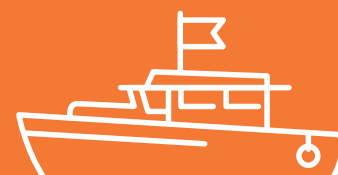
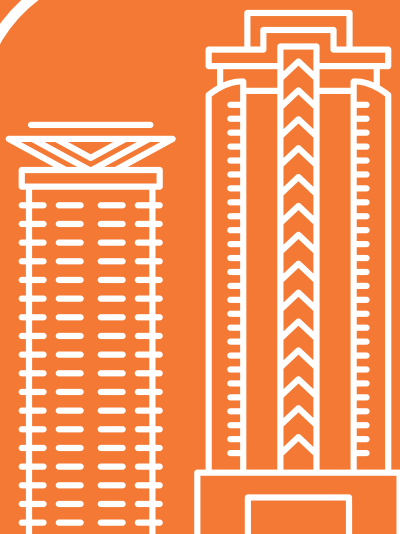


# LEARNINGS FROM SIX YEARS OF VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND LEARNING FOR LOW-EMISSION DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

V-LED PROJECT EXPERIENCE REPORT



V-LED | STIMULATING URBAN CLIMATE ACTION



V-LED

STIMULATING  
URBAN CLIMATE ACTION

**PUBLISHER:**

adelphi  
Alt-Moabit 91,  
10559 Berlin  
[www.adelphi.de](http://www.adelphi.de)

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**SUGGESTED CITATION:**

Becker, F., P. Adriázola, Y. Reddy  
and F. Oremo 2021: Learnings  
from Six Years of “Vertical  
Integration and Learning for  
Low-Emission Development  
in Africa and Southeast Asia”:  
V-LED Project Experience  
Report. Berlin/Cape Town/  
Nairobi: adelphi/ Sustainable  
Energy Africa/Institute for Law  
and Environmental Governance.

**DESIGN:**

Blush design agency  
[www.blushcreate.com](http://www.blushcreate.com)

**PLACE AND DATE OF  
PUBLICATION:**

Berlin/Cape Town/Nairobi,  
June 2021

**DISCLAIMER:**

The analysis, results and  
recommendations in this report  
represent the opinions of the  
authors and are not necessarily  
representative of the position of  
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## The project “Vertical Integration and Learning for Low-Emission Development in Africa and Southeast Asia” (V-LED)

is implemented in Kenya and South Africa (phase 2, 2019-2021). It is led by adelphi in partnership with the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance (ILEG) and Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA). Phase 1 (2015-2018) included the Philippines and Vietnam with additional partners, UN Habitat and OneWorld Sustainable Investments.

The project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) as part of its International Climate Initiative.

Visit [www.localclimateaction.org](http://www.localclimateaction.org) to learn more.



Supported by:



based on a decision of the Parliament  
of the Federal Republic of Germany

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## ACRONYMS

<b>BMU</b>	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
<b>CCC</b>	Climate Change Commission of the Philippines
<b>CCCF</b>	County Climate Change Fund
<b>CCU</b>	Kwale County Climate Change Unit
<b>DARDLEA</b>	Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Mpumalanga Province
<b>DFFE</b>	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment of South Africa
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>ILEG</b>	Institute for Law and Environmental Governance
<b>LGCCSP</b>	Local Government Climate Change Support Programme
<b>MoC</b>	Ministry of Construction of Vietnam
<b>SALGA</b>	South African Local Government Association
<b>SEA</b>	Sustainable Energy Africa
<b>V-LED</b>	Vertical Integration and Learning for Low-Emission Development Project



# THE V-LED PROJECT IN BRIEF

## INTRODUCTION

This publication provides insight into the achievements and lessons learned from six years of the V-LED project. In sharing this knowledge, we hope to inform other implementing organisations and practitioners working in international cooperation and help improve existing and future projects in the policy field of climate governance.

The first part describes the V-LED project and its main achievements. The second part presents lessons learned followed by some of the success factors identified throughout the project. To increase the tangibility, we provide concrete examples of the results and lessons learned from V-LED in practice.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many of the learnings in this experience report have been gathered from the colleagues in the V-LED implementing partner organisations (Institute for Law and Environmental Governance, Sustainable Energy Africa and adelphi), including all our former colleagues who did not author this report directly. Without their input, this report would not have been possible. We also thank all our colleagues from the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and OneWorld Sustainable

Investments for the great work together during the first four years of the project. Special thanks go to the colleagues in the national ministries, municipalities and regional governments listed below, with whom we learned so much throughout the years. We are also grateful to the Kwale County Natural Resources Network and the South African Local Government Association for their work with V-LED.



### KENYA

The National Treasury

Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Ministry of Devolution and Planning

County Government of Kwale, particularly the Department of Environment and Natural Resources



### PHILIPPINES

Climate Change Commission (CCC)

Department of the Interior and Local Government

National Economic and Development Authority

Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development

League of Cities of the Philippines



### SOUTH AFRICA

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

Mpumalanga Province - Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA)

Emalahleni Local Municipality

Nkangala District Municipality



### VIETNAM

Ministry of Construction (MoC)

## THE V-LED PROJECT IN BRIEF

The V-LED project (Vertical Integration and Learning for Low-Emission Development in Africa and Southeast Asia) provided support to the governments of Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa and Vietnam in order to strengthen vertically integrated climate planning and the mitigation and adaptation capacities of subnational governments. It facilitated dialogue between national institutions, subnational authorities and communities, supported learning networks between local actors and strengthened targeted capacities in government. Project partners included the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the Ministry of Devolution of Kenya, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) in the Philippines, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment of South Africa (DFFE) and the Ministry of Construction (MoC) of Vietnam. V-LED

received support from the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) as part of its International Climate Initiative.

The six years of the project were divided into two phases. The last phase (2019-2021) was implemented in Kenya and South Africa, led by adelphi and implemented in partnership with the local partner organisations Institute for Law and Environmental Governance (ILEG) in Kenya and Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA) in South Africa. The first phase (2015-2018) was also implemented in the Philippines and Vietnam in partnership with UN-Habitat. OneWorld Sustainable Investments was another partner in South Africa in the initial phase of the project.

## THE CASE FOR COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE ACTION

Tackling climate change is one of the biggest collective-action problems we face. For an effective response, we need action at different scales and planning and strategies at different government levels to speak to each other. Effective multi-level governance frameworks specify clear roles and responsibilities and address issues at the appropriate scale of governance. Some of the crucial tasks for a multi-level framework are providing incentives for effective climate action and ensuring that the adequate finance and capabilities are in place at different levels.

Integrated climate governance includes the national and subnational government level, which comprises the local

or municipal, and the regional or provincial sphere. It also reaches out horizontally – in contrast to conventional, silo-based approaches where departments responsible for relevant sectors, such as health, transport and waste management, work without collaborating or talking to each other.

As different government institutions work to achieve their objectives, they frequently neglect interdepartmental and integrating coordination, resulting in fragmented climate governance.

## THE V-LED APPROACH

We believe that dialogue is the basis for integrated climate action. Providing a space for constructive communication and giving public officials and government staff the opportunity to listen to and interact with each other facilitates inspiration and innovative ideas, a sense of ownership, learning and coordinated action.<sup>1</sup>

V-LED focused on climate governance processes according to the needs of the partner countries.

It functioned as an external, **neutral convener** that was able to support dialogue and exchange between the different levels of governance in order to work towards the implementation of climate change activities at the local level. For this purpose, we applied a series of **flexible and customised dialogue and capacity development formats** (see figure 1).

Strengthening targeted capacities in subnational governments	Facilitating dialogue process between national and subnational government	Drawing learnings for international exchange
 <p>Trainings</p>	 <p>Vertical dialogue events</p>	 <p>Regional workshops</p>
 <p>Toolkits</p>		 <p>Engagement in international conferences</p>
 <p>Coaching process</p>		

Figure 1: The V-LED dialogue and capacity development formats.

<sup>1</sup> Hemmati and Rogers (2015).



# THE RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE V-LED PROJECT



## PUTTING COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE ACTION AT THE CENTRE OF NATIONAL POLITICAL AGENDAS

One of the project's results was to highlight and raise awareness on the importance of collaborative climate action as a continued priority in V-LED countries.



As the 12th largest emitter worldwide, South Africa has prioritised climate change for years. The country has a sophisticated climate governance system that relies on cooperative governance between three spheres – municipal, provincial and national government. However, while at the core of its climate governance on paper, effective multi-level exchange and the alignment of climate efforts were still lacking in practice. The V-LED project provided a dialogue platform and the opportunity to establish exchange between the various levels and strengthen partnerships for climate response implementation. These dialogues in turn

facilitated the alignment of policies and plans as well as the sharing of information, building capacity for implementation and access to climate action funding.

The multi-level dialogue process of the V-LED project provided support to the national Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) towards the development of a climate governance framework in support of the climate change response policy and bill. The bill is expected to be developed into an act, and is to be adopted and carried forward by the county government.



## IMPROVED CLIMATE GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

Often, effective climate change governance is hampered by non-communicative processes between relevant sectors. For example, it is common for health, disaster risk and public works departments to not communicate with each other while conducting city planning, even though they are all relevant and work towards common objectives with regards to climate change. With this in mind, the V-LED project strengthened interdepartmental governance in two municipalities in South Africa and one county in Kenya.



In Kenya, V-LED helped one county establish a County Climate Change Unit (CCU)—an interdepartmental coordinating body within the county government tasked with coordinating climate change issues. The CCU comprises nine officials from different departments targeted to direct the formulation process of a climate change policy and bill. Led by the CCU Chair and supported by ILEG, CCU officials deliberated the content of its first county climate change policy and bill for two years. The process forged common views across departments and a strong commitment to the jointly developed strategy and bill. As a result, and with help from V-LED, the county is expected to pass these new and stronger climate governance instruments in 2021.



In South Africa, V-LED coaching sessions aided a local municipality in the co-development of its first climate change strategy following a highly inclusive process. This included the department in the municipality tasked with providing climate leadership, officials from the larger district municipality and the province, as well as the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE); they were consulted about their specific needs, who should be involved in the process and how. Thanks to their extensive commitment and partnership, the parties involved made crucial contributions to the design of the coaching sessions. Consequently, the sessions responded to the concrete needs of stakeholders and were very well received.



## HELPED ESTABLISH A STRONG POLICY FRAMEWORK, SECURING CLIMATE FINANCE ACCESS

One important instrument at the hand of cities and regions to find and codify their climate-related priorities is the development of official policies and, in some cases, bylaws and other legislation.



As a requirement to access pooled climate finance, Kenyan counties must have in place a participative climate change policy and legislative framework. V-LED provided support for one county's Climate Change Unit (CCU) over two years in the discussion and drafting process for a draft climate change policy and a climate bill. During this period, the county convened several meetings, with support from V-LED. The project made use of multiple formats (coaching workshops,

policy dialogues and knowledge exchange with climate experts, representatives from national government and county level, and community-based organisations) based on the precise needs of the CCU. As a result, the relationship between the county and the Kenyan National Treasury is stronger and the county is in the final stages of adopting the climate change policy and bill. The next step will be to establish on this basis a County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) to attract finance from international and national sources.



## HELPED PUT INTO PRACTICE NATIONAL SUPPORT MEASURES FOR THE LOCAL LEVEL

Aware of the shortages in capacities and resources for climate action on the local level, V-LED helped develop coordination and climate planning capacities at the local level through peer-to-peer exchanges, trainings and targeted assistance through coaching sessions. V-LED's facilitation of vertical exchange and coordination between all three spheres of government provided further support to the local level.



In South Africa, V-LED convened a number of climate change training and capacity-building workshops, e.g. a five-day municipal climate change training session. The sessions helped align and coordinate action among the three spheres of government through the co-creation of national support plans for local governments. Building on this, similar and previously successful workshops from V-LED were used to support the planning and roll-out of the Local Government Climate Change Support Programme (LGCCSP)

of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). The LGCCSP is a large-scale, capacity-building programme that helps provinces and municipalities across the country better understand and respond to climate change.

For more detailed analysis of the LGCCSP and steps for replication, visit the V-LED publication: ["The Local Government Climate Change Support Programme in South Africa"](#).





# V-LED EXPERIENCES: LESSONS FOR COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE ACTION



## COMBINING VERTICAL INTEGRATION SUPPORT AND FACILITATING ACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In recent years, a lot of support for local climate action has set a focus on either the national, regional (provincial or county) or local level. While projects and initiatives have backed national policy alignment – for instance through the integration of local climate action into national policy – transnational city networks have directly strengthened the local level by means of capacity-building or support for climate finance access. V-LED combined the support for local capacities with support for effective multi-level governance.

With this approach, projects can help build up the required capacities at the local level while at the same time strengthening the levels of government in charge of supporting the local sphere (for example provinces and districts). Crucially, by supporting local officials' knowledge on the climate priorities and scenarios in their municipalities and sharing with their peers, V-LED strengthened the understanding and voice of the local level. Empowered local officials were in turn better able to voice their concerns in discussions with the national government. On a practical level, providing support for this type of process involving not only the targeted district and local municipalities, but also regional officials and the environment ministry, was a time-consuming process. It paid off, however, in terms of the impact and sustainability of the project.



In South Africa, V-LED provided support for a district municipality and a local municipality in their interdepartmental climate change strategy development process. In the country, district municipalities have a supporting role vis-à-vis local municipalities. V-LED showed that a multi-level approach in

delivering local capacity activities was essential for the success of the project. More importantly, it helped to better achieve the dual objective of capacitating the district administration in performing its support tasks for the local level, and the local municipality in climate change planning.



## NEEDS-BASED APPROACH – TAILORED GUIDANCE FOR THE LOCAL LEVEL

The project offered one Kenyan county and one South African local municipality a needs-based process to tailor activities to their needs and priorities. This flexibility allowed V-LED to fill in the gaps as regards the support of dialogue and capacity development.



In South Africa, V-LED worked for four years with a standardised climate change toolkit and capacity-building programme delivered to officials from many municipalities in classic training sessions and training-of-trainer formats. The needs of the municipalities in the next step included more personalised coaching of a small, select group per municipality. This allowed the project team to consider the unique local circumstances related to climate change and the nuances of local municipalities in South Africa that might face complex struggles – poverty, debt, institutional capacity challenges, tensions between civil society and local government – as well as the challenges of engaging with and including diverse groups in decision-making.

Another crucial element leading to the success of this approach was the emphasis on the municipality taking the lead throughout the process. The project assumed the role of custodian and supporter. This meant coaching and supporting municipal officials in the relevant convening and coordinating tasks and giving methodological and climate-relevant advice when requested. In many cases around the world we see a different practice: consultants typically support local governments by writing a climate change strategy for them, without meaningful involvement by the relevant departments, with a lack of importance placed on the leading and convening skills in the administration.





## THE RIGHT FIT: COMPLEMENTING AND ADDING VALUE FOR OTHER ACTORS

In every partner country, V-LED was one relatively small project in a sea of big fish. Since the beginning in 2015, the project aimed to build bridges to other projects in the field, complementing other efforts and initiatives. The complementing and partnering up with other initiatives enabled V-LED to ultimately increase its impact.



In Kenya, the project's activities complimented those of the National Treasury and the World Bank in their climate finance support for Kenya's 27 counties. V-LED's support enabled one county to initiate the process to formulate devolved climate change governance instruments. The National Treasury requires counties to have in place a participative climate change policy and legislative framework to access pooled finance for locally-led climate actions. V-LED concretely supported one county in the interdepartmental county process of gathering all the relevant actors, identifying climate priorities, formulating and accompanying the county climate change draft policy and bill. Both are expected to be adopted in 2021.



In South Africa, V-LED complemented and supported the activities and priorities of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the long-term partnership on climate governance

between DFFE and the GIZ. For the last decade, DFFE and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) have been partners of South African municipalities in helping build municipal capacities for climate change response planning and implementation. Together, they conceived and are implementing the Local Government Climate Change Support Programme (LGCCSP) with the support of the GIZ, a large-scale capacity-building programme with a multi-stakeholder coalition. Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA) – V-LED's implementing organisation in South Africa – has supported the process through their work developing climate change planning training materials and sessions since 2012. More recently, as part of V-LED, SEA supported DFFE in placing a bigger focus on the climate change mitigation component of the LGCCSP, which previously focussed mainly on adaptation. Supporting factors for this achievement were V-LED's focus on mitigation and SEA's long expertise in sustainable urban energy development in South Africa since 1994.



## ESTABLISHING THE LINK WITH CLIMATE FINANCE: A CRUCIAL REQUIREMENT FOR CONCRETE ACTION

While there is no lack of smart ideas and concepts for climate action, their implementation lags behind. A main reason for this is the lack of linkages with finance. At the subnational level, municipalities often have budgetary and fiscal constraints. Existing funding opportunities are tied to complex application processes and demand certain preconditions which local stakeholders can find difficult to fulfil without the necessary resources and knowledge. As a result, climate finance and improved access for local stakeholders must be at the top of the agenda of national governments and international donors alike.



In Kenya, V-LED made a conscious decision to link up its activities with existing efforts by the national government seeking to secure linkages between climate finance and communities' priorities. V-LED supported the process of developing a county's climate change policy and climate change bill and underscored throughout the process the importance of the relationship with the National Treasury and to finance. Concretely, the leverage of a multimillion programme led by the National Treasury with the World Bank supporting county governments was a key incentive for the county government to prioritise resilient and low-emission development in its integrated development planning. In essence, the main motivation for the county to get its climate change governance frameworks ready was to benefit from the finance and technical support of the large programme.

A key next step after the V-LED support will be for the county to establish its own County Climate Change Fund (CCCF). CCCFs are sophisticated governance mechanisms that have been implemented in Kenya for the past decade. They allow counties to fund communities' priorities by pooling finance

from international sources, from the National Climate Change Funds and their own county finance, and in some cases support from the private sector. They act as framework for a structured process and advanced actor involvement.

For more detailed analysis of the CCCFs and steps for replication, visit the V-LED publication ["The Kenyan County Climate Change Funds"](#).



V-LED supported the subnational level in South Africa with information on access to climate finance through knowledge-sharing dialogues and a country specific study with a focus on multi-level climate governance and finance for local climate action. Vertical and horizontal dialogue session events held by V-LED provided, among other things, guidance on accessing climate financing including how to write funding proposals. This exchange and knowledge closely informed the Local Government Climate Change Support Programme (LGCCSP) in its focus on climate finance and building local government capacity to leverage climate financing.



# SUCCESS FACTORS FOR PROJECTS SUPPORTING COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE ACTION

Projects supporting climate efforts and a coherent and aligned governance structure across government levels face a common set of challenges and can employ similar strategies to achieve impact, ownership and ultimately the sustainability of benefits through institutionalisation of efforts. In this concluding section, we have derived four key success factors for projects supporting collaborative climate action. These can serve as inspiration for other projects and actors in international cooperation supporting strong multi-level climate governance and the climate work of cities and regions.





### NEEDS-BASED APPROACH AND COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

Involvement of and cooperation with the relevant actors through a **needs-based approach and an adaptable, highly participatory process** increases the political commitment, ownership, and sustainability of the process and improves the results of collaborative climate action projects. A set of **flexible dialogue and capacity development formats** that can be customised according to the needs of the target group often results in a sustained sense of responsibility to take the results and process forward. Following this design, the project implementer conducts a serious needs assessment as early as possible, ideally in the project design stage, and continues to carry out discussions to evaluate throughout the process and steer the interventions based on what the target group demands and suggests. While it may be **more time-consuming, this pays off in the end** and produces a much more valuable result.



### LOCAL / REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IN THE DRIVING SEAT

Multi-stakeholder involvement is a strong tool for subnational government to attain strong coalitions in their planning processes, legitimate results for citizens and to mainstream climate in all relevant sectors within the administration. **By taking the leadership, setting the agenda and following up on these multi-stakeholder involvement processes** in climate governance, subnational government staff strengthen their own coalition-building, advocacy and climate technical skills. In this design, the project implementer supports from behind the scenes all the steps taken by the municipal or regional government team, and acts as a neutral moderator and custodian of the process.



### BUILDING BRIDGES TO OTHER PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Partnering and coordinating with other projects and initiatives in the field and **complementing other efforts can increase the overall impact of project interventions and support alignment**. In addition, making use of well-established, **accepted concepts and strategies and adding to them** can facilitate the project's access to existing stakeholders and initiatives linked to these strategies. During the needs-assessment stage, project implementers can take the time to get to know other stakeholders' needs and priorities that relate to the project. This is a key element to avoid replication of existing projects and structures. In this way, complementing often pays off more than reinventing the wheel.



### LINKAGE WITH CLIMATE FINANCE

Often, climate governance projects focus on governance processes in the countries, without securing the necessary links for climate actions to be successfully financed and implemented. Providing seed funding to support pilots and, crucially, linking institutions with available climate finance are of crucial importance for concrete actions. **Climate finance and its improved access** allow the often-under-resourced subnational level to implement local climate action and achieve emission reductions.



# FURTHER V-LED INSIGHTS AND RESOURCES

## V-LED PROJECT INSIGHTS

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👉 For further insights into the project and additional publications visit the V-LED website: [www.localclimateaction.org](http://www.localclimateaction.org)

## CLIMATE PRACTICE INSIGHTS

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Read about more **real-life examples and practical knowledge** about multi-level climate governance and collaborative action in the V-LED “Real Practices in Collaborative Climate Action” and listen to our audio features.

👉 **KENYA**  
**Increasing Finance for Local Climate Action:**  
The Kenyan County Climate Change Funds  
<https://www.localclimateaction.org/climate-practice-insights/kenya>





👉 **PHILIPPINES**  
**Planning and Implementing an Ambitious Climate Response:** The Case of Ormoc City  
<https://www.localclimateaction.org/climate-practice-insights/philippines>

👉 **SOUTH AFRICA**  
**Multi-Level Climate Action through Capacity Building:** The Local Government Climate Change Support Programme in South Africa  
<https://www.localclimateaction.org/climate-practice-insights/south-africa>



👉 **COLOMBIA**  
**Facilitating Climate Change Planning in Diverse Regions:** The Regional Climate Change Nodes in Colombia  
<https://www.localclimateaction.org/climate-practice-insights/colombia>

## MULTI-LEVEL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE INSIGHTS

Find more background information on multi-level climate governance in the selected countries of the V-LED project in our country studies.

-  **KENYA**  
Activating mechanisms for climate action  
[https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led\\_country\\_study\\_kenya\\_web.pdf](https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led_country_study_kenya_web.pdf)
-  **VIETNAM**  
Bridging national planning and local climate action  
[https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led\\_vietnam\\_country\\_study\\_web\\_small.pdf](https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led_vietnam_country_study_web_small.pdf)
-  **SOUTH AFRICA**  
Catalysing finance for local climate action  
[https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led\\_south\\_africa\\_country\\_study.pdf](https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led_south_africa_country_study.pdf)
-  **PHILIPPINES**  
Shaping connections for climate action  
[https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led\\_country\\_study\\_philippines\\_small\\_0.pdf](https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led_country_study_philippines_small_0.pdf)

For more ideas and entry points derived from the V-LED project experiences:

-  **Entry points to support collaborative climate action**  
[https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led\\_entry\\_points\\_for\\_collaborative\\_climate\\_action.pdf](https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v-led_entry_points_for_collaborative_climate_action.pdf)
-  **Building Blocks for local climate action**  
[https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v\\_led\\_interconnections.pdf](https://www.localclimateaction.org/sites/localclimateaction.org/files/documents/v_led_interconnections.pdf)





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