

**AVID Country/Regional Strategy**  
**2014-15 to 2016-17**

**Country: Vietnam**

**Effective Date: 1 July 2014**

**Last Reviewed/Revised: March 2014**

**Indicative New AVID Volunteer Numbers**

Financial Year	Total AVID
2014-2015	64
2015-2016	64
2016-2017	64

**Core Partner Allocations – New AVID Volunteer Numbers**

Financial Year	Australaining Int'l		AVI	ARC
	AVID	AYAD		
2014-2015	47		17	Nil
2015-2016	47		17	Nil
2016-2017	47		17	Nil

**Australian Aid Program priorities**

After two decades of strong economic growth and reforms, Vietnam has become a lower middle-income country. More than 35 million people have been lifted out of poverty since the 1990s. Vietnam has achieved five Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets and is likely to meet two more in 2015. Despite this achievement, there are growing concerns about the economy's competitiveness and sustainability. Infrastructure gaps, weak labour skills and inefficiency in government systems contribute to high costs of basic service delivery and doing business. Poverty rates are persistently highest in rural areas, which are disconnected from the main growth in urban areas. Vietnam still has many tasks ahead in fighting against poverty reduction particularly for vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, women and people with disability.

AVID will continue to contribute to Australia's development and public diplomacy goals in Vietnam. Post has developed a Strategy for its Human Resource Development support in Vietnam. Australia will transition from one-off volunteer placements in a broad range of organisations in Vietnam, to a more strategic, long-term approach in targeted organisations, aligned strongly with Australia's aid program. Volunteer placements will continue to be demand-driven, and will be strongly guided and approved by the Australian Government, in line with the needs it identifies through its other investments and engagements. Transition to the Strategy approach will be managed carefully in collaboration with AVID implementing partners and in consultation with Volunteers Section.

The three key priorities under the Australia–Vietnam Joint Aid Program Strategy 2010- 2015 are:

- 1) Human resource development
- 2) Economic integration (including infrastructure)
- 3) Environmental sustainability (including climate change and water and sanitation).

DFAT continues to prioritise support for gender equality, disability, human rights, and HIV/AIDS in Vietnam.

### AVID Program priorities

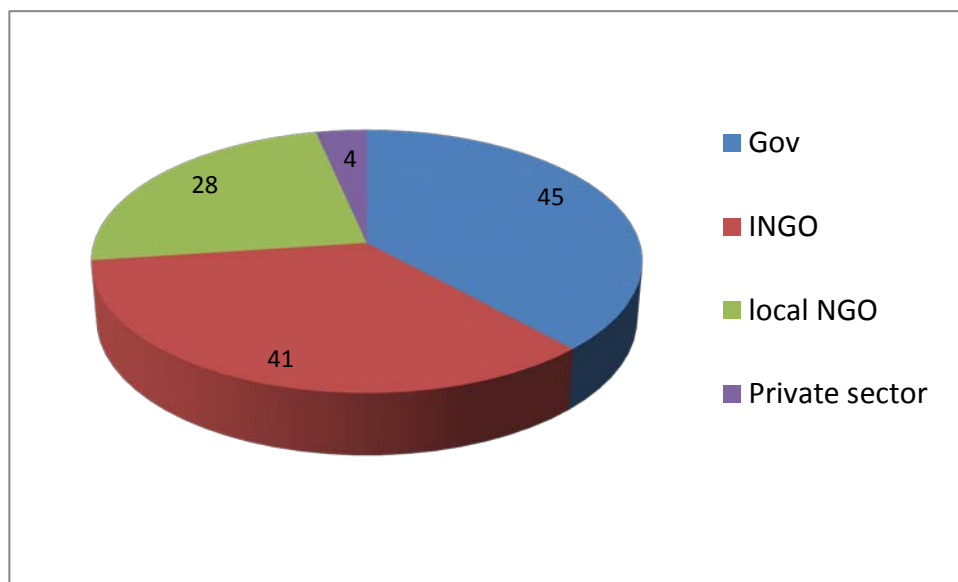
The AVID Program is closely aligned with the above priorities. Current volunteer assignments can be divided as follows:

Climate change	24%
Health	20%
Economic integration	20%
Governance	18%
Education	14%
Agricultural research	3%
Water and sanitation	1%

As the capacity of government institutions and provincial-based assignments to host effective volunteer assignments increases, there continues to be a growing shift to these types of assignments. The current breakdown of host organisations is:

Government agencies	38%
INGOs and multilateral agencies (*)	35%
Local NGOs	24%
Private sector	less than 1%

*Note: in Vietnam, many organisations registered as INGOs are in fact a cross-breed between local and international. These are organisations founded by long-term expatriate residents working in Vietnam. Examples of these include KOTO, Blue Dragon, Mekong Plus, and CHIA.*



*Number of assignments by type of Host Organisation*

Assignments are distributed throughout Vietnam as follows:

North Vietnam (Hanoi and surrounding areas)	48%
Central Vietnam (mostly Da Nang, Hoi An and Hue)	27%
South Vietnam (HCMC and Mekong Delta)	25%

Some Volunteers will continue to be placed within the AVID Program with key DFAT and Australian Government projects and partner agencies in order to complement ongoing assistance to these organisations and further support the sustainability of key outcomes.

## Identified Risks

### (1) Health and Security

Tropical storms and floods commonly occur between June and December. Vietnam is prone to various types of natural disasters including typhoons, flooding, landslides, and earthquakes. As such, natural disasters are an ongoing risk throughout the country and these have the tendency to disrupt any volunteer assignment. ICMs have safety and security strategies in place in case volunteers are affected by natural disasters. This includes pre-emptive evacuation to pre-identified 'safe houses' prior to typhoons.

The standard of primary health care is sufficient in major cities, but more complicated treatments may require evacuation to a third country, usually Thailand. Dengue Fever is endemic to Vietnam and can occur throughout the year. Outbreaks of Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) in Vietnam have led to 50 reported human fatalities. Swine flu is also present in rural areas. TB is endemic with relatively high rates in the southern part of the country. Malaria occurs in certain parts of Vietnam, but not in coastal areas.

Vietnam in general provides a safe and welcoming living environment. Crime levels are low; however petty crime and opportunistic robberies are increasing mainly in major cities. Speeding, drink driving, distracted driving, not wearing or wearing of poor quality motorcycle helmets and the vulnerable road quality all contribute to traffic risks in Vietnam.

### (2) Child Protection Policy

Under the DFAT Child Protection Policy, all HO (with the exception of Government bodies and multilateral agencies) are required to have a child protection policy. Unfortunately, not all HOs in Vietnam have the technical capacity to prepare and implement such a policy. Some organisations that do not directly work with children may not have a clear understanding and may not see the relevance of this requirement.

In addition, the implementation of a child protection policy requires significant commitment, resources and training of staff from the host organisation. Staff need to be trained so they understand how to appropriately report any issues about abuse that may arise and there needs to be a relevant person within the organisation to continue to train staff, update the policy and manage any reports of child protection issues that arise. The development of a CPP requires skill and significant knowledge and understanding of abuse and how to respond to disclosures to ensure children are not placed at risk of further harm. Technical support from the relevant area in DFAT may be required to effectively implement this requirement.

### (3) Visa and Work Permit Issues

Since the introduction of the requirement of work permits for volunteers in 2011, there have been a number of challenges that have delayed volunteer arrivals or made their stay in Vietnam more complicated. Medical clearances and education qualifications from Australia often do not meet the requirements of the Vietnam Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) to gain visas. This creates delays in gaining visas for volunteers and additional costs for ICMs.

However, in 2013, the Government issued a Decree exempting volunteers from the work permit requirement. Accordingly, Hanoi post is required to certify Official Development Assistance (ODA) status for volunteers of each intake to facilitate their work permit exemption. A Circular to guide the implementation of the Decree was issued in March 2014 but application is still new and applied differently by the various local authorities. Post will work closely with ICMs and the partner government to ensure standardization of rules and processes.

## AVID Communications and Marketing

A number of marketing and promotions strategies will be implemented in 2014-15. DFAT and the Core Partners will coordinate closely to ensure synergy in promoting the AVID Program. These include the following:

### **(1) Strengthen AVID branding**

DFAT and Core Partners will support the implementation of new AVID branding guidelines when available for better promoting and marketing of the single AVID brand.

### **(2) Australian Government Official Events**

Vietnam receives regular high-level Australian official visits and on many occasions these officials include a visit to a volunteer. Such visits receive Australian and Vietnam media coverage and promote the program to the broader public in both countries. In addition, each year in December the Australian Embassy hosts a volunteer photo exhibition in celebration of International Volunteers Day.

### **(3) Embassy Facebook**

The Embassy Facebook is a good communication channel for disseminating information of the AVID program to a wide online audience. Core partners, volunteers, host organisations and staff of Hanoi post contribute stories and photos of the AVID program in-country for the Embassy Facebook page.

### **(4) Information Sessions**

In the last four years, the Core Partners have been conducting HO information sessions as a key marketing strategy for the Australian Volunteers. On average around 15-20 HO representatives are invited to attend a 2-3 hour information session, held three to four times a year. This strategy is a good way to inform various groups of the Program to make sure that the opportunity to access volunteer support is communicated to a wide range of potential host organisations.

### **(5) Use of NGO Resource Centre and working groups network**

The AVID Program will continue to promote opportunities for volunteer assignments through the NGO Resource Centre and targeted thematic working groups such as Climate Change, Disability, and Rural Development.

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## ANNEX I

### AVID Vietnam Program 2012-2013 Geographical distribution of Australian Volunteers

