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# TAI and DEVELOPMENT

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## **National Strategy for Hungary**

*coordinated by the  
Environmental Management and Law Association (EMLA)  
and the  
Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND)*

### Introduction

Within the current project called “TAI and Development”, partners have envisaged to create a brief strategy to influence international development donor decision-making of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Hungary in order to take into consideration the level of environmental access rights implementation in the recipient country of Vietnam.

The current strategy is built on

- the Vietnam national TAI<sup>1</sup> assessment report prepared by the Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment (VACNE)
- the International Development Cooperation Strategy of Hungary for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for 2008-2010 prepared by the MOFA of Hungary
- the Agreement on Development Co-operation between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
- the findings of a roundtable meeting held on 17 July 2008 between EMLA, HAND and the representatives of the MOFA of Hungary

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<sup>1</sup> The Access Initiative (TAI) is the world’s largest network of civil society organizations working to ensure that citizens and communities have the so called “Access Rights”: the access to information about government decisions, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice when their rights to information, participation, and a clean environment are violated. The network partners use the TAI Assessment Methodology to assess the respective country's level of transparency, accountability, and citizen participation with regard to the environment, advocate for legal, institutional and practice reforms, raise public awareness, and engage their governments in a constructive dialogue to create change within their countries.

## Strategy

The goal of this strategy is to set a broad framework for action for EMLA and HAND in order to reach the aforementioned objective and bring new aspects into the decision-making process of the MOFA.

### ***Background***

EMLA and HAND,

1. *Recognizing* that existing legally binding as well as non-binding documents prepared in the field of international development and specifically development aid do not exclude the possibility to apply conditionality in donor decision-making, based on the performance of a recipient country,
2. *Recognizing* also that there are already existing examples where donors make their supportive international aid decisions conditional upon certain criteria to be met by the recipient countries, either on a general level or in bilateral relationships,
3. *Considering* that this addition in the development aid process would bring benefits to both parties, e.g. would create more transparency in donor decision-making while resulting in a better governance in the recipient country,
4. *Realizing*, however, that this effort is set back by a larger international trend towards unconditionality and a parallel effort to build capacity of the civil society in the recipient countries,
5. *Conscious*, however, that in numerous instances international aid is not used optimally in recipient countries or are granted to governments and projects with questionable legitimacy,
6. *Noting* in this context that Hungary with its limited means in international development cannot realistically go sharply against the international trends on its own without risking the refusal of aid by the recipient country,
7. *Acknowledging* also the legitimate feelings of recipient countries against any intervention into their internal affairs,
8. *Desiring*, nevertheless, to support the implementation of environmental access rights in Vietnam,

have agreed in the following strategy:

- I. The largest possible assistance must be given to VACNE in order to improve its watchdog capacities and be able to monitor the implementation of environmental access rights in Vietnam, with special regard to plans and projects financed from international development aid.
- II. Information gathered from the MOFA of Hungary regarding plans and projects financed from international development aid of Hungary must be made known for VACNE in order to facilitate its watchdog activities.
- III. The Vietnam national TAI assessment report must be sent to the MOFA of Hungary, together with a summary that highlights the major shortcomings in environmental access rights implementation in Vietnam.

- IV. A policy brief must be sent to the MOFA of Hungary suggesting that in international and EU arenas, Hungary as donor should take a standpoint in favor of conditional donor decision-making and vote against unconditionality.
- V. Existing international mechanisms, specifically the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness of the OECD DAC must be used in order to submit a policy brief, supporting conditional donor decisions and urging to discard point 24 of the Accra Agenda for Action (“*Donors will not impose conditions*”).
- VI. An EU level strategy must be created and communicated by the New Member State NGOs and the Global South NGOs involved in TAI at the Development Day of the TAI Global Meeting to be held at 29 October 2008 in Sligo (Ireland).

### Implementation

The aforementioned points of the strategy will be implemented by EMLA and HAND according to *ad hoc* decisions on sharing tasks and responsibilities.

***EMLA and HAND***  
*July 25, 2008*