatory approaches. Its successful contribution to the development of Circular No. 06/2023/TT-BTNMT, which guides the integration of climate change adaptation into strategies and plans, demonstrates its timely and effective response to the government's priorities and underscores its potential to drive sustainable systemic change.

Stakeholders report a positive perception of improved institutional capacity, increased community awareness and responsiveness, and the applicability of project tools and approaches.

However, the limited progress in implementation since 2023 has constrained the consolidation and scaling of these results. Consequently, the sustainability of project

outcomes will depend on the timely completion of remaining activities, continued stakeholder engagement, and the effective operationalization of institutional and community-level mechanisms.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To restore implementation momentum and ensure achievement of intended results, the MTR proposes the following ten (10) priority actions structured around three (03) interrelated areas:

### **A. Institutional effectiveness and implementation readiness**

Strengthen alignment with evolving national and sub-national priorities, improve the operational coordination within the ministry, and reinforce PMU capacity and implementation readiness.

### **B. Implementation acceleration**

Accelerate the delivery of outputs, particularly infrastructure and technical packages, through a clear, time-bound implementation plan and strengthened technical support

### **C. Quality assurance, sustainability and scaling**

Enhance risk management and M&E systems, strengthen coordination with ongoing initiatives, ensure continued integration of cross-cutting priorities, and promote local ownership, knowledge management, and scaling of successful models.

### 3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### CONTEXT

Since 2025, Viet Nam has been undertaking a major administrative reform involving the merger and reorganization of provincial-level units and the restructuring of central government ministries and ministerial-level agencies. Under Resolution No. 60/NQ-TW of the 13th Party Central Committee and related government decisions, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) have been merged to form the new Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE). It is important to note that, under the government's administrative reform, ISPONRE, the project owner, was merged with IPSARD to form the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Agriculture and Environment (IPSAE). IPSAE now operates under a new management structure and leadership, which should be duly considered for coordination and collaboration in the next stage of project implementation.

At the provincial level, the reform has led to the merger of Tra Vinh with Vinh Long and Bac Lieu with Ca Mau, while the district-level government has been abolished, shifting Viet Nam's governance from a three-tier to a two-tier system. Concurrently, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) have been consolidated into the Department of Agriculture and Environment (DAE). Under this new structure, responsibilities and authorities are being transferred from the district level to the provincial and commune levels, and from DONRE and DARD to DAE. These systemic reforms are expected to trigger shifts in human resources, institutional and administrative coordination, potentially influencing how projects are perceived, managed, and prioritized within the evolving governance framework.

Despite these structural changes, climate change adaptation remains a national and provincial priority, with continued emphasis on resilience-building in vulnerable regions such as the Mekong Delta.

#### BACKGROUND

To assist Vietnam's response to the climate change, the project "**Enhancing the resilience inclusive and sustainable eco-human settlement development through small scale infrastructure interventions in the coastal regions of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam**" aims to strengthen the climate resilience and support sustainable eco-human settlements in the coastal areas of Vietnam Mekong River Delta. The project adopts an integrated approach combining institutional capacity-building, policy support, and small-scale infrastructure interventions, with consideration to the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including women, elderly, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities, at the coastal areas of Ca Mau and Vinh Long provinces. The project is structured around four specific objectives and components as follows:

- Institutional capacity building for central and local level government, on developing an inclusive adaptation strategy for coastal communities;
- Providing technical support to develop an action plan, policy framework and integrating climate change response towards eco-human settlement into the strategy/planning/plan in Ca Mau and Vinh Long provinces based on local's needs;
- Piloting sustainable infrastructure management model, strengthening capacity and promoting gender equity in self-management and operation of provided infrastructure in a sustainable manner for locality.
- Replicate approaches and lessons learned on developing climate change resilient, eco-human settlements and communities based on local needs and capacities through a regional policy framework.

## **MID-TERM REVIEW SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**

After five years of implementation, the MTR provides an independent and in-depth review of the project performance and progress for its first phase of implementation (December 2020 – August 2025), lessons for implementation improvement and course correction and actionable recommendations for improved implementation and sustainability, in alignment with UN-Habitat and the donor's guidelines. The focus is mainly on processes, assessing the achievements of outputs and expected accomplishments (outcomes) so far, identifying and analyzing constraints, challenges, and opportunities.

This MTR took place from October to November 2025. The key audience for the evaluation included the project team, AFB, UN-Habitat, and other UN-Habitat partners for evidence-based decision-making on key leverage points to prioritize for the project's next stage.

The MTR seeks to answer the following overarching evaluation questions:

- a) To what extent is the project achieving its outputs and expected accomplishments?
- b) To what extent have cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, youth, environmental and social safeguards been integrated into the project design and implementation?
- c) What are the critical gaps with respect to the delivery of the project?
- d) What are the lessons learned and recommendations for adjustments and improvement?

These proposed evaluation questions are supplemented with sub-questions along the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and integration of cross-cutting issues.

## 4. MID-TERM REVIEW METHODOLOGY

### OVERVIEW

The MTR adopted a participatory approach, actively engaging key stakeholders throughout the process. It used a mixed-methods, results-oriented approach to generate reliable data for each evaluation question (EQ). It assessed whether the project is doing the *right things* (relevance) and identified factors that drive or hinder progress in terms of performance, efficiency, and effectiveness - particularly regarding implementation, management, and coordination. As it is still early now to assess final outcomes and impacts, the MTR followed an “attribution rule”, tracing cause-and-effect links along the project’s results chain from inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and sustainability. Stakeholder perspectives were central to both data collection and analysis.

The MTR also applied the 5Rs framework of Results, Roles, Relationships, Rules, and Resources to examine the project’s performance and systemic dynamics from multiple perspectives. This framework helped map key stakeholders, assess the quality of inter-agency and central–provincial coordination, and evaluate the integration of cross-cutting issues into project design and implementation. It also guided the identification of lessons learned and good practices for sharing with the government partners and other stakeholders. Stakeholder mapping and link analysis, supported by key informant interviews and a participatory focus group discussion (FGD) with the project team, were conducted to validate findings.

### MID-TERM REVIEW DESIGN

**Document review:** Core documents relating to the project design, implementation and legal documents were thoroughly reviewed (see Annex 1). The findings were compiled into a matrix to determine whether they could be substantiated by subsequent empirical research.

**Online surveys:** A list of 29 project participants from key stakeholders, including UN-Habitat staff, PMU members, national and provincial stakeholders, and beneficiaries, was provided by the UN-Habitat team and used to contact participants for the survey (see Annex III: List of Key Stakeholders for Surveys, KIIs, and FGDs). The survey was distributed via email and Zalo, with a 10-day response window in October 2025. A total of 19/29 respondents participated (66% response rate). Non-response was primarily due to stakeholder turnover following administrative restructuring.

Respondents were asked to provide ratings and feedback on the project’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, cross-cutting integration, and sustainability, the quality of inter-agency coordination and interaction at both national and provincial levels, and their own professional capacities and their organizations’ capacities in climate change adaptation.

**Key Informant Interview (KIIs):** 04 virtual KIIs were conducted in October 2025 with key stakeholders representing participants and beneficiaries at the provincial level.

**Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** A FGD with the UN-Habitat team to review their own evaluation of the project effects on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, cross-cutting, and sustainability, together with the respondents’ feedback, the context

change, and the stakeholder mapping exercise based on the respondents' feedback and context changes. The FGD included a stakeholder mapping using the 5Rs and discussion on vertical and horizontal inter-agency coordination and interaction and review of context changes.

**Limitations:** The evaluation faced several limitations related to timing and stakeholder availability.

Due to the gap between initial project activities (largely conducted in 2021-2022), and the MTR period, as well as stakeholder turnover following administrative restructuring, some respondents had limited recall or direct involvement in earlier project activities.

As a result, the evidence base relies more strongly on available documentation and a smaller pool of stakeholders with direct knowledge of implementation. While efforts were made to triangulate findings, this may have constrained the breadth and depth of insight on the certain aspects of project performance, particularly outcomes.

## 5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### RELEVANCE

#### ***To what extent was the project relevant to the requirements/needs of the beneficiaries (national, local governments and the communities)?***

The project remains strongly aligned with Viet Nam's national and sub-national development strategies in both socio-economic development and climate change adaptation. The Government of Viet Nam has taken a proactive and integrated approach to climate change response and adaptation, recognizing it as both a national priority and a key element of sustainable development. Guided by the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2021–2030 (SEDS), the Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021–2025 (SEDP), National Climate Change Strategy to 2050, the National Adaptation Plan (2021–2030, vision to 2050), and the National Green Growth Strategy, the government aims to enhance community resilience, protect natural ecosystems, promote low-carbon and inclusive growth. The recent Decision No. 1422/QĐ-TTg (dated 19 November 2024) — “*Approving the Updated National Climate Change Adaptation Plan for 2021–2030, with a Vision to 2050*” updates and replaces the Decision 1055/QĐ-TTg (2020), aims to ensure that Vietnam's national response to climate change remains aligned with the Paris Agreement, the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and socio-economic development priorities. According to these strategies and plans, adaptation measures have been mainstreamed into socio-economic planning, infrastructure development, and sectoral policies—particularly in agriculture, water resources, urban development, and coastal protection. Viet Nam has strengthened early warning systems, disaster risk reduction, and ecosystem-based adaptation, while mobilizing diverse financing sources and international cooperation for technology transfer and capacity building.

At the regional level, the Government of Viet Nam maintains its high priority for climate resilience and sustainable eco-human settlement development in the coastal areas of the Mekong River Delta (MRD) as part of its broader strategy for climate-adaptive and inclusive growth. Guided by Resolution 120/NQ-CP (2017) on sustainable and climate-resilient development of the MRD, it integrates ecosystem restoration, smart land and water use, resilient infrastructure, and livelihood diversification to strengthen local communities' adaptive capacity. The Mekong Delta Regional Master Plan (2021–2030, with a vision extending to 2050), builds on previous plans for the region and is aligned with national strategies around climate resilience, adaptation, and sustainable development.

Within this policy context, the project is well aligned with both national and regional priorities, particularly in addressing climate risks in the Mekong Delta. Vinh Long and Ca Mau provinces, among the most climate-vulnerable areas, face challenges including coastal erosion, salinity intrusion, sea-level rise, and inadequate infrastructure. The project's focus on small-scale infrastructure, capacity-building and participatory planning directly responds to these needs.

The review of Viet Nam's strategies and policies on climate change adaptation, along with stakeholder survey responses, indicates that the project has effectively supported the implementation of both national and provincial strategies and policies at the macro level, while also addressing community-level priorities. Its four-component design responds well to local needs by enhancing community capacity for climate change

adaptation, eco-human settlement development, formulating action plans and strategies, integrating these into planning and policy frameworks through participatory approaches, and developing small-scale protective infrastructure.

However, while the project design remains highly relevant, implementation delays have limited the extent to which these needs have been fully addressed in practice.

Overall, the project is assessed as highly relevant in design with strong alignment to policy framework and beneficiary needs, but with limited realisation of this relevance due to implementation constraints. In the next stage, the project is expected to guide the newly structured provincial authorities and communities through participatory planning processes to effectively integrate climate change adaptation tasks and solutions in line with national and provincial strategies and policies while well reflecting the local communities' critical needs.

***To what extent was the implementation strategy responsive to donor and UN-Habitat strategies?***

The HREM RD project is well aligned with the Adaptation Fund's priorities in climate resilience, community-based adaptation, and support for vulnerable populations. It focuses on concrete adaptation measures, including ecosystem-based approaches, small-scale infrastructure, and capacity-building, and reflects the Fund's strategic emphasis on locally driven and practical solutions.

The project also aligns closely with UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020–2025, particularly its focus on resilient human settlements, sustainable urbanization, social inclusion, and effective governance. It contributes directly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly SDG 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.”, while integrating cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Overall, alignment with donor and UN-Habitat strategies is strong and consistent.

***To what extent is UN-Habitat's comparative advantage in this area of work compared with other UN entities and key partners? To what extent were the identification of key stakeholders and target groups (including gender analysis and analysis of vulnerable groups) and of institutional capacity issues relevant?***

UN-Habitat's comparative advantage in this area lies in its specialized mandate, technical expertise, and long-standing experience in promoting sustainable urbanization, resilient human settlements, and climate-adaptive planning. UN-Habitat's strength is in its integrated, spatial, and settlement-based approach that links infrastructure, environment, and social inclusion within the framework of urban and regional planning. Its long-standing partnerships since the early 2000s with Vietnamese ministries, provincial authorities, and community organizations fostered trust and facilitated effective coordination during the early implementation phases.

Building on its global expertise and long-standing partnerships in Viet Nam, UN-Habitat has supported the development of context-specific, eco-human settlement models, promoting nature-based solutions and people-centered approaches. This complements other development partners that focus more narrowly on sectoral

interventions such as agriculture or water resources. The organization also demonstrated strong adaptability by adjusting implementation strategies in response to COVID-19 disruptions and climate-related delays.

The identification of key stakeholders and target groups was generally relevant and aligned with the project's objectives. The project engaged a diverse range of actors—national and provincial government agencies, local communities, women's groups, and vulnerable populations—ensuring that implementation was participatory and context-responsive. Gender analysis and the consideration of vulnerable groups were integrated into project design and data collection, reflecting UN-Habitat's cross-cutting commitments to gender equality and social inclusion.

However, continued stakeholder engagement has been affected by implementation delays and institutional restructuring, which will need to be re-established during the next phase.

## COHERENCE/COMPLEMENTARITY

***To what extent is the project coherent and implemented in synergy with other projects of UN-Habitat funded by the Adaptation Fund? Was the project coherent or complement with partners' policies and with other donors' interventions?***

The project "Enhancing the resilience, inclusive and sustainable eco-human settlement development through small-scale infrastructure interventions in the coastal regions of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam" aligns closely with UN-Habitat and Adaptation Fund's strategy, particularly in promoting locally led, ecosystem-based adaptation and integrating climate resilience into human settlement planning. It builds upon UN-Habitat's global experience in sustainable urban and settlement development and the Adaptation Fund's approach to participatory, gender-responsive, and community-driven planning and adaptation.

In Viet Nam, the project contributes directly to the national climate change and urban resilience agenda, ensuring policy coherence and complementarity with national and provincial adaptation programs. It aligns with and reinforces the current priorities of key development partners - such as GIZ, Aus4Adaptation, SNV or the World Bank - that support eco-human settlement resilience by integrating infrastructure, ecosystem protection (mangroves, coastal ecosystems), livelihood diversification, and local institutional capacity in the Mekong Delta. UN-Habitat's comparative advantage in linking spatial planning and ecosystem-based adaptation at the human settlement level ensured complementarity rather than duplication with other interventions that focus more on agriculture, water management, urban planning or large-scale infrastructure.

Coordination with provincial authorities and line ministries further strengthens policy coherence and alignment with national adaptation frameworks. However, coordination and synergy at the implementation level have been affected by delays and institutional changes, limiting opportunities for active collaboration and joint implementation during the reporting period.

Overall, the project demonstrates strong coherence and complementarity in design, with clear added value within the broader adaptation landscape, although implementation-level synergies have been only partially realized to date.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### ***To what extent is the project on track towards achieving its target results at output and expected accomplishment level?***

The project is currently not on track to achieve its planned outputs and expected accomplishments within the original timeframe.

According to project reports and stakeholder survey responses, implementation progress has been the primary concern for all stakeholders. As of January 2025, only **10** out of the 42 targeted indicators and accomplishments have been achieved, as highlighted in green in the table *“Project Indicators – Results vs. Targets”* below. The achieved outcomes and outputs include:

- Contribution to the development of Circular No. 06/2023/TT-BTNMT, which provides guidance on integrating climate change adaptation into strategies and planning processes in 2023;
- Development of drafts guidance & training materials for vulnerability and risk assessment (Output 1.1.2) and planning toolkits (Output 1.1.3);
- Capacity-building results exceeding targets, including 178 trained facilitators (compared to the target of 20 facilitators) and 43% of female representation among facilitators and experts (above the 40% target) (Output 1.1.4),
- Strong female participation in training activities (43% of the total 269 participants) in capacity-building activities was women, exceeding the 40% target (Outcome 1.1).
- The Outcome 1.2 – level of knowledge capacity at all levels is almost achieved, with 92% completion (183/200 government official target).
- Development of 1 set of community-based management and operation guidance materials (Output 3.2.1)

These results indicate that the project performed well during the early phase of implementation. However, progress has stalled since 2023.

Numerous administrative and technical adjustments, coupled with cumbersome procedures, lengthy approval processes, and constraints in PMU operational capacity, have significantly delayed project implementation. As a result, 32 indicators remain unachieved or have not yet been initiated.

Overall, while the project has delivered several high-quality outputs, particularly in capacity-building and policy support, the limited implementation progress means it is currently not on track to achieve its intended outcomes.

## PROJECT INDICATORS - RESULTS VS. TARGETS, BY JANUARY 2025

Source: The Project Reports

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Project Result	Project Target
<b>Outcome 1.1</b>	Level of capacity at national level increased	Total <b>269</b> government officials, experts and practitioners	<b>100</b> national & provincial level government officials, experts and practitioners
	% of females' participation in the capacity building activities	<b>43%</b> (110/269 government officials, expert and practitioners)	At least 40%
<b>Outcome 1.2</b>	Level of knowledge capacity at all levels	<b>183 (92%)</b>	<b>200</b> government officials, experts and practitioners at all levels
	% of female's participation to the capacity building activities	<b>43% (79/183)</b>	At least 40% of women
Output 1.1.1	# of participants	<b>44 (44%)</b> <b>20 (45%)</b> female participants	<b>100</b> government officials, experts and practitioners at all levels (At least 40% women)
Output 1.1.2	Developed guidance and training materials for vulnerability and risk assessment at local levels	Final draft of technical guidance and training materials	A full package of developed guidance & training materials for vulnerability and risk assessment
Output 1.1.3	Developed planning toolkits and training materials for planning, strategy and action plan development.	Final draft of technical guidance and training materials	3 full package of planning toolkits & training materials for all levels (national, provincial, district+ commune)
	% of female expert and consultants	<b>51% (15/31)</b>	At least 40% women
Output 1.1.4	# of trained facilitators.	<b>178</b>	20 facilitators will be trained
	% of female experts and consultants for being facilitators	<b>43% (77/178)</b>	40% women
Output 1.2.1	# of training workshops	<b>3 (150%)</b> 1 national, 2 provincial workshops	2 training workshops
	# of participants (40% women)	<b>43% (79/183)</b>	200 participants (40% women)
<b>Outcome 2.1</b>	# of action plans and strategies developed	<b>0</b>	4 dialogue workshops (5 action plans and strategies)

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Project Result	Project Target
			for 2 provinces & 3 districts)
	# of training workshop	0	4 training workshops
	% of female's participation	0	At least 40% of women
<b>Outcome 2.2</b>	# of dialogues workshops	0	10 dialogue workshops
	# of integrated action plans and strategies into planning	0	8 training workshops
	% of female's participation for decision making process	0	At least 40% of women
Output 2.1.1	# of action plans and strategies developed	0	4 dialogue workshops (5 action plans and strategies for 2 provinces & 3 districts)
	# of training workshop	0	4 training workshops
Output 2.2.1.	# of integrated action plans and strategies into planning	0	8 training workshops
	# of dialogue workshop	0	8 dialogue workshops
	# of report for policy framework development	0	N/A - 2 reports for 2 provinces
Output 2.2.2	# of dialogue workshop	0	2 dialogue workshops
	# of integrated action plans and strategies into planning	0	2 actions plans and strategies for 2 provinces
<b>Outcome 3.1</b>	# of people who benefit from the prevention system	0	N/A - 41,124 beneficiaries (direct and indirect)
	% of female's participation and accessibility	0	At least 40% of women
<b>Outcome 3.2</b>	# of people who are trained	0	50 trained people
	# of training workshop	0	N/A – 3 training workshops (1 for each commune)
	# of management and operation guidance materials	1	A set of guidance and training materials
	# of female's participation	0	At least 40% of women
Output 3.1.1	# of people who benefit from the prevention system	0	Install 7 water treatment systems and 3 rainwater harvesting systems Bac Lieu: Direct 2,211 and indirect 8,121 women

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Project Result	Project Target
			would have accessibility of clean drinking and domestic use water Tra Vinh Direct 3,080 and indirect 12,851 women (Total Direct 10,148 beneficiaries Indirect 41,124 beneficiaries)
Output 3.1.2	# of people who benefit from the prevention system	0	8,240 m <sup>2</sup> mangrove plantation/ 540m length for elastocoast/ 860m length for coastal protection/ 61,490m <sup>2</sup> aquaculture pond protection 12,851 women can have benefits (25,199 direct beneficiaries)
Output 3.2.1	# of people who are trained	0	50 trained people
	# of training workshop	0	N/A – 3 training workshops (1 for each commune)
	# of management and operation guidance materials	1	A set of guidance and training materials
Outcome 4.1	# of dialogue workshops	0	10 dialogue workshops /Policy Platform development
	# of report for policy platform development	0	N/A – 1 report
	# of female participation	0	At least 40%
Output 4.1.1	# of dialogue workshops	0	10 dialogue workshops
Output 4.1.2	# of report for policy platform development	0	N/A - 1 report for policy platform development
	# of practices & experience sharing workshop	0	N/A (could be integrated in the workshops organized during the project life)

***To what extent has local capacity been strengthened so far through this programme? To what extent is the project proving to be successful in terms of ownership in relation to the local context and the needs of beneficiaries?***

Local capacity has been partially strengthened, primarily during the initial implementation phase (2021-2022), but gains have not been sustained due to implementation delays. Ownership at the community level remains emerging rather than fully established.

During 2021 - 2022, 361 government officials were trained on climate change adaptation, assessment of vulnerability and risks, and integration of climate change adaptation into socio-economic planning processes. The training sessions were well attended by representatives from various state management agencies and community groups, including associations and women's unions, with balanced gender representation. It was reported that participants found the training highly relevant to their work, helping them understand the methods and steps for integrating climate change adaptation into the formulation of annual socio-economic and cultural development plans. It was also noted that the training provided valuable information to enhance their understanding of climate-related risks and vulnerabilities and to strengthen their advocacy and community engagement skills.

Fieldwork assessments on climate risk and vulnerability, along with feasibility studies for small-scale infrastructure interventions in targeted communes in Ca Mau and Vinh Long provinces, were conducted in close consultation with local authorities and communities. Community members—particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, older persons, and ethnic minorities—were also actively considered in the assessment process. The participatory approach supported initial engagement and alignment with local needs and received positive feedback on the relevance of the proposed interventions.

At the policy level, the project contributed to the development of Circular No. 06/2023/TT-BTNMT. This represents a positive contribution to strengthening institutional capacity for integrating climate change adaptation into planning processes, although its broader impact will depend on continued implementation will uptake.

However, since 2023, implementation delays have significantly constrained the continuation and consolidation of these capacity gains. Limited follow-up activities, combined with institutional restructuring and staff turnover, have affected continuity in knowledge application and stakeholder engagement.

As a result, local capacity strengthening remains at an early stage, and community ownership has not yet fully developed.

***Which factors and processes are contributing to achieving or not achieving the expected results (internal and external factors)?***

Project performance has been shaped by a combination of enabling factors in the early phase and significant internal and external constraints that have affected implementation since 2023.

### **Enabling factors:**

- Strong project design and alignment with national priorities, which supported effective implementation during the initial phase (2021-2022);
- High-quality capacity-building and technical outputs, including training, guidance materials, and policy contributions (e.g. Circular no. 06/2023/TN-BTNMT);
- Early stakeholder engagement and participatory approaches, which facilitated initial uptake and relevance at national and local levels.

### **Constraining factors:**

- External shocks and institutional changes that led to delays in decision-making and loss of institutional memory due to staff turnover:
  - The COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 severely disrupted project implementation and progress due to travel restrictions and operational limitations;
  - The 2025 government administrative reform introduced significant institutional restructuring, including the merger of ministries and provincial systems, abolishment of city and district levels, resulting in changes in roles, responsibilities and leadership;
- Prolonged administrative and approval processes that extended timelines and created bottlenecks in implementation:
  - Disruptions and revisions to the project implementation arrangements required multiple rounds of review and approval, including project document (in Vietnamese) revisions, annual work plans, procurement processes, and budget approvals
- Changes in local context and demands:
  - Evolving local priorities and administrative restructuring led to requests for changes in intervention sites and the project's result framework, requiring additional assessments and further delaying implementation
- Constraints in PMU operational capacity significantly constrained the PMU's ability to coordinate, manage implementation and maintain stakeholder engagement.
  - The PMU was initially adequately staffed (2021-2022) with 8 staff (4 part-time and 4 full-time), enabling effective early implementation;
  - However, prolonged delays and lack of approved work plans and budgets resulted in reduced staffing and operational capacity since 2023, with only two to three part-time personnel and limited or no full-time staff;
  - High staff turnover (changes within the PMU, changes in leadership of the Ministry – MONRE to MAE and Institute – ISPONRE to ISPAE) further reduced institutional continuity and operational capacity;

While the project benefited from strong design and effective early implementation, the combination of institutional restructuring, prolonged approval processes, and reduced

PMU operational capacity has significantly hindered progress. These factors explain the limited achievement of outputs and the current implementation delays.

## **EFFICIENCY**

### ***To what extent does the management structure of the project support efficient implementation?***

The project's management structure is appropriate and demonstrated effective functioning during the initial phase (2021-2022), but its efficiency has been affected since 2023 by institutional restructuring and procedural delays.

The project “**Enhancing the Resilience Inclusive and Sustainable Eco-Human Settlement Development through Small-Scale Infrastructure Interventions in the Coastal Regions of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam**” was approved by the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) in June 2020 for the original implementation period 2021–2023, with a total budget of US\$6,345,292 (Decision B.35.a-35.b/22). The project document was subsequently approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) in March 2021 (Decision #856/QĐ-BTNMT).

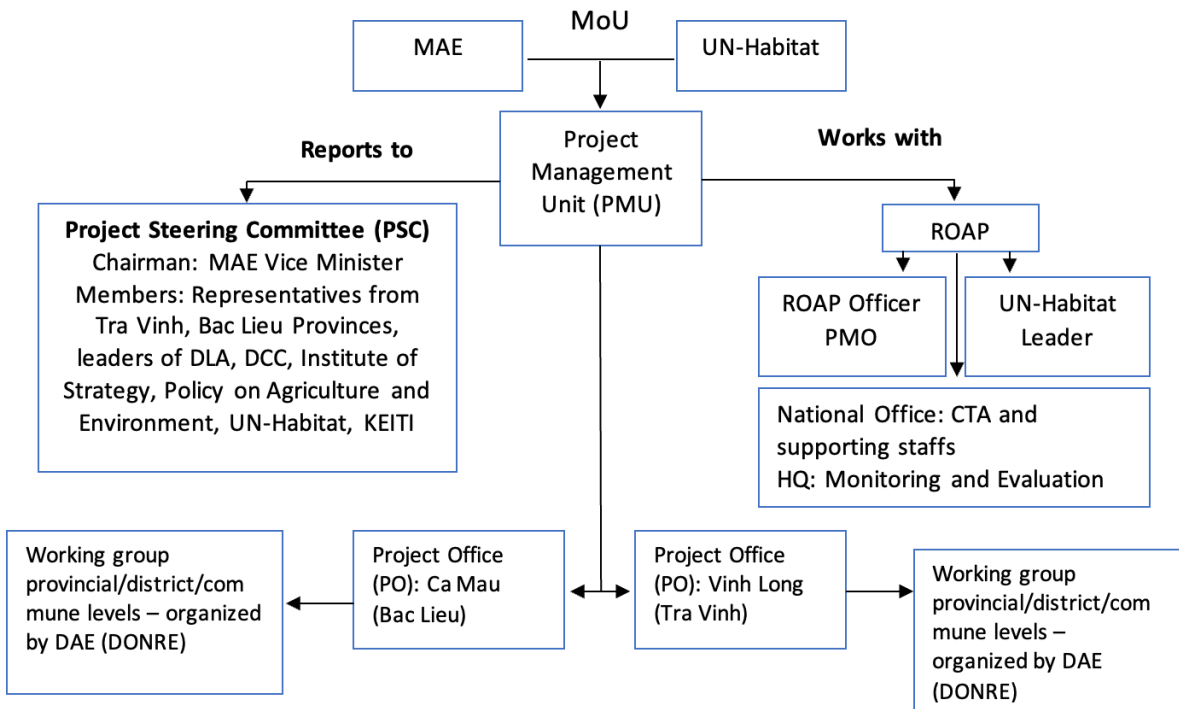
Since the project's start, it has experienced multiple delays, resulting in three no-cost extensions, with the current completion date now June 2027.

The approved project document clearly defines the management structure, including MAE (formerly MONRE) as the governing body, ISPAE (formerly ISPONRE) as the project owner, and the establishment of a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and a Project Management Unit (PMU). These arrangements are consistent with national implementation systems and are appropriate for project delivery.

At the targeted provinces of Ca Mau and Vinh Long, project implementation is coordinated through the Provincial People's Committees and the Departments of Natural Resources and Environment (DONREs). Working groups were also established at the provincial and commune levels to facilitate coordination, monitor progress, and support the effective implementation of project activities within their respective localities. This structure provided a sound basis for coordination across national and subnational levels.

## Project Management Structure

Source: Project Document



During the initial implementation phase (2021-2022), the management structure functioned effectively, enabling the delivery of planned outputs.

However, since 2023, the efficiency of the management structure has been significantly affected by a combination of factors, which are interrelated and occurred sequentially, with each factor reinforcing the next:

- **Increased coordination complexity following changes in institutional arrangements:**

Adjustment in ministerial structures and implementation responsibilities since 2023, including the separation of components across different entities, increased coordination requirements among national counterparts and UN-Habitat. In particular, the need to define appropriate implementation arrangements for the infrastructure component added procedural steps within the ODA framework.

This factor necessitated a revision of the Vietnamese project document and contributed to delays in decision-making and approval.

- **Lengthy and complex administrative and approval processes:**

Revisions to the project document in Vietnamese require multiple layers of approval (from MONRE/MAE and relevant line departments), delaying the finalization of annual work plans and associated budgets. As a consequence, the 2023 work plan was not approved, and the 2024 work plan, although approved, was not implemented.

These delays created gaps in operational continuity, limited the PMU's ability to mobilize resources in a timely manner, and constrained the implementation of planned activities.

- **Reduced operational continuity at PMU level due to prolonged implementation delays**

This has been a persistent challenge and should be thoroughly reviewed. Following its establishment in 2021 with a full staffing structure, the PMU's operational capacity was affected by delays in approvals and inactivity since 2023. With limited approved workplans and budget allocation, the PMU was not able to maintain a full-time operational structure and functioned primarily through part-time management personnel. This results in reduced continuity in day-to-day coordination, stakeholder engagement, and follow-up on implementation processes, thereby affecting the pace of project delivery

- **The government administrative restructuring in 2025 further compounded implementation constraints**

The nationwide merger and reorganization of provincial-level units and central ministries, as well as the removal of district-level governance in 2025, introduced significant transitional disruption across all levels of project governance. These changes resulted in staff turnover and loss of institutional memory among key counterparts, particularly at provincial and local levels.

During this transition period, uncertainties regarding roles, responsibilities, and points of contact reduced stakeholder engagement and feedback. As a result, ongoing delays since 2023 were further reinforced, and the PMU's ability to maintain consistent communication, coordination, and advocacy at the provincial level was significantly constrained.

***To what extent is the project being implemented efficiently in terms of delivering the expected results according to quality standards, in a timely manner according to budget and ensuring value for money?***

Immediately following the project approval by MONRE in July 2021, the project demonstrated strong initial implementation efficiency, with all activities and milestones under Components #1 & 2 delivered as planned during 2021-2022. Key achievements included the development of a project branding and communication materials, set, guidance and training packages for local-level vulnerability and risk assessments and planning toolkits and training materials to support strategy and action plan development.

Three training workshops on "Developing Strategies and Action Plans for Ecological Human Settlements to Strengthen Climate Change Adaptation" were delivered to over 200 participants, alongside a dedicated training-of-trainers for 30 participants. These activities effectively strengthened local technical capacity and stakeholder engagement. Field assessments for the proposed infrastructure interventions were also conducted in the initially selected communes since 2023 and again in 2025 to reflect the newly proposed locations in Vinh Long (formerly Tra Vinh) and Ca Mau (formerly Bac Lieu) provinces. More significantly, the project contributed to the development of Circular No. 06/2023/TT-BTNMT, a key policy instrument guiding the integration of climate change adaptation into planning processes.

All outputs delivered during this period were assessed as meeting the expected quality standard, delivered within budget, and largely on schedule, indicating strong value for money in the early phase of implementation. Training activities were consistently rated by participants as practical, relevant, and directly applicable to their work, while technical guidance materials and planning toolkits were considered fit-for-purpose and adaptable to local context. Field assessments were also comprehensive and inclusive, cover well the targeted communes' situations of and responses to climate risk, vulnerability, and local adaptation policies and institutions. Throughout all activities, vulnerable groups and environmental factors were well considered in.

However, these early efficiency gains were not sustained. Since mid-2022, the project has experienced prolonged implementation delays, with little to no substantive activity delivered despite available funding. This has resulted in significant under-utilization of resources and delays in translating outputs into outcomes, raising concerns regarding overall efficiency and timeliness.

While the quality of outputs produced to date remains high, the interruption in implementation has weakened the project's ability to deliver results in a timely and cost-effective manner thereby affecting the overall value for money at the project level.

### ***To what extent is monitoring and reporting on the project transparent and satisfied key stakeholders?***

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan was developed as part of the project document to monitor the project implementation and achievement of targeted outputs and accomplishments. The M&E Plan was shared with all stakeholders via a workshop for their engagement, comments, and consultation. The M&E Plan emphasizes participatory outcome and result monitoring, risk management (including financial, project management, and environmental and social risks), learning and sustainability, and the consistent collection, analysis and use of data for the project implementation improvement and achievement of targeted outputs and accomplishments.

The M&E framework includes a structured results framework with indicators, baselines, and end-of-project targets, as well as a monitoring plan with clear monitoring activities of periodic field visits, meetings and reports on the quarter, semi-annual, and annual basis, clear roles, responsibilities and timelines at all national and local levels to review the project progress. A clear evaluation plan is also indicated clearly with a mid-term review after the project's two-years of implementation and a final review by the independent evaluators.

The project's participatory monitoring mechanism engages different levels of government and commune representatives to collect data and share feedback. This participatory approach enables beneficiary communes to engage directly with the project's M&E mechanism, identify delivery challenges, and enhance adaptation benefits, including replication and sustainability of project results.

While a comprehensive M&E framework has been established, its effectiveness remains limited, with several critical elements insufficiently operationalized:

- Lack of detailed indicator definitions and measurement methodologies, particularly for outcome-level indicators;

- Timelines and protocols for data collection, verification, and reporting are in place but not consistently applied, affecting data comparability and timeliness.

Stakeholder feedback and grievance mechanisms have been established and are functioning, including project-level grievance channels, pre- and post-activity evaluations. However, the number of feedback and grievances received to date has been limited, and inputs are primarily captured through meetings, field visits, and activity-based evaluations.

In addition, no real-time M&E information system has been established, limiting the project's ability to track progress dynamically, support evidence-based decision making, and communicate results transparently to stakeholders and donor.

Overall, while the project has established a solid M&E framework with strong participatory intent, gaps in operationalization and data management reduce its effectiveness in ensuring full transparency, timely reporting, and adaptive management

## SUSTAINABILITY

***To what extent is capacity being developed in order to ensure sustainability of the efforts and benefits? To what extent is the project engaging participation of beneficiaries in implementation, monitoring, and reporting? To what extent is the project fostering innovative partnerships with local institutions and authorities and other development partners?***

As the project is still in the early-to-mid stage of implementation, the MTR assesses sustainability prospects using an “attribution rule” approach, tracing cause-and-effect linkages between I along the project's results chain, from inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and longer-term impacts. During the initial implementation period of 2021 and 2022, over 200 government officials and community representatives were trained in climate change adaptation, including local risk assessment, integrating climate change adaptation measures into provincial strategies and action plans, and facilitation skills to support community dialogues on climate change adaptation planning.

It was reported that training participants found the training highly relevant to their work, helping them understand the methods and steps for integrating climate change adaptation into the formulation of annual socio-economic and cultural development plans. Feedback from participants also indicates that the training provided valuable information that enhanced their understanding of climate-related risks and vulnerabilities and strengthened their advocacy and community engagement skills. These early investments represent an important foundation for sustained institutional capacity.

The MTR survey found that most respondents were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the strengthened institutional capacity for climate change adaptation at both central and local levels, the enhanced community awareness and responsiveness to climate change, and the applicability of the project's results. The project's contribution to the development of Circular No. 06/2023/TT-BTNMT, which guides the integration of climate change adaptation into strategies and planning processes, demonstrates early evidence of systemic impact and strengthens the enabling policy environment for sustainability and replication.

The project's integrated approach, which combines capacity-building, policy integration, and small-scale infrastructure interventions, remains highly relevant and is positively perceived by stakeholders as an effective and sustainable strategy for strengthening climate resilience at local level. This approach is well aligned with national and provincial adaptation priorities, reinforcing its high potential for institutional uptake, scaling, and long-term sustainability.

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The review of all project documents, reports, field assessments, and surveys indicates that cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, the inclusion of vulnerable groups, and environmental protection have been systematically integrated throughout the project development, planning, and implementation processes.

Women have been well represented in project governance and technical processes, accounting for about **50%** of positions within the Project Management Unit (PMU), the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and the expert and consultant team. This level of representation supported the consistent mainstreaming of gender considerations across all project activities. The active engagement of the Women's Union in training sessions and dialogue events further ensured that women's voices were incorporated into local decision-making processes.

Consequently, women actively participated in workshops and training at central, provincial, district, and commune levels, representing **43%** of total participants. About **40%** of the project's trained facilitators and technical experts were female, meeting project targets. This not only empowered female professionals but also ensured the inclusion of gender-sensitive perspectives in community facilitation, technical guidance, and toolkit development. Gender mainstreaming modules were incorporated into training materials, strengthening awareness and promoting women's leadership in climate-resilient planning and community engagement.

The project also demonstrates adequate consideration of vulnerable groups, including youth, ethnic minorities, children, and the elderly, particularly through vulnerability and risk assessments and infrastructure planning processes. Infrastructure designs incorporated basic principles of accessibility and resilience to ensure safe and equitable access to services under climate-stress conditions.

Environmental and social safeguards were integrated into project design and assessment processes, with attention to ecosystem protection and risk mitigation. Nature-based solutions such as mangrove restoration and hybrid infrastructure approaches were promoted to address coastal erosion and flooding risks, while contributing to biodiversity conservation and long-term resilience. Eco-human settlement planning emphasized the use of locally sourced materials and renewable energy in small-scale infrastructure. Participatory planning tools further supported community engagement and laid the foundation for local ownership of adaptation interventions.

However, the interruption of project implementation since 2023 has limited the continued operationalization and monitoring of these cross-cutting priorities. Sustained efforts will be required to ensure that gender, inclusion, and environmental safeguards are consistently applied during the implementation of the remaining project components, particularly infrastructure interventions.

## CONCLUSION

The MTR finds that the project remains highly relevant and technically well-designed, with strong alignment with national and provincial climate change adaptation priorities, as well as with the Adaptation Fund and UN-Habitat's strategic objectives. Early implementation (2021-2022) delivered high-quality outputs, particularly in capacity building, policy support, and the development of technical guidance and planning toolkits. These achievements have established a solid foundation for advancing eco-human settlement development and climate-resilient planning in the Mekong Delta.

However, overall progress has been significantly constrained by prolonged implementation delays since 2023, driven by a combination of administrative restructuring, changes of local context, extended approval processes and reduced operational continuity at the Project Management Unit (PMU) level during this period. As a result, the project is substantially off track in delivering planned outputs and outcomes, with a large proportion of indicators not yet achieved.

Despite these challenges, the project retains strong potential to deliver its intended outcomes, particularly given its demonstrated contribution to policy development, institutional capacity strengthening, and participatory approaches involving local communities, including women and vulnerable groups. The recent stabilization of institutional arrangements under the restructured Ministry of Agriculture and Environment provides an opportunity to re-activate implementation and restore momentum.

Looking forward, with the current extension to June 2027, the project retains a realistic opportunity to deliver its core objectives, provided that implementation is accelerated and key operational constraints are addressed in the immediate term.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the systemic constraints affecting implementation progress and ensure achievement of intended results within the remaining period, the MTR proposes the following prioritized actions, structured around three interrelated areas:

### A. Institutional effectiveness and implementation readiness

#### **Recommendation 1: Strengthen alignment with national and subnational priorities**

- The project team (MAE, ISPAE, provinces, UN-Habitat) should continuously align project activities with updated national and subnational climate adaptation priorities following the 2025 administrative reform
- Provincial authorities should be actively engaged to validate priorities and ensure alignment with local planning frameworks
- The project team should provide targeted orientation and technical support to newly restructured provincial and commune/ward entities to ensure continuity in integrating climate change adaptation into planning and implementation processes.

#### **Recommendation 2: Strengthen operational coordination within existing approval processes**

- PMU/ISPAE, in coordination with MAE departments, should proactively prepare and submit work plans, budgets, and revisions in line with government procedures to avoid delays
- MAE (through its relevant departments) should facilitate the timely review and approval of the work plan, budget allocation, and adjustments
- PMU should strengthen its internal capacity to actively follow up on submissions, track approval progress, and maintain coordination with relevant departments
- The Project Steering Committee should be more proactively mobilized to resolve bottlenecks and support timely decision-making

#### **Recommendation 3: Reinforce PMU capacity and implementation readiness**

- The project governing body (MAE) and owner (IPSAE) should review and re-establish a fully functional PMU structure, including adequate full-time technical and operational staff to support day-to-day implementation
- PMU should strengthen internal coordination and ensure effective utilisation of assigned human and financial resources to support implementation
- UN-Habitat should provide technical support and onboarding for newly assigned PMU personnel to ensure continuity and alignment with project objectives and requirements

## **B. Implementation acceleration**

### **Recommendation 4: Accelerate implementation of delayed outputs**

- The project team should develop and implement a clear, time-bound acceleration plan, prioritizing unfinished components, particularly infrastructure interventions.
- PMU should review, update, finalize, and roll out all technical guidance packages (vulnerabilities and risks assessment, planning toolkits) through training, with subsequent national dissemination and application.
- PMU should re-engage target communities in newly merged administrative areas through renewed communication and awareness campaigns and local platforms
- UN-Habitat should provide technical backstopping and quality assurance

## **C. Quality assurance, sustainability and scaling**

### **Recommendation 5: Update and operationalize risk management measures**

- UN-Habitat, in coordination with the project team, should update the environmental and social risk management plan (ESMP) to reflect new administrative boundaries, revise implementation arrangements, update intervention sites and the results framework, ensuring compliance with national regulations and Adaptation Fund and UN-Habitat safeguards

### **Recommendation 6: Strengthen M&E system for adaptive management**

- UN-Habitat, in coordination with the project team, should further operationalize the M&E system by refining indicator definitions, standardizing data collection tools, reporting templates, and timeline to ensure comparability across components and locations.
- Existing grievance and redress mechanism (GRM) should be documented within the M&E system to ensure that stakeholder feedback is systematically captured and informs project implementation and decision-making
- PMU should strengthen regular monitoring and reporting practice to support timely, evidence-based adaptive management, particularly in the context of evolving institutional arrangements

### **Recommendation 7: Strengthen coordination and complementarity with ongoing initiatives**

- The project team should maintain active coordination with development partners (e.g. GIZ, SNV, World Bank) to promote synergies, avoid duplication, and maximize the uptake and utilization of project outputs.
- Provincial authorities should facilitate information-sharing across projects to avoid duplication and promote complementary
- UN-Habitat should support the identification of synergies and integration of project outputs (VRA guidance, planning toolkits) into broader adaptation initiatives.

### **Recommendation 8: Strengthen operationalisation of cross-cutting priorities**

- PMU should ensure continued integration of gender equality, social inclusion, and environmental safeguards in the next phase of capacity building, infrastructure development and policy formulation to ensure the project's sustainability.
- PMU should re-active and strengthen engagement with local stakeholders, including mass organisations such as the Women's Union, to support inclusive participation during implementation
- UN-Habitat should provide technical guidance on inclusive and nature-based approaches

### **Recommendation 9: Strengthen local ownership and continuity**

- PMU and provincial authorities should re-engage local communities through community-centered design and co-creation activities (e.g. consultations, awareness campaigns, participatory planning), with special attention to women, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable groups
- Local authorities at the commune level should take a more active role in implementation and monitoring
- UN-Habitat should support participatory approaches and capacity building

### **Recommendation 10: Strengthen knowledge management and scaling**

- PMU should establish a structured knowledge management system to capture lessons learned, best practices and technical outputs to facilitate systemic learning and knowledge exchange
- MAE and provincial authorities should facilitate integration of successful models into policy and planning frameworks
- UN-Habitat should support documentation and dissemination at national, regional and global levels
- The project's knowledge management system should be reviewed and strengthened to facilitate systematic learning, knowledge exchange, and the replication of best practices in other vulnerable coastal provinces, contributing to broader systems change.

## 7. ANNEX I: LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED

No.	Title of the Documents
1	Project Document, dated 2021, approved by MONRE (Vietnamese version) and Decision #1446/QD-BTNMT, dated July 23, 2021 approving the revised project document
2	Revised Project Document, dated 2024, (Vietnamese version) and Decision #1881/QD-BTNMT, dated July 9, 2024 approving the revised project document
3	Revised Project Document, dated 2024, (English version)
4	Project 2022 Mid-Term Progress and Financial Report
5	Project Performance Report (PPR), 16 Dec. 2023 -16 Dec. 2024
6	Project Status Report, dated April 17, 2024
7	Project Report to Bac Lieu Province
8	Project Report to Tra Vinh Province
9	Component #1 Report: Annex 1. Risk Vulnerability Reports; Integration Reports; Field survey Reports; National WS in Can Tho; Workshop in Bac Lieu; Workshops in Tra Vinh; Communication Report
10	Component #3 Reports: Field Mission Report dated April 22-26, 2025; Project Report to MONRE dated May 20, 2025; Interim Narrative Reports on Bac Lieu and Tra Vinh dated April 2025





ADAPTATION FUND



UN-HABITAT

## Management Response Plan

### Enhancing the Resilience, Inclusiveness, and Sustainability of Eco-Human Settlement Development through Small-Scale Infrastructure Interventions in the Coastal Regions of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam

Recommendation	Management Response	Proposed Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Status of implementation	Comments on progress
Add recommendations as they appear in the final evaluation report	Select: Accepted, Partially Accepted, Not Accepted	Add proposed action/s e.g. To conduct training in / to develop. One recommendation may require several proposed actions in order to be implemented.	Add Month and Year to complete proposed action(s) [max. 24 months]	Add entity	Select: Not started/ In-progress/ implemented	Add description of actions taken/ progress made
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> Strengthen alignment with national and subnational priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project team (MAE, ISPAE, provinces, UN-Habitat) should continuously align project activities with updated national and subnational climate adaptation priorities following the 2025 administrative reform</li> <li>- Provincial authorities should be actively engaged to validate priorities and ensure alignment with local planning frameworks</li> <li>- The project team should provide targeted orientation and technical support to newly restructured provincial and commune/ward entities to ensure continuity in integrating climate change adaptation into planning and implementation processes.</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and update project workplan to align with post 2025 administrative structure and revised provincial priorities</li> <li>- Organize coordination meetings with provincial authorities (Vinh Long, Ca Mau) to validate priorities and implementation arrangements</li> <li>- Deliver targeted orientation sessions for newly assigned provincial and commune/ward counterparts on project approach and tools</li> </ul>	Q1-Q3 2026	ISPAE, PMU/CPO UN-Habitat, provincial authorities	In-progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New project work plan has been developed in coordination with the new PMU (CPO)</li> <li>- Coordination meetings &amp; orientation sessions with new provincial authorities planned to be organized in first week of Apr 2026</li> </ul>

<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> Strengthen operational application of existing approval processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PMU/ISPAAE, in coordination with MAE departments, should proactively prepare and submit workplans, budgets, and revisions to avoid delays</li> <li>- MAE (through its relevant departments) should ensure timely approval of workplans and budget plans, as well as state budget allocation plan to enable effective staffing and implementation</li> <li>- PMU should strengthen internal capacity to actively follow up on submissions, track approval progress, and maintain coordination with relevant departments</li> <li>- The Project Steering Committee should be more proactively mobilised to resolve bottlenecks and support timely decision-making</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare and submit consolidated workplan, budget, and procurement plan in advance of implementation cycles</li> <li>- Establish internal tracking mechanism for approval status and timeline</li> <li>- Convene PSC meetings to address bottlenecks and facilitate timely decision-making</li> </ul>	Q3 2026 – Q1 2027	MAE departments, PMU/CPO, provincial authorities	Not started	
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Reinforce PMU capacity and implementation readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project governing body (MAE) and owner (IPSAE) should review and re-establish a fully functional PMU structure, including adequate full-time technical and operational staff to support day-to-day implementation</li> <li>- PMU should strengthen internal coordination and ensure effective utilisation of assigned</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and formalize PMU structure with adequate full-time staff</li> <li>- Assign dedicated focal points for technical, procurement, financial and coordination functions</li> <li>- Conduct onboarding and technical orientation for newly assigned PMU staff</li> <li>- Ensure allocation of sufficient operational budget for PMU functioning</li> </ul>	Q2-Q3 2026	MAE, ISPAAE, PMU/CPO, UN-Habitat	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MAE has reviewed and assigned a new management unit (Central Project Office for Water Resources Projects - CPO) to be the project owner, effective from Dec 25, with dedicated focal points for technical, financial and coordination functions</li> </ul>

<p>human and financial resources to support implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN-Habitat should provide technical support and onboarding for newly assigned PMU personnel to ensure continuity and alignment with project objectives and requirements</li> </ul>						- Technical orientation and onboarding was provided to CPO
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Accelerate implementation of delayed outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project team should develop and implement a clear, time-bound acceleration plan, prioritizing unfinished components, particularly infrastructure interventions.</li> <li>- PMU should review, update, finalise, and roll out all technical guidance packages (vulnerabilities and risks assessment, planning toolkits) through trainings, with subsequent national dissemination and application.</li> <li>- PMU should re-engage target communities in newly merged administrative areas through renewed communication and awareness campaigns and local platforms</li> <li>- UN-Habitat should provide technical backstopping and quality assurance</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a detailed acceleration plan with milestones for all remaining outputs (especially Component 3)</li> <li>- Review, update and roll out all technical guidance packages through refresher trainings</li> <li>- Re-launch community engagement and awareness campaigns in newly merged administrative areas</li> <li>- Provide technical backstopping and QA/QC for infrastructure design and implementation</li> </ul>	Q2 2026 - Q1 2027	PMU/CPO, provincial authorities, UN-Habitat	Not started	
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Update and operationalise risk management measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN-Habitat, in coordination with the project team, should update environmental and social risk</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update ESMP to reflect new administrative boundaries, revised sites, results framework and implementation arrangements</li> </ul>	Q4 2025 -Q1 2026	UN-Habitat, PMU/CPO	Implemented	- ESMP has been updated to reflect the changes

<p>management plan (ESMP) to reflect new administrative boundaries, revise implementation arrangements, updated intervention sites and the results framework, ensuring compliance with national regulations and Adaptation Fund and UN-Habitat safeguards</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Align safeguards with national regulations and Adaptation Fund requirements</li> <li>- Integrate risk monitoring into regular project reporting</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Strengthen M&amp;E system for adaptive management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN-Habitat, in coordination with the project team, should update the M&amp;E system to include with clearly defined indicators, data collection tools, reporting templates and feedback mechanisms, and a database to track real-time data for monitoring and decision-making for adaptive management.</li> <li>- Existing grievance and redress mechanism (GRM) should be integrated into the M&amp;E system to ensure that stakeholder feedback systematically informs project implementation and decision-making</li> <li>- PMU should strengthen regular monitoring, reporting, and feedback loops to support adaptive <b>management, particularly in the context of changing institutional arrangements</b></li> </ul>	<p>Accepted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finalize and standardize M&amp;E tools and indicators aligned with the update results framework with clear definitions, templates, and assigned responsibilities within PMU and provinces</li> <li>- Establish a simple tracking system to regularly monitor progress, including systematic recording and use of GRM data to identify issues and inform corrective actions</li> <li>- Institutionalize regular review and feedback loops between PMU/CPO, and UN-Habitat to use monitoring results and stakeholder feedback for adaptive management</li> </ul>	<p>Q2-2026</p>	<p>UN-Habitat, PMU/CPO, provincial authorities</p>	<p>Not started</p>	

<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Strengthen coordination and complementarity with ongoing initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project team should maintain active coordination with development partners (e.g. GIZ, SNV, World Bank) to promote synergies, avoid duplication, and maximize the uptake and utilization of project outputs.</li> <li>- Provincial authorities should facilitate information-sharing across projects to avoid duplication and promote complementary</li> <li>- UN-Habitat should support identification of synergies and integration of project outputs (VRA guidance, planning toolkits) into broader adaptation initiatives.</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map ongoing climate adaptation initiatives in target provinces</li> <li>- Establish periodic coordination mechanism at provincial level</li> <li>- Integrate project tools into relevant partner programmes</li> </ul>	Q2 2026- Q2 2027	PMU/CPO, Provincial authorities, UN-Habitat	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of ongoing initiatives has been updated in preparation for the Vietnamese project document approval</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> Strengthen operationalisation of cross-cutting priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PMU should ensure continued integration of gender equality, social inclusion, and environmental safeguards in the next phase of capacity building, infrastructure development and policy formulation to ensure the project's sustainability.</li> <li>- PMU should re-active and strengthen engagement with local stakeholders, including mass organisations such as the Women's Union, to support inclusive participation during implementation</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrate gender, inclusion, and environmental safeguards into all activities</li> <li>- Strengthen engagement with Women's union and local mass organizations</li> <li>- Apply nature-based solutions consistently in infrastructure design</li> </ul>	Q4 2025 – Q2 2027	PMU/CPO, provincial authorities, UN-Habitat	In progress	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN-Habitat should provide technical guidance on inclusive and nature-based approaches</li> </ul>						
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> Strengthen local ownership and continuity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PMU and provincial authorities should re-engage local communities through community-centred design and co-creation activities (e.g. consultations, awareness campaigns, participatory planning), with special attention to women, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable groups</li> <li>- Local authorities at the commune level should take a more active role in implementation and monitoring</li> <li>- UN-Habitat should support participatory approaches and capacity building</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct participatory consultations and co-design activities at community level</li> <li>- Strengthen role of commune-level authorities in monitoring and implementation</li> <li>- Support community-based mechanisms for operation and maintenance</li> </ul>	Q4 2025 – Q2 2027	PMU/CPO, local authorities, UN-Habitat	Not started	
<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> Strengthen knowledge management and scaling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PMU should establish a structured knowledge management system to capture lessons learned, best practices and technical outputs to facilitate systemic learning and knowledge exchange</li> <li>- MAE and provincial authorities should facilitate integration of successful models into policy and planning frameworks</li> <li>- UN-Habitat should support documentation and</li> </ul>	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop structured knowledge management system</li> <li>- Compile and disseminate good practices and technical models</li> <li>- Support integration of successful approaches into national/provincial policies</li> </ul>	Q4 2026 – Q2 2027	MAE, PMU/CPO, UN-Habitat	Not started	<b>New internal coordination arrangements have been established</b>

<p>dissemination at national, regional and global levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The project's knowledge management system should be reviewed and strengthened to facilitate systematic learning, knowledge exchange, and the replication of best practices in other vulnerable coastal provinces, contributing to broader systems change.</li></ul>						
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