"Untangle the tangle"

A case study of Meta-governance approach to Multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development in the context of waste management in Hoi An city, Vietnam

Author: **Luong Binh Nguyen Vo**
Supervisor: **Moira Nelson**

Abstract

Objectives: Multi-stakeholder partnership is garnering greater attention worldwide as a means of tackling global wicked problems, implementing sustainable development and leveraging development cooperation. By adopting meta-governance approach, this study investigates the case study of Hoi An – A Green Destination partnership in the waste management context of Hoi An city, Vietnam to understand how stakeholders coming from different sectors with varied motivations work with each other to strengthen the effectiveness of the partnership.

Methods: A qualitative single-case study approach is applied. In-depth online interviews were conducted with 11 internal and external stakeholders of the partnership. Due to the limitation of online fieldwork, documentary data is also employed to further the analysis of the selected case study.

Principal findings: The findings have also underlined the preceding assumptions that stakeholders in an MSP for sustainable development can merit from the adoption of meta-governance approach to ensure the foundations of the MSP and stakeholders' work while enabling their collaboration to achieve their organisational goals and partnership goals. The research also provides further understanding of the essence of stakeholders' flexibility and adaptability to strengthen the effectiveness of MSP. It helps extend previous studies on stakeholders' motivations and power relations and the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development implementation.

<u>**Keywords:**</u> multi-stakeholder partnership; development cooperation; partnership for sustainable development; meta-governance; waste management; Vietnam

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Table of Contents

List of figures and tables

Abbreviations

CSSP	Cross-Sector Social Partnership
HA	Hoi An
HA-GD	Hoi An – A Green Destination
DOC	Department of Construction
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LUMID	Lund University Master of Science in International Development and Management
MOC	Ministry of Construction
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Partnership
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
URENCOs	Urban Environment Companies
VZWA	Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance
WWF	World Wild Fund

1. Introduction

1.1. Motivation for the research

Sustainable development has been the central of international development's academic debate and practical discussion in the past few decades. In the context of an increasing number of complex societal issues, Multi-stakeholder Partnership (MSP) has become a popular approach to development cooperation between different sectors to solve the global wicked problem and advance sustainable development (Gray and Purdy, 2018; Haywood et al., 2019). Furthermore, in light of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, MSP has been evolved as one of the main sustainable development goals (SDGs) to foster knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources (UNDESA, 2021). In recent years, there have been over forty-five MSP initiatives organised to address a wide range of global wicked problems such as poverty, climate change, migration, disaster preparedness, environmental pollution (Gray and Purdy, 2018). Given the rising phenomenon of more MSP to address complex social, economic and ecological challenge, there is a real need for further understanding of MSP for sustainable development.

Moreover, the role of MSP in sustainable development discourse raises larger questions of its effectiveness. MSP is a 'new mantra' of not only policy-makers around the world but also businesses and civil societies (Buckup, 2012; Loveridge and Wilkinson, 2017). However, MSP is also referred as a tangle under which is overlapped connections, activities and goals that need to be untangled. Most studies recognise a persistent challenge in MSP as stakeholders come to the partnership with different capacity and expectations, setting shared goals and outcomes for development projects or initiatives under the umbrella of MSPs, thus, these MSPs can be complicated and sometimes considered unrealistic and unachievable (Dewulf, 2007; Gray and Purdy, 2018; Wehrmann, 2018; Clarke and MacDonald, 2019). Research on MSP's effectiveness usually assess MSP at institutional level to achieve institutional goals, thus they may overlook the stakeholders' roles and their interactions at organisational or individual level. Therefore, it is necessary to explore different stakeholders' practices and the motivations behind them. Understanding of how partners work and engage with each other in an MSP for sustainable development is important for two main reasons. First, it contributes to the overall understanding

of MSP in the context of sustainable development. Second, it takes the issue of MSP back to its core origin which is multiple stakeholders partner with each other.

1.1. Purpose and Research question

Against the backdrop of waste management in Vietnam, by adopting meta-governance approach, the thesis will assess stakeholders' relation and interaction in MSP for sustainable development and examine barriers that may inhibit effective MSP. By putting MSP for sustainable development and meta-governance approach at the centre of the study, it contributes to the knowledge gap of MSP and governance of partnership in the academic debate on development cooperation. Furthermore, by assessing MSP for sustainable development in the specific context of waste management, the study also provides sample of good practices for an effective, inclusive and long-standing MSP for sustainable development in this field. With these objectives in mind, the following research question will guide this study:

> *"How do stakeholders work with each other to strengthen the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development in the context of waste management in Hoi An City, Vietnam?"*

In order to answer 'how stakeholders work', it is important to understand their motivations and their perceived roles within the MSP. The thesis applies the MSP framework to support SDGs implementation developed by Eweje, Sajjad, Nath and Kobayashi (2020). This conceptual framework proposes a meta-governance approach to bolster the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development in which it analyses good practices and potential opportunities and challenges based on the motivations of the stakeholders for engagement and how they perceive their roles which in turn influence a set of measures that can either enable or inhibit the effectiveness of the MSP Thus, the thesis further draws on the sub-research questions as follow:

- *What motivates the partnership stakeholders to align themselves with others to pursue their objectives?*
- *How do stakeholders perceive their roles in an MSP for sustainable development?*

Answers for these questions will be determined through a qualitative single-case study of an MSP for sustainable development in Hoi An City, Vietnam, confronting the wicked problem of waste management.

1.2. Outline of the thesis

Second to this introduction, the thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 consists of general background information on socioeconomic realities and waste management issues in Vietnam as well as introduces the case study area. Chapter 3 reviews the extant literature on MSP and governance of MSP leading to the current research gap. Chapter 4 presents the theoretical framework based on the conceptual framework of MSP to support the implementation of SDGs proposed by Eweje et al. (2020) and discusses how it will be applied in the thesis.

The methodology with qualitative research design, the methodological procedure for data collection, interviews and data analysis are explained in chapter 5. Then chapter 6 presents the key findings from the data collection and simultaneously analyses the results according to the MSP framework for SDGs implementation. A discussion of these findings and implications for HA city waste management partnership is then followed by concluding remarks and opportunities for further research in chapter 7 and chapter 8.

2. Background

The following chapter provides an overall understanding of Vietnam's socio-economic realities and waste management of the country and how these settings establish the thesis' context. It will present the current challenges of waste management in Vietnam, introduce the context of the conducted case study area – Hoi An city (HA), Quang Nam province, as well as discuss the rising trend of waste management-related projects and partnership in the country and HA city particularly.

2.1. Waste management in Vietnam

After the Reform (*Doi Moi*) in 1986, Vietnam's socioeconomics has significantly transited from a closed to more market-oriented economy (Yip and Tran, 2008). The country has an average of 6.5% of economic growth annually since 2010, bringing Vietnam into the world's fastest-growing economies (Huynh et al., 2020; World Bank, 2021). However, rapid economic development has also transformed urban and rural lifestyles leading to certain pressures on social and environmental quality (Schneider et al., 2017; Huynh et al., 2020). In particular, rapid economic growth and urbanisation have resulted in a tremendous increase in waste generation in the country which has doubled in just less than 15 years, with an estimation of 27 million tons of waste in 2015 (World Bank, 2018). Vietnam has been also reported in the top five countries in marine plastic waste generation (Hoang et al., 2019). Especially, the COVID-19 pandemic has also worsened the situation with a spike increase of single-use plastics waste during national and local lockdowns (Tinh, 2020; Tuoitre, 2020).

In order to fully comprehend waste management difficulties and involvement of different stakeholders in this sector in Vietnam and later the case study area, it is not sufficient to only focus on the waste management system but also the institutional framework that impacts this system. Firstly, Vietnam's waste management system is still majorly dominated by the public sector.[1]

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[1] At the central level, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and the Ministry of Construction (MOC) are the two key ministries that are responsible for solid waste management Meanwhile, at the local level, responsibilities related to waste management are divided among the Provincial and City People's Committee, the provincial representative of MONRE and MOC – Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) and Department of Constructions (DOC), and Urban Environment Companies (URENCOs) – state-owned enterprises (World Bank, 2018; Nguyen and Bui, 2020).

There is very little engagement of the private sector and communities in supporting the system except paying waste collection and transportation fee. Thus, these frameworks have presented several limitations and shortcomings that are hindering effective waste management in Vietnam. Specifically, local DONRE, DOC and URENCOs do not have enough human and financial resources to efficiently execute their management, supervision and implementation functions (Nguyen and Bui, 2020). Besides, there is no legal enforcement on waste separation and recycling leading to low public awareness and lack of participation of local people in waste management and waste reduction (World Bank, 2018). Additionally, waste separation and recycling are mostly dominated by the financially-driven informal individual waste collectors (ibid.). Under this weak institutional framework, waste collection, separation and recycling coverage is low in Vietnam.

Facing the criticism and pressure from the public, the Government of Vietnam has recently issued and mandated several new decrees, circulars and decisions to foster the effectiveness and efficiency of current waste management of the country. In 2019, the National Government promulgated the *Decision 1746/QD-TTg of the Government of Vietnam regarding National Action Plan on Marine Plastic Litter towards 2030*[2]. Another crucial legislation document is the *National Strategy for General Management of Solid Waste to 2025, with a vision toward 2050* addressing various measures to improve solid waste management, encouraging international cooperation, and also raising the awareness and responsibility of organisations and individuals on sound management of waste and environment (Government of Vietnam, 2009; Huynh et al., 2020).

Therefore, in light of cooperation for waste management, the past two decades also witnessed a rising trend in international and local partnership and development projects in Vietnam.[3] In 2010, as Vietnam has transited to lower middle-income country, the form of collaboration was also shifted from aids to partnership and joint projects with a focus on several different fields and areas (ibid.). Moreover, there are also attempts of multi-stakeholder initiatives to build partnerships between disparate sets of actors in the waste management sector of Vietnam, such as

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[2] The Decision emphasises the importance of individuals and organisations in recycling and reuse of plastics, and promotes circular economy and green growth approaches (Government of Vietnam, 2019).

[3] In the 1990s, there have been records of bilateral collaboration projects under foreign aid such as Vietnam Canada Environment Project (1995-2006), SIDA Environment Fund, DANIDA fund and also from international organisations such as World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP (Huynh et al., 2020).

Access2innovation[4], *Plastic Smart Cities[5]*, and *Viet Nam National Plastic Action Partnership[6]* (Chistensen, 2014; Di, 2020; WWF, 2021). Nevertheless, according to Tsai et al. (2021), despite generous and diverse funding from projects and international cooperation programmes, their implementations are not always effective. This is due to several reasons, including limited facilities and infrastructure and lack of suitable framework (legislation and human resources) for a better change of waste management at a macro level (Tsai et al., 2021; Huynh et al., 2020).

In essence, waste management in Vietnam is a sectoral and institutional issue that requires the engagement of various stakeholders from different sectors. The recent years have marked a wide range of waste management-related projects at national, regional and local levels that involve stakeholders from public, private and non-profit sectors (Schneider et al., 2017; Nguyen and Bui, 2020; Tsai et al., 2021). The following section will depict the selected case of HA city where the aforementioned difficulties of waste management of Vietnam and local partnership projects for better waste management are also prevalent.

2.2. The case of Hoi An city

In the past few years, HA city – a UNESCO heritage site of Vietnam has been challenged by waste management issues from tourism activities. This section will delineate the context of the city, its challenges as well as current stakeholders and projects involved in waste management at HA city which directly connect to the research question.

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[4] *Access2innovation* is an initiative based in Denmark that was applied to facilitate a multi-actor partnership centred on developing a business idea for handling waste in Vietnam (Chistensen, 2014).

[5] *Plastic Smart Cities* is a collective partnership to tackle plastic pollution with several cities in Vietnam (WWF, 2021).

[6] *Viet Nam National Plastic Action Partnership* is a multi-stakeholder platform originated from World Economic Forum that translates commitments to reduce plastic pollution and develop a circular economy (Di, 2020).
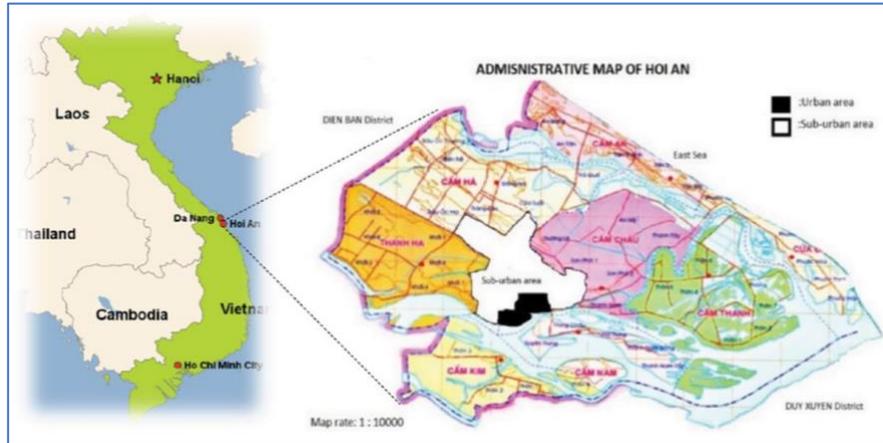
Figure 1: Map of Hoi An City (Pham et al., 2019, p.1078)

Located in the south central of Vietnam, HA city, belonging to Quang Nam province, has an area of 6171.25 ha with a total population of 93,000 people and comprises 12 inland wards and one island ward – Cu Lao Cham (Hoang, Fujiwara and Pham, 2017; Hoang et al., 2019). As a world heritage site with unique characteristics of mixed urban, suburban and rural areas, the city has become a tourism hotspot domestically and internationally in the last decade. The number of tourists has tremendously increased in the past few years, with a record of more than 3.2 million arrivals in 2017 (Pham et al., 2019). Despite bringing a major profit to the city and its local economics[7], the tourism industry has also been putting irremediable pressure on the ecosystems of HA city. Tourism activities have also generated an average of 33.77 kg of waste per day, accounting for more than 60% of the city's municipal solid waste (Hoang, Fujiwara and Pham, 2017). Plastic waste in HA city also takes one-fifth of municipal solid waste composition, adding to the problem's severity (Nguyen and Bui, 2019).

In light of waste management, similarly to many other cities and provinces in Vietnam, HA city's waste collection and management system are mainly handled by the government with minimal engagement from the private sector or community (Nguyen and Bui, 2020). Thus, the aforementioned problems of Vietnam's waste management system such as weak institutional framework and limited resources are also found in HA city. Additionally, the HA city's current waste treatment method is open landfill. The two major landfills of the city – Cam Ha and Tam

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[7] Tourism has accounted for 65% - 68% of HA's city annual GDP and become the main income source for local people (Tran, 2014)

Xuan 2, however, have been overloaded and overcapacity since 2018 (Hoi An Government, 2018; Thanh, 2019; Vietnamnet, 2019). While the amount of waste has been doubled in the past few years due to tourism commercial activities such as lodging, dining, travelling, entertainment and shopping, the landfills have not been improved and expanded in both treatment capacity and quality (Pham, 2019; Thanh, 2019; Vietnamnet, 2019). Consequently, the untreated wastewater and emanated malodour have been threatening HA's citizens living near the landfills (Thanh, 2019; Vietnamnet, 2019). The city has gradually become a pollution hotspot from a tourism hotspot with various problems including large generated waste volume from tourism activities and inefficient waste management and treatment system (Nguyen and Bui, 2020). In other words, HA city has been at risk of losing its tourism industry due to waste management issues. The need for a better, more integrated and comprehensive solution to reduce waste and increase business consensus, involve local communities, and enhance effective management from the local government is significant.

Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the city's economics and created a turning point for local tourism that positively affected HA City's waste management situation. It is reported that, in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on tourism, HA City's waste volume decreased to 29,000 tons compared to 37,000 tons in 2019 (Tuan and Loc, 2020). Thus, taking advantage of this unexpected situation, the city's government has proposed a new strategy to recover the tourism industry in which sustainable development and zero-waste tourism is put at the centre (Tuan and Loc, 2020; Tam, 2020).

Therefore, against this background, HA city has attracted a substantial number of sustainable development projects to tackle waste management issues from different organisations and agencies. While the local government has put waste management at the centre of its development plan[8], these projects have complemented this effort in terms of resources and solutions. Table 1 below details several selected projects that are currently being operated in the city.

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[8] In 2020, the local government of Quang Nam Province issued the Decision 1772/QĐ-UBND of 02 July 2020 in which the government details its plan to achieve the goal of reducing plastic waste generation by 75% and having 100% of resorts, tourist attractions, tourist accommodation and other tourist services not using disposable plastic products and non-biodegradable plastic bags by 2030 (Quang Nam People's Committee, 2020).

No.	Name of projects	Organisations	Plan in 2021	Need for coordination and cooperation
1	Zero-waste model implementation	Pacific Environment GAIA Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance *(NGOs)*	Zero-waste policies and communication campaign for Hoi An city	MoU signing with Hoi An city government; Development of Zero-waste Action plan for Hoi An city
2	Waste audit and waste management system research Informal waste collectors support	Da Nang University and BUS *(Academic institution)*	Environmental education at schools; Organisations connection; Support to informal waste collector groups; Technical support	Environmental education; Development of Action plan to reduce plastic waste
3	Circular economy and sustainable development	Da Nang University of Technology and Education *(Academic institution)*	N/A	N/A
4	Waste treatment training for businesses (restaurants, hotels, etc.)	Hoi An Eco-city Working Group *(Community group)*	Continue trainings; Strengthen networking; Site tours operation; Increase number of businesses participating	Personnel with knowledge about impact of plastic waste on health; Connection with organisations and businesses; Development of circular economy platform for businesses; Permission for testing pilot solutions
5	Low-value plastic waste treatment; Circular economy glass bottling	Evergreen Labs Reform/ Glassia *(Social enterprise)*	Manage input and output of treated waste; Connect with informal waste collection sector; Scale up Reform project;	Promotion of waste sorting; Connection with current recycling systems

6	Collect and deliver plastic waste according to schedule; Composting Promotion on plastic waste sorting (labelling unsorted waste bags); Collect plastic waste and exchange for gifts	Hoi An Public Works Company *(State enterprise)*	Develop regulations on solid waste sorting in collection-fee contracts for households; Call for restriction on plastic consumption; Training on plastic waste sorting for workers (waste collection and delivery team); Propaganda promotion on plastic waste sorting and plastic restriction at the company	Communication and knowledge dissemination about environmental health due to the impact of waste and plastic waste.
7	MarPlasticcs – piloting circular economy project in Cham Island	IUCN Evergreen Labs Reform *(NGO & Social Enterprise)*	Collect low/non value plastic waste for up-cycling and to produce the tradable value products; Build and maintain the operation of Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Cham Island	N/A

Table 1: *Mapping of current waste management projects in Hoi An city (adapted, translated and combined by the author based on Greenhub's 2020 project report[9])*

Furthermore, in order to have a clearer picture of the contested HA city's waste issues, the thesis also adopts an overall stakeholder analysis (Table 2). By defining stakeholders into groups and their interest, influence and resources, a fuller picture of who may be engaged in the thesis's later partnership case study is created. In particular, there are three main stakeholder groups (Figure 2) which are core group, catalyst group and beneficiaries group. Core group are those stakeholders with high interest and influence that are able to maintain, connect and motivate other stakeholders and groups in achieving sound waste management and plastic waste reduction. These stakeholders, despite not obtaining legislative powers or formal mandates, are still vital as they provide constant

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[9] Greenhub is a local civil society organisation in Vietnam founded in 2016 with a mission to connects communities and resources to embrace green lifestyle practices, sustainable production and natural conservation. In 2020, the organisation began the implementation of the 3-year "Local solutions for plastic pollution – LSPP" project sponsored by USAID in 4 cities including Hoi An. The 2020 project report details project activities, analysis of project results and stakeholders involved in the project as well as plan for next steps in 2021. (https://greenhub.org.vn)

support and connect other stakeholders. Catalyst group is referred to those with local factors that can enable the implementation of waste management-related projects in HA city. Finally, beneficiaries group are those that will greatly benefit from improved waste management or plastic waste reduction such as tourism businesses, schools, communities (Mathews and Hebart-Coleman, 2020).
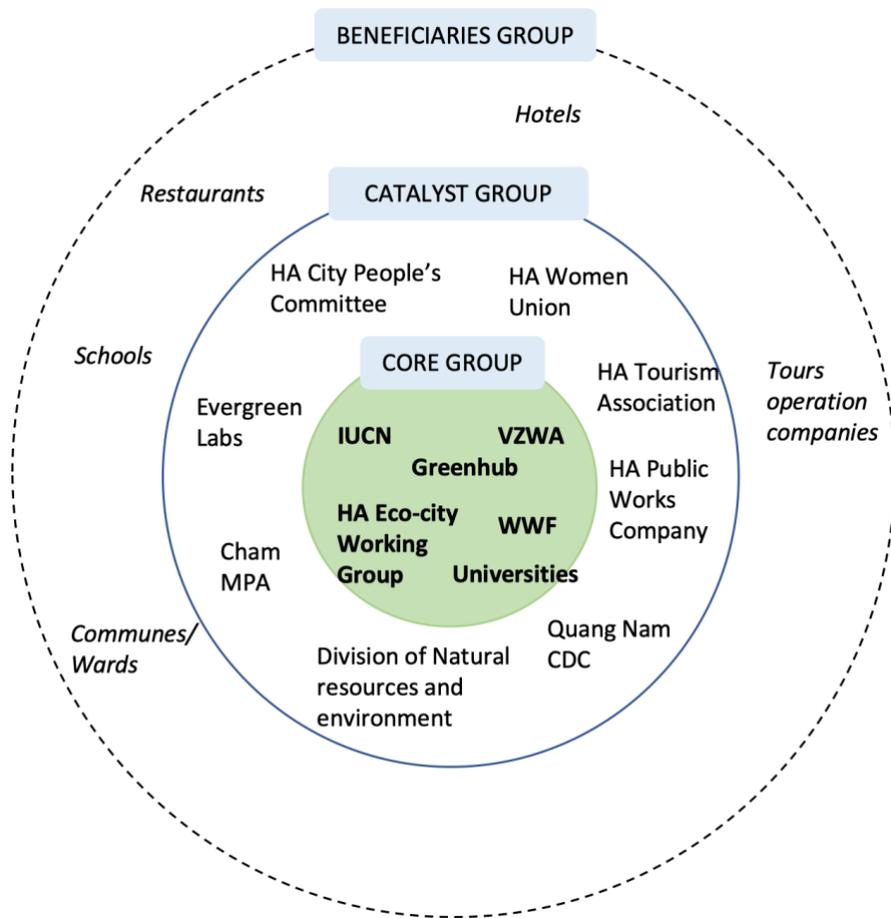
Figure 2: Mapping of current stakeholders involved in waste management projects in Hoi An city (illustrated by the author based on Greenhub's 2020 project report)

Stakeholder name	Level	Interest	Influence	Resources
HA city municipality (HA city People's Committee)	State	High	High	Power (High) Finance (Medium)
Cu Lao Cham MPA	State	High	Medium	Material and human resources (Medium) Finance (Low)
Division of Natural resources and Environment	State	High	High	Power (High) Human resources (High) Finance (Medium)
HA city Women Union	Civil society	High	Low	Human resources (Medium) Finance (Medium)
Quang Nam Tourism Association	Private	High	Medium	Material and human resources (High) Finance (High)
People's Committees at Communes/ Wards	State	High	High	Power (High) Finance (Medium)
HA Public Works Company	State	Medium	Medium	Material and human resources (Low) Finance (Low)
Businesses (Restaurants, Hotels, Tour operation companies)	Private	Medium	Medium	Material and human resources (Medium) Finance (Medium)
Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance / Pacific Environment	Non-profit	High	High	Material and human resources (Medium) Finance (Medium)
IUCN	Non-profit	High	Medium	Material and human resources (High) Finance (High)
WWF	Non-profit	High	Medium	Material resources (High) Finance (High)
Greenhub	Non-profit	High	Medium	Material and human resources (High) Finance (High)
GreenViet	Non-profit	High	Medium	Material and human resources (High) Finance (High)
Hoi An Eco-city Working Group	Community group	High	High	Material and human resources (Medium) Finance (Medium)
Green Youth Collective Action	Social enterprise/ Private	High	High	Material and human resources (Medium) Finance (Medium)
Evergreen Labs	Social enterprise/ Private	High	Medium	Material and human resources (High) Finance (High)

Table 2: *Stakeholders analysis (adopted and combined by the author based on Greenhub's 2020 project report and Mathews and Hebart-Coleman, 2020)*

Hence, overall, three trends can be observed in HA city simultaneously. Firstly, the waste management-related projects in HA city are implemented by a wide range of organisations and institutions including international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local NGOs, academic institutions, community group, social enterprise and state enterprise. Secondly, these projects target different aspects of waste management and plastic pollution. On the one hand, this diversifies resource and solutions to tackle the challenges in waste management at HA city. On the other hand, as the projects mostly focus on specific areas of the city – Cam Ha ward, Cam Thanh ward, and Cham Island (Greenhub, 2020; Le, n.d.), this imbalance of project implementation areas may lead to unequal distribution of resources and overload of project activities in certain areas.

Lastly, as their resources are diverse and not at the same level, ranging from low to high, a majority of the stakeholders have definite needs for cooperation and coordination to either foster project implementation or connect with other partners to sustain their projects. Therefore, in light of these issues, a partnership between different stakeholders has emerged as a new concept for sustainable development cooperation in waste management of HA city (ibid.). Nevertheless, there has not been any report or research on this kind of development cooperation and its effectiveness to tackle HA city's waste management problems. Existing academic research on waste management and sustainable development of HA city primarily focuses on technical aspects and solutions to waste management rather than cooperation, collaboration or socioeconomic factors in dealing with this issue (Hoang, Fujiwara and Pham, 2017; Hoang et al., 2019; Pham et al., 2019; Pham et al., 2020).

Thus, having presented HA city context and the complexities of multi-stakeholders engagement and partnership in the city's waste management landscape, I now turn to review the literature and academic discourses relevant to MSP for sustainable development.

3. Literature Review

In order to understand how MSPs are defined in relation to sustainable development and how the motivations and roles of stakeholders influence the effectiveness of MSPs, the following chapter aims to present an overview of the academic discourses and operative concepts pertinent to the research to further situate the study of MSP for sustainable development.

First, the broader field of MSP will be discussed, highlighting different definitions of MSP, especially MSP for sustainable development. Second, it will focus on the notable shift in the MSP paradigms with a focus on existing studies. By reviewing the definitions of MSPs and paradigms, it helps inform the current understanding of MSP and its purpose that lay groundwork for further discussion. In particular, studies on motivations, power relations, governance and effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development will also be reviewed, noting their implications and challenges to strengthen the effectiveness of MSP. Reviewing what and how these concepts and approach have been studied before informs the choice for the theoretical framework and the qualitative single-case study approach. Lastly, the chapter will conclude by summarising the gap in existing research on MSP for sustainable development that motivated this study. It further highlights some debate and limitations in previous studies that motivated the research question and approach, i.e. particularly the meta-governance approach in MSP for sustainable development.

3.1. Understanding of Multi-stakeholder Partnership for sustainable development

3.1.1. Definition of Multi-stakeholder Partnership

MSP has become a phenomenon in both development practices and academia. Defining MSPs in terms of their origin, composition and expected core targets contributes to our understanding of the motivations of potential partners to work with others and to form MSPs.

Firstly, MSP has become a common approach to solve wicked problems. Research on MSP has pointed out that an increasing number of wicked problems is the impetus for rising MSP on global scale (Selsky, Wilkinson and Mangalagiu, 2014; Gray and Purdy, 2018; Clarke and MacDonald,

2019). According to Termeer et al. (2015, p.680), wicked problems are "ill-defined, ambiguous and contested, and feature multi-layered interdependencies and complex social dynamics" that demand new types of solutions which bridge different interests, disciplines and sectors (Selsky, Wilkinson and Mangala, 2014; Gray and Purdy, 2018). Examples of wicked problems that require attention and commitments of many interdependent actors over a considerable time include environmental degradation, immigration and integration, economic health, income inequality, and capability of government in handling complex problems (Termeer et al., 2015; Selsky, Wilkinson and Mangalagiu, 2014; Gray and Purdy, 2018). In particular, the aforementioned case of waste management in Vietnam in general and HA city can be referenced as a wicked problem as it is multi-layered, convoluted and contested calling for involvement of not only the public sector but also other fields ranging from local businesses to non-profit organisations and community groups. Studies by Dentoni, Bitzer and Schouten (2018) and Gray and Purdy (2018) also accentuate that wicked problems are the very reason that traditional forms of top-down management or bureaucratic decision making by individual organisations are being challenged by alternative types of cooperation. In other words, these complex societal problems are currently driving the formation of MSPs in which different kinds of partners seek collaborative alliances with partners from other sectors (Gray and Purdy, 2018).

Therefore, MSP is associated with cross-sector social partnerships (Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006; Clarke and MacDonald, 2019; Eweje et al., 2020). Clarke and MacDonald (2019) define MSPs as large cross-sector social partnerships (CSSP) that involve multiple partners from all three sectors: governments, business and civil society, which set them different from small CSSPs of two or three partners. Meanwhile, according to Gray and Purdy (2018), MSPs are collaborations among four types of stakeholders: businesses, governments, NGOs, and civic society. This definition is derived from Utting and Zammit (2009)'s work in which MSPs are generally defined as "initiatives where public-interest entities, private sector companies, NGOs and/or civic society organisations enter into an alliance to achieve a common practical purpose, pool core competencies and share risks, responsibilities, resources, costs and benefits" (p.40). Nevertheless, it should be noted that there are differences between MSP and multi-stakeholder platforms which are often referred to as networks, coalitions, initiatives or alliances constitute different MSPs instead of different (individual) actors (Loveridge and Wilson, 2017; Wehrmann, 2018). Gray and Purdy (2018) also list different types of MSPs in which MSPs can take different forms such as

roundtables, policy dialogues, co-management of natural resources, collaborative governance and transnational networks (Figure 3).
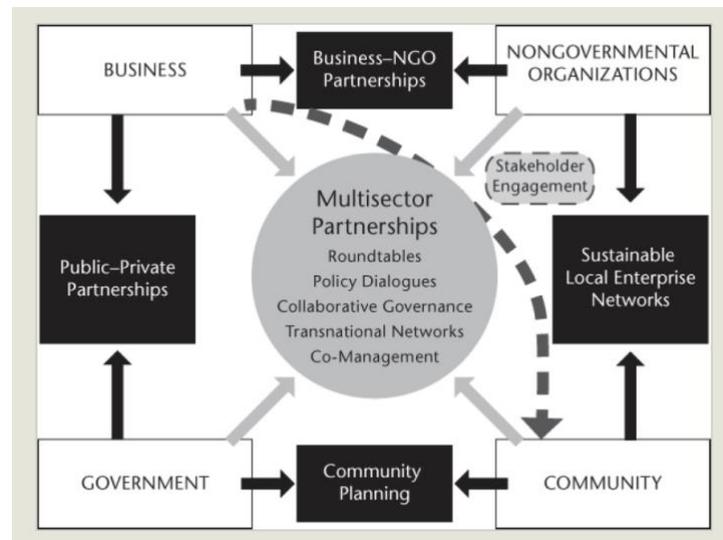
Figure 3: *Types of MSPs (Gray and Purdy, 2018, p.3)*

In essence, whilst searching for innovative approaches to effectively tackle wicked problems, MSP has emerged as a solution to harness these complex societal issues. Moreover, while wicked problems motivate the formation of many partnerships, they also determine the types of partners and stakeholders involved in the partnership as well as the mechanism of partnerships (Gray and Purdy, 2018; Dentoni, Bitzer and Schouten, 2018; Clarke and MacDonald, 2019). In light of these definitions, they inform how MSP is explicitly defined for sustainable development. Thus, the thesis now dives into the concept of MSP for sustainable development, which is the core research subject of this study.

3.1.2. Multi-stakeholder Partnership for sustainable development

In terms of sustainable development, the understanding of MSP has evolved along with developing the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. This evolution has depicted the specific features of MSP for sustainable development and determined academic research on this kind of partnership.

First of all, the concept of partnership for sustainable development has been first discussed and received academic attention since the 1990s after the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in which CSSP was highlighted as one of the primary mechanism for sustainable development (Pesqueira,

Glasbergen and Leroy, 2020). This message was later reiterated in the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002 that effective partnership between governments, business entities and civil society organisations is central to achieving sustainable development (Bäckstrand, 2006; Wehrmann, 2018; Eweje et al., 2020). Since the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit, partnership for sustainable development has been transformed to partnership for the SDGs and become one of the SDG (SDG17) following the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (Werhmann, 2018). Ultimately, according to Eweje et al. (2020), the SDGs are interdependent in nature and are considered as a roadmap to solve the world's wicked problems to create a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

In light of this transformation and aforementioned concepts, this thesis adopts the following definition of MSP for sustainable development presented by Stibbe and Prescott (2020, p.23) for the UN that comprehensively depict both academic and practical perspectives. In particular, MSP for sustainable development is:

> *an on-going relationship between or among organisations from different stakeholder types aligning their interests around a common vision, combining their complementary resources and competencies and sharing risk, to maximise value creation towards the Sustainable Development Goals and deliver organisational benefit to each of the partners.*

This definition highlights the importance of the 'on-going relationship' nature of MSP and its significance of collective actions from stakeholders. Particularly, as the thesis deals with the concept of MSP as a solution for current societal wicked problems such as waste management, the definition emphasises that MSP is more than a quick one-off project and requires considerable time, effort and commitment from all stakeholders to develop and work together (ibid.). Furthermore, this definition highlights the aspect of organisational benefits as added value from the involvement of different partners which is a vital motivation for them to remain engaged throughout the partnership.

Therefore, such characterisations of MSP for sustainable development have since been central to academic debate and research focusing on this type of development cooperation to address sustainable development challenges. Notably, existing scholarship in MSP studies primarily identifies wide range of stakeholder orientation, partner engagement and their impacts on

partnerships' effectiveness to achieve sustainable development (Clarke and MacDonald, 2019; Eweje et al., 2020). This is now what the thesis will turn to, focusing on the divergence of MSP for sustainable development studies.

3.2. Studies on Multi-stakeholder Partnership for sustainable development

Based on the definition and concepts of MSP and literature review, this section discusses the academic field of MSP for sustainable development with an emphasis on the four key domains emerged from the shift in MSP's paradigms over the past two decades that would further help to situate the thesis in this field. Particularly, these four key domains which are motivations, power relations, effectiveness and governance inform the current trends and core areas of MSP for sustainable development academic research. However there are still challenges and limitations in researching within each domain and also between the domains that motivated this study.

3.2.1. The paradigm shift

In approaching studies on MSP for sustainable development, a good starting point is to assess the paradigm shift which presents specific changes and trends in MSP for sustainable development. The first partnership paradigm was presented by Glasbergen (2007) in which he noticed the shift towards the pluralistic approach of governance of sustainable development. Furthermore, in the last decades, there has been a significant shift in MSP paradigms from Pre-MSP in the pre-1990s period to Conventional MSP paradigm in the period between the mid-1990s and mid-2010s to the Emergent MSP paradigm in the post-2015 period, which create various clarification of partnerships and forms of collaborative arrangements (Bendell, Collins and Roper, 2010; Eweje et al., 2020). The main characteristics of the two critical paradigms are presented below (Table 3).

	Conventional MSP paradigm	Emergent collaborative MSP paradigm
Period	From the mid-1990s to the mid-2010s	Post-2015
Boundary of responsibilities	Blurring and cross-sector	Further blurring but effectively shared among stakeholders, whole-sector
Governance	Nested-hierarchy, and loosely coupled later	Meta-governance, adaptive self-control and shared accountability
World view (philosophical assumptions)	Post-modernist, unresolved compromise of sustainable development, and partnerism	Pragmatist, practical solutions to paradoxes and complexities
Power relations	Shifting power relations	Further shift but with mutual respect and equal footing
Expectations/ Motivations	Access to combined resources; Dialogues/ roundtables; Mutual benefits and reciprocity; Achieving legitimacy	Greater collaboration and transformation (new framing, perceptions); Mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources; Realistic solutions; Holistic and inclusive arrangements based on systemic thinking
Key challenges/ Limitations	Actors' conflicting stakes, expectations and tensions; Limited accountability and effectiveness (review and evaluation mechanism); Incongruity between expectations and progress, short-term and long-term priorities; Policy-practice decoupling; More dependence on corporation/Pro-globalization	Forming and leaving stakes; Embracing variety of outcomes; Require huge long-term global investment; Potentially additional bureaucracy; Potential incongruity (local and global); Trust-based pragmatism and adaptation; Co-creating new knowledge for broadening collaboration and building much-needed trust; Internal change; External system change; Tension between issue of rigidity on the one side and flexibility and credibility on the other side

Table 3: Summary of partnership paradigms characteristics (adopted from Eweje et al., 2020, p.12-15)

This shift in paradigms highlights how the key characteristics of MSP have evolved over the last two decades, which is also in coincidence with the emergence of the sustainable development debate since the 1990s (Eweje et al., 2020). Moreover, four key trends can be observed which are (1) the influence of pragmatist view on MSP for sustainable development that further affect motivations of stakeholders, (2) the further blurring boundaries of responsibilities that shift power relations among stakeholders and alter governance mechanism of MSP for sustainable development, (3) the request for innovative methods to overcome various challenges presented in the current collaborative MSP paradigm and enhance the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development, and finally (4) the rise of meta-governance to mobilise actions and resources between stakeholders to ensure the overall success of MSP. These three key trends and related studies will be discussed further in the following sections respectively.

3.2.2. Motivations and Expectations

To date, literature on motivations and expectations of stakeholders involved in MSP recognises that if motivations of stakeholders are not aligned and in complement with each other, it can result in mismatch within the partnership and lead to difficulties in working together (Dentoni, Bitzer and Schouten, 2018; Gray and Purdy, 2018; Stott and Murphy, 2020). For instance, the empirical study on public-private-NGO partnerships in Indian slums' water and sanitation services by Baruah (2007) highlights that challenges in this MSP arise mainly since they have dissimilar motivations and expectations towards their partners when joining the partnership. Additionally, in the case of innovation for resilience, Smith (2014) also points out that the shared interest in a more resilient future has motivated and helped governments, the private sector and civil society align better and advance mutual advantages and opportunities in multi-stakeholder collaboration for resilience. These empirical research echoes the 'overlapping stakeholder value' which is also confirmed by Soundararajan, Brown and Wicks (2019, p.393) that "when participants in a network find points of overlapping value, they will be motivated to come together and cooperate."

Furthermore, stakeholders' motivations can be loosely categorised in two different ways. On the one hand, motivations to participate in an MSP for sustainable development are classified into four main types: legitimacy-oriented, competency-oriented, resources-oriented and society-oriented motivations (Gray and Stites, 2013; Gray and Purdy, 2018). On the other hand, Stott and Murphy

(2020) identify motivations of stakeholders in an MSP for sustainable development as two overlapping dichotomies: instrumental vs integrative motivations and extrinsic vs intrinsic motivations. Nevertheless, both of these approaches highlight "a pragmatic attitude" towards stakeholders' motivation "with an acknowledgement that each partner can contribute different resources and align around the achievement of desired goal(s)" (Stott and Murphy, 2020, p.12).

Nevertheless, literature on MSP for sustainable development are still limit the debate on motivations for stakeholders to join a partnership rather than how these motivations would determine the stakeholders' relations and actions within an MSP as well as how these motivations can be translated to stakeholders' practices to together strengthen the impact of MSP for sustainable development.

3.2.3. Responsibilities and Power relations

Whilst power dynamics among stakeholders is considered as one important area of research in partnership literature (Pesqueira, Glasbergen and Leroy, 2017), research on responsibilities and power relations of stakeholders in MSP for sustainable development is limited. One key literature on power relations in MSP is Stott and Murphy (2020), examining partnerships for the SDGs using relationship lens. The research discusses the inter-personal connections and its link to organisational interaction within MSP in the way that the values, motivations and dynamics they embrace affect the development, influence and impact of diverse collaborative arrangements in the partnership.

Besides, other general MSP for sustainable development literature's approach to power relations and responsibilities of stakeholders often associate them with pre-defined roles of stakeholders (Gray and Purdy, 2018; Haywood et al., 2019). Pattberg and Widerberg (2016) further identify clear division of roles and responsibilities to coordinate funding and resources of MSP as effective management structure. Even so, as MSP grows, there remains little clarity on whether the stakeholders would stick to their defined roles when participating in the MSP. Eweje et al. (2020) mention the concept of 'blurring boundary' of stakeholders' responsibilities and roles from studies of Prescott and Stibbe (2015) and Pattberg and Widerberg (2016), yet it is still not clear to what extent the boundary can be 'blurred' and how this would contribute to effectively implement MSP for sustainable development.

Moreover, the debate on roles and power relations of stakeholders in MSP has also overlooked the fact that tension may "arise not only between actors from different sectors, but also between actors in the same sector that engage in dynamics of cooperation and competition" (Pesqueira, Glasbergen and Leroy, 2017, p.424). Thus, Haywood et al. (2019) argue that trust and confidence among stakeholders are vital to grow and nurture healthy MSP. In this light, partner's commitment and informal accountability mechanism also arise as an important aspect within this area of stakeholders' responsibilities and relations (MacDonald, Clarke and Huang, 2019). These studies, therefore, pose further opportunities and challenges in examining stakeholders' relations and responsibilities from different perspectives.

3.2.4. Effectiveness of Multi-stakeholder Partnership for sustainable development

Assessing the effectiveness of MSP has become a core area of research in the partnership field (Buckup, 2012; Clarke and MacDonald, 2019; Pesqueira, Glasbergen and Leroy, 2020). Effectiveness of an MSP, according to Selsky and Parker (2005), is defined by its ability to satisfy both the partnership's social goals and the partners' strategic goals while still efficiently operating. Thus, in order to measure and assess the effectiveness of MSP, previous research has largely taken qualitative approach. For instance, Clarke and MacDonald (2019) applied a qualitative research design to study of the application of partners outcome to assess the effectiveness of MSP. Meanwhile, Sanderink and Nasiritousi (2020) employed a mixed method research involving both quantitative and qualitative data to study the link between institutional interactions and effectiveness of MSP in renewable energy. Nevertheless, there are still few empirical research on the effectiveness of MSP (Loveridge and Wilson, 2017).

Moreover, there is a tendency to focus on the MSP's effectiveness in terms of its aggregated quantitative impact on sustainable development rather than its stakeholders' benefits and contribution. Measure of effectiveness based on tangible results such as specific goals in organisational capital and human capital may overshadow recognition of intangible results such as increased respect or legitimacy which is much related to individual stakeholders' motivations (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Clarke and MacDonald, 2019). Furthermore, according to Selsky and Parker (2005), another persistent challenge in MSP research is establishing outcome criteria to measure the effectiveness of MSP as they differ for the private sector, government and civil

society. Pattberg and Widerberg's study (2016) on transnational MSP also show that few MSP had monitoring and reporting mechanism which severely limit the MSP's effectiveness at an aggregate level. Moreover, scholars also raise critical concerns on how to ensure transparency in monitoring and evaluation process, especially for marginal stakeholder groups in MSP (Alamgir and Ozan, 2018). Overall, previous studies on the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development present a mixed picture of challenges in assessing and strengthening MSP's effectiveness in regard to the whole MSP and its individual stakeholders that require new and innovative approach.

3.2.5. Governance of MSP and Meta-governance approach

The final critical domain of MSP for sustainable development research is governance of MSP. Academic debate on MSP governance mostly centre around the question that which type of governance approach is needed to make partnerships successful and effective (Buckup, 2012; Beisheim et al., 2018). Buckup (2012, p.25) argues that partnership governance is "control over the assets of a partnership" in which key governance areas can be divided along the dimensions of transparency, participation and enforcement. Meanwhile, Eweje et al. (2020) provide different scenarios for governance for MSP including network governance, market governance, impoverished governance, hierarchical governance and especially meta-governance (Figure 4). Considering the complexity and dynamism presented in MSP, meta-governance has been recently promoted by a number of research as a new approach and practical option to tackle the complication of stakeholders engagement and interaction within MSP for sustainable development (Beisheim and Simon, 2015; Pattberg and Widerberg, 2016; Mundle, Beisheim and Berger, 2017; Beisheim et al., 2018). It should be notice that meta-governance approach is also applied as a means to enhance SDGs implementation (Meuleman and Niestroy, 2015; Eweje et al., 2020).

Meta-governance is defined as "a means by which to produce some degree of coordinated governance" (Meuleman and Niestroy, 2015, p.12303), which can be exerted by both state and non-state actors (Beishem and Simon, 2015). Meta-governance is also described as 'the organisation of self-organisation', 'regulation of self-regulation' and 'governing of governing' (Beishem and Simon, 2015, p.8). Despite their vagueness, these characteristics also establish the foundation for study of meta-governance in MSP. For instance, Mundle, Beisheim and Berger (2017) analyse the relevance of private meta-governance for MSP, or Beisheim et al. (2018) examine the meta-governance of MSP for sustainable development for water partnership in Kenya.

While the application of meta-governance approach with its two broad functions: *enabling* and *ensuring* is considered as innovative and effective to govern such complex and contested subject as MSP for sustainable development (Beishem and Simon, 2015; Pattberg and Widerberg, 2016), these empirical research demonstrate mixed result. On the one hand, meta-governance enable MSP's standard, structure and processes as well as ensure improvement of internal governance system of MSP and provision of credibility for stakeholders (Mundle, Beisheim and Berger, 2017). On the other hand, at national and local levels such as in the case of water partnership in Kenya, existing meta-governance for MSP is rather weak and fragmented (Beisheim et al., 2018).

In sum, while being considered as a potential and innovative approach to enhance MSP for sustainable development, meta-governance still presents varied challenges. Moreover, due to the lack of empirical research on this topic, there is little known how meta-governance approach can be applied and translated into action and practice for stakeholders.
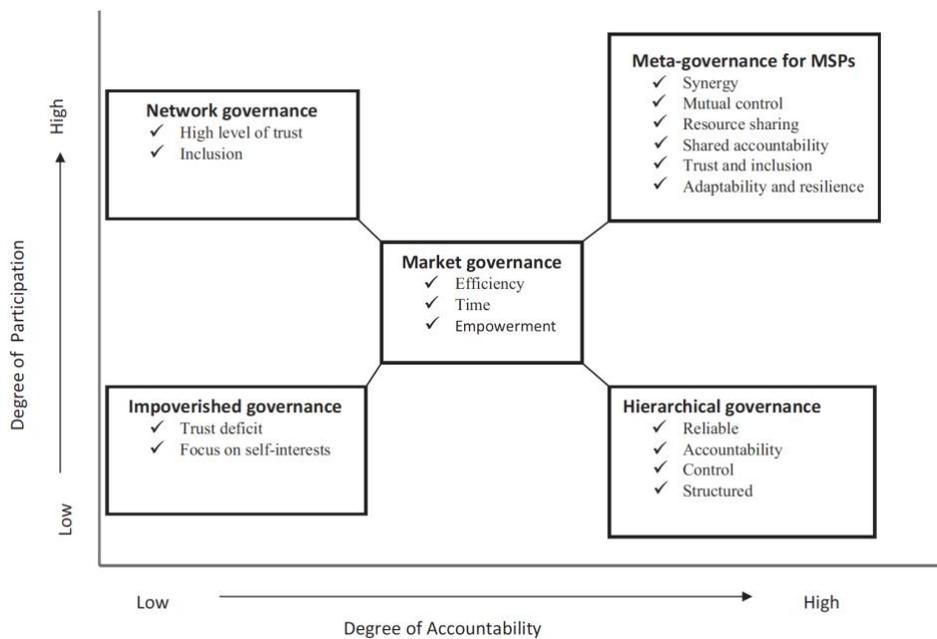
Figure 4: Governance scenarios for MSP (Eweje et al., 2020, p.202)

3.3. Gaps in existing research

In short, while debates about the pros and cons of MSP continue, they have proliferated in a number of issue areas and gaps that need to be fulfilled. Firstly, despite growing literature on MSP

for sustainable development with a proliferation of models, suggested advantages and benefits, there is limited attention to empirical qualitative research examining MSP in a specific contest dealing with a certain wicked problem. Moreover, this leads to the second gap as a major of literature on MSP for sustainable development usually take MSP as a whole at institutional level rather than individual stakeholder level to examine their interactions and motivations which also affect the impact. Additionally, the debate of clear division of stakeholders role with formal accountability mechanism and blurring roles with informal accountability mechanism also poses questions on which practices would be more applicable. Thus, there is a need to explore different practices within MSP that take in account of stakeholders' motivations, roles and interactions at individual stakeholder level. In this context, meta-governance approach has been introduced by several scholars to strengthen governance of MSP while furthering the effectiveness of MSP and stakeholders' capacity to achieve sustainable development.

Hence, having identified the gaps and where this study fits within existing literature, the thesis now turns to the theoretical framework in which I pick up on these arguments and the potential of meta-governance approach to propose an analytical framework to analyse an MSP for sustainable development in the contested context of waste management in HA city.

4. Theoretical Framework

The thesis will employ the framework developed by Eweje et al. (2020) which applies a meta-governance approach to improve MSP mechanism and advance MSP effectiveness in SDGs implementation. As discussed earlier in the literature review, the meta-governance approach has been a unique approach to study various factors such as participation, accountability and adaptability in MSP for sustainable development. Recalling that the research question of this thesis seeks to investigate how stakeholders work with each other to enhance the effectiveness of sustainability MSP, the application of meta-governance approach would be appropriate to explore different answers and solutions.

Proposed by Eweje, Sajjad, Nath and Kobayashi in 2020, the MSP framework for supporting SDGs is a conceptual framework that helps understand and explain how stakeholders can better engage with each other to support the implementation of SDGs (Figure 4). This is especially appropriate when examining the complex system of multi-stakeholder governance for sustainable development, discussed in Section 3.2 and the selected case of HA city waste management partnership in Section 2.2.
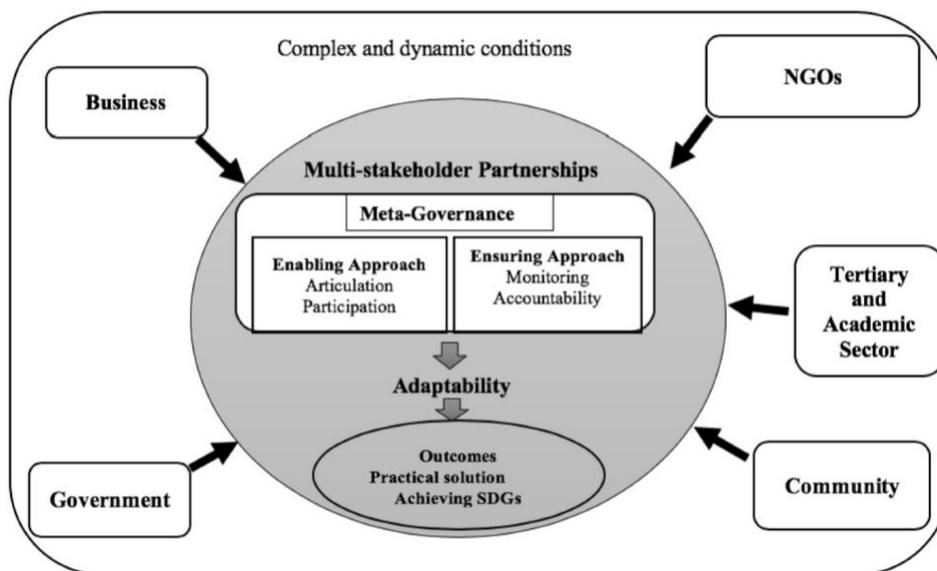
Figure 5: *Renewed MSP framework for supporting SDGs (Eweje et al., 2020, p.202)*

However, it is noteworthy that, despite offering sample practices under the two meta-governance approaches – *ensuring* and *enabling* – to illuminate how stakeholders should work and back up each other in an MSP to enhance the partnership's effectiveness and impact, Eweje et al. (2020)'s framework does not provide insights into the explicit connections between the roles and motivations of stakeholders with these practices. In other words, the meta-governance approach under Eweje et al. (2020)'s framework can only help answer the question of 'what' (type of practices) but not fully provide the connection to 'who' would do exercise these practice within an MSP. Therefore, picking on this gap, I will also propose an analytical framework based on Eweje et al. (2020)'s framework in order to connect and bridge the gap between the 'what' and the 'who' presented above.

In light of these description, the following discussion explains the development of the MSP framework for supporting SDGs and its concepts as well as practices emerging from the framework. Additionally, an analytical framework and its application to the selected case of HA city's waste management partnership is also outlined. This comprehensive analytical framework does not only reflect the theoretical framework application in an empirical case of MSP for sustainable development, but also establishes the foundation for the thesis's analysis that would help answer the research question.

4.1. The MSP framework for supporting SDGs

First of all, I will follow Eweje and his colleagues' footsteps in describing the development of the framework and its embedded theories and concepts. This helps establish the foundations for the meta-governance approach and further explain the theoretical motivations for this framework.

4.1.1. Development of the framework

Recognising the aforementioned challenges in implementing the SDGs and achieving sustainable development through MSP, Eweje et al. (2020) developed the MSP framework for supporting SDGs based on an integrative literature review including critical assessment, analysis and synthesizing of existing literature on MSP and SDGs. A wide range of key words including sustainable development, SDGs, multi-sector partnership, MSPs, governance, collaboration, institutional theory and stakeholder engagement have been applied for broad literature search

(ibid). Furthermore, the authors employed institutional theory and stakeholder engagement perspective to argue for the formation of this framework and renew the framework while adopting the meta-governance approach.

Moreover, in providing explanations for stakeholders' motivations and perceptions of each stakeholder's role when participating in a sustainability MSP, the framework also indicates good practice and potential challenges that may further or limit the successful realisation of MSP for sustainable development. Particularly, the framework emphasises the importance and significance of various roles of stakeholders within MSP for sustainable development. In fact, in comparison to several other definitions of MSP which only include businesses, governments and civic societies organisations, the framework does expand the range of stakeholders to the academic sector and community. A summary of stakeholders' roles proposed by the framework can be found in table 4 below. These specific roles will be used later to assess the stakeholders' roles and help answer one of the sub-questions on how the stakeholders perceive their roles in a sustainability MSP.

Stakeholders	Characteristics and roles in MSP for sustainable development
Government	- Leadership role in partnering with various stakeholders to solve sustainability issues. - Make the partnership consistent with national laws and development plans
Private sector	- Provide financial, technology and innovation resources and expertise - Bring new solutions
NGOs	- "Voice of the voiceless" - Improve intervention and access of governments program - Negotiate with the private and public sectors, as well as other NGOs to acquire necessary funding
Community	- Use community influence and local knowledge to work with other sectors - Offer an avenue or dialogue and encourage other stakeholders to work together to achieve local specificity
Tertiary and academic sector	- Neutral to all sector; - Provide indispensable knowledge and experience in leading a transparent and impartial visible outcome-based monitoring and evaluation system

Table 4: *Roles of stakeholders depicted by the MSP framework*
(combined by author based on Eweje et al., 2020)

Additionally, the framework is developed based on the theoretical assumptions of institutional theory which focuses on the legitimacy of MSP stakeholders (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Eweje et al., 2020). In fact, institutional theory and its assumptions play a major role in the proposed framework and its approach. The following section will explain how this framework can be understood from the lens of institutional theory as well as factors and approaches embedded in the framework highlighting their implications for the methodology, findings and discussion of the thesis.

4.1.2. Institutional theory and the Meta-governance approach

Firstly, Eweje et al. (2020) employ institutional theory to have a better understanding of the effective ways to align MSP within a complex global governance system such as the sustainable development paradigm. In the two schools of institutional theory (old and new institutionalism), new institutionalism developed by DiMaggio (1998) focuses on the constraining and enabling effects of formal and informal rules on the behaviour of individuals and groups. This new school of institutional theory is rooted in the study by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) about institutional isomorphism in which they proposed "three mechanisms through which institutional isomorphic change occurs, each with its own antecedents" including coercive isomorphism, mimetic processes and normative pressure (p.150). In regards to the framework, Eweje et al. (2020) argue that the application of "collective institutional pressures through coercive and normative governance mechanisms" derived from new institutional theory would enhance the effectiveness of MSPs in sustainable development implementation. In the context of MSP, these arguments are also supported by Bäckstrand (2006) and Mena and Palazzo (2012)'s two types of legitimacy mechanism – input and output legitimacy which are the effectiveness of regulations, partnership agreements, representation of stakeholders and relationship between them to enable and ensure fair and inclusive involvement of stakeholders and the success of partnerships.

Therefore, under these assumptions, the authors' arguments are translated into two meta-governance approaches: *enabling approach* and *ensuring approach* that offer an innovative way for sustainability MSP to achieve greater adaptability and practical solutions in a complex and dynamic situation. On the one hand, the *enabling approach* bolsters the institutional theory's normative assumptions where MSP allows to "be aligned with a collaborative platform that

provides sustainable development-related capacity-building trainings, knowledge-building initiatives and resource support" (Eweje et al., 2020, p.188). On the other hand, the *ensuring approach* endorses the coercive assumptions of institutional theory that emphasises "monitoring and accountability criteria for effective governance of MSPs that facilitates the implementation of sustainable development issues." (ibid.) In other words, while the *ensuring approach* contributes to the significant foundations of MSP, the *enabling approach* supports development for a better MSP.

In essence, the framework with its focus on the two meta-governance approaches was developed based on theoretical assumptions of new institutionalism and influenced by transformational stakeholder engagement perspective. The next sections will explain in detail the two approaches, their characteristics and sample practices.

4.2. The two meta-governance approaches

4.2.1. Ensuring approach

The ensuring meta-governance approach of the proposed MSP framework, underpinning institutional theory's coercive assumptions, highlights monitoring and accountability requirements to assure successful governance of MSP for sustainable development. In other words, these accountability and monitoring aspects represent influence of institutional pressures or conformity with visibly codified laws from regulatory authorities on the implementation process (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Eweje et al., 2020). By assessing the characteristics and sample practices underlined this approach, it would help establish a set of sample practices which will be later used to analyse stakeholders' relation and interaction within an MSP for sustainable development.

Accountability

In regards to partnership, accountability often refers to the relationship between actors or stakeholders (Bäckstrand, 2006). According to Caplan (2005), partnership accountability involves stakeholders being accountable to one another, to external partners and, to relevant existing national and regulatory frameworks. The promotion of accountability to stakeholders and partners consists of compliance, transparency and responsiveness (Stott, 2019). In light of these

characteristics, the framework emphasises accountability for outcomes to ensure the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development (Eweje et al., 2020).

Hence, this accountability of stakeholders in MSP for sustainable development approach is translated into official binding standards and rules of conduct as common practices when stakeholders join MSP (Eweje et al., 2020). Moreover, other examples of stakeholders' accountability practices include legally-binding collective agreements and regular stakeholder feedback in order to ensure available and transparent information on partnership's decision-making and related actions (Stott, 2019; Eweje et al., 2020). Baruah (2007) points out that, in the case of MSP for slum upgradation in India, the absence of a legal document or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder has led to conflicts within the partnership.

Monitoring

The need for systematic monitoring progress of partnerships is significant that ensure and further the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development. Eweje et al. (2020) propose that, with regard to the successful implementation of sustainable development, monitoring includes outcome-based monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure the governance of MSPs. However, Clarke and MacDonald (2019) argue that it is challenging to monitor these outcomes as they depend partially on the goals of both the partnership and the partners.

In this light, several practices such as institutionalising a result- and outcome-based monitoring and evaluation framework in MSP, formal monitoring by local government, and individual monitoring of partners' specific goals and outcomes are suggested to ensure the monitoring process and attain both the partnership and partners' goals as well as further the effectiveness (Clarke and MacDonald, 2019; Eweje et al., 2020). Particularly, Eweje et al. (2020) emphasise the link between monitoring and accountability in which, through accountability practice such as legal binding standards between stakeholders in a MSP, outcomes can be institutionalised and accountable for all stakeholders, thus ensuring the implementation and transparency in monitoring activities of the MSP for sustainable development implementation.

4.2.2. Enabling approach

As mentioned above in section 4.1.2, the enabling meta-governance approach, influenced by the normative assumptions of institutional theory, supports the aspect of collaboration amongst stakeholders and sharing platform to enable the establishment and operation of MSP. The proposed enabling approach highlights 'articulation' and 'participation' of stakeholders involved in MSP for sustainable development. Similar to section 4.2.1, the characteristics and sample practices presented below will be later applied for the analysis of stakeholders' interaction and relation within an MSP for sustainable development.

Articulation

According to George et al. (2016), articulation, in the context of sustainability MSP, refers to the partners' participation and contribution of efforts and resources for a shared purpose. This enabling aspect implies the articulation and establishment of new partnerships to solve social challenges in areas of limited statehood, especially in the context where organisations and governments lack the organisational capacity, resources and transparency to deliver outcomes (Beisheim and Simon, 2015; Eweje et al., 2020). In this sense, practices of provision of capital, networking and training of MSP are proposed to allow stakeholders to acquire sustainable development-related skills, knowledge and resources from their partners (Beisheim and Simon, 2015).

Several examples of application of this enabling governance approach in MSP for sustainable development include the "A Working Future" partnership between Accenture and Plan International in Uganda[10] and Ericsson disaster-preparedness programme – a global MSP between Ericsson, Red Cross, UN Agencies, local NGOs, government agencies and local companies[11] (ODI and FDC, 2003; Albrectsen, 2017). In these cases, stakeholders with resources and technical expertise such as Accenture, Plan International or Ericsson have provided knowledge-based capacity-building training to enable other stakeholders and achieve true sustainable development impacts (ODI and FDC, 2003; Albrectsen, 2017; Eweje et al., 2020).

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[10] The "A Working Future" partnership between Plan International, Accenture and local government in Uganda to boost youth employment and support youth economic empowerment with innovative collaboration across all sectors (Albrectsen, 2017).

[11] A global MSP between Ericsson, Red Cross, UN Agencies, local NGOs, government agencies and local companies for rapid and reliable information and communication capacity support in emergency response (ODI and FDC, 2003).

Participation

While participation is not explicitly described in the framework in comparison to articulation, this enabling aspect is reflected through balanced representation of various stakeholders and the extent MSP includes different stakeholder interests (Bäckstrand, 2006; Eweje et al., 2020). This side of the approach is guided by the assumptions that more participation of impacted groups would generate more effective collective problem solving, which underpin the concept of 'governance from below' representing several characteristics of meta-governance such as trust and inclusion (ibid.). Thus, by integrating the participation aspect in MSP for sustainable development, it would further the effectiveness of a sustainability MSP.

In order to assess the 'participation' aspect, Bäckstrand (2006, p.294) suggests the question: "To what extent is an appropriately wide range of stakeholder groups participating formally in the network, as lead or participating partners?". Eweje et al. (2020) also adopt this by assessing varied stakeholders' engagement and roles, calling for stakeholder consultation as well as forms of innovative collaboration in MSP as practices to foster partnership. These kinds of practices can be particularly found in the gender – sustainable development agenda in which women are seen as both victims of environmental destruction and the key to solving the environmental crisis (Bäckstrand, 2006).

In short, a summary of characteristics and examples of practices underlining the two meta-governance approaches can be found in Table 5.

Meta-governance approach		Characteristics	Practices
Ensuring approach	Accountability	- Compliance - Transparency - Responsiveness	- Legally-binding collective agreements - Official binding standards - Partnership documents that outline specific roles and responsibilities of partners
	Monitoring	- Results- and Outcomes-based monitoring and evaluation	- Institutionalise Results- and Outcome-based monitoring and evaluation framework - Formal monitoring by local government - Individual monitoring of partners' specific goals
Enabling approach	Articulation	- Shared resources and expertise - Context of limited statehood, capacity or resources	- Capacity building - Provision of training, capital and networking - Sharing platform
	Participation	- Inclusion - Governance from below	- Representation of various stakeholders, especially affected stakeholders - Call for stakeholder consultation - Innovative collaboration

Table 5: *Summary of the approaches, characteristics and practices (combined by the author based on content drawn from Bäckstrand, 2006; Beisheim and Simon, 2015; Eweje et al., 2020)*

4.3. A comprehensive theoretical application

As the renewed MSP framework for sustainable development was proposed in the middle of 2020 and based on integrative literature review methodology, it is important and necessary to assess and adapt the framework in an empirical way. Adopting this conceptual framework as the key theoretical lens, the thesis investigates how stakeholders work with each other in the context of waste management in Vietnam. I argue that stakeholders involved in a MSP for sustainable development that concerns a wicked problem such as waste management in Vietnam can merit from the meta-governance approach as the key mechanism to strengthen the effectiveness of the partnership and solve the challenging issues of sustainable development. Figure 5 illustrates how the framework is used to explain the case of HA city in which under the complex and dynamic conditions of the city's waste management, a MSP is established with the involvement from five groups of stakeholders. Thus, these stakeholders applied the meta-governance approaches with

proposed practices to work with each other and adapt to the situation in order to enhance the effectiveness of this MSP.

Complex and dynamic conditions
- Waste collection and management is 100% handled by the government
- Pressure from tourism
- Overload of projects and organisations working on waste management
- Imbalance distribution of resources from organisations

HOI AN CITY – MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP

BUSINESSES · LOCAL GOVERNMENT · COMMUNITIES · NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS · ACADEMICS/UNIVERSITIES

ARTICULATION · PARTICIPATION · ACCOUNTABILITY · MONITORING

Provision of training, capital and networking · Sharing platform · Capacity building · Representation of various stakeholders, especially affected stakeholders · Stakeholders consultation · Innovative collaboration · Legally-binding collective agreements · Partnership documents · Official binding standards · Individual monitoring of partners' specific goals · Formal monitoring by local government · Institutionalise outcome-based monitoring and evaluation framework

Adaptability to enhance effectiveness of the MSP and achieve partnership goals in relation to sound waste management and sustainable development

Figure 6: *Analytical framework of stakeholders and governance of the selected case study in HA city*

In this light, I expanded and proposed a set of practices and roles exercised by the stakeholders (Table 6) based on the MSP for SDGs implementation framework of Eweje et al. (2020) to the

context of waste management in HA city. It is expected that by exercising these practices and roles, stakeholders would be able to achieve harmonise collaboration and interaction and advance the effectiveness of the MSP. This table is used to guide data collection and interpret findings, explained further in section 5.3 and 5.4. Both deductive and inductive approaches are applied with an emphasis on participants' practices and insights from the framework used to interpret themes or patterns (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The following chapter details this process and other methodological elements.

Stakeholders						
			Government	*Private sector*	*NGOs*	*Community*	*Academic sector*
Meta-governance approach	*Enabling approach*	*Articulation*	Join network and sharing platform of the MSP	Provide capital and share technology, expertise with other stakeholders	Offer sharing platform, network and capacity-building training for other stakeholders	Join network and sharing platform of the MSP	Provide sustainable development-related knowledge and skills for other stakeholders
		Participation	- Participate in the MSP - Provide consultation to the MSP when needed	- Participate in the MSP - Provide consultation to the MSP when needed	- Ensure all stakeholders groups participating in the MSP through negotiation and networking - Provide consultation to the MSP when needed	- Participation of impacted groups in the MSP - Encourage other stakeholders to work together to achieve partnership goals	- Participate in the MSP - Provide consultation to the MSP when needed
	Ensuring approach	*Accountability*	- Provide legal foundation for the MSP to establish - Ensure that the MSP is in compliance with national laws and regulations - Provide document that outline stakeholders' responsibilities and partnership working mechanism	Comply with the MSP agreements and standards	Comply with the MSP agreements and standards	Comply with the MSP agreements and standards	Comply with the MSP agreements and standards
		Monitoring	- Institutionalise monitoring framework - Establish outcome-based monitoring system	Participate in outcome-based monitoring and evaluation system of MSP	- Participate in outcome-based monitoring and evaluation system of MSP - Enable marginal stakeholder groups to participate in monitoring process	Participate in outcome-based monitoring and evaluation system of MSP	- Support local government to effectively implement monitoring activities of the MSP - Ensure transparent and impartial visible outcome-based monitoring and evaluation system

***Table 6:** A comprehensive framework of practices and roles exercised by the stakeholders within a MSP for sustainable development (combined by the author)*

5. Methodology

The thesis employs qualitative research as an empirical point of departure to gain profound insights into the research questions. The literature review and background sections unveil that few empirical studies on MSP for sustainable development focus on the interaction of stakeholders and how stakeholders work together in a specific context, especially in terms of waste management. Furthermore, MSPs are context-dependent and a relatively new field in development cooperation literature.

The following chapter explains the research design and methodology to answer the central question of this thesis. It starts with the development of research design and continues with case selection, followed by a presentation of data collection and data analysis. The chapter will conclude by reflecting upon limitations and delimitations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as ethical considerations concerning the applied methods.

5.1. Development of research design

5.1.2. Research methodology, approach and philosophy

Qualitative research allows the author to explore and investigate further into the context of this study. Firstly, it helps me seek insight of participants and stakeholders who are engaged directly and indirectly in the MSP especially in the context of plastic waste management in HA city (Creswell, 2018). Secondly, qualitative research is suitable for the study to understand the relationship between the stakeholders in the local context. Finally, it helps interpret the collected data and explain the undefined challenges that may impact the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Flick, 2018). This method fits with the study of how stakeholders work and interact with each other in a MSP due to the complexity and interactions between various stakeholders, especially in Vietnam where social norms and informal institutions have substantial effects on formal relationships between stakeholders.

The thesis also applies social constructivism which is often described as an interpretivism approach as this is a typical approach to qualitative research that emphasises participants' views of the

situation and creates richer understanding and interpretation of the stakeholders' actions and strategies in the chosen sustainability MSP (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Creswell and Poth, 2018). The social constructivism approach also stresses the importance of open-ended questions that are broad and general enough to help participants "construct the meaning of a situation" and the researcher address "the processes of interaction among individuals" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p.67). Thus, these characteristics were applied in interview guides design and the data collection process of the study.

5.1.1. Research strategy

The single case study method is employed in the thesis for the following reasons. Firstly, while multiple case-studies would allow comparison, single case-study provides better insight into the situation. The single case-study method develops an in-depth analysis of the case that is often an activity, or process involving one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Secondly, it is appropriate for an exploratory study which seeks answers to the questions 'why' the stakeholders chose to participate in the partnership, 'what' functions and roles each of them is playing in the partnership and 'how' they play their roles and work with each other (Yin, 2014). Thirdly, the single-case study method offers a robust explanation of stakeholders' behaviours to solve their particular needs by allowing focus on the roles of different stakeholders in a particular MSP for sustainable development (Stake, 2005).

Therefore, the thesis applies the single case-study approach to explore stakeholders' roles and interactions in a particular MSP for sustainable development to address specific sustainability issues and community needs and realise specific challenges of stakeholders that are bounded by time and its activities and relationship in local context (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

5.2. Case selection

HA city, Vietnam was chosen as the case study location. It was selected primarily because of its unique waste management-related situation and also my knowledge of the city in light of my previous career. At the same time, as I delineated before in section 2.2, the city provides a rich opportunity to explore partnership for sustainable development in the context of waste management. Particularly, there are currently around 7 waste-related projects and more than 10

organisations ranging from NPOs, businesses to community groups involved in waste management in the city (Greenhub, 2020).

Furthermore, the case was chosen following a purposive sampling strategy (Pratt, 2009) with the following criteria. Firstly, the case or the partnership must fit in the definition of MSP for sustainable development that was discussed in section 3.1.2, which features several characteristics including "on-going collaborative relationship", "different stakeholder types" and "value creation towards sustainable development" (Stibbe and Prescott, 2020). This leads to the second condition that the case selected must have been operated for a significant period of time with certain results and impacts on local communities. In particular, this criterion aligns with "studying conditions over time" and "covering contextual conditions" which enrich this single case study research with more information (Yin, 2014, p.284). Thirdly, the selected case must be related to waste management issues in Vietnam and located in HA city – the case study location.

Therefore, based on these criteria and with the support of my gatekeeper from Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance (VZWA)[12], the Hoi An – A Green Destination partnership (HA-GD) initiated by Quang Nam Tourism Association has been chosen to realise the thesis's aim of assessing the way that stakeholders are working with each other to enhance the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development. HA-GD, established in August 2020, is the partnership between small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector, NGOs, local governments and local communities in the setting of HA city with the aim to transform the city to a sustainable destination through sustainable practices in waste management and tourism. Figure 6 below illustrates stakeholders that are currently involved in the HA-GD partnership. A short description of each stakeholder can be found in Appendix 1.

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[12] Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance (VZWA) is founded in October 2017. It is a grassroots alliance of concerned organisations and citizens that share the goal of applying zero waste practices to better manage solid waste, reduce plastics, save natural resources, and protect the environment of Vietnam. Its members are non-profit groups, government entities, universities, and businesses (http://zerowastevietnam.org/).
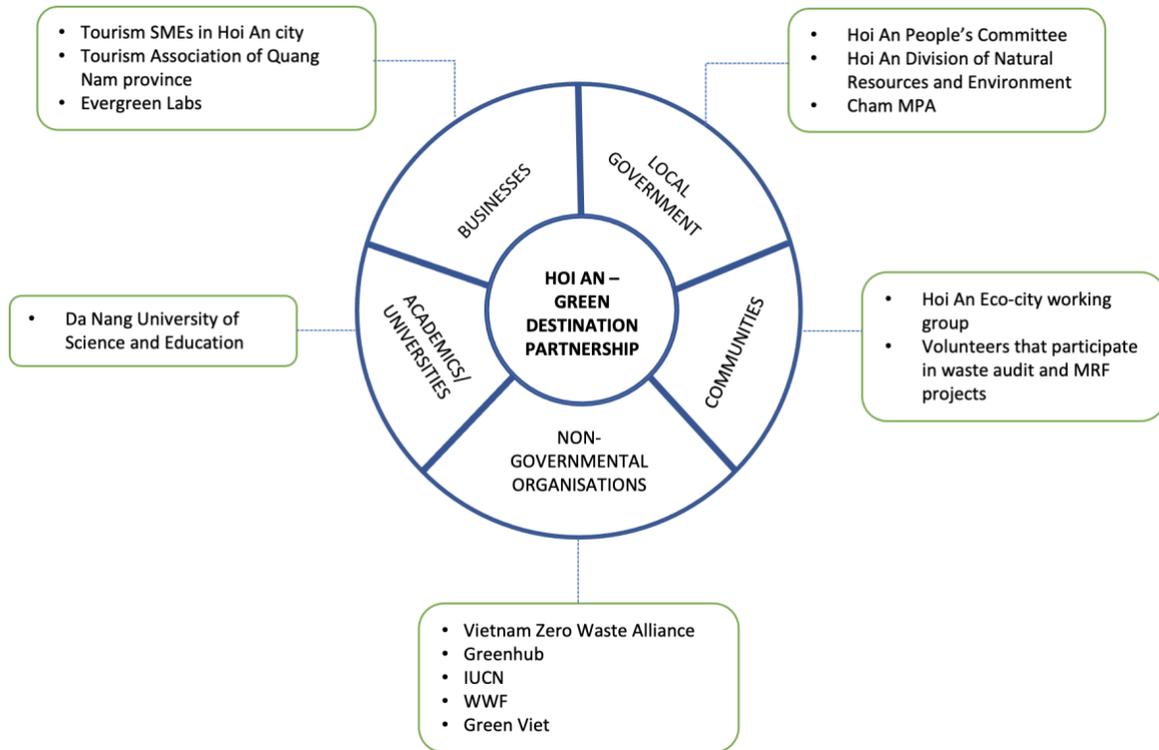
Figure 7: Stakeholder mapping of the case study[13]

5.3. Data collection

In order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the case, the thesis adopted data triangulation with multiple sources of data (Kaczynki, Salmona and Smith, 2013; Flick, 2018). Data triangulation supports more credible evidence and bolsters transparent connections of evidence to the design, analysis and interpretation of findings (Carter et al., 2014; Flick, 2018). Figure 7 below illustrates different sources of data for the research: (i) interviews with internal stakeholders directly involved in the partnership, (ii) interviews with experts who work closely with the partnership and provide expert insight to support the development of the partnership, and (iii) archived documents. These various sources of data enhance data robustness and insights into the case as well as roles and relationships the stakeholders. In other words, internal stakeholders' interviews would offer great insights into the partnership. Additionally, the experts who were indirectly engaged in the establishment of the partnership provided their objectives views and evaluation on the roles of

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[13] In order to make the stakeholders analysis and mapping clearer, the social enterprise – Evergreen Labs has been grouped in the private sector group with the allowance and confirmation of the stakeholder.

various stakeholders involved in the partnership. Meanwhile, archived documents provide longitudinal observation along the case's operation period and different stages.
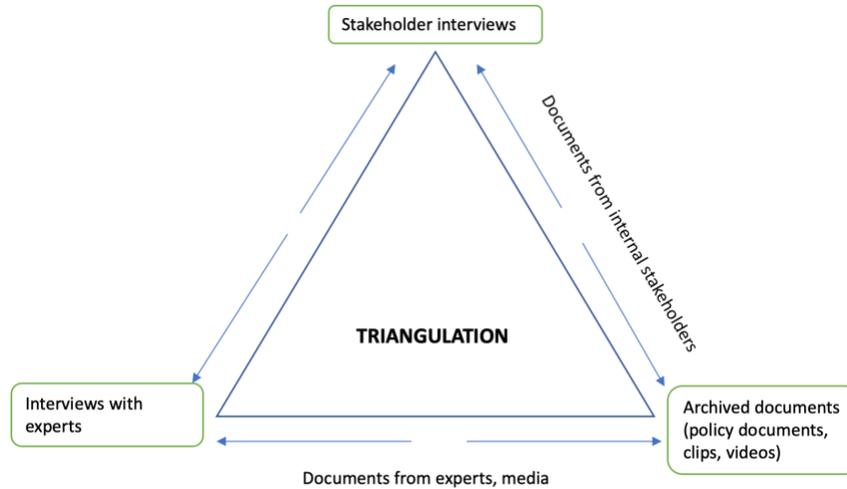
Figure 8: Data triangulation

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not return to Vietnam for fieldwork. Hence, online fieldwork for qualitative data collection was conducted over a period of three months from January to March 2021. It included nine online in-depth interviews with the internal stakeholders and two online in-depth interviews with experts/ external stakeholders. Furthermore, documentary data was also collected with the support of these stakeholders to further my understanding of the case and fill potential gaps resulting from not being able to access the field physically (Jowett, 2020).

5.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

Online interviews were conducted through Zoom, Skype and Zalo[14] with stakeholders in Vietnam and experts who are currently located in the Philippines and the US. Specifically, the semi-structured interview method was chosen to gather valuable and relevant information, provide flexibility and adaptability for the interviewer while allowing both the interviewer and interviewees to express in different ideas or respond in more detail (Turner, 2010; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Moreover, for this single case study research, I have adopted a shorter case study

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[14] Zalo: A Vietnamese-based social network that offer both international and local calls.

interviews approach in which all the interviews were more focused, less than 1 hour long and used to capture interviewees' own sense of reality of the case (Yin, 2014).

Development of Interview guide

The interviews were formulated by two key well-elaborated interview guides with open-ended questions. The open-ended questions allowed follow-up questions, freedom and also adaptability while inquiring information from interviewees (Turner, 2010). In particular, one interview guide was developed for internal stakeholders (Appendix 2a), and another for external stakeholders (Appendix 2b). Informed by the sub research questions and the theoretical framework, the interview guides were developed to reflect on stakeholders' motivation, roles and ways of working. Moreover, the questions in the interview guide are also guided by the identified analytical framework (see Table 7).

Interview guide structure	Example questions
Part 1: Introduction to the partnership – Mission, vision and goals	- What do you know about the HA-GD partnership? - What are the partnership's mission, vision and goals?
Part 2: Motivation to join the partnership	- Why did you join the partnership?
Part 3: Perceived roles of the stakeholders	- How would you describe your role in the partnership? - Who is taking the lead of the HA-GD partnership?
Part 4: Working with each other – Opportunities and challenges	- What do you see as opportunities when working with other stakeholders? - What do you see as challenges when working with other stakeholders? - How have you overcome those challenges? - What have learned from your partners? - How do you monitor your and your partner's activities in this partnership?

Table 7: Semi-structured interview guide sections

I conducted a pilot interview with an external stakeholder who knows about the case origin but is not involved directly in the development of the partnership in order to determine potential weaknesses and limitations of the interview guides and the questions' wording as well as reassess my academic bias (Funder, 2005; Turner, 2010). Thus, several changes have been made after the pilot interview including formulating more open-ended questions not pertaining to the theoretical

approaches in order to leave room for unexpected perspectives to emerge. The official interview guides were then sent in advance to the interviewees with an ethical consent form (Appendix 3) to be reviewed together.

Interviewees

I applied a snowballing technique to identify key informants for the interviews. As I have had to conduct online interviews, the snowballing technique was even more helpful that has helped me reach to important interview participants (Hammett, Twyman and Graham, 2015). I first contacted my gatekeeper in Vietnam, who is the National coordinator of VZWA, then I was able to contact other informants through the gatekeeper's introduction. Thus, a list of interviewees was established with both internal and external stakeholders' contact. In total, eleven online interviews have been conducted with nine key internal stakeholders and two external stakeholders involved in the HA-GD partnership in the course of March 2021 (see Table 8).

Interview number	Interview code	Role of interviewees	Date and Audio recording time
Internal stakeholders			
1	IS.1	NGO – National coordinator of VZWA	3rd March 2021 (00:35:14)
2	IS.2	Private sector – Chairman of Quang Nam Tourism Association/ Business owner	6th March 2021 (00:32:16)
3	IS.3	NGO – Programme director of Greenhub	11th March 2021 (00:25:35)
4	IS.4	NGO – Programme coordinator of Green Viet	15th March 2021 (00:32:36)
5	IS.5	Private sector – Business owner in HA city	16th March 2021 (00:25:12)
6	IS.6	Social enterprise/ Private sector – Programme manager of Evergreen Labs	15th March 2021 (00:44:39)
7	IS.7	Volunteer	21st March 2021 (00:42:08)
8	IS.8	Community group – Founder and Head of Hoi An Eco-city Working group	22nd March 2021 (00:37:43)
9	IS.9	Universities – Lecturer of Da Nang University of Science and Education	30th March 2021 (00:13:45)
External stakeholders			
1	ES.1	Community expert – Programme Officer of GAIA	27th February 2021 (01:02:37)
2	ES.2	Partnership expert – Programme Director of Pacific Environment	24th March 2021 (00:52:33)

Table 8: *List of interviewees and interviews*

5.3.2. Documentary data

The study also employed archived documents as secondary data to support primary data collected from the interviews. One concern with archival research mentioned by Hammett, Twyman and Graham (2015) is that the researcher should be aware of when and how the material has been produced as they may have been collected for a range of non-scientific and objective purposes. Therefore, while archival research helps get a better understanding of the case without physically accessing the field, the combination with interviews and other methods, if possible, is necessary and essential to validate the data and information (Yin, 2014).

Thus, with the help of the gatekeeper, I have been able to collect several internal documentation related to the HA-GD partnership. I have also searched for visual data (images and videos) about the partnership on the internet. Therefore, the documentary data includes internal documents detailing roles and work division among the stakeholders, policy documents, video clips, journals, websites, and Facebook pages collected from different internet sources. I arranged the archived documents into a secondary data list: (i) text documents and (ii) online article, posts, images and videos. A list of documents and media sources can be found in Appendix 4.

5.3.3. Connections between analytical framework and research methods

Table 9 outlines how practices, motivations and roles of the stakeholders were captured through the aforementioned methods to enable analysis through the theoretical lens of the meta-governance approach for MSP for sustainable development.

Practices			Interviews (Example questions)	Documentary data (type of information)
Motivations and Roles			- Why did join the partnership? - How would you describe your role in the partnership?	- Web page of organisations - Partnership document: policy, decree, decision - Social media
Enabling approach	*Articulation*	- Capacity building - Provision of training, capital and networking - Sharing platform	- How have stakeholders collaborated with each other? - What have you learned from your partners?	- Web page of organisations - Social media
	Participation	- Representation of various stakeholders, especially affected stakeholders - Call for stakeholder consultation - Innovative collaboration	- If you encounter any challenges, would you consult other stakeholders? - How would you communicate with them?	- Web page of organisations - Partnership document: policy, decree, decision - Internal meeting and workshop notes - Media: Online newspaper
Ensuring approach	*Accountability*	- Legally-binding collective agreements - Official binding standards - Partnership documents	- Does the partnership have any official/legal documents? - If not, why?	- Web page of organisations - Partnership document: policy, decree, decision
	Monitoring	- Results- and Outcome-based monitoring	- How would you evaluate the current situation of the partnership in comparison to its starting point? - What are the expected outcomes of the partnership? - How do you monitor your and your partner's activities in this partnership?	- Web page of organisations - Internal meeting and workshop note - Social media

Table 9: Connections between analytical framework and research methods

5.4. Data analysis

I employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis to analyse the data and ensure thorough understanding the stakeholders' practices and interaction within the selected MSP. The purpose of thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.78-79) is to provide "a flexible and useful research tool, which can provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" by "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data". This approach is certainly

compatible with patterns matching technique for single-case study discussed by Yin (2014, p.202) that compares "an empirically based pattern" which is based on the findings from the case study with a "predicted one" made before the data is collected which is the proposed practices and roles in the analytical framework (Table 6). A detailed description of the data analysis process based on guidance from Braun and Clarke (2006) is as follow.

Phase 1: Familiarising with data: I first transcribed the interviews in Vietnamese, familiarising myself with the data by reading and re-reading. This step did not only include interview data, but also documentary data such as policy documents. Intensively engagement with the data helped me note down the initial ideas.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes: I coded the interesting feature of the data based on the theoretical framework, the themes – four aspects of the two meta-governance approaches – were applied in the coding process. Applying this deductive approach, I was able to identify and organise data into predetermined codes such as 'articulation', 'participation' or 'accountability' and 'monitoring'. Moreover, in order to emphasise the motivations and roles of stakeholders to explain for the practice, I have also applied an inductive approach in which I looked at the data afresh from the beginning for any undiscovered patterns without trying to match them with the pre-existing coding frame (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2015). It should be noticed that documentary data is also included throughout the process of this phase as secondary data beside the primary interview data.

Phase 3: Searching for theme: Subsequently, I collated different codes and sorted them in potentially primary themes. Several sub-themes have also been developed in this phase. Thus, before moving to the next phase, I had a collection of potential themes and sub-themes with all coded data that is related to these themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes: Phase four involved my review of all candidate themes and decisions to either keep or omit the themes based on coherence within individual themes and their validity in relevance to the entire dataset of the MSP case study.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes: In this phase, I refined and redefined each theme to effectively generate and identify the 'story' underlined them. For instance, I also structured 'the

story' with the analysis of each individual theme regarding the "broader overall story" that the research is aiming to tell.

Phase 6: Producing the report: Finally, once I had a set of "fully worked-out themes" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.93), I selected compelling extract examples that would best capture the essence of the themes and provide sufficient evidence for the analysis.

5.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations have been taken into account in all of the aspects of the research. The thesis follows the Ethical Guidelines for Fieldwork of the LUMID programme. Firstly, before the interview, a consent form has been sent to all interview participants when I contacted them via emails for interviews. Thus, participants were informed of the purpose of the thesis, their rights and any possible conflict of interests before the interviews were conducted. In addition, all participants have given their consent to be audio recorded and agreed on using translated extract in the study prior to the interviews. Moreover, personal details of the interviewees, including name and address will be kept confidential.

Secondly, during the interviews, some participants required not to share sensitive information related to other external partners of the partnership; thus, I took this kind of information out of the record and the transcription and replaced it with interview notes.

Thirdly, after the interviews, the participants were also allowed to withdraw from the research and ask to destroy the data if they preferred. However, they were also informed that once the thesis has been submitted on 14th May, it would not be possible to withdraw their data from the study.

5.6. Limitations

Lastly, some limitations of conducting online fieldwork should be acknowledged. First of all, as the interviews were conducted online, this would impact the quality of the interviews. In addition, audio quality was sometimes affected due to the internet connection where some of the interviewees are residing. Thus, potential breaks in audio recording files may have affected the quality and flow of conversation (Weller, 2015). Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2018) mention that dynamics between interviewer and interviewee is one of the critical aspects of qualitative

interview. Nonetheless, while some interviewees allowed video recording, some did not. Consequently, some interviews lack the interaction and dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewees.

Secondly, while the initial aim of the data collection was to collect all stakeholders' groups perspectives and opinions, I could not interview the public sector's stakeholders[15]. In order to bridge this gap, I have used official documents from the public sector, meeting note and workshop note provided by other internal stakeholders.

The third limitation concerns language. Most of the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and later translated by myself, which may reflect some of my subjective perspective in interpreting and translating participants' opinions. Due to time and financial constraints, as well as given the dire circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic, peer-review of translation or cross-coding methods to justify data analysis and delimit the language limitation were unable to apply (Creswell, 2014).

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[15] I have tried to contact the public sector's stakeholders several times, however, there were no responses.

6. Analysis

In the following chapter, the results of the data analysis are presented. As mentioned above, in regards to the main research question, i.e. how stakeholders work with each other to strengthen the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development in the context of waste management in HA city, Vietnam, I first applied a deductive approach under thematic analysis methodology to analyse the data in which the findings are grouped in accordance with the two meta-governance approaches presented in the theoretical framework: enabling approach and ensuring approach. Furthermore, in the analysis, I have linked the practices under these critical approaches with the stakeholders' motivations and their perceived roles to explain their actions and interactions within the selected case. Here the five key themes emerged from the analysis, which also confirm some of the assumptions of roles and motivations of stakeholders outlined in the analytical framework:

- Shared platforms and conversations amongst the stakeholders to boost knowledge sharing and capacity building *(articulation)*;
- Transparency in communication *(articulation* and *participation)*;
- Promotion of 'Governance from below' *(participation)*;
- Informal working mechanism vs Formal working mechanism *(accountability)*;
- Lack of integrated outcome-based monitoring and evaluation within partnership activities *(monitoring)*

Furthermore, to further understand whether exercising the practices simultaneously would advance the MSP or create any tension among the stakeholders, I will also discuss the interrelation and connection between these practices and highlight potential opportunities and challenges that may enable or inhibit the HA-GD partnership's effectiveness. In brief, adopting *articulation* and *participation* practices together would bolster the HA-GD partnership in realising its goals and maximising its capacity to strengthen its impact. Nevertheless, the debate on the informal vs formal mechanism and the absence of frequent *monitoring* activities would later diminish the efforts and result in potential tension among the stakeholders and the practices themselves.

6.1. Shared platforms to boost knowledge sharing and capacity building

The perceived need for shared knowledge, skills, resources and capacity was common to all interview participants highlighting the main element of *articulation* in strengthening the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development. In particular, sharing platforms, including workshops, seminars and sub-program, are common practices within the partnership that enable stakeholders to learn from each other and enhance their capacity with updated waste management related skills and sustainable development knowledge. These practices align with commonly found examples in governance and management of MSP for sustainable development literature (see e.g. Beisheim and Simon, 2015; George et al., 2016; Eweje et al., 2020).

Organising these shared platforms is achieved through shared responsibilities of stakeholders in organisation and the active engagement of stakeholder groups' members in these platforms. In particular, as a core element of these practices, the NGOs, the academic sector and communities group play active roles in co-organisation of training workshops and sessions. For instance:

> *"We [the academic sector] have been conducting many workshops, keeping track of what we do, working with the community, promoting environmental movements, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge" (Vid2, retrieved 00:08:28-00:08:38)*

> *"Supporting activities of the Hoi An Eco-city Working group include: sessions and trainings on waste sorting and self-treatment of waste at source, especially for reusable and recyclable waste such as organic kitchen waste" (Excerpt from Post1) (Picture 1)*

Moreover, when there was a workshop or training session organised, all members belong to the stakeholders' groups were invited to participate and share their experiences afterwards. This is a way to "encourage others to practice zero waste at home, disseminate knowledge and also promote the partnership activities" (IS.8).

Picture 1: *Poster of a workshop organised by Hoi An Eco-city Working Group (Post2)*

Picture 2: *Private sector stakeholders participated in a 'waste to resource' workshop organised by Hoi An Eco-city Working Group (Post3)*

The engagement from all three stakeholders' groups demonstrated the "shared responsibilities of stakeholders in the partnership" (IS.3). These responsibilities are more connected with the motivations of stakeholders and their own perceived roles when joining the HA-GD partnership. Notably, for the NGOs, it is their mission to "foster stakeholder collaboration in reducing plastic

waste or supporting the implementation of HA-GD" (IS.3), and also their "commitment with funding donors" (IS.3; IS.8). These factors motivated them to organise, coordinate and facilitate knowledge and skills sharing sessions to bolster other stakeholders' capacity. Meanwhile, the private sector perceived their role as a partnership leader as they acclaimed that "businesses are pioneering with their manpower and capital to lead the game" (IS.2). The fact that the private sector was the initiator of this HA-GD partnership and brought forward their idea to the local government, the NGOs and the local communities groups also confirms their active involvement in these practices.

One key question arisen regarding stakeholders' engagement in these 'articulation' practices is the role of local government in fostering sharing and disseminating waste management- and sustainable development-related knowledge and skills. While the Action plan (Doc3) outlined the responsibilities of the local government in promoting zero waste practices to local communities and businesses and supporting the NGOs and businesses' activities, it hardly detailed the local government's role in providing capacity building training for other stakeholders. Moreover, no interview participants mentioned the local government's involvement in this type of practices.

Altogether, the above findings confirm some assumptions outlined in the analytical framework about roles, actions and interactions of stakeholders in relation to articulation practices. Moreover, these findings are also aligned with MSP for sustainable development literature and several practical examples linking stakeholder motivations and resources (expertise, skills) sharing to strengthen the effectiveness of MSP (Gray and Purdy, 2018; Stott and Murphy, 2020).

6.2. Transparency in communication

Alongside articulating shared platforms, all interview participants perceived transparency in stakeholders' communication is the critical factor that made the HA-GD unique and set it apart from other similar partnerships. This emerged theme reflects core values of both articulation and participation aspects of the enabling approach. In other words, transparent communication and information exchange enabled all stakeholders to actively engage in the partnership and interact with other stakeholders while further resources sharing and later bolster the impact of the MSP. Furthermore, especially for 'affected stakeholders' such as local communities, transparency in

communication also allowed room for active participation in all HA-GD partnership discussions. This emphasis confirmed that more participation of impacted groups would generate more effective collective problem solving, presented in other studies (Bäckstrand, 2006; Eweje et al., 2020).

In particular, a similar sentiment was identified among the interviews that transparency through information sharing and discussion helped the partnership move quick and achieve its goals. Before the partnership was established, despite working in the same area, the NGOs, businesses and the HA city local government all found it "difficult to connect and share ideas leading to overlapped activities and unequal distribution of resources" (ES.1; ES.2). Thus, when the stakeholders above participated in the HA-GD partnership, they established both online and offline communication channels. In terms of sharing online platform, the stakeholders created themselves two online communication platforms (Zalo and Skype) and document sharing platform (Google Drive) (IS.1; IS.3; IS.4). These platforms are used by the stakeholders to "share information related to upcoming activities and discuss implementation plan" (IS.1). One significant example illustrating transparent and collaborative communication by the interview participant is that:

> *When the local government draft a new action plan or activities document related to solid waste management, they will share it with the group on the platform. The other stakeholders will together comment on that document and then implement those activities. This is such an improvement in information sharing. (IS.3)*

Besides the online channels that all interview participants highly appreciate, offline meetings are often organised in HA city. While there is no fixed date for the offline meetings, "it much depends on the stakeholders' plan to avoid overlapped activities" (IS.1).

In terms of stakeholders' roles, most participants confirmed the facilitator role of the NGOs stakeholders to "facilitate and coordinate communication activities" (IS.3) so that the stakeholders can have one united voice related to the partnership's goal and vision. In fact, this is in line with the expected role of NGOs – 'voice of the voiceless' in relation to the participation activities outlined in the theoretical framework. Further discussion on the roles of each stakeholders' group revealed that in order to maintain transparency of communication and meaningful participation, "willingness to share information" (IS.3) despite the "differences in organisations' viewpoints and

perspectives" (ES.1). In other words, stakeholders had to work on "their priorities and the HA-GD partnership's priorities in order to harmonise communication and help each other" (IS.1).
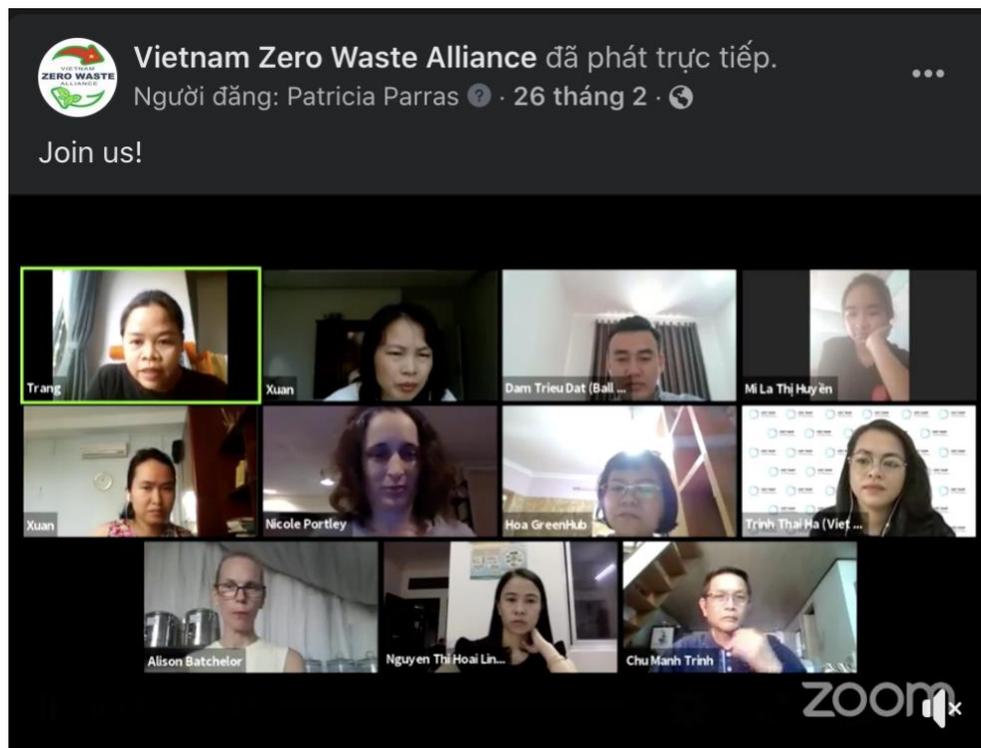
Picture 3: *Online meeting via Zoom between internal and external stakeholders to share the latest report on waste audit activities (Post4)*

In this light, discussing the importance of transparent communication, the community group representative mentioned that:

> *It is essential that the information is transparent; it must reflect the common value system. The common is not just the common of the stakeholders but also the common directions and goals that all stakeholders aim for. As for what we need to focus on, we must also define and debate each other every day. (IS.8)*

This comment echoes other stakeholders' statements on the partnership's goals to serve the common value for a "sustainable and green HA city" (IS.2). Ultimately, this corroborates the emphasis that Smith (2014) put on the shared interests and goals such as a resilient future as motivation for stakeholders within an MSP for sustainable development work with each other.

Therefore, the "willingness to share information" was considered as an enabling factor among the participants to advance transparent communication and positively impact other articulating practices, including resources sharing. Furthermore, all participants found this as a "precious opportunity" (IS.3; IS.8; IS.7) to not only better interact with their partners in the partnership but also learn from each other. Thus, the acknowledgement of information sharing was, once again, found as a vital element to bolster the MSP's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

Surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic was also considered another enabling factor for boosting transparency in communication and participation by most interview participants, which demonstrated the adaptability capacity of the partnership with practical solutions.

> *Even though the COVID-19 has slowed down summer activities, but it has also speed up some kind of like new way of communication, [...], you cannot meet other people, so people make an effort, and make the information like more transparent. And I think they find out that [...] business, local government, like in the companies, they cannot work like that on that partnership. So the information flow seems to be faster, quicker and more transparent. I think this is one of the most 80 of the COVID-19. (ES.2)*

Picture 4: Business owner mentioned the unexpected impact of Covid-19 (Vid1, retrieved 00:09:38-00:09:58)

Whilst the element of COVID-19 or any similar situation is not particularly mentioned in any MSP for sustainable development literature, it is noteworthy how stakeholders in this specific MSP turned a negative situation into a positive development. This element effectively speaks to the "innovative collaboration" practice detailed in the theoretical framework. It further illustrates the stakeholders' capacity in transforming the MSP to adapt to the disadvantaged situation.

6.3. Promotion of 'Governance from below'

This third practice is also largely related to 'participation' aspect of the meta-governance approach which emphasises equal participation of all stakeholders, especially affected stakeholders. The idea of 'governance from below' was expressed through the practice of stakeholders' consultation shared and led by the public sector, the private sector and the NGOs. In short, while this confirms the theoretical assumptions of the role of NGOs as 'voice of the voiceless' (Eweje et al., 2020), this also shed new light on the roles of government and businesses in motivating and enhancing 'governance from below' in MSP for sustainable development.

In particular, the government enabled 'governance from below' by actively asking for other stakeholders' consultation when encountering waste management-related challenges. The private sector and the NGOs highly appreciate this practice:

> *"In our first stakeholders' meeting, the Head of HA city's DONRE has stood up and asked for consultation on the following steps to implement the new Environmental Law in HA city. Our company highly appreciated this action. For us, this was the first time we saw a government agency with management function said that they did not know what to do and asked for support.*
>
> *Then we had a meeting with the Department to discuss some suggestions and next steps. The government agency wholeheartedly seeks consultation. Then after they prepared a new waste management plan, they also sent to us for opinion." (IS.6)*

Reflecting to the institutional background of waste management system in Vietnam, this is considered by all participants as a great improvement. Participants' statement regarding the local government's actions and interaction with other stakeholders suggest that the connection between

the local government and other stakeholders is, at least in part, positive. From the local government, this is "an important direction" they are "committed to" in order to ensure "the community, the people and the businesses all play a role in this common goal" (Vid2, retrieved 00:11:06-00:11:22), further confirming their institutional motivations when joining the partnership.

Nonetheless, there are still doubts on the local government's role in "further adopt stakeholders opinions and implement them practically to manage the HA city's waste situation" (IS.4) or "promote stakeholders' actions and streamline them to policy documents" (IS.5). Thus, how far the local government can support and elevate 'governance from below' was "difficult to tell as it was still at the beginning of the partnership".

Further discussion on stakeholder consultation practice and engagement of local communities group – the 'affected stakeholders' revealed that, as "HA city is a small city with close communities" (IS.4), the business owners are also part of this local communities and "directly affected by waste and pollution issues" (IS.2). Hence, in terms of 'governance from below' within the HA-GD partnership, the private sector was considered as both the object, but also the leader of these practices. They "hired local people as staff, trained and inspired them" (IS.2). Particularly, both the NGOs and the private sector participants considered the businesses were ambassadors of the HA-GD promoting the partnership's mission to wider local community:

> *"We first applied some of green practices in our restaurants in hope that our model will inspire the wider community to follow [...] Another substantial success is with our staff who have gained better knowledge and were inspired to take up more sustainable lifestyle and way of doing business. As a result, our business is improving and winning more support from the community". (Vid2, retrieved 00:05:38-00:06:03)*

This corroborates the idea of 'inclusion' in the enabling approach's *participation* aspect that it helps exploring the extent of wide range of stakeholder groups included in the partnership's activities with their roles as lead or participating partners (Bäckstrand, 2006). It further illustrates the interrelation between the two aspects *'articulation'* and *'participation'* within the enabling approach. By supporting equal and inclusive participation of local community, the partnership

would enable transparency in its operation and further resources sharing as well as capacity building for stakeholders, thus, leveraging its effectiveness and achieving its goals.

6.4. Informal working mechanism vs Formal working mechanism

While the above practices promote the enabling approach to strengthen the effectiveness of the HA-GD MSP, this 'working mechanism' is largely associated with the *accountability* aspect of the ensuring approach. Whilst, in the theoretical framework, the ensuring approach is there to ensure accountability requirement for successful governance of MSP through official legal documents (Eweje et al., 2020), findings from the interview participants and policy documents highlight that informal setting and commitment from stakeholders also play a vital role to boost accountability.

In essence, there is only one policy document from Quang Nam Tourism Association detailing the partnership mission and vision, stakeholders' responsibilities and benefits, as well as operation and implementation plan (Doc1). Another policy document is the Action plan by the local government (Doc3) dated 8th April 2021 also identifies the role and responsibilities of local government agency in supporting and implementing several activities related to partnership. These documents' content outline several other legal and official documents that the partnership and the stakeholders also follow or are bounded by.

Another noticeable document is the MoU within the private sector group. Around businesses have "signed agreement on joining the HA-GD partnership under the umbrella of Quang Nam Tourism Association" (IS.2; IS.4; IS.5; IS.6). According the private sector's interviewee, this showed "the commitment of the businesses to not only the partnership, but also a sustainable future of HA city" (IS.2). Thus, while highlighting the importance of an MoU which also aligned with other empirical research on MSP (see Baruah, 2007), this statement further emphasises the critical factor of stakeholders' commitment.

Picture 4: *MoU signing ceremony between the businesses owners (Vid1, retrieved 00:00:47)*

For many interviewees, an informal setting at the beginning of the partnership was preferred. Informal setting or collaboration means that "informal working group not bound by any laws or regulations, but commitment from organisations and individuals" (ES.2). Discussing the reasons for the HA-GD partnership's current informal working mechanism, the partnership expert shared that:

> *So, what is more of an informal and plan than would be ideal. [...] But that goes, there's not a culture among NGOs in Vietnam, of having really detailed shared plans. That, I think that can be riskier in terms of under the umbrella of government. So groups are reticent to sign on to positions like ideally, [...], but thus far, groups do not rather has kind of shared annual plans. (ES.2)*

Thus, given each stakeholder group's institutional background, their motivations, and what they are currently bound by, an informal working mechanism would allow for flexibility and adaptability. Explaining for this informal mechanism, the community leader described the partnership as "the tangled that we need to untangle step by step" and "bridge the gaps by working together through each activity, each event" as "it is not simple to have a formal working mechanism right now" (IS.8). Moreover, she pointed out that:

Although it is theoretically necessary [to have a formal working mechanism in the partnership], it is still not a convenient time for it. So what is already available, without spending any extra resources, we just have to use it. Actually, other stakeholders also understand, implicitly understand that and still intertwined with each other to work together for common goals. (IS.8)

However, two challenges arise regarding the informal working mechanism. Firstly, how far and how long this current informal setting would the effectiveness of the HA-GD partnership in achieving its goals of transforming HA city towards a green destination, however, was limited. Discussion on future of the partnership also revealed that, as the partnership was growing, all interview participants perceived the need for a formal collaboration and working mechanism. There would be "right time for it [formal working mechanism] to come, but at this stage, it is still not really clear when it comes to that" (IS.1). It is suggested by the interviewees that the current plan and policy document can be the foundation to regulate the partnership in the future.

The second challenge associated with the government's role in coordinating this whole informal – formal working mechanism. While all interview participants emphasised the important role of the local government in "providing the mechanism and coordinating the other stakeholders within this mechanism to leverage the impact of the partnership" (IS.4) at institutional level which were also aligned with the assumptions on government's role concerning *accountability* aspect of the ensuring approach, the current informal setting without any official legal policy document or decision would diminish this potential.

Insofar, while literature on governance for MSP for sustainable development illuminates the importance of an official partnership document (Baruah, 2007; Stott, 2019; Eweje et al., 2020), the findings show that 'commitment' to the partnership and working based on trust among stakeholders would make the partnership work in a more flexible and adaptable way which is also aligned with Haywood et al. (2019)'s findings on trust and confidence for healthy stakeholders relationship in MSP for sustainable development. However, the lack of official binding standards would lead to unexpected consequences which will be outlines in the next section.

6.5. Lack of integrated outcome-based monitoring and evaluation

The last finding was associated with another aspect of the ensuring approach which is *monitoring*. All interview participants agreed that the HA-GD is currently lacking a common monitoring framework. A certain challenge in monitoring and evaluating the partnership pointed out by the interview participants is the difference in stakeholders' expectations when joining the partnership as well as "the approach to waste management and the resources they are bring to the table" (IS.1). Some interview participants pointed out certain incident of tension between stakeholder when discussing the partnership's vision or some common goals. For instance:

> *Each [NGO] organisation has worked with its own donors and sponsors, with its own goals and expected outcomes when joining this partnership. [...] But the method itself, each organisation has a number of approaches, a way to do it. Working in this diversity is a challenge. (IS.8)*

While the current draft planning framework of the HA-GD composed by Quang Nam Tourism Association (Doc1) also outlined the partnership's goals and expected outcomes related to waste reduction and sustainable tourism, it is not an official document as it only determined several expected outcomes for the private sector and lack of other stakeholders' perspectives. The absence of officially binding document for the partnership, consequently, has led to a missing institutionalised monitoring framework with outcome-based indicators for all stakeholders. Here, the tension between stakeholders' accountability based on trust and voluntary commitment and a need for an institutionalised outcome-based monitoring framework is apparent. It also partially confirmed MacDonald, Clarke and Huang (2019)'s findings that informal accountability mechanism can be challenging over time as stakeholders feel a lack of partnership ownership and may start distancing from the MSP.

Further discussion on the monitoring framework also highlighted another challenge for monitoring and evaluating activities is that "it is still early for evaluating the partnership as we just wrapped up our first phase"[16] (IS.3, IS. 9). Nevertheless, each stakeholder participating in the partnership

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[16] The first phase of the partnership was from August 2020 – March 2021 (Doc1, Journal3). The interview were conducted in March 2021 when the stakeholders was about to finish its first phase. However, the interviewees also shared that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, there were also several activities that took longer to implement.

still has their own monitoring framework which is somewhat aligned with the theoretical assumptions of the ensuring approach's individual monitoring practices. For example, the private sector mentioned that they have their "own criteria that are recently developed to measure 'green' businesses, monitor their activities and evaluate the outcomes" (IS.2).

Moreover, due to the absence of an official and legal document, the role of the local government in institutionalising monitoring framework and establishing an outcome-based monitoring system cannot be exercised. As each organisation has their own system and process of monitoring, the academic sector also cannot ensure transparent and impartial visible outcome-based monitoring and evaluation of the HA-GD partnership. The academic sector interviewee mentioned that they just "contributed to monitoring of single project or activity operated by NGO or private sector under the umbrella of the MSP such as waste audit of restaurants or hotels as there is currently no a monitoring system in place" (IS.9).

7. Discussion

Thus far, the analysis has presented current practices that the stakeholders have adopted in the HA-GD to work with each other and provide insights to their motivations, the roles they are exercising and their interactions which also affected these practices. The findings, while largely confirming the theoretical framework, also add to understanding of previous literature and academic debate on this topic. Given that this research aims to further understanding of how stakeholders work with each other in an MSP for sustainable development by adopting meta-governance approach framework to explore their motivation and roles, the following sections will reflect on the motivations and perceived roles of stakeholders and the merit of adopting meta-governance approach in exploring and explaining these topics.

7.1. Motivation: sustainable purpose vs organisational purpose

Findings from chapter 6 show that motivations of stakeholders when establishing and joining the partnership, and when exercising certain practices are a mix of both sustainable purposes and organisational purposes. Sustainable purposes include promotion of green practice, sustainable tourism or zero-waste application. Meanwhile, organisational purposes are rooted in organisations' mission, vision and institutional background of stakeholders, especially for the public sector and the NGOs. Thus, whilst sustainable purposes present 'shared interest and 'overlapping value' which are often deemed as motivations for stakeholders to join MSP for sustainable development by MSP literature (Smith, 2014; Gray and Stites, 2013; Soundararajan, Brown and Wicks, 2019), organisational purposes associate with the acknowledge of differences between stakeholders in terms of resources and goals as already mentioned by Stott and Murphy (2020). However, this can also be seen as drive for practices of sharing among the stakeholders to enhance organisational benefit as detailed in the definition of MSP for sustainable development.

Furthermore, adopting meta-governance approach allowed room to explore how these motivations can be translated into actions and interactions between stakeholders. The theoretical framework of the meta-governance approach and its aspects provided a testbed for the stakeholders' motivations and practices and contributed to the understanding of meta-governance approach to MSP for

sustainable development. In particular, while the application of the meta-governance approach in this case study further confirmed the argument on enabling and ensuring functions of meta-governance (Beisheim and Simon, 2015), it also implied the success factors for MSP for sustainable development drawn by Pattberg and Widerberg (2016) and Mundle, Beisheim and Berger (2017) as an inclusive process, transparency and institutionalised compliance management.

7.2. Flexible roles of stakeholders

While I have argued in the theoretical framework that stakeholders are expected to adopt specific roles when exercising the meta-governance practices in order to maximise their capacity, achieve their goals and partnership's goals to enhance the effectiveness of the MSP, the findings highlighted that it is not always a must for stakeholders to stick to a particular role when working in an MSP for sustainable development. By not sticking to their roles, stakeholders are provided with the flexibility to quickly change to a new role and improve their capacity when joining an MSP for sustainable development, then further the effectiveness of the MSP in a convoluted context such as waste management.

Secondly, the findings also confirm that allowing such flexibility for stakeholders to adopt and exercise their roles can boost the adaptability capacity of the MSP. The example of how stakeholders and the MSP can still effectively operate in the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated this argument. By examining the meta-governance approach framework, the study revealed that to work with each other in the context of limited resources and statehood, stakeholders should be flexible and quickly adapt to the situation while maintaining the principles of transparency and inclusion.

Moreover, the findings also contribute to the debate on a clear division of roles with formal accountability mechanism or blurring boundaries of stakeholders' roles and responsibilities with informal accountability mechanism within MSP. While they corroborate those drawn by MacDonald, Clarke and Huang (2019) in term of informal accountability mechanism, they still confirm the need for a formal accountability mechanism between stakeholders in order to make the MSP effectively work and achieve its goals which have been illustrated by many MSP literature such as Baruah (2007), Mundle, Beisheim and Berger (2017), Stott (2019), and Eweje et al. (2020).

8. Conclusion

This study departed from the premise that MSP is a popular approach to further sustainable development implementation and the need to understand how stakeholders within an MSP for sustainable development work and interact with each other. In this regard, the thesis employed a qualitative research methodology for the single-case study of HA-GD partnership in waste management in Hoi An city, Vietnam, to explore its stakeholders' behaviours and interactions. Furthermore, this research took a step back and analysed the MSP at stakeholders level by adopting and improvising the meta-governance framework proposed by Eweje et al. (2020). The improvised framework, which includes the two meta-governance approaches – *ensuring* and *enabling* combines good practices for stakeholders and their expected roles to help them implement these practices and govern the partnership.

Therefore, overall, by asking how the stakeholders work with each other, a comprehensive account of good practices and challenges of stakeholders within the partnership has been established. Notably, the findings have presented good practices and what the HA-GD partnership is currently lacking with detailed analysis of motivations and flexible roles of stakeholders that are currently driving the stakeholders' behaviours and interactions. The findings have also underlined the preceding assumptions that stakeholders in an MSP for sustainable development can merit from the adoption of meta-governance approach to ensure the foundations of the MSP and stakeholders' work while enabling their collaboration to achieve their organisational goals and partnership goals. Moreover, it corroborates most literature on MSP that confirms the shared interest and values in sustainable development as motivations for stakeholders to join and drive their actions. Lastly, it further responds to the question posed by some in the MSP for sustainable development concerning the accountability mechanism for stakeholders in which it enables understanding of the essence of stakeholders' flexibility and adaptability to strengthen the effectiveness of MSP for sustainable development.

Therefore, with respect to further research, the findings from this thesis suggest that future research should continue exploring the potential of the meta-governance approach in MSP for sustainable development. Moreover, further research with cross-case studies and a larger sample of data on

stakeholders and MSP would be valuable to establish the extent to which the application of the meta-governance approach affects different cases in the same context or different contexts. Such research would help generate and extend a list of good practices and recommendations for stakeholders. Additionally, research based on quantitative method could potentially provide other insights and perspectives for this topic. More specifically, based on findings from this research, a set of indicators can be established to measure the practices and their impacts in relation to stakeholders' motivations and roles. Thus, it would further untangle the tangle of MSP and enhance its application as an effective means to implement sustainable development.

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Appendix 1: Description of Stakeholders

No.	Name of stakeholders	Type of organisation	Description
1	Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance	NGO	Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance (VZWA) is founded in October 2017. It is a grassroots alliance of concerned organisations and citizens that share the goal of applying zero waste practices to better manage solid waste, reduce plastics, save natural resources, and protect the environment of Vietnam. Its members are non-profit groups, government entities, universities, and businesses (http://zerowastevietnam.org/)
2	Greenhub	NGO	Greenhub is a local civil society organisation in Vietnam founded in 2016 with a mission to connects communities and resources to embrace green lifestyle practices, sustainable production and natural conservation. (https://greenhub.org.vn/)
3	GreenViet	NGO	GreenViet is a local NGO with mission to conserve ecosystems and endangered species of flora and fauna in Vietnam. GreenViet has With the role of supporting the community's development, the ABCD approach is practiced by GreenViet in order to work with communities, government agencies, partners & sponsors. The ABCD approach helps to identify and mobilize the internal strengths of each community, and then lead to the formation of strong team. (https://greenviet.org/)
4	IUCN Vietnam	NGO	IUCN has been working in Viet Nam since the mid-1980s, and the country became a State Member in 1993, the same year the IUCN Viet Nam office was established. Together with government, NGOs, academia and businesses, we deliver programmes focused on two main thematic areas: water and wetlands and coastal and marine. Current projects include supporting the formation of multi-stakeholder groups to supervise initiatives that impact on the environment, supporting local NGOs with small grant financing, enhancing the quality of environmental reporting, engaging business and cooperating with provincial governments to demonstrate nature-based solutions. (https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/viet-nam)
5	WWF Vietnam	NGO	WWF-Viet Nam is recognised as the leading conservation organisation in the country, bringing

			solutions and support to the government and other key players to meet the country's development challenges. (https://vietnam.panda.org/)
6	Quang Nam Tourism Association	Private	Quang Nam Tourism Association, a voluntary social-professional organization of enterprises with legal status, operating in the field of tourism and other fields related to tourism in Quang Nam province. With the motto: determined to act towards the core values: **"Linking – Innovation – Innovation – Sustainable development"**, Quang Nam Tourism Association determined to focus on the key tasks with the Association. Members build the Association to become a close cooperation organization, support to improve business performance in a sustainable manner and promote strengthening the legitimate rights and interests of the Association. (https://qta.org.vn/en/gioi-thieu/)
7	Tourism Small and Medium Enterprises in Hoi An city	Private	30 small and medium enterprises working in Hoi An city including hotels, hostels, homestay businesses, restaurants, tour operation companies, transportation companies.
8	Evergreen Labs	Private (Social enterprise)	Established in 2016 and headquartered in Da Nang, Vietnam, Evergreen Labs is a purpose-driven, creative business lab focused on innovating towards sustainable solutions and ventures for the future. With an international team comprised of future changemakers, we focus on solving today's social and environmental issues. We envision a world where people & the environment live as one, fully circular balanced system. (https://evergreenlabs.org/)
6	Da Nang University of Science and Education	Academic	The University of Da Nang - University of Science and Education has the mission of training and developing high quality human resources, the core of which is teacher training, and conducting scientific research and technology transfer in educational science, natural science and social science and humanity in order to actively boost the country development, with the focus on the Central Region and Highlands. (https://en.ued.udn.vn/)
8	Hoi An Eco-city Working Group	Community group	Hoi An Eco City Working Group facilitates and promotes community practices from local businesses, social enterprises, schools and education sector, and other development partners - our vision is ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL FOR HOI AN ECO CITY (https://www.facebook.com/hoianecwg)

9	Hoi An People's Committee	Public sector	The People's Committee is a state administrative body of the administrative system of Vietnam. Hoi An city People's Committee is the law enforcement agency at Hoi An city. (http://hoian.gov.vn/default.aspx)
10	Hoi An Division of Natural Resources and Environment	Public sector	The division is a specialized agency of the City People's Committee, has the function of advising and assisting the City People's Committee in state management on: land, water resources, natural resources, environment, meteorology, hydrology, surveying, cartography, seas and islands; appraisal of compensation, assistance and resettlement plans (http://hoian.gov.vn/CMSPages/BaiViet/Default.aspx?IDBaiViet=12905)
11	Management Board of Cham Islands Marine Protected Area (MPA)	Public sector	The board is a public agency with administrativee function at Cham Islands MPA. (http://culaochammpa.com.vn/)

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Interview guide for external stakeholders

Preliminary information

The research focuses on "Hoi An – A Green Destination" partnership with the engagement of multi-stakeholders from public sector, private sector, NGOs and local community.

The purpose of the research is to examine this multi-stakeholder partnership and its stakeholders' motivations, relation and interaction. The research aims to find different practices that stakeholders are currently applying within the partnership in order to effectively enhance the partnership's effectiveness and impact.

1. **About Hoi An – A Green Destination partnership**

1.1. What do you know about the partnership? Who are the stakeholders in this partnership?

1.2. What do you know about the partnership's goals and long-term vision and mission?

1.3. How would you describe the partnership situation today in comparison to its beginning days?

2. **Motivation**

2.1. According to you, what are the motivations of stakeholders when establishing and joining this partnership?

3. **Roles of the stakeholders**

3.1. How would you describe the roles of different stakeholders in the partnership?

3.2. Who is the one initiated this partnership? Who is currently taking the lead of this partnership? Who is currently coordinating the partnership's activities?

4. **Working with each other**

4.1. How have stakeholders worked together to achieve the partnership's goals in relation to sustainability/ sustainable development?

4.2. What do you see as opportunities for stakeholders when involving in this partnership?

4.3. What do you see as challenges for the stakeholders when involving in this partnership? How have they overcome those challenges?

Accountability

- Does the partnership have any official/legal documents? If not, why?

Monitoring
- How would you evaluate the current situation of the partnership in comparison to its starting point?
- What are the expected outcomes of the partnership?
- How are stakeholders doing to monitor activities in this partnership?

Articulation
- How have stakeholders collaborated with each other?
- What have you learned from involving in this partnership?

Participation
- If you encounter any challenges, would you consult other stakeholders?
- How would stakeholders communicate with each other?

Interview guide for internal stakeholders (Vietnamese version also provided)

Preliminary information

The research focuses on "Hoi An – A Green Destination" partnership with the engagement of multi-stakeholders from public sector, private sector, NGOs and local community.

The purpose of the research is to examine this multi-stakeholder partnership and its stakeholders' motivations, relation and interaction. The research aims to find different practices that stakeholders are currently applying within the partnership in order to effectively enhance the partnership's effectiveness and impact.

1. <u>About Hoi An – A Green Destination partnership</u>

1.1. What do you know about the partnership? Who are the stakeholders in this partnership?

1.2. What do you know about the partnership's goals and long-term vision and mission?

1.3. How would you describe the partnership situation today in comparison to its beginning days?

2. <u>Motivation</u>

2.1. What are your motivations when establishing/ joining this partnership? Why did you join the partnership?

3. <u>Roles of the stakeholders</u>

3.1. How would you describe your role in the partnership?

3.2. Who is the one initiated this partnership? Who is currently taking the lead of this partnership? Who is currently coordinating the partnership's activities?

4. <u>Working with each other</u>

4.1. How have you worked with other stakeholders to achieve the partnership's goals in relation to sustainability/ sustainable development?

4.2. What do you see as opportunities when engaging in this partnership?

4.3. What do you see as challenges when engaging in this partnership? How have you overcome those challenges?

Accountability

-Does the partnership have any official/legal documents? If not, why?

Monitoring
- How would you evaluate the current situation of the partnership in comparison to its starting point?
- What are the expected outcomes of the partnership?
- How do you monitor your and your partner's activities in this partnership?

Articulation
- How have stakeholders collaborated with each other?
- What have you learned from involving in this partnership?

Participation
- If you encounter any challenges, would you consult other stakeholders?
- How would you communicate with them?

Appendix 3: Consent form

Master thesis: A Meta-governance approach to Multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development in the context of waste management in Hoi An city, Vietnam

Master Candidate: Luong Binh Nguyen Vo

Interview Consent Form

I have been given information about A Meta-governance approach to Multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development in the context of waste management in Hoi An city, Vietnam and discussed the research project with Ms. Luong Binh Nguyen Vo who is conducting this research as a part of a Master's in International Development and Management.

I understand that, if I consent to participate in this project, I will be asked to give the researcher a duration of approximately 60 minutes of my time to participate in the process.

I understand that the interview will be recorded, and I consent to record the interview. I also consent to transcribe and quote directly from the interview for the study purpose provided that my name is hidden or coded.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without any reasons.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in the research as it has been described to me. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for thesis and journal publications, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Name: …………………………………………………………
Signed: …………………………………………………………..
Date: ………………………………………………………….

Appendix 4: Archived documents and media list

Document list

No.	Code	Name of documents	Source
1	Doc1	Planning Framework – Commitment programme in Waste Reduction and Action Plan of Businesses in 2021 – 2023 towards Hoi An – A Green Destination (Draft)	Shared by internal stakeholder
2	Doc2	Hoi An – Project Mapping	Shared by internal stakeholder
3	Doc3	Doc. No.801/KH-UBND of Hoi An City People's Committee (Date 07 April 2021) Action Plan – Implementation of solutions to reduce the use of plastic bags and single-used plastic products and improve efficiency in minimizing, classifying and treating waste at source to protect the city environment in 2021	Shared by internal stakeholder
4	Doc4	Hoi An – Towards a Zero Waste City Meeting Minute	Shared by internal stakeholder
5	Doc5	MRF Short Proposal for Cham Island	Shared by external stakeholder
6	Doc6	Doc. No.430/TB-UBND of Hoi An City People's Committee (Date 23 October 2020) Meeting conclusion – Meeting with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Evergreen Labs Co., Ltd. to discuss the sustainable waste management project at the Eo Gio landfill – Cham Island	Shared by internal stakeholder

Media list

No.	Code	Description	Source/ Link
1	Post1	BUSINESSES TAKE ACTIONS IN WASTE REDUCTION TOWARDS HOI AN - A GREEN DESTINATION	Hoi An Eco-city Working Group Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/hoianecwg/posts/1503668763161606
2	Post2	WASTE TO RESOURCE program in Hoi An	Hoi An Eco-city Working Group Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/hoianecwg/posts/1536589629869519
3	Post3	Right now at Dana Connect Hoi An, a skill-share workshop on Kitchen waste recycling at home. Within this next 2 hours, join us in person when you can!	Hoi An Eco-city Working Group Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/hoianecwg/posts/1539094866285662
4	Post4	Webinar on sharing waste audit report	Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance Facebook: https://fb.watch/5thRAIzWZc/
5	Journal1	In search of the 'zero waste' holy grail	https://vietnamnews.vn/sunday/features/839164/in-search-of-the-zero-waste-holy-grail.html
6	Journal2	Zero-waste communities emerge in Hoi An	https://vietnamnet.vn/en/sci-tech-environment/zero-waste-communities-emerge-in-hoi-an-650246.html
7	Journal3	Doanh nghiệp giảm rác thải hướng tới Hội An trở thành điểm đến xanh	http://tapchimoitruong.vn/chuyen-muc-3/doanh-nghiep-giam-rac-thai-huong-toi-hoi-an-tro-thanh-diem-den-xanh-23146
8	Vid1	Short documentary: Businesses take actions in waste reduction towards Hoi An – A Green Destination	Hoi An Eco-city Working Group Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gftSfzNvRbA
9	Vid2	Dialogue: Hoi An City Practices Zero Waste Solutions Towards Green Destination	Zero Waste Asia Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akdDzGx48Qg