



# THE VIETNAM LAND, SERVICES AND CITIZENSHIP (LSC) FOR THE URBAN POOR PROGRAMME



Hanoi, Vietnam. Photo: Andrea Zeman/Cities Alliance

## Vietnam LSC at a Glance

The LSC programme is a partnership initiative undertaken by the Government of Vietnam and its support partners to align urban development efforts at the national, city and community levels. It aims to:

- \* Support the Government of Vietnam's efforts to scale up inclusive urban development policies
- \* Build the capacity of cities to strategically manage urbanisation
- \* Empower community organisations to actively engage in city development
- \* Focus on enhanced community participation, replication and scale

Vietnam has a population of around 91.5 million, of which 27.4 million live in cities — a figure that is expected to double by 2025.

## WHAT IS THE VIETNAM LSC PROGRAMME?

The Land, Services and Citizenship for the Urban Poor Programme (LSC) is an initiative undertaken by the Government of Vietnam to align urban development efforts at the national government, city government and community levels. It aims to include the urban poor in the planning and decision-making processes.

## WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF LSC?

LSC seeks to support Government—both national and city—and urban poor communities so that they can effectively manage urban growth, improve access to services, and formulate inclusive urban development policies that benefit the poor at scale.

It does this by:

- **Bringing coherence of effort** by creating an institutional framework that allows stakeholders to align their activities and financing towards common objectives.
- **Building effective partnerships** among the national government, city governments, urban poor communities and other stakeholders that enable inclusive city management and development to be scaled up.

## WHO ARE THE PARTNERS IN LSC?

The Government of Vietnam is implementing LSC through the Ministry of Construction's Urban Development Agency. The Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN) is implementing efforts at the community level. These partners are supported by international organisations including the World Bank, UN-Habitat, and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The programme is facilitated and supported by the Cities Alliance, a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development.



Woman washes clothes on the street in Vinh, Vietnam.  
Photo: Andrea Zeman/Cities Alliance

**The challenge is now to scale up urban upgrading to a citywide level and to mobilise the urban poor so that they benefit from Vietnam's economic growth as well.**

### Urbanisation in Vietnam

- \* One of the fastest urbanising countries in East Asia, Vietnam has undergone a remarkable process of economic reform in recent decades that has spurred economic growth and driven an urbanisation rate of around 3 per cent per year.
- \* At the same time, the country has made great strides in reducing urban poverty. Since the Cities Alliance began engaging with Vietnam in 2000, the country's focus has moved from pilot upgrading projects to broad-based upgrading programmes.
- \* A national urban upgrading policy is in place but runs the risk of not reaching secondary cities, where the bulk of urbanisation is taking place.



Dilapidated Housing in Vinh, Vietnam. Photo: Andrea Zeman/Cities Alliance

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE LSC?

In Phase 1, the LSC activities in Vietnam focus primarily on rolling out a national urban upgrading programme, strengthening the Vietnam Urban Forum as a national platform for dialogue on urban issues, and expanding the existing Community Development Fund (CDF) network, a network of 30 cities engaged in community-led upgrading activities. Subsequent phases will also include community-based City Development Strategies (CDS) and training for city authorities.

### At the National Level

LSC activities at the national level focus on supporting the Government of Vietnam in its efforts to scale up its upgrading programmes and develop a more effective urban agenda centred on sustainable, inclusive cities.

- **The National Urban Upgrading Programme (NUUP).**

Finalised in 2008, the programme provides, for the first time, an overall demand assessment and cost estimate for urban upgrading in low-income areas in more than 100 cities and towns throughout Vietnam. It is expected to lead to an upgrading approach that is based on partnerships with local governments and urban communities – a significant urban development shift in centralised Vietnam.

The Country Programme is supporting the development of a detailed strategy to operationalise and guide the rollout of the NUUP through 2020. The activity is being implemented by the Ministry of Construction, which was responsible for the formulation and preparation of the NUUP.

- **The Vietnam Urban Forum.** Originally launched in 2003, the Forum is garnering new attention as a result of the debate surrounding the NUUP. LSC is supporting the revitalisation of the Vietnam Urban Forum as a platform for discussion

on urban issues. It also informs stakeholders by regularly reviewing and reporting on the state of urban development programmes in Vietnam, including mobilising the rollout of the NUUP and promoting the CDF.

- **Vietnam Urbanisation Review.** Produced by the World Bank, the Urbanisation Review is a strategic analysis of the country's urban transformation that will guide the Government's urban policies and serve as a basis for national dialogue. The completed Review was presented at the Vietnam Urban Forum in October 2011.

### At the City Level

At the city level, LSC activities support strategic urban planning that includes engaging communities as well as capacity building for city authorities.

- **City Development Strategies.** Of the 30 cities that are part of the Community Development Fund network, several will be selected to undertake community-based City Development Strategies. Through the participatory CDS process, communities will engage with local governments to work together to achieve the city's development goals.

- **Training for city authorities.** As part of the LSC programme, mayors and other city officials will receive training on strategic urban planning and management from the Academy of Managers for Construction and Cities (AMCC), which is part of the Ministry of Construction.

## At the Community Level

The community component of LSC focuses on strengthening and expanding the Community Development Fund network. This part of the programme is being implemented by the Association of Cities of Vietnam, a network of cities that represents the interests of local governments in the country.

LSC activities mobilise and empower communities by setting up savings groups, establishing a CDF at the city level, and undertaking citywide community mapping in the participating cities. This mapping, which is schematic rather than physical, provides a common framework that the cities can use to identify key issues and prioritise their interventions. LSC also supports seed funding for small community-led projects.

In order to facilitate expansion of the CDF, ACVN has developed an operational manual that includes information on conducting mapping exercises, implementing small community-driven upgrading projects, and financial management guidelines. ACVN has also conducted training workshops for CDF network members and developed financial operations software.

There are also plans to institutionalise the CDF with a joint city-community management structure. Cities would include contributions to the CDF in their budgets, providing matching funds for community savings groups.

Local planning official showing upgrading plans for the neighbourhood in Viet Tri, Vietnam. Photo: Andrea Zeman/Cities Alliance



Community housing project in Viet Tri, Vietnam.  
Photo: Andrea Zeman/Cities Alliance



## Initial Results

1. The Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN) has completed an operations manual for expanding the Community Development Fund to 20 cities. ACVN has also created financial operations software and conducted training workshops for CDF network members.
2. A Vietnam Urbanisation Review has been completed and presented to policymakers at the Vietnam Urban Forum in October 2011.
3. The Vietnam Urban Forum (VUF) has convened regularly and is well on its way to becoming a fully functional, effective platform for urban sector exchanges and structured dialogue that includes a wide range of stakeholders. Recently, VUF members have established a first thematic platform for shared learning and dialogue: the *Community of Practice on Urban Climate Resilience in Vietnam*.
4. The LSC programme has leveraged an additional \$3 million from the World Bank for technical assistance in the rollout of the National Urban Upgrading Programme.