

<b>Thesis Title</b>	The Evaluation of Health Issues in Strategic Environmental Assessment in Vietnam
<b>Author</b>	Phan Thi Mai Hoa
<b>Degree</b>	Master of Science (Natural Resources and Environmental Management)
<b>Advisor</b>	Dr. Panate Manomaivibool
<b>Co-Advisor</b>	Dr. Richard Joel Frankel Assoc. Prof. Dr. Det Wattanachaiyingcharoen

## **ABSTRACT**

The Vietnamese government has recognized the importance of an early assessment of the sustainability of its developmental frameworks. It institutionalized the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in the 2005 amendments to the Law on Environmental Protection. Vietnam has also endorsed the protection and the promotion of public health as one pillar of sustainable development. However, it remains a question to what extent these two interrelating themes are integrated in the assessment of policies, plans and programs. The purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the current extent to which the consideration of health is incorporated into SEA process in Vietnam. Based on a criteria-based review and rating of 8 SEA reports and expert opinions, this study identifies common gaps and factors that can facilitate the health impact assessment (HIA) in SEA. The reasons for inadequate attention to HIA focus on (1) the common limitations of adequate resources including time, finance, and professional capacity; (2) the lack of legislation requiring incorporating of health issues in SEA; (3) insufficient SEA Management Plans (e.g.

lack of monitoring of health). Mostly, engaging health authorities in the initial step of SEA process is considered as a crucial starting point for effective health in SEA, whereas the adequate resource is an important implement for effective monitoring system and implementation of recommendations. Crucially, an effort must be made to build up legislation and technical standards about integrating health issues in the SEA process. These technical standards would include indicators and methods to implement a meaningful HIA within SEA.

**Keywords:** SEA/HIA/Vietnam