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VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND LEARNING FOR LOW-EMISSION DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Building Blocks for local climate action: Potentials of vertical integration

Climate action starts with dialogue

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1. Introduction

Currently, a vast number of countries expand their efforts to respond to climate change. After the adoption of the first ever universal and legally binding climate agreement at the UN climate conference in Paris and the emphasis on climate action at the succeeding climate conference in Marrakesh, fundamental questions for policy makers, practitioners and researchers arise: How can global and national climate commitments be translated into tangible action at the local level and how can climate policies and actions be coordinated across multiple levels of governance, from local to national?

Researchers and policy makers have highlighted the need to fill the evidence gap on effective climate coordination mechanisms especially in countries of the Global South. In this paper, we argue that local actors play a key role in climate change response and that multi-level governance is a prerequisite for effective local action. The untapped potential of local action to achieve the goals of the international climate agreements calls for a deeper understanding of 1) processes stimulating and facilitating local action and 2) means and strategies that increase effective coordination among actors and between the relevant levels of governance.

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This discussion paper shares preliminary insights on strengthening effective vertical and horizontal policy coordination and is based on experiences from the project "Vertical integration and learning for low-emission development in Africa and Southeast Asia" (V-LED). The project aims to strengthen processes of multi-level climate governance in four countries with different political systems: communist Vietnam, post-apartheid South Africa, devolved Kenya and disaster-prone Philippines. The key feature of the project is its "dialogic approach", bringing the relevant stakeholders together and providing space for exchange on equal footing. Through the promotion of vertical coordination and horizontal exchanges the project follows the assumption that one can increase the potential to stimulate climate action through designed dialogues.

Throughout the project we document and analyse the national multi-level climate governance systems in the four countries and seek to understand how dialogue platforms influence coordination mechanisms. Thereby, we try to identify types of coordination between national and subnational actors which enable climate action at the local level.

In the following, we present five statements derived from our preliminary findings on multi-level governance for climate action. The paper's main objective is to share and reflect upon the practical experiences we have been drawing from the first two years of implementing the V-LED project. In section 2 we briefly introduce the approach of the project, its perspective on climate and multi-level governance. In section 3, we discuss the five statements by drawing on selected cases and conclude in section 4.

2. The V-LED approach

The V-LED project builds capacities to stimulate vertically integrated climate action. It facilitates dialogue between national institutions, municipal authorities and communities, and enables knowledge sharing and learning among local governments. The project, running from 2015 until 2019, is financed by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB). It is implemented by a consortium adelphi – a Berlin based think tank – as the overall consortium lead and implementing partners in the four countries (Sustainable Energy Africa and One-World in South Africa, the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance in Kenya and UN-Habitat in Vietnam and the Philippines). V-LED is implemented in Kenya, Philippines, South Africa and Vietnam. These countries represent a variety of characteristics in terms of their political history and systems, their climate change impacts and their responses to climate change. This allows us to explore and compare ways to strengthen multi-level climate governance in four very different contexts.

The central theme of the V-LED project is to promote a dialogic approach to vertical coordination and horizontal exchanges to stimulate climate action. This dialogic approach rests on a simple premise: as the basis of coordination, dialogue opens up potential for collective climate action. If you convene people and allow them to constructively spend time together, to listen to and interact with each other in a meaningful way, dialogue can help build trust, coordinate efforts, initiate learning, inspire innovation and generate a sense of ownership of solutions (Hemmati, M. and F. Rogers, 2015). Like this, inclusive dialogues can produce better coordination and more comprehensive strategies capable of addressing the collective climate challenge.

Through a series of events, the V-LED project brings together concerned representatives of various levels of governance, facilitating discussions on specific topics that require intense coordination (e.g. integration of climate mitigation measures into urban development planning). Selected project activities include:

Vertical climate dialogues:

- Initiating informal dialogue events among national, provincial and municipal spheres to support information flows and vertical policy integration. Taking up tangible themes including renewable energy and energy efficiency, waste disposal, and city planning.
- Fostering the potential of subnational actors to contribute to national emission reduction targets.

Capacity development package:

- Strengthening planning and implementing capacities of subnational governments through a country-specific climate mainstreaming manual and training series.

Horizontal good practice exchange:

- Strengthening planning and implementing capacities, while mobilising subnational governments through a good practice exchange series.
- Foster peer-to-peer learning on low emission development.

Applied research:

- Investigating types of coordination between national and subnational actors to enable local climate action and low emission development.
- Identifying factors related to coordination and beyond, that support local climate action.

Each event creates a platform to discuss on equal footing. The design of the activities is tailored to the specific capacities of the participants and follows an interactive format to foster an exchange between participants. Central to the V-LED approach is to build on existing efforts and give credit to achievements. As we are aware that political stakeholders are frequently burdened with an ever-growing number of instruments and policy tools, we rather push for the consolidation and institutionalization of existing tools. This includes taking up activities, existing tools and mechanisms which have proven to be successful. We consciously avoid the replication of existing efforts.

The dialogic approach builds on adelphi's experience from the German National Climate Initiative (NKI), in particular the NKI-Project "Climate dialogue" (KSD) and its good practice series. As the German KSD program has shown, promoting fruitful dialogues and transformative learning among a variety of actors can be successful and can result in unexpected positive outcomes.

Measuring the effects of such dialogues has been a challenge as outcome variables are rather intangible and difficult to quantify. Additionally, positive effects will materialize only in the long term and may not be observed within the project duration. The empirical basis for our research involves a range of qualitative methods, policy and institutional analyses and takes the results and observations gathered throughout the implementation of the project activities into account.

In the following, we briefly explain two key definitions and concepts of the V-LED project: multi-level governance and the climate governance grid (lock).

Multi-level governance

We understand multi-level governance as the synergistic "interplay" between different levels of government (national, regional, local) and civil society organizations that define, shape and implement policies into actions. This interplay can take numerous forms (e.g. top-down, bottom-up, or hybrid institutional arrangements), and is carried by a diverse number of mechanisms (e.g. tools, frameworks).

Currently, many countries are facing coordination gaps, evident in difficulties of "localizing" national climate targets, as well as difficulties for bottom-up integration of local climate initiatives into national frameworks. Most prominently these include: gaps between objectives, levels of information and capacities, accountability, and access to funding. Different government levels suffer from conflicting or overlapping mandates and multiple climate instruments, plans and reporting demands. Effective multi-level governance supports relevant stakeholders to close these gaps.

The climate governance grid (lock)

For effective responses to climate change, national governments have to consider low emission development, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction simultaneously, while at the same time ensuring the social and economic wellbeing of people concerned. This means that at least three distinct professional communities are involved. These do not sufficiently interact with each other – but are being officially called to do so since the 5th assessment report of the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Somanathan E. et al., 2014).

Because of the multi-sectoral nature of climate change, mainstreaming is widely advocated as an important approach to managing climate change effects. This means that climate action needs to be coordinated horizontally across policy sectors or departments. At the same time, national climate policies need to be translated into tangible activities at the local level. Thus, climate action has also to be coordinated vertically at different hierarchical administrative levels.

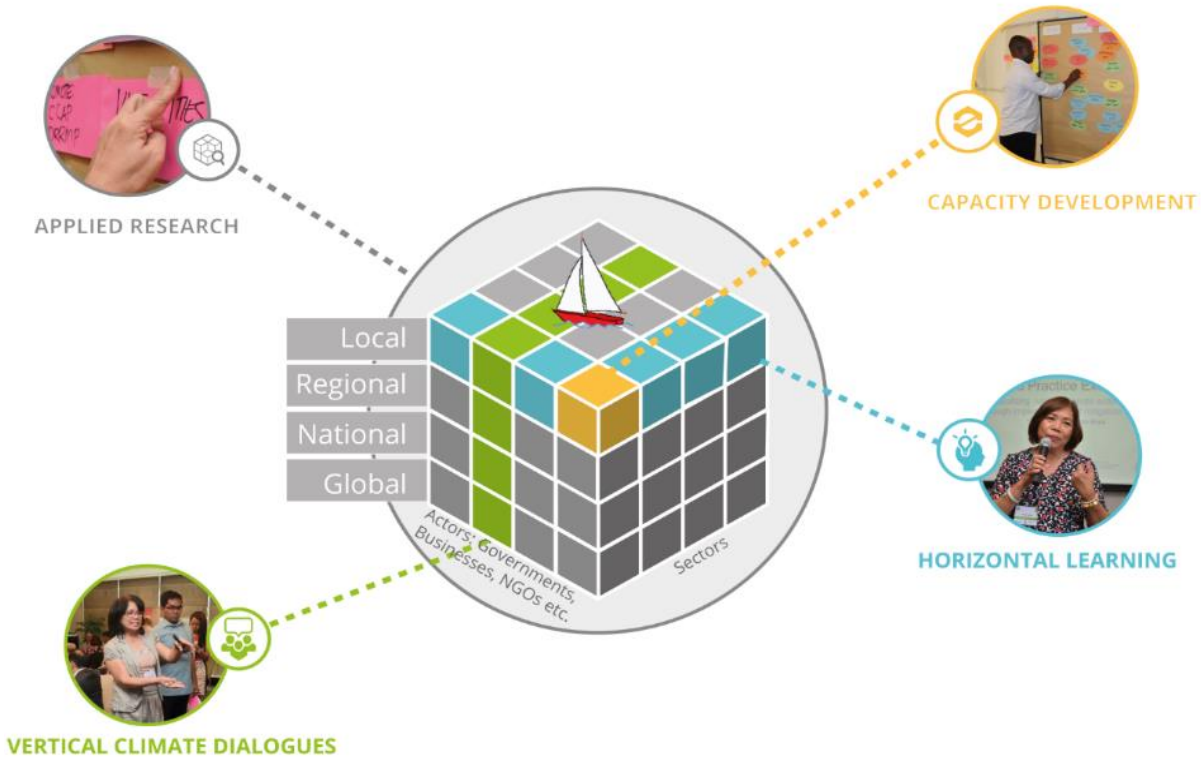

Fig.1: climate governance grid and V-LED activities, based on Jänicke (2008)

Overall, climate change governance can be seen as a complex, multilevel grid that we need to "navigate" in order to find effective solutions to respond to climate change (Fig. 1). This grid is populated by different disciplines that work according to different timeframes and use different processes and tools. The activities described above seek to cover the different faces of the grid.

However, in the end, addressing climate change is ultimately a local-scale affair. Countries need to craft relevant policies and the municipal level has to translate these into concrete adaptation and mitigation actions. How can we leverage the potential of subnational actors and how can effective multilevel governance coordination foster climate action? In the following section we give preliminary answers to this question by discussing five statements of horizontal and vertical coordination within this governance grid.

3. Strengthening vertical and horizontal coordination

The analysis of observations and data we collected during the V-LED events reveal underlying factors that stimulate or prevent local climate action. Using the dialogic approach of the V-LED project as a starting point of our analysis we focus here on those factors that hold the potential to increase effective coordination among relevant actors. In the following, we present a sequence of preliminary statements illustrated with examples from the different V-LED countries.

Statement I: Bridging missing coordination mechanisms gives crucial impulses for vertical coordination.

Local governments are key actors in implementing practical climate solutions. In the attempt to take on their responsibility, they need supporting structures at other government levels. In all four V-LED countries, cross-sectoral institutions have been constituted at the highest level of government. These institutions set up climate change strategies, action plans and programmes and coordinate their implementation. However, very few countries have to date been

able to establish dynamic coordination mechanisms between the national and subnational levels to support local climate action. Institutionalized mechanisms to ensure effective coordination between relevant stakeholders are often missing or insufficient.

Providing such mechanisms can bridge existing coordination gaps on a temporary basis. Through mechanisms, such as vertical dialogues or good practice exchanges, stakeholders create a common understanding of existing coordination gaps and are able to experience the advantages of effective coordination. This provides an impulse to (1) gain a common understanding of the importance of intersectoral and national-to-local coordination and (2) jointly leverage the creation of institutionalized mechanisms.

In the Philippines the Climate Change Commission (CCC) is the lead policy-making body for climate change responses. Its main tasks include monitoring, evaluating and coordinating climate change-related programmes and action plans. As coordinating body, the CCC supports Local Government Units (LGUs), which are, according to the Climate Change Act (2009) "at the forefront of responding to climate change", in the implementation of climate planning and action at the local level.

Experiences from the V-LED project have identified a missing mechanism that facilitates direct communication between the local level and the CCC. Throughout the year 2016, the V-LED project supported the CCC to fill this gap by organising vertical climate dialogues with relevant national agencies, representatives of regional and local networks and LGUs. The dialogue events provided an important platform for actors of different government levels to meet and discuss about common themes ranging from implementing the INDCs in the waste sector, urban resilience and local climate action. Through engaging in this space of multi-level dialogue, the CCC acknowledged the importance of such a 'vertical' communication mechanism. As a member of the CCC pointed out, there is now more awareness about the opportunities and challenges for climate action at the local level. Only through the dialogues did the CCC become aware of the many overlapping reporting and planning requirements that LGUs have to comply with, indeed, it transpired to them that local governments already have to comply with up to 30 nationally derived plans and reporting processes. By the end of 2016, the CCC thanked V-LED for having established vertical dialogue platforms for them and other national actors to interact with LGUs.

In South Africa the Local Government Climate Change Support Program (LGCCS), an initiative of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), developed the Let's Respond toolkit in early 2012. The different departments started coordinating the rollout of the training in 2015. A range of political partners and other stakeholders were involved in the process, including the implementing partner of the V-LED project, Sustainable Energy Africa, who was the main actor developing the toolkit. Bringing these stakeholder "back" together in the frame of the V-LED project provided an opportunity for political partners on national level to support the trainings. By now, V-LED is the key platform to execute the capacity development for the municipal level surrounding the Let's Respond Toolkit. With this it provides a mechanism for DEA to meet the performance indicators of the department regarding the support of a certain number of municipalities. Collaboration between national (DEA) and subnational (SALGA) actors was strengthened through their active involvement in conceptualizing and facilitating the pilot training, making the trainings a vehicle for vertical coordination (see below). Alongside the work of the training, actors involved now push for an institutionalization. V-LED is currently supporting the connection to the University of Johannesburg to facilitate the certification of the course pushing for an institutionalization of the training.

Statement II: Climate action policies require the voice of cities in national strategy setting.

Climate change response needs coherence between the work of the different line ministries. Competition about funding, divergence of objectives, and insufficient horizontal coordination processes are challenges.

However, in many countries, governments have put in place a robust climate governance architecture with cross-sectoral, high-level ministerial committees responsible for mainstreaming climate change into key sectors. This means that at national level horizontal mechanisms making climate change a policy concern of (various) sectoral line ministries do exist.

Climate governance is highly dynamic, illustrated through the number of new regulations in the past years. This results in an increase of planning, implementing and reporting requirements for the subnational level. In order to provide climate policies for action at the local level, national policy makers have to understand the realities of the local level. This is often not the case: Different ministries cascade their own policies, action plans, guidelines and reporting requirements down to the local level. Each line ministry might have a climate related programme, for example climate-smart agriculture, REDD+, biomass energy, urban resilience, energy efficiency in the building sector, which needs to be implemented at the local level. Sometimes, not aware that another line ministry also implements a plan related to climate change. The local level, on the other hand, has to respond to these national requirements often without having been consulted first. It is hence crucial to feed the local requirements into existing horizontal mechanisms at national level. Therefore, a vertical mechanism is important to bring the local view into the channels of the existing national climate governance architecture, e.g. through the connection between the climate change commission and institutions representing the voice of municipalities. Such connection can be used as an anchor point to feed the local perspective into national decision making processes. Ensuring the message is carried further through existing horizontal mechanism at national level is a second step.

Through this, decision makers across various sectors at the national level are provided with knowledge about local requirements and capacities and enabled to come up with meaningful and realistic policies. Local voices need to be heard in national climate mainstreaming processes to (1) create an enabling environment for local climate action and (2) concretize intersectoral coordination on national level.

In the Philippines, there are several national agencies (the CCC, the Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Local Government Academy (LGA)) that need to agree on which tools are provided to LGUs. Comparing existing tools (the HLURB's supplemental guidelines to mainstream DRR-CCA, that focus on climate and disaster risk assessments and LGA's guidebook on formulating the LCCAP) shows diverging methods that need to be harmonized. At the same time, policy guidance for mitigation actions at the local level is missing.

In general, on top of possible inconsistencies in guidelines and tools provided by national agencies, climate change planning at the local level is competing with other planning priorities. By giving local governments a voice in climate planning processes at the national level, tools and guidelines would reflect local governments' needs and be more applicable in practice.

Statement III: Climate managers are drivers of coordination.

Responsibilities and tasks at the subnational level increases. Requirements for local departments to report, to develop strategies and plans and to implement measures are growing in number and with this the need to coordinate these efforts across departments and with other levels of governance.

Governments have to tackle the growing need and complexity to integrate climate change response into municipal structures of governance. One strategy is the establishment of a coordinating body within the municipal structure. This has been emphasized by various initiatives in the past years. It can be thought of as a coordinating climate change office or an integrated climate manager. We can draw from the example of the climate managers in Germany to illustrate this more concretely.

In the past years, many municipalities in Germany have created the position of a climate manager, partly supported through the National

Climate Initiative (NKI). Climate managers initiate and coordinate climate protection activities. The climate manager is responsible to take up targets and ideas and channel them into actual projects and measures. This includes the gathering of relevant data, cooperation with relevant stakeholders inside and outside municipal agencies, public relations work and a lot more. Beside technical knowledge, this position requires networking, communication skills and experience in administrative procedures and structures. The position of the climate manager within the municipal administrative structure can vary (e.g. directly responding to the mayor or as part of the environmental department etc.). According to the assertion of various climate managers, the positioning and hence the access to decision-makers greatly determines the coordination impact. Depending on the scope of the job assignment, the climate manager coordinates activities with relevant departments. A climate manager is able to harmonize the work of different departments in a considerable way.

As the example from Germany has illustrated, climate managers can be drivers of coordination. However, these positions are new in Germany and in many federal states impermanent. During various V-LED workshops in the Philippines, representatives of LGUs emphasized that the position of the Environmental and Natural Resource Officer (ENRO) is the only position designated to deal with climate action on top of being responsible for the LGU's environmental and resource governance affairs. Not all LGUs create the position for an ENRO as it is not yet mandatory, or those designated as ENROs are permanent employees who have other responsibilities to which the ENRO function is added-on.

Scaling up climate action necessarily means investing in the human resources, at subnational level, to take on the momentous effort necessary for our global ambition.

Statement IV: Capacity development has to touch upon technical knowledge, soft skills and knowledge about climate governance processes to be effective.

Key challenges for effectively responding to climate change, often highlighted in the V-LED countries and echoed in the literature, concern technology transfer and technical capacity building for local actors. Various training measures and other instruments aim to ensure relevant municipal staff is enabled to take up the emerging tasks. The transfer of technical knowledge is an important part of local capacity development measures. Nevertheless, this does not provide the full scope of skills needed. In many countries specific documents guide subnational actors on the "what" of planning and implementing climate change projects. Although contents are important, the "how" to implement is equally important. The "how" includes an increased understanding of the overall political climate governance process and the corresponding roles and functions of different government levels. Additionally, the implementation of climate responses often requires effective coordination between institutions and stakeholders. Therefore, capacity building measures need to take into account soft skills such as communication, process management and dialogue creation.

Kenya provides an illustrative example of the first point: the country has embarked on one of the fastest devolution processes in the world. Following the endorsement of the new constitution in 2010, elections in 2013 created 47 new county governments. Several sectors and functions – previously under the jurisdiction of the national government – have been devolved to the new county governments. Climate Change is being mainstreamed in different sectoral plans as well as in the national development strategy (Vision 2030), the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS) and Action Plan (NCCAP) and the Green Economy Strategy And Implementation Plan (GESIP) and some elements on climate justice, rights and participation are anchored in the constitution. How does this architecture affect county level planning and reporting? As the process of devolution is still ongoing, clarity on the repercussions of certain national functions on subnational climate vulnerability still need to be framed and communicated. The county representatives have a challenging task to negotiate their own mandates and functions in planning and implementing climate actions and the implementation of the new Climate Change Act

(2016), Policy and Budget. Counties have a stake and need to actively participate in national climate change discussions through different platforms of vertical dialogues on their role in the new climate finance landscape and the new climate change governance architecture.

Through the trainings in South Africa we experienced close coordination between national and subnational institutions. The training was aiming at strengthening the capacity of municipalities in integrating climate change into local development plans. The roll-out of trainings required the coordination between national departments and municipalities. Three key actors came into play: At national level the Department for Environmental Affairs (DEA), heading the country's climate policy and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), which traditionally holds the mandate to deal with city development issues. Representing the key actor at the subnational level, SALGA, the South African Local Government Association, worked as a bridge between the municipalities and national institutions. In this case the quality of the conceptualization and facilitation of the trainings, and thus the success of the training was mainly build on the intense cooperation between SALGA and DEA. At both institutions the relevant staff (1) are equipped with excellent communication skills, entering a transparent and confident dialogue and (2) are familiar with structures and objectives of the counterpart they engage with. SALGA interfaces with national agencies throughout their work providing guidance in both directions. The staff member who mainly carried out the training is also constantly connecting to municipalities. She is one of the main contact points for all environmental and climate support that the South African Local Government Association provides its members (the 257 municipalities). The DEA staff member, being the deputy for climate change adaptation, used to work in a municipality for a long stretch of her professional career. As a result, their shared perspectives and common ownership on the activity, paired with being on the same wavelength, provided a smooth facilitation of the training and strengthened the connection between DEA and SALGA. The combination of these persons jointly making the training happen, is an example of how the human factor can increase the effectiveness of coordination.

Statement V: Joint work on concrete products or themes enhances effective coordination.

Multi-level governance can be strengthened by convening dialogue around a practical theme or process. Working on a theme that is relevant for various sectors supports the identification of common goals and increases ownership. Finding the right balance in identifying the scope of a theme is challenging. To allow discussing it in a diverse group on the one hand and framing it concrete enough to allow for direct linkages towards the work of individual agencies is crucial. Observations show that working jointly on a common product can foster the coordination between stakeholders in the long run. This can be in the form of a strategic plan or planning a joint activity that is of interest to the involved stakeholders.

The Kenyan National Climate Change Action Plan 2013-2017 is an example for such process initiating new dialogue and cooperation across ministries and international agents. Kenya is pursuing an ambitious approach to transform towards a climate compatible economy and society. Led by the Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources (MEMR), the Government of Kenya, supported by the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), finalized in 2010 a Climate Change Action Plan that cuts across sectors to implement Kenya's National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS). This comprehensive Action Plan includes subcomponents such as a national adaptation plan, low carbon sector analysis, a technology action plan, a finance component, a policy and regulatory framework, and a knowledge management and capacity building component.

The Action Plan is seen as a flagship model that may be replicated to plan effectively for the varied and uncertain impacts of climate change. Multiple partners have assisted in the process given its significant scope (Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Common Market for Eastern and

Southern Africa (COMESA), the French Development Agency (AFD), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Denmark's development cooperation (DANIDA). To achieve this high level of ambition, the process involved many stakeholders, aiming to reflect the needs of the citizens and communities most affected by climate change. The Kenyan Government engaged with people across the country on their experiences of climate change and how the Action Plan can address their issues, moving from Nakuru in the south and Garissa in the north, to the cities of Mombasa and Nairobi. The process has also led to new dialogues and cooperation across ministries and donors. High-level buy-in and direction from government has been achieved through an inter-ministerial, senior-level taskforce overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan. Eight thematic working groups consisting of a wide range of stakeholders ranging from civil society, academia and the private sector provide technical support. This process ensured that the Action Plan is informed by the best available knowledge and expertise.

The example of trainings in South Africa illustrates that a joint endeavour strengthens vertical and horizontal coordination. In the previously described case we presented the coordination dynamics between involved stakeholders. In this regard the training provided a vehicle to increase cooperation and strengthen the vertical coordination.

In the Philippines the topic of local climate action in relation to solid waste management was taken up in a number of activities carried out in the V-LED project. While "climate action" as a single issue for a dialogue was perceived by some stakeholders too unspecific, solid waste management proved to be an issue to which stakeholders could productively relate to. Both locally relevant topics were discussed in a vertical dialogue event and brought the relevant ministries in the Philippines together. The theme proved to be a great vehicle to discuss the requirements of local climate action and initiated a dialogue between LGUs and national stakeholders.

In Vietnam, the national government has launched the second phase to develop the National Urban Development Strategy (NUDS) in March 2017. Climate resilience is a key theme identified for the NUDS. Multiple institutions, in particular the World Bank, are involved in supporting the development of the NUDS. This process does hold the potential to strengthen the voice of subnational actors, especially the cities, in national strategic planning. At the inauguration of the second phase, involved stakeholders emphasized the need to directly include the municipal perspective during this phase. Concrete mechanisms to ensure the voice of municipalities is heard have yet to be identified. V-LED also promotes the alignment of NUDS with the NDC implementation plans.

4. Conclusion

The statements presented in this paper emphasize that providing support to thematic and organizational facilitation and promoting coordination capacities are entry points to enhance effective multi-level governance. Providing thematic inputs or taking over the organization of an event to facilitate a dialogue between a diverse group of stakeholders makes the advantages of coordination visible and precise. The "who", "what" and "how" of multi-level governance mechanisms can become tangible for stakeholders who are in the position to initiate and to follow-up connections between different levels of governance. Further, our findings suggest that the nuances of character, communication skills and attitude of the involved people are key for successful coordination processes. The crucial task for promoting effective multi-level governance is to formalise sporadic dialogue and training into institutional mechanisms. These vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms contribute to local climate action and should be invested in to achieve our ambitious climate targets.

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