

Policy Position Paper

Introducing Blue-Green Infrastructure in Vietnam

Introduction

A growing number of Vietnamese, European, and international companies engaged in production and operations within Vietnam are expressing heightened concern regarding the state of the urban environment. They are particularly alarmed by issues such as air pollution and urban heat posing threats to public health, the ongoing loss of biodiversity, and the overall deterioration in the quality of life within urban centers.

Within the framework of EuroCham's Green Growth Sector Committee, a coalition of companies has collaboratively crafted this policy paper and set of recommendations. The aim is to provide constructive support to the Vietnamese government as it endeavors to steer the nation towards a future characterized by improved health, carbon neutrality, and enduring sustainability.

This policy position paper particularly aims to outline the rationale, objectives, required actions, challenges, and initial steps for the introduction of blue-green infrastructure in Vietnam. Blue-Green infrastructure refers to a strategic approach that combines water management techniques with natural and engineered green spaces to enhance water sustainability, mitigate climate change impacts, and improve overall urban livability. Vietnam's vulnerability to climate change, coupled with rapid urbanization, necessitates the integration of Blue-Green infrastructure into its urban planning and development.

Rationale and Objectives

Vietnam faces increasing challenges from climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and urban flooding.

The introduction of Blue-Green infrastructure in Vietnam presents a significant opportunity to address climate change impacts, enhance water management, and improve urban livability. By taking strategic actions, fostering partnerships, and integrating blue-green principles into policy frameworks, Vietnam can pave the way for sustainable, resilient, and vibrant cities that benefit both current and future generations.

The integration of Blue-Green infrastructure aligns with the country's commitment to sustainable development and the Paris Agreement's goals. The primary objectives of this policy paper are:

Climate Resilience: Enhance the resilience of urban areas to climate change impacts, such as flooding and heatwaves, by implementing integrated blue-green solutions.

Water Management: Improve water quality, reduce urban flooding, and enhance water resource management through the integration of natural and engineered water systems.

Biodiversity and Livability: Create green spaces that promote biodiversity, provide recreational areas, and improve overall urban livability.

Sustainable Urban Development: Ensure that urban growth is balanced with environmental protection, making cities more sustainable, efficient, and attractive.

Required Actions

To successfully introduce Blue-Green infrastructure in Vietnam, the following key actions are recommended:

- Development of a comprehensive national policy framework that mandates the integration of blue-green infrastructure into urban planning and development processes.
- Investments in training programs to enhance the technical capacity of urban planners, engineers, and landscape architects in designing and implementing blue-green solutions.

- Involvement of local communities, NGOs, and stakeholders in the planning and implementation of blue-green projects to ensure their needs and preferences are considered.
- Provision of incentives such as tax breaks or development bonuses to encourage private developers to incorporate blue-green elements in their projects. Establish regulations that require new developments to include green roofs, permeable surfaces, and water retention features.
- Funding research initiatives to develop context-specific blue-green solutions and adapt international best practices to Vietnam's unique climate and urban conditions.

Challenges

The introduction of blue-green infrastructure in Vietnam is not without challenges:

- Many stakeholders, including policymakers and the public, may have limited understanding of the concept and benefits of blue-green infrastructure.
- Rapid urbanization has led to limited available land, making it challenging to allocate space for green areas and water retention.
- The implementation of blue-green infrastructure requires significant upfront investment, which may be a barrier for cash-strapped municipalities.
- Sustaining green and water infrastructure over time demands proper maintenance, which can strain local budgets if not planned for adequately.

Road Map for Implementation

To initiate the implementation of Blue-Green infrastructure, we propose the following initial steps:

- Launch public awareness campaigns through media, workshops, and educational institutions to educate citizens about the benefits of Blue-Green infrastructure.

- In addition to the current pilot projects sponsored by international donors, it is imperative to expand the scope and pinpoint additional cities or neighborhoods to function as pilot areas. These selected locations will serve as testing grounds to showcase and evaluate the efficacy of Blue-Green solutions.
- Integrate Blue-Green infrastructure principles into existing urban development policies and regulations at both national and local levels.
- Provide training programs for urban planners, engineers, and relevant professionals on designing and managing Blue-Green infrastructure.
- Foster collaborations between government agencies, private sector entities, and non-governmental organizations to pool resources and expertise.

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