Could baseline establishment be counterproductive for emissions reduction? Insights from Vietnam's building sector

This article provides insights into the role of institutions involved in climate governance working towards a future low-carbon society at the national level, within the global climate change governance architecture. Specifically, it contributes to understanding the fragmented governance of energy efficiency policy in developing countries by focussing on Vietnam’s building sector, identifying key institutions related to underlying discourses, national and international power relations, resource distribution and coalitions. It uses the case of baseline setting in developing Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) to illustrate institutional dynamics, nationally and transnationally, as well as to question whether demands for baseline setting achieve the ideal trade-off between actual GHG emissions reduction and institutionalized demands for accountability. The analysis reveals that, in addition to domestic efforts and challenges, the international agenda greatly influences the energy efficiency policy arena. The article presents lessons to be learnt about policy processes from the specific Vietnamese case, reflecting on the role of international actors and discourses in it. Finally, it argues for the abolition of baselines in favour of adequate monitoring and evaluation, from the perspective that requirement for deviation from fictitious baselines is unproductive and only serves an international techno-managerial discourse.
Guidebook for the Development of a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action for Solar Water Heaters

This guidebook provides an introduction to designing government-led interventions to scale up investment in solar water heater (SWH) markets, showing how these interventions can be packaged as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAS). Reflecting the changing balance in global greenhouse gas emissions, NAMAs embody the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In addition to developed countries’ commitments to make quantitative reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, developing countries are invited to contribute with voluntary actions that are ‘nationally appropriate’ deviations from ‘business as usual’ emissions scenarios. Such deviations may be captured in low-carbon (or low-emission) development strategies, and then implemented as NAMAs.
Guidance for NAMA Design - building on country experiences
Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) represent a valuable opportunity for developing countries to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while remaining true to their sustainable development priorities and needs. Many countries are already taking steps to use NAMAs as instruments for participating in the global mitigation agenda and as a means of leveraging national and international support for more effective and transformational climate actions. National governments, multilateral organisations, development partners and others are joining forces to ensure that NAMAs not only contribute to urgent efforts to limit the increase of GHG emissions, but that they yield tangible results in terms of development at national and local levels, i.e., poverty reduction, job creation and energy access. It is in this context that UNDP, the UNEP-Risø Centre and the UNFCCC Secretariat have joined forces to produce this guidebook, which will assist developing countries in formulating more effective NAMAs. Initially conceived as part of UNDP’s Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) Programme and funded by the European Commission and the governments of Germany and Australia, the guidebook has been expanded in scope, thanks to this later strategic partnership. It should benefit any government or institution that wishes to participate in NAMA development.

This NAMA Guide is designed to build on countries’ relevant work in developing mitigation actions, for instance through their National Communications, as well as on the early experiences of some developing countries in NAMA formulation. It also builds on UNDP’s work supporting countries in the design of low-emission, climate-resilient development strategies and on related experiences of the UNEP-Rise Centre and the UNFCCC Secretariat. This guidebook does not attempt to prescribe a linear path for NAMA development. Rather, it emphasises the iterative nature of this development, a process that encompasses learning from past experience, involves a wide range of stakeholders at the national level, capitalises on lessons learned, adapts or establishes policy frameworks, and includes the necessary means for establishing the institutional, financial and monitoring components that go into solid NAMAs. Because NAMA is an emerging concept – the definition of which will most likely remain broad due to its very nature as a “nationally appropriate” tool – the aim of this guide is to take stock of what has been decided thus far and to provide insights on what will continue to be perceived as “good practices.” It is important to note that NAMAs are already being developed and NAMA frontrunners are establishing an experience base, which has informed this guidebook.

General information
Guidebook for the Development of a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action on Efficient Lighting

This Guidebook illustrates how to create an efficient lighting NAMA based on a country-led national efficient lighting strategy. It aims to be a practical resource for governments (ministries of energy, environment, housing, climate change, finance, planning and others), private sector investors and civil society organizations. Users already may have developed an efficient lighting strategy, or may be in the process of developing one. Furthermore, users may have an interest in articulating a NAMA for the implementation of the strategy, indicating how the country will turn strategy into practice. Articulating the NAMA facilitates communication with stakeholders, including citizens, the private sector, and national and international funders.

Chapter 2 gives a generic background for the NAMA concept, origin and founding principles, as well as current interpretations among international stakeholders and the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Chapter 3 provides specifics on how to develop a NAMA from a national efficient lighting strategy, using UNEP en.lighten initiative’s Achieving the Global Transition to Energy Efficient Lighting Toolkit and other tools, such as models and forecasts, to provide evidence for consideration by key stakeholders and potential funders. The UNFCCC has not yet promulgated strict requirements for NAMAs, but best practices from developed NAMAs, as well as donor and investor due diligence requirements provide a basis for evidence for present NAMAs.

Chapter 4 introduces one of the most important elements of a NAMA: the measuring, reporting and verifying of the NAMA impacts, including emissions reductions and co-benefits. While basic requirements are given by the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, current practices in designing and implementing NAMAs show that accurate interpretation of measuring, reporting and verifying systems for NAMAs are crucial.

Chapter 5 explains the current sources of financing for NAMAs, and ways that efficient lighting NAMAs could be financed. It introduces the ‘incremental costs’ approach as a means of quantifying budgets for ‘supported NAMAs’.

Chapter 6 reviews and summarizes the information contained in this Guidebook, and offers brief advice on what steps to take in order to tap the potential of efficient lighting NAMAs.

General information

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Organisations: Department of Management Engineering, UNEP Risø Centre
Authors: Lütken, S. (ed.) (Intern), Bertule, M. (Intern), Hansen, J. I. (Intern), Karavai, M. (Intern), Sandbukt, S. (Intern), Staun, F. (Intern), Wieben, E. (Intern)
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Measuring, Reporting, Verifying. A Primer on MRV for Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions

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Penny Wise, Pound Foolish?: Is the original intention of cost efficient emissions reduction through the CDM being fulfilled?

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Authors: Lütken, S. (Intern)
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Low Carbon Development Strategies: A Primer on Framing Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) in Developing Countries

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Authors: Lütken, S. (Intern), Fenhann, J. V. (Intern), Hinostroza, M. L. (Intern), Sharma, S. (Intern), Olsen, K. H. (Intern)
Number of pages: 16
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Progressing towards post-2012 carbon markets

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Series: Risø DTU Climate Paper Series
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Corporate Strategies and the Clean Development Mechanism: Developing Country Financing for Developed Country Commitments?
This book assesses the organizational structure of projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol. It explains why, instead of the expected bilateral structure where a company from an industrialized country invests in a project in a developing country and receives the emission reduction credits in return, a unilateral structure prevails whereby a company from a developing country finances the emission reduction project itself and sells the emission reduction credits. The book arrives at three fundamental, interconnected conclusions: CDM is logically a unilaterally driven investment activity; CDM investment is an irrelevant compliance instrument for companies from industrialised countries and the structure of the compromise is flawed and unequal.

Projects:

GGGI, in partnership with the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will develop a comprehensive and coherent national Green Growth Plan (GGP) for the UAE over the period of three years (2011-2014). Among the three components of the project – development of a national Green Growth Plan for the UAE, establishment of a national GHG inventory, and capacity building – URC is expected to develop the UAE-tailored capacity building/training programs for policy makers, public officials and stakeholders. Capacity building will mainly involve knowledge-sharing and dissemination through policy
dialogues, training programs, workshops and various specialized programs. These programs should be designed and implemented in a way that can best assist the local actors. The objective of the overall capacity building programs is to build the UAE’s own capacity to conduct and refine green growth analysis as well as to translate it into policy decisions and implementation plans that are well aligned with the country’s broader economic, social and environmental interests.

Out of the total project period, this contract is intended for the Phase I (December 2011 - December 2012) activities, where URC is expected to design and organize training programs and policy dialogues as required in the development of the UAE National Strategy for Green Growth and delivery/communication of it with the objectives of:

1) Establishing sectoral programs for policy design and analysis
2) Facilitating the articulation of comprehensive national strategy
3) Organizing sectoral stakeholder workshops February 2012 to December 2012

URC’s main focus will be to design and implement capacity building sessions for sectoral stakeholders from Oil & Gas, Water & Electricity, Transport, Building, Industry and Waste sectors, by organizing specialized sectoral capacity building sessions where each of the six sectors participate at least twice in 2012.

The contract expired end of October 2013. An amendment to extend the contract has been underway since then, awaiting that UAE Government and GGGI could decide on dates for the 2nd knowledge sharing workshops. However, as it has not been possible to confirm dates for the 2nd round of workshops it was agreed the contract will be terminated during February/March 2014.

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UNEP Rise Centre
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UNEP Sustainable Buildings Climate Initiative
Period: 06/02/2012 → 31/10/2013
Number of participants: 6
Project ID: 82161/URC288
Project participant:
Fenhann, Jørgen Villy (Intern)
Mackenzie, Gordon A. (Intern)
Dhar, Subash (Intern)
Goswami, Surabhi (Intern)
Lütken, Søren (Intern)

Project Coordinator:
Olsen, Karen Holm (Intern)

Green Energy and Low Carbon Development
The Danida Fellowship Course “Green Energy and Low Carbon Development” is a three-week training course to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, 19 May – 6 June 2014. The course will explore green energy and low carbon development business opportunities in developing countries. The course is relevant for managers and decision makers from the private and public sectors seeking to develop their skills within improved energy efficiency, renewable energy and new markets related to trading in CO2 reductions. The course supports that new ideas are developed into realistic action plans for business development and enabling frameworks for public-private partnerships.

The course is being held for the 5th year in 2014. The contract is for one year at a time.

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Lawrence Agbemabiese
Period: 01/08/2010 → 31/08/2014
Number of participants: 5
Project participant:
Fenhann, Jørgen Villy (Intern)