

Dear cherished readers,

As we enter the festive seasons, gifts to express our love and gratitude have been generously exchanged between loved ones. At Fulbright, in early October, gifts of knowledge have been extended to talented students who successfully passed the rigorous entrance rounds. At the Inauguration Ceremony for MPP2024, FSPPM welcomed its first Lao students who are young policymakers in their country under MUSP scholarship program – an initiative funded by USAID to bring together public policy students of Mekong countries, aggregating collective wisdom to address trans-national challenges. Also, MPP24 students working in civil organizations sector are endowed with additional financial aids from FSA Scholarship Grant to pursue their education at Fulbright. These generous deeds epitomize our community's emphasis on education and commitment to support zealous learners in their quest for knowledge.

In this quarter, our faculty and research team have organized and delivered insightful courses in the realm of sustainability, environment, and energy to local public officials and the public. We expand our reach from Mekong Delta to Central Coast provinces, travelling to places which are valued for their great potential in renewable energy along the coast of Vietnam. At campus, we hosted enlightening seminars on wind energy, urban planning and macroeconomy, etc.

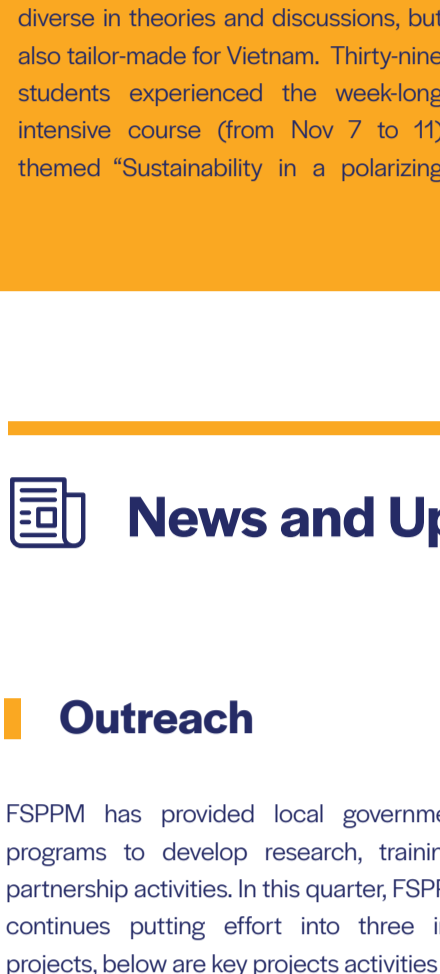
In addition, many published articles and studies that you can find more details below are presented in this issue.

We hope you have a good time reading the issue and appreciate for your support to realize our shared vision.

Warmest regards,

Editorial Board

Highlights



On the morning of October 17, 2022, the Inauguration Ceremony for the Master in Public Policy Class of 2024 took place to welcome over 65 new MPP students and introduce them about the school. The Ceremony had a special honor to receive the attendance of H.E. Susan Burns, the US Consul General to Ho Chi Minh City and H.E. Phan Van Mai, chairman of Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee. The event marks an important milestone in the academic and professional growth of the new cohort, who are committed to participate in the rigorous MPP program

accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). Particularly, MPP24 is the first cohort to welcome Lao students under MUSP scholarship to attend MPP program. Funded by U.S. government, MUSP initiative plan to recruit and train Laos aspiring policy makers and offer them a chance to attend the prestigious MPP program at Fulbright. In addition, MPP24 students who work in social organizations, NGOs, or NPOs are endowed with FSA Scholarship for their pursuit of education at Fulbright.

In the effort to bring the competitiveness for the MPP program and create a chance for students to be exposed to an international academic environment, as well as upon receiving very positive feedback from the last cohort, the executive short course at Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) was resumed after two-year of COVID-19 pandemic. The course, jointly designed by the faculty from FSPPM and HKS, is not only diverse in theories and discussions, but also tailor-made for Vietnam. Thirty-nine students experienced the week-long intensive course (from Nov 7 to 11) themed "Sustainability in a polarizing

world". The curriculum revolved around sustainability-related issues like climate change, energy, and the environment, which were posing quite a lot of challenges to Vietnam's current development trajectory. These issues were posing quite a lot of challenges to Vietnam's current development trajectory. These issues were posing quite a lot of challenges to Vietnam's current development trajectory. These issues were posing quite a lot of challenges to Vietnam's current development trajectory.



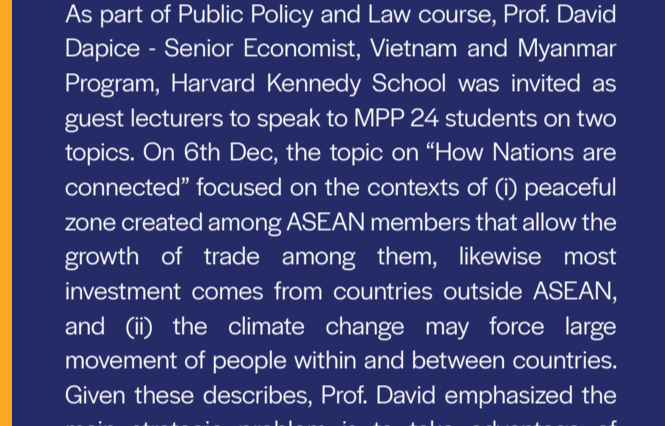
News and Updates

Outreach

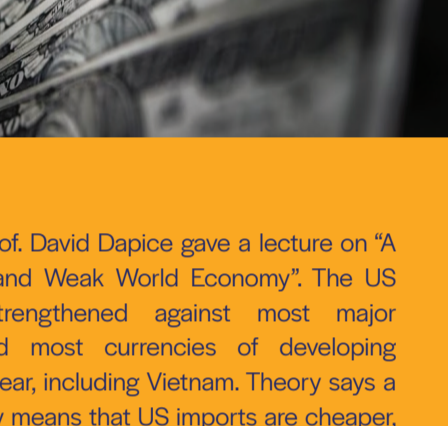
FSPPM has provided local government with outreach programs to develop research, training, consulting and partnership activities. In this quarter, FSPPM's outreach team continues putting effort into three important research projects, below are key projects activities in Quarter 4/2022:

Natural Capital Management (NCM)

Short training in Renewable Energy Study using Geospatial Technology organized in Ninh Thuan in November 26-27. This is a crash course with some basic knowledge of the geographic data and the geospatial technology (satellite data, equipment, and software) for natural resources (land, air, water) monitoring and other administrative tasks at the central and local government. Participants were officials from local or regional state agencies, business firms, technicians, or any individuals with the interests to learn the basic of Geospatial Technology. The course introduces the applications of Geospatial Technology, spatial and attribute data in solving the real-world problems. Participants practiced hands-on training for data collection, integration, map production, and basic spatial analysis using open-source tools (Q-GIS, SNAP, Arcolite). There were approximately 40 attendees in each course, coming from different sectors (government agencies, private sectors, academia and NGO).



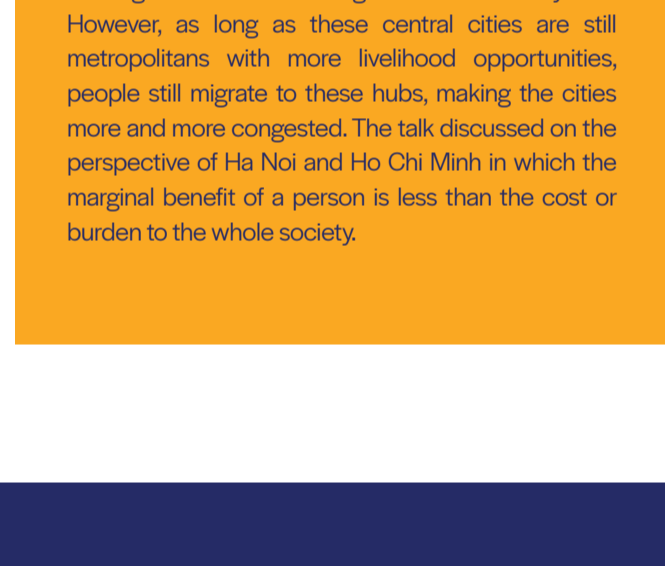
Field trip to the South Coast (Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan) in November 28-30 to explore operational challenges of high-level renewable energy integration. The team traveled to those provinces to discuss with local authorities and corporates regarding the energy industry. With the energies, the team investigated the potential to become the energy hub of Vietnam of these two provinces, their evaluation of renewable energy projects in their areas, as well as the labor supply for the energy sector. With the corporates, the team focused on their business performance and the challenges that they face in implementing and running their projects. The team also explored the potential for the participation of local businesses in the renewable energy sector.



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An executive training on "Environment, sustainable development, the necessity of environmental protection" for the People's Committee of Ha Giang in September 22. The training aims to provide the provincial management staff with knowledge about environmental science and the impact of the environment on the province's sustainable economic development. Scientists and experts focused on discussing solutions to integrate biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and sustainable tourism into socio-economic development.

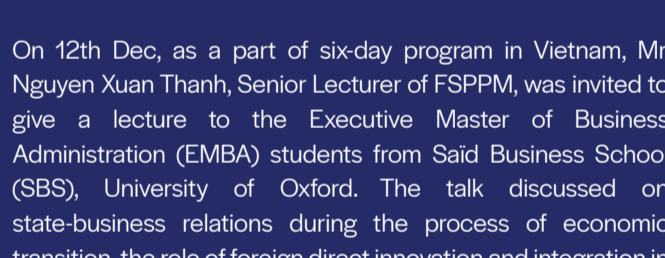
Guest Speakers & Policy Seminars



As part of Public Policy and Law course, Prof. David Dapice - Senior Economist, Vietnam and Myanmar Program, Harvard Kennedy School was invited as guest lecturer to speak to MPP 24 students on two topics. On 6th Dec, the topic on "How Nations are connected" focused on the contexts of (i) peaceful zone created among ASEAN members that allow the growth of trade among them, likewise most investment comes from countries outside ASEAN, and (ii) the climate change may force large movement of people within and between countries. Given these describes, Prof. David emphasized the main strategic problem is to take advantage of China's dynamism while avoiding taking sides in disputes between it and several rich countries over issues like ocean movement and control, Taiwan, and technology policy; as well as the major issue is how to move forward rapidly on climate change so that damage to coastal areas, agriculture, and habitability is reduced.



On 8th Dec, Prof. David Dapice gave a lecture on "A Strong Dollar and Weak World Economy". The US dollar has strengthened against most major currencies and most currencies of developing countries this year, including Vietnam. Theory says a strong currency means that US imports are cheaper, and this should help Vietnam exports more. The lesson was structured in five parts as follows: (i) The gold standard and its aftermath, (ii) How a Strong Dollar Can be Inflationary for Some Countries, (iii) Why is the Dollar Used So Much?, (iv) Optimal Currency Areas, and (v) How Big is Vietnam's Depreciation? The lectures had explained why many countries are having economic difficulties linked to a strong dollar.



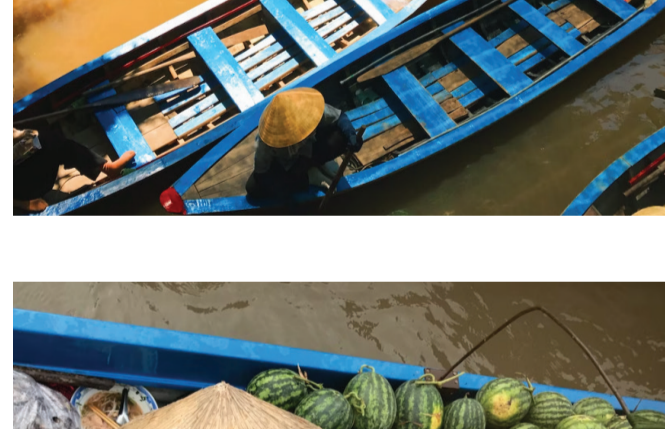
As the first policy seminar by Fulbright faculty to public, Dr. Huynh The Du, FSPPM Adjunct Faculty discussed the topic "The saturation of megacities". Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are going to a state of saturation where travel is very difficult with huge costs for individuals and the economy; economic activities look crowded all the time, but in fact, the efficiency is not high and the annual growth rate is very low. However, as long as these central cities are still metropolitans with more livability opportunities, people still migrate to these hubs, making the cities more and more congested. The talk discussed on the perspective of Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh in which the marginal benefit of a person is less than the cost or burden to the whole society.



The seminar on "Offshore Wind Development Challenges and Solutions" on December 22 with Dr. Tuyen (Tony) Wu – Assistant Professor at Clarkson and Co-founder of Intelligent NRG Solutions LLC, NY, USA. With the estimated leveled cost of energy for offshore wind (OSW) projects has been significantly reduced over the last decade (50% reduction from 2014 till 2020), OSW becomes more attractive as an alternative resource for decarbonization goals. Global OSW power in 2021 has reached to a record high with the total deployment of nearly 18GW. This increases the global cumulative capacity to 50GW with a more than 250 projects. This talk will outline challenges and solutions for future power grid reliability with high concentration of OSW.

Policy Dialogues and Conferences

On 14th Oct and 13th Nov, Assoc. Prof. Pham Duy Nghia participated in policy dialogues with National Assembly Office and Committee of Law on projects on revising of the 2013 Law on Land and delivered two policy papers on the consistency of rules in land development project.



On 11th Nov, Dr. Ha Quang Hung, research fellow, participated and had a sharing on "Natural resource management using the open-source Orfeo Toolbox. A case study of Tam Dao National Park" in the National Conference of Earth Sciences and Natural Resources for Sustainable Development, Hanoi University of Mining and Geology. While the illegal deforestation and land occupation are getting more and more common in Vietnam, the efficient national forest and land management and monitoring remain a challenging task. Given that the quantitative analysis using remotely sensed data, with great benefits from free-of-charge data such as Landsat, Sentinel-1, and Sentinel-2, with the aim to manage forest and land is an optimal choice for Vietnam. In this research, we showcased the proof-of-concept and the potential for wide implementation of the open-source tool, Orfeo Toolbox, for the object-based image analysis for accurate delineation of forest and forest land in Vietnam. The case study of the Tam Dao national forest mapped using Orfeo Toolbox gained a high accuracy of 93.7%. At the same time, this approach is efficient and valuable since it only requires a low-configuration computer system with the capability to process big spatial data.



On 02nd Dec, Mr. Nguyen Xuan Thanh participated in workshop on "Promoting the Belt 3 Project – a new driving force for the Southern Key Economic Region", co-organized by the Government Portal and Tuổi Trẻ Newspaper. In his talk, Mr. Thanh discussed on the key traffic projects, even with high cost in investment, enhance high economic benefits (the return rate is about 16-28%) and identified the challenge of the Belt 3 project.



On 12th Dec, as a part of six-day program in Vietnam, Mr. Nguyen Xuan Thanh, Senior Lecturer of FSPPM, was invited to give a lecture to the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) students from Saïd Business School (SBS), University of Oxford. The talk discussed on state-business relations during the process of economic transition, the role of foreign direct innovation and integration in global value chains as a primary engine of growth, and the challenge of innovation and industrial upgrading amongst indigenous firms. The students are expected, through the session, to enhance their understanding about Vietnam and its business environment.

Research

In this quarter, Dr. Tran Anh Thong, FSPPM Research Fellow, and his co-author (Jonathan Rigg, David Taylor, Michelle Ann Miller, Jamie Pittock, Phong Thanh Le), published a paper on Human Ecology about "Social Memory in the Mekong's Changing Floodscapes: Narratives of Agrarian Communities' Adaptation" available at

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-022-00362-0>

The abstract:

Rural adaptation encompasses place-based perceptions, behaviors, livelihoods, and traditional ways of life associated with local environments. These perceptions, norms, and practices are disturbed by coupled environment-development externalities.

This study employs the Vietnamese Mekong floodplains as an exemplary case to illustrate how floods impact agrarian communities and how they have experienced flood alterations driven by hydropower development and climate change in recent years. Drawing on thematic and narrative analyses of qualitative data (focus group discussions and interviews) collected in three agrarian communities in the Vietnamese Mekong floodplains, sources drawn from various news outlets, and academic materials, we argue that disrupted flood environments in the floodplains have triggered affective flood reminiscences, catalyzing shifts to incremental and transformative adaptation to achieve resilience. We build a nuanced understanding of how social memory helps to enhance human-environment relationships in response to highly complex hydrological dynamics in the delta.



Last but not least, Dr. Le Viet Huu, FSPPM lecturer, published one peer-reviewed article about "Water value, irrigation policy, and implementation hazard in Vietnam's rural economy", RR at Water Resources and Economics"

The abstract:

Irrigation plays a critical role in Vietnam's rural economy and the national food security priority. The Vietnamese government has developed an extensive irrigation system and waived irrigation cost to farmers as a social policy to reduce rural poverty. However, excessive use of water has become a major concern, thus requiring proper evaluation of the value of water and measures to encourage economical use. We use a multi-model approach and plot-level data to indirectly estimate the value of irrigation water and address many issues relating to causal identification. The results indicate that farmhands with access to irrigation have a significantly higher productivity and land value. The high value of irrigation water in agricultural production is a premise for investigative payment for irrigation water. We then investigate the design of irrigation policy, the hazard arising from the fee waiver, and explain why the current policy has failed to promote a long-term sustainable prospect.

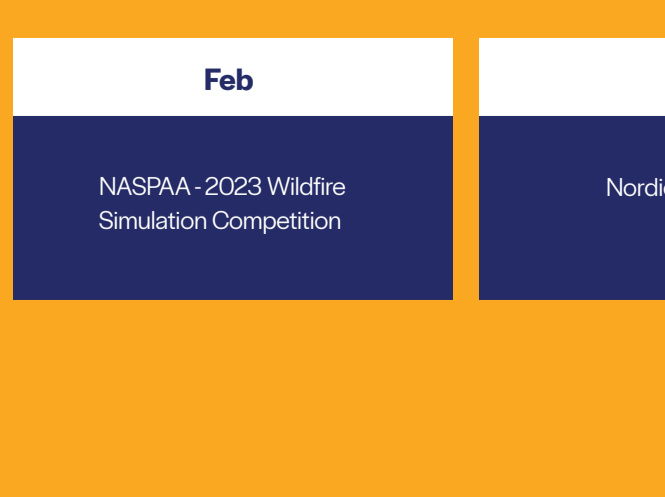


Student & Alumni Activities

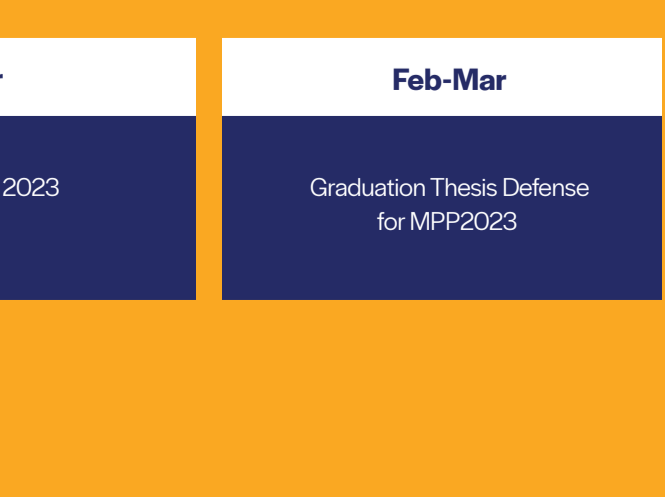
On November 26, the Fulbright School Alumni (FSA) organized FSA Homecoming - "Pay it forward" event as part of its efforts to strengthen the connection between the alumni and students of Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management. FSA Homecoming is an annual event organized in November, in the spirit of Vietnamese Teachers' Day (November 20), in which the Fulbright school's alumni and students gather to send their best wishes to lecturers, share their knowledge and work experiences. There were about 150 alumni attending the event this year. Aligning with the theme of this year's FSA Homecoming event "Pay it Forward", the FSA also announced the plan to launch the FSA for Education Fund with the mission of building a philanthropic ecosystem of the Fulbright community to contribute to the development of education in Vietnam. The fund will operate on a trial basis in the first year by soliciting donations from the FSPPM network of alumni and students before taking further steps in the coming years.



As a part of Orientation Week's activities to Lao students, a one-day briefing cultural tour in Ho Chi Minh City was organized so that the students can get familiar with Vietnamese culture and lifestyle in Sai Gon as well. During the field trip to the historical places such as War Remnants Museum, Dragon Wharf, Independence Palace, students learnt about history, culture values, love for peace, independence, and freedom of Vietnamese people. Specially, through the destinations to Cho Lon Market, Ba Thien Hau Temple, the students had chance to experience the characteristics of trading and religious culture of Vietnamese communities.



FSA members actively engaged with community via being TedTalk speakers, winner of third prize of the New Leadership Group Award by IIE on vocational orientation for high school students in Ben Tre, mentors for the Fulbright X Acumen Social Impact Business Accelerator Program.



Upcoming events

Feb	Mar	Feb-Mar
NASPAA - 2023 Wildfire Simulation Competition	Nordic Day 2023	Graduation Thesis Defense for MPP2023

