

## Completion Report

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The research aimed to explore different schemes for international cooperation at local level between Viet Nam and Japan in the context of the ever-growing relationship between the two countries. Taking Da Nang City as the case study, the research has examined three popular types of cooperation, among others, which allow Vietnamese localities to tie up with Japanese localities. These are establishing official relationship, utilizing the support of a third party and joining intercity networks.

Forming the official relationship through a signed agreement is one of the ideal ways that local governments use to engage in international exchange. The official relationship can be named 'sister city' or 'friendship city' or 'twin city' according to each country's norm and regulation. There is no legal definition for 'sister city' in both Viet Nam and Japan, but in some municipalities in Japan, a 'friendship city' is positioned as a prelude to a 'sister city'. Vietnamese data sources documented that more than 50 written agreements were signed among localities of the two countries over the past years, the majority of which falls into 'the friendly and cooperative city' relationship rather than sister city affiliation.

Another scheme for localities to participated in a collaboration is by utilizing the support of a third party, which can be non-state actors or government agencies. The term 'cooperation' or 'collaboration' is more commonly used in this situation as it emphasizes joint efforts from both localities in conducting a funded project. Unlike sister city relationship with broader exchange fields, city-to-city collaboration usually focuses on a particular issue with clear objectives within a fix time frame. Japan International Cooperation Agency's Development Partnership Program and Ministry of Environment of Japan's City-to-City program among others are considered as examples for which localities can apply.

Intercity network and forum also act as a platform for localities to promote themselves, to be updated with current propensity in urban management and to seek opportunities for cooperation. CITYNET and some of the regional networks initiated by the Japanese municipalities such as Asia Smart City Conference, Asian-Pacific City Summit have engaged both Vietnamese and Japanese localities since establishment.

Not all localities in both countries have fully accessed these cooperation schemes, therefore it is suggested that either government agencies or non-state organizations should shed light on cooperation at local level and provide further connecting assistance at both ends. Whereby, localities from Viet Nam are also expected to be more active in approaching different stakeholders to attain suitable forms of cooperation with the Japanese localities. For those which already entered an official affiliation, the allocation of certain budget and the assignment of relevant personnel are important to sustain the exchange activities over time and to boost the relationship to higher levels.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Sharing the study results to the lecturers and Year 4<sup>th</sup> students at the Faculty of Japanese language studies, Da Nang University of Foreign Languages Studies.

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