Strategic Delta Planning in Vietnam; navigating implementation strategies in Ben Tre province

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Delta systems and climate change

Delta systems are vulnerability to the effects of climate change:
• High population density
• Inundation: In the Mekong delta up to 40% by the end of the century
• Water scarcity and droughts
• Flooding events
• Increasing levels of salinity in the coastal region

• To address these: Strategic delta plans
Mekong Delta Plan

- Development of scenarios that form the basis of a set of measures.
- Measures include controlled seasonal flooding in the upper delta, creating a system of coastal flood protection, economic adaptability and a shift in agriculture.

Strategic Delta Plans

- More and more, we see soft adaptation measures;
  - Shift to sustainable livelihoods
  - Adapting to salinity
  - Coping with regular flooding
  - Urgent requests for enhancing delta resilient and agriculture transformation.
- Strategic goals, implementation pathways not defined. Vision as check-list for policy & plans
Strategic Delta Plans

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Policy and plan evaluations

- How to assess whether these plans and policies are implementable?

3 dimensions project planning

- Performance
- Feasibility
- Adaptable

- Cost/benefit
- Robustness
- Effectiveness
- Up-scaling
- Social acceptance
- Social impact

- Performance reflects professional’s point of view;
- Feasibility reflects Government point of view;
- Adaptability reflects Community’s point of view.
MOTA framework

Different Actor groups
Ben Tre province

Ben Tre is one of the 13 provinces in the Mekong Delta
• total area of 2.359 km²
• population of 1.262.205

The primary land uses:
• rice farming
• (brackish) aquaculture
• fruits and coconut farming
• cattle

Societal MOTA

Aim:
Understanding willingness and capability of farmers to adopt alternative livelihood strategies.

• 50 structured interviews of farmer households
• Two districts:
  – Thanh Phu
  – Ba Tri
Societal MOTA: results

MOTA mapping Thanh Phu (left) and Ba Tri (right)

Strategic MOTA

Aim:
Understanding possibilities and constrains for the implementation of the Mekong Delta Plan at local government level

- Semi-structured interviews
- 28 representatives of provincial and district level government agencies

Focus on
- Adaptation to salinity
- Shift in agricultural livelihoods
Strategic MOTA: results

Conclusions

- The local setting is a very pluralistic
  - Differences between the communities;
  - Salinity intrusion is primarily perceived as a threat;
  - Agro-business as an opportunity
- The linkage of performance – implementation – adoptability can provide more holistic perspective in implementing and developing strategic delta plans
- Future work
  - Surveys in Ben Tre to include more livelihood options
  - Studies on ‘implemented projects, such as Ba Lai Sluice gate
Thank you for your attention

For more information on project, see: http://strategic-delta-planning.un-ihe.org

Further reading:
• (2) Nguyen Hong Quan et al. Farmer adoptability for (sustainable) livelihood transformations in the Mekong Delta: A case in Ben Tre Province. In review
• (3) Korbee, D. et al., Implementation of Strategic Delta Plans – in the nexus of strategic national plans and household-level transformations. In Review
• (4) Korbee et al. (in preparation) MOTA; a tool to assess adoptability of soft adaptation measures

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Strategic MOTA: results

Motivation to change
• Salinity intrusion is a risk and should be controlled and monitored
• Market integration is an opportunity
• Motivation for grassroots involvement in developing plans (bottom-up)

Abilities to change
• Dependency on hierarchical structure for planning process
• Cooperation
• Technical know-how to support farmers available

Actions to change
• Actions in line with current policies and plans; limited ‘actions for change’
• Incremental changes within boundaries of current institutional setting
• Space given within these boundaries is used as opportunities

Triggers caused by the MDP process
• The Mekong Delta conference September 2017
• Cooperation between provinces, under degree 593 by PM
• However, government officials are awaiting formalisation of MDP in ‘regular plan or detail regulation/instruction’