



# Country reference framework

# Vietnam

**November 2023**

## Inhoud

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# Country reference framework Vietnam

## Background

In FYP1 the VLIR-UOS country strategies presented the strategic niche for future VLIR-UOS cooperation in a specific country, leading to strategy-based calls for proposals. These country strategies created a framework for project formulation, but could limit project identification to geographical and/or thematic foci and/or to a limited number of partner institutions. Country strategies also aimed at enabling synergy and complementarity between VLIR-UOS projects and projects from other (Belgian) stakeholders working in that country.

In FYP2, however, we shift towards an approach whereby a country reference framework provides information rather than strategic guidance. The country reference frameworks will be used mainly to support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in a given country, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors, their ongoing projects and partners in that country in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity.

The country reference frameworks consist of three components:

- (i) overview of VLIR-UOS projects in the country;
- (ii) context analysis focused on the Agenda 2030 framework and the higher education sector;
- (iii) overview of Belgian development actors (ANGCs involved in thematic or geographic JSFs & Enabel), their local partners and their regional/thematic focus.

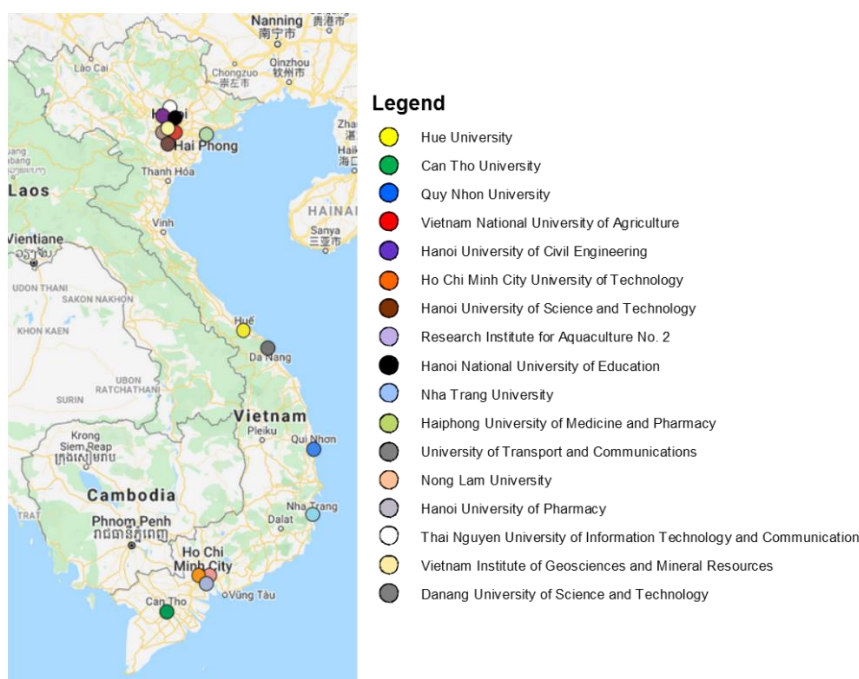
The frameworks have been elaborated based on information available at the time of drafting this actor programme (1st half of 2021) and through consultations with both Flemish and local project promoters in 2020-2021, and with geographic JSFs, when applicable, to ensure relevant information for coherent project formulation is included.

Prior to the launch of competitive calls, the ANGCs active in the country/region will be invited to list a number of research themes/questions that can be addressed by HE&SIs in the framework of VLIR-UOS funded projects or scholarships. Synergy and complementarity will be integrated as an element in the selection of project proposals, more in particular when discussing the (developmental) relevance and coherence of the proposals and the extent to which the multi-stakeholder partnership principle has been reflected in the project's implementation set-up. By this mode of operation, the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development links up with the other geographic JSFs.

Evidently, the frameworks will be updated regularly in consultation with the HEI&SI stakeholders and with the respective geographical JSFs and, where appropriate, also with ARES, and especially prior to the launch of competitive calls by VLIR-UOS, to be compatible and responsive to evolving/emerging needs and priorities of academic and development actors active in the country/region/sector.

# 1 VLIR-UOS in Vietnam

## 1.1 Overview projects & scholarships (2003 – 2023)



Projects 2003-2023		
Type	Budget (€)	Number
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,414,179</b>	<b>86</b>
IUC	9,802,450	2
NETWORK	2,602,823	1
TEAM	5,478,158	19
SI	2,759,439	43
JOINT	221,955	2
Crosscutting	350,525	8
RIP	1,098,453	11
ITP	100,376	0

Scholarships 2003-2023		
Type	Budget (€)	Number
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,890,054</b>	<b>672</b>
<b>Ph.D.</b>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,017,365</b>	<b>18</b>
ICP PhD	1,803,215	17
VLADOC	214,149	1
<b>Short term</b>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,110,431</b>	<b>417</b>
ITP	430,355	75
KOI	171,831	82
REI	217,757	214
Other scholarships	290,488	46
<b>Study</b>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7,762,258</b>	<b>237</b>
ICP	7,762,258	237

**Vietnam is a long-standing partner of Flemish higher education institutions.** From 2003 to 2023 VLIR-UOS spent over € 33,3 million in cooperation with Vietnam, including 4 long-term institutional partnerships, the Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) projects with **Hanoi University of Science and Technology (HUST)**, **Can Tho University (CTU)** and **Hue University (HU)** and the national interinstitutional NETWORK in Biosciences for food, coordinated by CTU in collaboration with Vietnam National University of Agriculture, Hue University, Nha Trang University and Research Institute for Aquaculture N°2). . A new IUC partnership with Quy Nhon University (QNU) started since September 2022. More detailed information can be found on our [Vietnam country page](#) on the VLIR-UOS website

## 1.2 Ongoing projects and future calls (2022-...)

Ongoing VLIR-UOS projects that will continue in FYP II (List of projects 2022-...)						
Type	Runtime	Title	Flemish promoter	Local promoter	Local institution	Total budget (FYP 2) (€)
IUC	2019-2024	Institutional University Cooperation with Hue University (HU) (phase 2 & phase-out)	P. Bossier (Ghent University)	Nguyen Quang Linh	Hue University	365.000
	<i>Subproject 1</i>	<i>Institutional strengthening</i>	<i>M. Valcke (Ghent University)</i>	<i>Huynh Van Chuong</i>		
	<i>Subproject 2</i>	<i>Livestock and Aquaculture</i>	<i>V. Fievez (Ghent University)</i>	<i>Dinh Phung Le</i>		
	<i>Subproject 3</i>	<i>Coastal ecosystem and natural resources management</i>	<i>L. Triest (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)</i>	<i>Duong Van Hieu</i>		
	<i>Subproject 4</i>	<i>Rural health care</i>	<i>A. Derese (Ghent University)</i>	<i>Minh Tam Nguyen</i>		
Networks	2019-2024	Network Bioscience for Food (phase 2 & phase-out)	K. Dewettinck (Ghent University)	Thanh Ha Toan	Can Tho University	270.000
	<i>Subproject 1</i>	<i>Joint graduate training and research based education in Aquaculture</i>	<i>F. Volckaert (KU Leuven)</i>	<i>Ngoc Ut Vu</i>		
	<i>Subproject 2</i>	<i>Interuniversity research based education in Vietnam to guarantee the safety and quality of the food supply chain in the South</i>	<i>M. Hendrickx (KU Leuven)</i>	<i>Ly Binh Nguyen</i>		
IUC	2022-2027	Institutional University Cooperation with Quy Nhon University (QNU) (phase-in & phase 1)	K. Temst (KU Leuven)	Vu Thi Ngan	Quy Nhon University	3.000.000
	<i>Subproject 1</i>	<i>Developing an early flood warning system to improve the adaptive capability of the local authorities and communities in the context of climate change (P1)</i>	<i>P. Willems (KU Leuven)</i>	<i>Anh Tu Ngo</i>		
	<i>Subproject 2</i>	<i>Enhancing the performance of the solar-assisted drying system and biogas production by using novel nanomaterials and technical solutions (P2)</i>	<i>E. Janssens (KU Leuven)</i>	<i>Thanh Hai Phan</i>		
	<i>Subproject 3</i>	<i>Improving the safety and quality of avocado and durian crops by managing pre-harvest factors (P3)</i>	<i>W. Vanhove (Ghent University)</i>	<i>Thi Thanh Tra Huynh</i>		
	<i>Subproject 4</i>	<i>Research on post-harvest preservation using natural bioactive compounds to improve the value of local fruit (P4)</i>	<i>B. Nicolai (KU Leuven)</i>	<i>Duc An Hoang</i>		
	<i>Subproject 5</i>	<i>Establishing risk assessment and risk management models for the dragon fruit and jujube supply chains (P5)</i>	<i>S. Speelman (Ghent University)</i>	<i>Thi Thanh Phuong Truong</i>		
	<i>Subproject 6</i>	<i>Improving institutional capacity for the internal service delivery of e-services to students, e-learning and library (P6)</i>	<i>P. Lernout (Hasselt University)</i>	<i>Thanh Binh Nguyen</i>		
	<i>Subproject 7</i>	<i>Establishing a sustainable institutional waste management system at Quy Nhon University (P7)</i>	<i>E. Van Mechelen (University College Ghent)</i>	<i>Van Chi Vo</i>		

Ongoing VLIR-UOS projects that will continue in FYP II (List of projects 2022-...)						
Type	Runtime	Title	Flemish promoter	Local promoter	Local institution	Total budget (FYP 2) (€)
TEAM	2019-2022	Impact of saltwater intrusion on water resources and irrigation in the Southern Central region of Vietnam under climate change	T. Hermans (Ghent University)	Ho Huu Hieu	Vietnam Institute of Geosciences and Mineral Resources	46.278
TEAM	2022-2027	Development of plant-based milk beverages with improved functionality for enhancing economic value of Vietnamese crops and healthy lives	Koen Dewettinck (UG)	Dinh Thi Tran	Vietnam National University of Agriculture	279.980,80
TEAM	2022-2027	Levodopa-rich biomass of slime molds and puffballs and their melanins for treatment of Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease	Ann Van Eeckhaut (VUB)	Hanh TM Tran	International University - Vietnam National University HCM City	279.999,50
TEAM	2022-2027	GEOdata infrastructures and citizen SCiences to support REsilient development of rural communities in Quang Nam province (GEOSCIRE)	Matthieu Kervyn (VUB)	Nguyen Quoc Dinh	Vietnam Institute of Geosciences and Mineral Resources	299.981,00
SI	2022-2024	The women's empowerment-sustainable tourism nexus in rural Vietnam	Constanza Parra (KUL)	Huong Hoang	Vietnam National University	69.960,00
SI	2022-2024	Improving the indoor air quality to reduce health risks for susceptible groups in Vietnam.	Christophe Walgraeve (UG)	Nguyen Luong Duc	Hanoi University of Civil Engineering	69.996,03
SI	2022-2024	Capacity building for a sustainable management of mineral resources in the Vietnam	Stijn Dewaele (UG)	Nguyen Quoc Dinh	Vietnam Institute of Geosciences and Mineral Resources	70.000,00
SI	2023-2025	DORA: open Drone data platform for biodiversity mapping to support the sustainable management of forests	H. Luong (UG)	Thi-Lan Le	Hanoi University of Science and Technology	69.861
SI	2023-2025	Promoting inclusive digital transformation for rural households through multimedia solutions	T. Schellens (UG)	Huu Hanh Hoang	Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology	69.999
ITP	2022-2025	A research training programme on Machine Learning for climate change mitigation in buildings	Magd Abdel Wahab (UG)	n/a	n/a	150.000
ITP	2022-2025	Professional training: Sustainable consumption and production: how to measure and move forward?	J. Dewulf (UG)	n/a	n/a	138.532

Abbreviations (type): IUC=Institutional University Cooperation; SI=Short Initiatives; ITP=International Training Programme. Abbreviations (Flemish institutions): KUL= Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; UG=Ghent University; VUB=Vrije Universiteit Brussel, HU=Hasselt University.

Competitive calls for new SI and TEAM projects will be launched and announced on our website. Nationals of Vietnam are eligible<sup>1</sup> to apply for scholarships for the International Master Programmes (ICP) and International Training Programmes (ITP).

<sup>1</sup> Admission requirements, application procedures and selection procedures differ across the programmes and host institutions.

## 2 Vietnam and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

### 2.1 Vietnam and the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in line with the long-term development strategy of Vietnam. Seventeen global SDGs have been nationalized into 115 Vietnam SDG (VSDG) targets in their “[National Action Plan for Implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)” (or SDG NAP), based on Vietnam’s development context and priorities, and building on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, Vietnam has paid particular attention to vulnerable groups such as the poor, people with disabilities, women, children and ethnic minorities through a number of policies aimed at promoting social equality to ensure that no one is left behind.

Since the first VNR in 2018, Viet Nam has experienced a difficult context in progressing towards the SDGs due to the COVID-19 prolonged impacts, increased food and fuel prices, external financial instability, and worsening impacts of natural disasters and climate changes. Despite the challenging context, Viet Nam continued to make strong commitments to the 2030 Agenda that was institutionalized in the National Action Plan. All 17 SDGs have been mainstreamed in socio-economic development strategies, plans, and sectoral policies at national and local levels. The whole political system and society have strived to accomplish the SDGs to Leave No One Behind.

Viet Nam has made remarkable progress towards SDG 1, SDG 6, SDG 9, SDG 10, SDG 16 and SDG 17. Continuing to be on track for SDG 1, the multidimensional poverty rate declined from 9.2% to 4.3% between 2016 - 2022. Important achievements were evident for SDG 6 with 98.3% of households using improved water sources in 2022 (from 93.4% in 2016). Expanded investments in infrastructures, export-oriented industrialization and enabling environment for innovation of enterprises contributed to progress in SDG 9. Continued progress was made for SDG 10 through job creation, expansion of social protection coverage, and enhanced support for vulnerable groups, especially in coping with the COVID-19 negative impacts. Improvements were made for SDG 16, with the rate of population and organizations showing their satisfaction with public services increased from 80.9% to 87.2% between 2017 - 2021. After approximately three decades of global and regional integration, being a pro-active and responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam has secured solid improvements under SDG 17. Viet Nam needs to maintain the pace of progress and achieved attainments of these SDGs.

For the remaining SDGs, Viet Nam has made important progress. SDG 3 continues to be improved with reduction of child mortality and 92.04% of the population having health insurance in 2022. For SDG 4, the rate of transition from primary to lower secondary schools was 99.9% and the percentage of students graduating from lower secondary schools was 98.1% in 2022. Regarding SDG 7, the percentage of households with access to electricity was 99.5% in 2022. Viet Nam stands out for fast recovery from COVID-19 pandemic with the GDP growth rate of 8.02% in 2022 while maintaining a low unemployment rate (SDG 8). The country progressed towards SDG 11 with the percentage of population living in temporary houses declining from 2.6% to 0.9% between 2016 - 2022. Viet Nam continues to advance SDG 13 through the Net Zero commitment that has been integrated into relevant policies.

However, Viet Nam still faces multiple challenges and therefore needs to accelerate the SDG implementation further. In particular, Viet Nam will prioritize addressing malnutrition among ethnic minority children (SDG 2). Extra efforts will be put into improving health and well-being, the expansion of essential healthcare services for all people, especially for vulnerable populations such as the older people and ethnic minorities (SDG 3). Viet Nam will also advance SDG 4 toward equitable access to quality education, especially for vulnerable groups. Combating harmful social norms on gender and gender-biased sex selection will be the key to accelerate SDG 5. Increasing renewable energy and boosting energy efficiency will be the focus for SDG 7. Viet Nam will continue to prioritize inclusive growth, decent jobs, and enhance labour productivity to further progress SDG 8. In addition, Viet Nam will make extra efforts in addressing environmental issues in both urban and rural areas (SDG 11); promoting sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12); mobilizing resources for disaster risk management and climate change mitigation and adaptation (SDG 13); preserving life below water (SDG 14); protecting biodiversity and improving ecosystem services (SDG 15).

To successfully implement the 2030 Agenda in the remaining half-way, Viet Nam will: (1) Prioritize investments in human capital, science and technology, innovation ; upgrade infrastructures to improve productivity, develop a green and circular economy, and build up resilience against natural disasters and climate change; (2) Enhance socialism-oriented market institutions, foster public administration reform and promote the participation of vulnerable groups in decision-making process; (3) Further reform the social protection system to strengthen resilience of communities and support for vulnerable groups; (4) Stabilize macroeconomic fundamentals , continue the COVID-19 recovery support, mobilize and enhance efficient use of financial resources for sustainable development; (5) Improve data availability to enhance the monitoring of SDG progress; (6) Engage all stakeholders and collaborate with all partners to achieve the SDGs for all by 2030 .Moreover, sustainable development principles have been thoroughly mainstreamed into the 2011-2020 Social and Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) and the 2016-2020 Social and Economic Development Plan (SEDP). It is most likely that the SDGs will be fully and further integrated into Vietnam’s 2021-2030 SEDS and [2021-2025 SEDP](#).

Vietnam’s [Voluntary National Review](#) last performed in 2023, thus provides an opportunity to raise SDG awareness and mobilize the participation of different stakeholders including the National Assembly, the Government, the United Nations in Vietnam, Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations, international and local NGOs, the business community, the Higher Education Institutions and other development partners. Taking into account the global aspect of the SDGs, the [Sustainable Development Report](#) of 2021<sup>2</sup> assesses where each country stands with regard to achieving the SDGs. Vietnam ranks 55st out of 166 countries included in the report. The [Vietnam Country Profile](#) shows that the majority of goals is facing major or significant challenges.



<sup>2</sup> Sachs et al. (2021): The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Report 2021. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



Since the first VNR in 2018, Viet Nam has experienced a **difficult context** in progressing towards the SDGs due to the COVID-19 prolonged impacts, increased food and fuel prices, external financial instability, and worsening impacts of natural disasters and climate changes. Despite the challenging context, Viet Nam continued to make **strong commitments** to the 2030 Agenda that was institutionalized in the National Action Plan. All 17 SDGs have been **mainstreamed in socio-economic development** strategies, plans, and sectoral policies at national and local levels. The whole **political system and society** have strived to accomplish the SDGs to **Leave No One Behind**.

As an umbrella organisation that works with calls for proposals, VLIR-UOS supports interventions for and through higher education institutes, supporting them in the areas of education, research and uptake and thereby strengthening them in their role as development actor. Doing so, the impact of the interventions supported by VLIR-UOS can be found in a large variety of sectors. In line with its major intervention area, VLIR-UOS positions itself within the education sector, especially focused on higher education, research and innovation (SDG 4 and 9). However, through its interventions, VLIR-UOS intervenes in different sectors as well. VLIR-UOS recognises that given the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of current societal challenges, meaningful social, economic and ecological transformations can only be realised by starting from a holistic and integrated approach to the SDGs. When translated into SDGs, the projects that were financed by VLIR-UOS in Vietnam covered mainly, apart from SDG 4 and 9, SDGs 2, 3, 12 and 13. Top sectors for VLIR-UOS in this country for the past decade are education, agriculture, aquaculture, environment, food security, health and technology transfer.

More background information and context analysis on Vietnam can be found in the **geographic Joint Strategic Framework** for Vietnam, which will be shared with (potential) project promoters when new calls are launched.

#### **Additional sources on progress related to higher education & science (SDG 4)**

- [UNESCO-UIS](#): overview data resources indicators [related to SDG4](#)
- [Our World in data](#):
  - Indicators related to [educational mobility and inequality](#)
  - Indicators related to [tertiary education](#)
  - Indicators related to [projections of future education](#) (demand)
  - Indicators related to [science](#) and [research](#)
- [Student mobility: UIS-data](#) showing shifting demand for higher education caused by COVID-19

## 2.2 Higher education landscape in Vietnam

Between 1999 and 2009, the number of universities/colleges increased more than twofold (from 153 to 376). By 2009, there were 150 universities, of which 44 (29.3%) were 'non-public'. In the 1999 – 2009, the number of students increased by 143%. This rate was similar for public and non-public universities.

Since late 2004, a series of policy initiatives have been taken with respect to higher education. Chronologically these include the following:

- MoET decision No 38/2004/QD-BGD&DT of 2 December 2004 concerning the adoption of the '*Provisional Higher Education Quality Accreditation Regulation*'. The decision concerns higher education quality issues and implies universities, academies and other types of higher education institutions. It identifies self-assessment and external review as key elements in the quality assurance process.
- Government Resolution 14/2005/NQ-CP of 2 November 2005 on '*Substantial and Comprehensive Renewal of Vietnam's Tertiary Education in the 2006-2020 period*'. Resolution 14 aims to 'substantially and comprehensively renew tertiary education and make substantial changes in education quality, efficiency and scale, thus satisfying the requirements of national industrialization and modernization, international economic integration and people's learning demands. The Resolution refers inter alia to the importance of linking higher education with overall socio-economic development, autonomy of university management and the role of higher education institutions in the renewal of the higher education provision.
- The *Higher Education Reform Agenda 2006-2020* (HERA 2020) approved by the Government in July 2005. The Agenda, amongst others refers to the importance of networking of higher education institutions, expansion of higher education and the advancement of scientific and technological research, including contract research.
- MoET *Regulation on Regular (full-time) training programmes of universities and colleges* (promulgated together with decision No 25/2006/QD-BGD-DT of 26 June 2006). The Regulation refers to curricula, teaching loads and credit system.
- The *Education Law* of 14 June 2006 replacing the Education Law of 2 December 1998. The Law regulates amongst others the credit system to be used in higher education, emphasises the importance of QA and distinguishes different types of institutions and various levels of higher education. The Law furthermore stipulates that higher education institutions have a responsibility for the design of their own programmes, based on the core programmes set by MoET.
- MoET *Regulation on Master-level Education* (promulgated together with decision No 45/2008/QBDGT of 5 August 2008), which sets amongst others the requirements for Master level education in terms of human resources, teaching infrastructure, etc.

Vietnam aims to strive to develop as an upper middle-income country by 2030. The 10-year strategy on socio-economic development (for period 2021-2030) indicates the pathway to transform the economic model to a dynamic, knowledge driven, productivity driven, digital and resilient economy. For this purpose, it is a crucial task to build high quality workforce, and higher education reform is one of vital tasks.

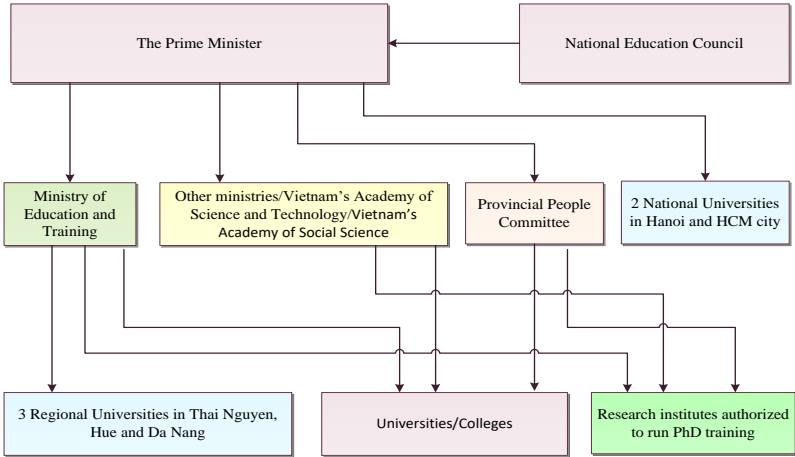
Vietnam’s higher education system has steadily developed<sup>3</sup>. The number of universities has increased rapidly. In 2020, Vietnam has 420 universities, of which there were 175 public ones and 60 private universities and 5 with 100% of foreign investment in the country. Now many of them have developed to be multi-field, multi-disciplinary/comprehensive universities offering Associate/college, Bachelor/university, master’s and PhD programs. Regarding the enrolment, according to the World Bank, of the 6.9 million pupils of post-secondary school age, about 2 million (28.6%) are enrolled in universities and colleges. This rate is quite low compared to the countries in the region.

In terms of management structure, universities in Vietnam can be categorized into three primary types: National universities, regional universities, and normal universities/colleges. Two national universities located in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are directly overseen by the Prime Minister. These national universities oversee various universities, colleges, service delivery institutions, and research institutes.

Meanwhile, three regional universities situated in Thai Nguyen, Hue, and Da Nang cities fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). These regional universities, similar to their national counterparts, encompass a range of universities, colleges, and research institutes.

Normal universities and colleges, on the other hand, may be established by MOET, other ministries, Vietnam's Academies of Science and Technology, or Social Science, or under the authority of provincial People Committees. (See Figure 1. Structure of Higher Education Sector in Vietnam).

Figure 1. Structure of Higher Education Sector in Vietnam



In terms of ownership, the educational landscape in Vietnam encompasses both government-run and privately-owned universities and colleges. Among the private institutions, there are those that are entirely foreign owned, as well as joint ventures involving both foreign and domestic investors, as stipulated in Article 7 of the Law on Higher Education 2012.

In recent years, Vietnam’s universities education system has conducted a number of structural reforms to improve quality on such key areas including: (i) increase of access and equity; (ii) improving of training

<sup>3</sup> Text updated based on final evaluation IUC with Hue University, performed by Dr. Patrick Vanderweyden from the evaluation consortium C\_Lever.

curriculum to meet high requirement of labour market' needs; (iii) improving financial autonomy; and (iv) bettering governance.

As part of the efforts for accelerating the reforms of universities, in 2018, the National Assembly passed the revised Higher Education Law to update the 2012 Law. The updated Law provides clearer legal framework for reform of the university governance setup to be more flexible and to increase of managerial autonomy to the university, especially among the top-tier universities to be able to raise self-finance. As a result, universities have the right to determine their own objectives and select a way to implement its objectives. The revised Law also indicates provisions for improving the budget allocation and efficient usage of resources.

Another initiative from Government is the Prime Minister's Decision issued in 2019 (69/QĐ-TTg), approving a Program on Quality Improvement for Higher Education for 2019–2025. This Decision pronounces the overall strategic directions and the main principles applicable for all universities. In implementing this Decision, universities have been encouraged to:

- Increase the diversification of income sources and make a more efficient use of resources.
- Enhance internationalization and strengthen employer engagement.
- Ensure equity and competition among universities and strengthen quality assurance.

Looking at international rankings like [Webometrics](#), some 72 Vietnamese universities are ranked within the top 10.000 and 7 ( VNU, Ton Duc Thang, Duy Tan, Nguyen Tat Thanh, HUST, VNUHCM University of Technology and University of Econ HCMC) are even ranked in the top 2000.

## 2.3 Leaving no one behind

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community pledged to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. The principle of leaving no one behind can be defined as a three-part imperative: to end absolute poverty in all its forms, to stop group-based discrimination that results in unequal outcomes for disadvantaged populations, and to take action to help the furthest behind.

In the SDG NAP it is stated that, “Attention will be paid to creating enabling conditions for all the people and communities in society to have equal opportunities for development, to access common resources, to participate in, contribute to and benefit from development, and to create a strong, healthy material, intellectual and cultural foundation for future generations. Efforts will be made to leave no one behind and to prioritize those populations who are most difficult to access, including children, women, the elderly, the poor, the handicapped, people in isolated and remote regions and other vulnerable groups.”

In March 2019, the UN Human Rights Committee issued its "concluding observations", making recommendations to Vietnam on how it can strengthen its compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. ([ICCPR](#)).

Vietnam has a GII value of 0.314, ranking it 68 out of 162 countries in the 2018 index, compared to Philippines and Thailand, China and Malaysia are ranked at 98 and 84, 39 and 58 respectively. In Vietnam, 26.7 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, only lower than Lao's 27.5 percent and Philippines' 29.1 percent and higher than the rest of comparator-countries and HDI groups. 66.2 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 77.7 percent of their male counterparts in Viet Nam (UNDP, HDR 2019).

Vietnam shows major differences between multidimensional and income poverty across regions. While having an income poverty headcount higher than that of the South East, the Red River Delta's multidimensional poverty incidence is considerably lower. The multidimensional incidence in the **Central Highlands** is higher than in the **Northern midland and mountain areas**, while its income poverty rate is much lower.

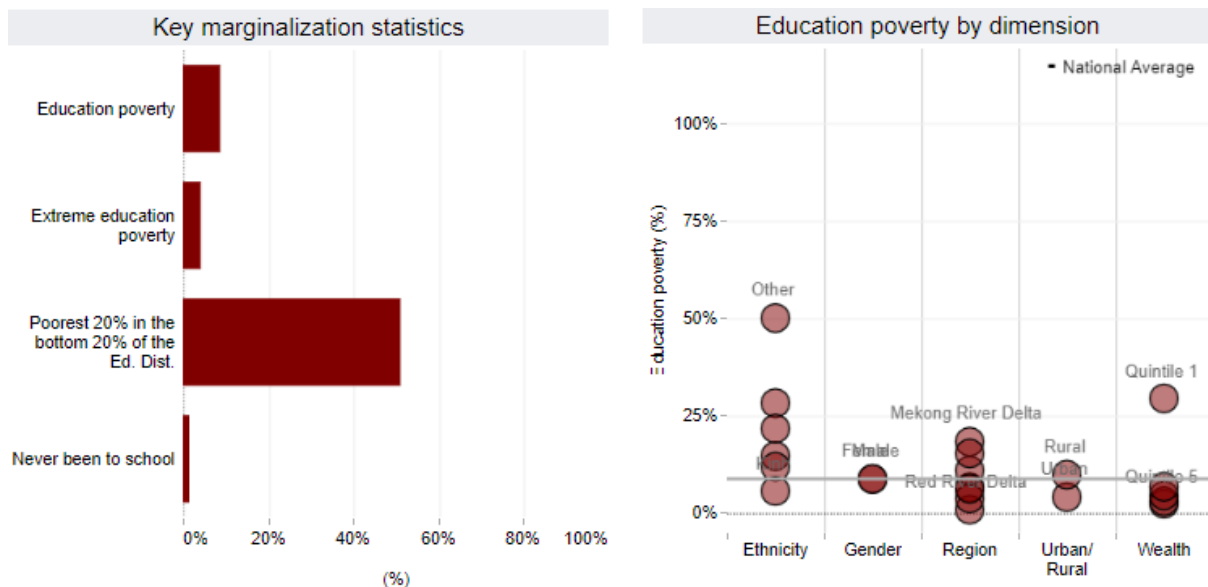
Clear differences in regional income and multidimensional poverty rates reveal deprivations beyond **income**, often rooted in factors like **geography, supply constraints** and **institutional barriers**. Multidimensionally poor population in the Northern midland and mountain areas were more likely to be deprived in aspects of education, health insurance, housing, sanitation, and assets to information access that may be caused by the limited social service provision and access. The Central Highlands region had high levels of deprivation in most of dimensions and income, perhaps due to **geographical, economic, linguistic and cultural barriers**. (UNDP, HDR 2019)

The UNESCO data on [Deprivation and Marginalization in Education](#) (DME)<sup>4</sup> presents the following scheme, showing that challenges remain between the two sexes, between rural and urban, as well as between regions.

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- Education poverty: the proportion of the population with less than 4 years of education
- Extreme education poverty: the proportion with less than 2 years
- Poorest 20% in the bottom 20% of the Ed. Dist.: what proportion of the poorest 20% are also in the bottom 20% of the education distribution
- Never been to school: what proportion of 7-16 year olds have never been to school



#### Additional sources on Leaving No One Behind

- Gender parity index: [school enrolment](#)
- [Global Gender Gap Report 2020](#), including country profiles
- ODI leaving no one behind index: summary [report](#) index 2019; annex [index 2019](#)
- World Inequality Database on Education: [Disparities in higher education attendance](#)
- Danish institute for human rights: [Human rights data explorer](#)

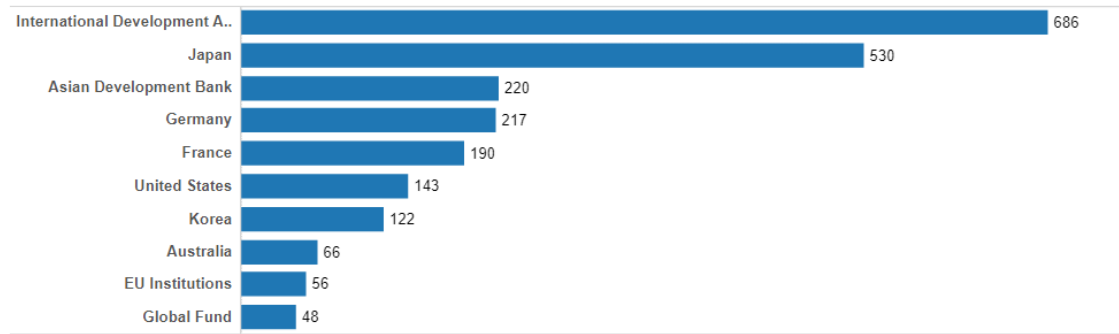
## 2.4 Multistakeholderpartnership - Stakeholder analysis

The complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of the current societal challenges that the SDG framework is seeking to address, requires a concerted effort of a wide variety of different stakeholders. As such, the principle of multistakeholderpartnership – which promotes cooperation and partnerships at different stages and spanning the boundaries of civil society, private sector, government, and academia – is ubiquitous across the 2030 Agenda. An analysis of these stakeholders is essential for each partnership.

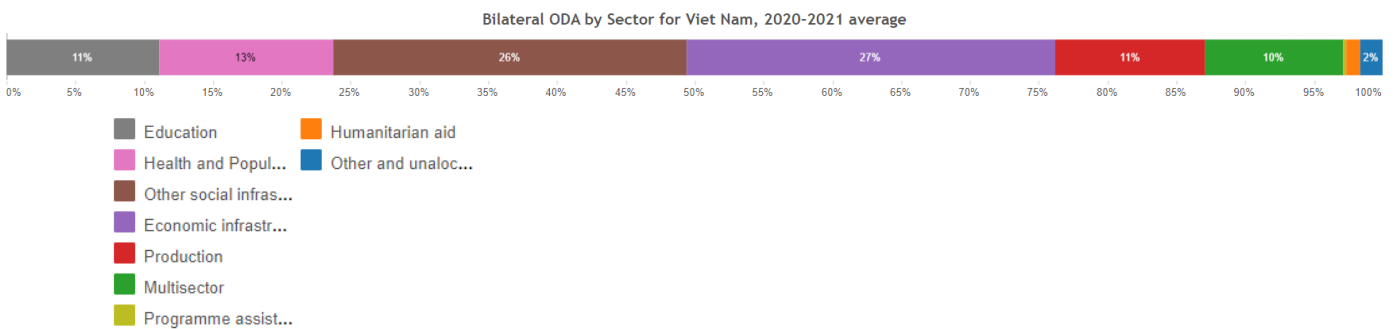
The Government of Vietnam has created an enabling legal environment and encouraged foreign and domestic private sectors to invest and do business in line with sustainable development principles. Accordingly, the Vietnam Business Council for Sustainable Development is an initiative aimed at enhancing connections within the business community to enable them to share and spread good practices, as well as to play an important role in realizing the SDGs.

When looking at OECD's gross official development aid (ODA), IDA is the biggest donor, followed closely by Japan and ADB.

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Viet Nam, 2020-2021 average, USD million

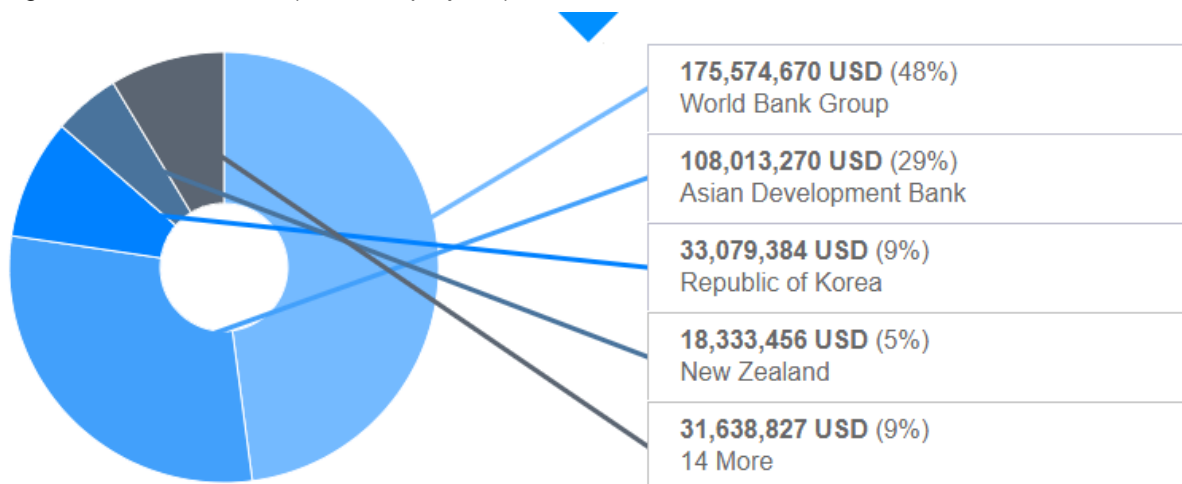


Most of the support goes to other social infrastructure and services followed by education and multisector.



Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm>

Data from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), shows that it is mainly the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank and USAID and New Zealand that are investing in Vietnam's Higher Education sector (full list of projects).



Source: [http://d-portal.org/ctrack.html?country\\_code=RW&sector\\_code=11420#view=main](http://d-portal.org/ctrack.html?country_code=RW&sector_code=11420#view=main)

VLIR-UOS contributes to the 2030 agenda by realizing a societal impact, implying an impact on local communities, civil society, governments, private sector or other higher education institutions. In what follows we list the role and the desired change among the main actors involved in the change process that VLIR-UOS envisages to support through *its interventions*.

Actor	Role and interest/influence
<b>Higher Education Institutions in Vietnam</b>	HEIs in Vietnam are important boundary partners in the realization of VLIR-UOS outcomes in terms of its contribution to Agenda 2030, and the potential contribution to local sustainable development. As project owners they are expected to contribute to HEIs' enhanced institutional performance in the core tasks relating to education, research and societal service delivery strengthening the HEI's visibility and recognition as a centre of excellence. In the long-term, partner HEIs are also expected to have a multiplier effect on the higher education system and development sector in the country or region through their engagement in (global) knowledge-driven partnerships with academic and non-academic stakeholders.
<b>Belgian embassy</b>	The Belgian Embassy can play a role in facilitating the uptake of knowledge, the identification, mobilisation and relation building with other stakeholders (e.g. links with European Union, national government, other donors), the contextual updates etc.
<b>Belgian bilateral cooperation (BIO &amp; Enabel)</b>	VLIR-UOS will regularly exchange with Enabel and BIO to identify and communicate opportunities for synergy and complementarity with academic projects of the partner HEIs (e.g. through country reference frameworks, JSF platform). In the case of Vietnam however bilateral cooperation and Enabel activities are already outphased but quite some important bilateral contacts remain and potential links with BIO can be further investigated.
<b>Students, professionals, and alumni</b>	<b>Students</b> can be direct (e.g. as a recipient of a PhD scholarship within a project) or indirect beneficiaries (e.g. enjoying improved/innovative didactical approaches) of the projects. As direct beneficiary, their changed role will be about the generation and use of newly acquired knowledge, competences (e.g. global citizenship) and networks in view of sustainable development. Alumni from VLIR-UOS-projects in Vietnam will be important stakeholders in connecting VLIR-UOS projects with each other, with other actors, etc.
<b>Academics/researchers</b>	As direct beneficiaries of the projects, academics and researchers affiliated within Flemish and partner HE&SIs play an important role in co-creating, disseminating and creating conditions for uptake of knowledge relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in line with the needs, policies and priorities of the partner HE&SIs, local/national or regional stakeholders.
<b>Members of the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development</b>	VLIR-UOS, ITM and ARES have initiated the JSF on HESD4SD to further unlock the developmental potential of higher education and science cooperation for sustainable development and make it accessible to other local, Belgian and international partners as scientific advisor to other partners' projects, partners or policy bodies, as a platform for sharing state of the art scientific results, information, expertise and experience and for exploration of possibilities for synergy and complementarity. In Vietnam all 3 actors are present.
<b>Belgian Actors of the Non-governmental Cooperation</b>	VLIR-UOS continuously tries to identify and encourage synergy and complementarity between Belgian ANGCS and academic stakeholders.



	Through the uptake of research results, mobilisation of local stakeholders, participation in trainings or courses, identification and communication of relevant research questions/opportunities, hosting of international internships, facilitating student mobility... these actors play a critical role.
<b>International organizations and other donors (e.g. WHO, UNESCO, World Bank, European Commission...)</b>	Interventions undertaken by international organisations like UN agencies such as FAO or international donors active in higher education co-operation can be complementary in the achievement of the objectives of projects. They can, for instance, play a role in the use and upscaling of new knowledge or practices or serve as seed money for bigger interventions financed by these international organisations.
<b>Academic/science (inter)national and regional networks</b>	Regional or (inter)national academic/science networks (e.g. ASEAN) are among the potential indirect beneficiary as targeted HE&SIs strengthened in their research/educational capacities can improve the functioning of the networks they are part of through the co-creation, exchange and uptake of knowledge among academic stakeholders. Similar effects can be realized in the case of alumni and scholarship networks/associations when former scholarship students act as agents of change within these networks.
<b>Public sector: Local or central government and political community</b>	Engage in evidence-based governance that puts knowledge to the test by being a stakeholder in the co-creation of inclusive (innovative) solutions and effective user of research results to foster good governance for sustainable and coherent policies.
<b>Private sector</b>	Individuals and companies who operate for profit and which are not controlled by the state can play a role within projects as users of the knowledge, applications and services (co-)created as result of the project and therefore contribute in particular but not only to SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure.
<b>Civil society, social movements and local communities</b>	Civil society actors, social movements and local communities are expected to co-create, access and use the knowledge and research products generated within the framework of <i>projects</i> thereby making a potential contribution to the entire range of SDGs.

## 3 Synergy and Complementarity with other (Belgian) development actors in Vietnam

### 3.1 VLIR-UOS approaches to synergy and complementarity

Drawing upon their longstanding common history, VLIR-UOS, ARES and the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) jointly developed the thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development (JSF HES4SD). Through cooperation with civil society, private and public sector, the JSF initiators<sup>5</sup> aim to further unlock the huge developmental potential of higher education and science cooperation for sustainable development and make it accessible to other Belgian, local and international partners, in different ways: as partner in a multi-actor partnership, as scientific advisor to other partners' projects, partners or policy bodies, as a knowledge broker for sharing state of the art scientific results, information, expertise and experience and for exploration of possibilities for synergy and complementarity. This reference framework for Vietnam will feed into the **platform** that the initiators of the JSF HES4SD plan to create to proactively communicate opportunities and facilitate such cooperation. More precisely, the platform can be used to:

- (i) communicate about the launch and results of competitive calls for projects;
- (ii) communicate other opportunities for projects or scholarships;
- (iii) gather/exchange on collaboration opportunities (e.g. requests for scientific advice);
- (iv) share information about ongoing projects, events and seminars in the country/region.

### 3.2 Bilateral development cooperation (Enabel) in Vietnam

Since June 2019, bilateral cooperation with Vietnam was discontinued.

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<sup>5</sup> The three JSF initiators represent 60 Belgian higher education institutions (HEIs), being 11 universities, 32 university colleges, 16 school of arts, and ITM.

### 3.3 Belgian actors of the non-governmental cooperation in Vietnam

#### 3.3.1 Thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science

	Belgian HE&SI	Partner HE&SI	Topic/ thematic focus	Contact person
ARES	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Vietnam National University of Agriculture	Vietnam National University of Agriculture - Appui institutionnel 2022-2027	Simon Hemptinne
	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Vietnam Academy of Agriculture Sciences (VAAS)	ViAE: Improving livelihoods in Vietnam through agro-ecological innovations for sustainable banana Fusarium disease management in family farming	
	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Ho Chi Minh City (UMP)	Advancing of Physiotherapy Education and Services in Vietnam	
	Université de Mons (UMONS)	Institut de technologie tropicale (ITT - VAST)	Renforcement de l'expertise environnementale du centre de compétences en protection contre la corrosion et en électrochimie	
	Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	Université Pham Ngoc Thach	Building strategies for prevention and management of Helicobacter Pylori infection in children	
	Université de Liège (ULiège)	University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City	Innovation dans le contrôle des maladies combiné à la gestion et valorisation des déchets de la culture du fruit du dragon.	
	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Can Tho University	PANGAGEN: Towards a sustainable pangasius breeding, a selection approach.	
	Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	"Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR)	Foodborne zoonotic trematode infections and integrated control in vietnam (foodtinc)	

	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Vietnam National University	Exploring the Medical, (ECO)-Toxicological and Socio-Economic Potential of Natural Extracts in North Vietnam.	
	Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	Hôpital Nhi Dong 2 - Grall	Actions multidisciplinaires pour contrôler et réduire les maladies respiratoires chroniques au Vietnam.	
<b>ITM</b>	ITM	National Institute of Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology (NIMPE)	Institutional Capacity Strengthening (ICS 2022 – 2026) - Focus is on support to malaria control and emerging food- and waterborne parasitic diseases	Eline Kattenberg

### 3.3.2 Vietnam Joint Strategic Framework

Description of the strategic goal		ANGCs
<b>SG1</b>	Contribute to advancing gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls as full members of the society in all parts of Vietnam.	Plan VVOB Rikolto
<b>SG2</b>	Contribute to inclusive and equitable education and improving learning outcomes of all children, in particular children growing up in remote, disadvantaged districts.	Plan VVOB
<b>SG3</b>	Contribute to an enabling environment and improved skills of young women and farmers to be economically empowered and more resilient based on sustainable practices	Plan Rikolto

ANGC	JSF – Strategic goals	Approaches	Local partners	Geographic region	Contact person
<b>Plan International</b>	SG1	Improving the agency of adolescent girls from ethnic minorities for them to thrive in an enabling and protective environment and live free from violence, supported by their parents and communities.	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 Plan International		Dai Luu Quang Ineke Adriaens
	SG2	Strengthening basic and life skills of adolescent girls and boys from ethnic minorities to support them to learn in an enabling, gender equal and protective school environment, supported by the school staff.			

	SG3	Strengthening employability and entrepreneurship skills of adolescent girls and young women from ethnic minorities to enable them to access decent job opportunities or start their own business.		
RIKOLTO	SG1	Awareness raising and training to strengthen women's role in the agriculture sector, including women empowerment at household level, local market and negotiating power.	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 RIKOLTO	Mi Lan Hoang
	SG3	Strengthening farmer organisations' leadership and capacity so that they become more professional, adopt diversification of production and sustainable agriculture practices and become more resilient.		
		<p><i>Facilitating the development of an inclusive business environment for smallholder farmers to create decent profits and jobs for all actors along the value chain, especially for smallholder farmers both men, women and youth and preserving the environment for future generation through reduce water consumption, greenhouse gas emission and promote close-loop production.</i></p> <p><i>Facilitate multi-stakeholder initiative to influence public and private sector policies that favour a sustainable and inclusive agri-food sector, increase efficiency and make sustainable quality products available, acceptable and affordable to mainstream consumers.</i></p>		
VVOB	SG1	Capacity development for Pre-school teachers and their principles in ethnically diverse districts to acquire the pedagogical skills to apply the principles of gender-responsive play-based teaching and learning.	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 VVOB	Silvija Pozenel
	SG2	<p>Building school leadership capacities to create enabling environments for teachers to develop competences for teaching in diverse and adverse contexts.</p> <p>Building teacher capacities to diversify language practices in preschools as core elements of learning readiness of children, guaranteeing that children from ethnic minority groups get equal opportunities throughout their school career.</p>		

### 3.3.3 Other Thematic Joint Strategic Frameworks

ANGC	JSF	Approaches	Local partners	Contact person
RIKOLTO	Sustainable cities	<p>Co-constructing and implementing the local sustainable policy with local actors</p> <p>The capacities of local actors to shape the sustainable city have been strengthened</p> <p>Local economic actors adopt inclusive procurement practices that stimulate sustainable consumption and production</p>	<p>Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARDs);</p> <p>Management Board of selected markets (MBs);</p> <p>Association of Food Transparency (AFT);</p> <p>Center for Rural Economic Development (CRED);</p> <p>Hanoi University of Technology (HUST);</p> <p>Organic Agriculture Association (OAA) Vietnam;</p> <p>Center for Social Initiative Promotion (CSIP);</p> <p>Cooperative Alliance (VCA);</p>	Mi Lan Hoang

			National Institute of Nutrition (NIN)	
<b>CEBioS</b>	Resilience	Dealing with the risks resulting from climate change and environmental disasters as well as increasing the awareness on what triggers climate change and how individuals and institutions can avoid contributing to the accelerating climate crisis is transversal in all the geographical approaches. The expertise from the local partners and CEBioS on these issues and the link to biodiversity forms a good field for possible joint learning. This would also build on the successful joint learning within the 2017-2021 JSF Vietnam on green office and implementation of programmes.	Ministry of Environment, IEBR, VNMN, IMER	Luc Janssens de Bisthoven
<b>Oxfam</b>	Decent Work	Decent Work and Socio-Economic Justice for women workers in the food system: 1.Guaranteeing rights at work, 2.Extending social protection, 3.Promoting social dialogue.	Trade union (collaborator); Formal and Informal workers' associations in food sector; NGOs; Research institutes	Huong Nguyen Thu