

Session DP RE 5.2: Green Adaptation – optimal use of ecosystem services to adapt to the effects of climate change in transition countries

Date and Time of Session: Wednesday, 29 September 2010, 14.00-15.45

Short description of the session topic and the objective of the session

Topic: Green Adaptation, using a delta system's natural resources and characteristics to adapt itself to climate change.

Objective: Exchange experiences, present best practices, discuss pros and cons.

Session Agenda and Main Speakers

Session chair: Arjan Berkhuisen, World Wildlife Fund, the Netherlands.

Main speakers

- Overview of various Green Adaptation concepts Helena Hulsman Mindert de Vries, Deltares, the Netherlands.
- Why Green Adaptation is a need and not a luxury for a transition country Hoang Viet, WWF Greater Mekong Programme, Vietnam.
- Why Green Adaptation measures are not always the answer Prof.dr. Marcel, Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands.
- Assessing Green Adaptation possibilities for the Mekong Delta Prof.dr. Le Quang Minh, Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Panelists: Speakers + chair.

Most exciting insight, moment or outcome

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Main conclusions, themes, insights or messages

- We can no longer ignore the impacts a changing climate will have on our people.
- Adaptation that does not integrate ecosystem and community approaches may have a higher risk of failure.
- We must work together to increase chances of success in reducing climate impacts to and increasing resilience of our people and nature.
- Green adaptation, an integrated approach with low cost investment and multiple benefits, is the a must and not a luxury for a transition country, like Vietnam
- No general definition of green adaptation exists
- There may not be enough sediment available to protect a delta against sea level rise
- Most green adaptation measures allow extensive forms of agricultural production and fisheries. This limits the carrying capacity of the delta in terms of food production. The rapid population growth in delta cities on the other hand calls for intensive production methods.
- In the Mekong Delta, there is a long tradition of flexible response to extreme climatic events especially flooding
- The alternative to green adaptation in Viet Nam entails the construction of thousands of kilometers of dikes along the river and the marine coast

Key phrases or quotes

- The poorest people are the most vulnerable to climate change, they are not always in a position to adapt to climate change in a green way.
- For green adaptation measures, the starting situation has to be taken into account. In a situation which is already much altered, much more effort is required and less results may be expected.
- The cost of maintaining a manmade defense against flooding is actually very low, especially compared to the economic value that can be (and already has been) developed behind the dikes.
- Green adaptation techniques have always been available traditionally, and are now rediscovered as a sustainable way of adaptation