

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project, Vietnam, Report of the Review/Evaluation Mission, prepared by Hum Bahadur Gurung and Le Dong Phuong, October 1999

Name of project, programme or organizational unit:

Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project (STP)

Objectives of the project, programme or mandate of the organizational unit:

The goal of the project was “to identify and raise awareness of the negative socio-economic and ecological impacts of tourism, and contribute to the development of sustainable community-based models of tourism that can generate sustainable income for some of the country’s poorest and least advantaged communities, while at the same time helping to maintain Vietnam’s cultural and biological diversity.”

STP objectives constitute six ‘activity areas’: (1) networking and information exchange; (2) research and analysis; (3) education and training; (4) support for a pilot project; (5) advocacy; and (6) project extension.

IUCN area of specialisation: Sustainable tourism

Geographical area: Vietnam

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organisational unit:

August 1997 – December 1999

Overall budget of the project, programme or organizational unit: USD 250,305

Donor(s): The Ford Foundation, the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and Oxfam International

Objectives of the evaluation:

1. Undertake a general review and assessment of the relevance, importance, achievements, impacts, shortcomings, constraints, risks and expectations of STP.
2. Evaluate the STP’s programming work in terms of the six objectives or ‘activity areas,’ considering priority setting, implementation of activities, follow-up and monitoring, links and networks established internationally and with Vietnamese organisations and stakeholders, project profile at national and international level.
3. Provide comments and recommendations for improvements or future directions/priorities.
4. Evaluate the project’s organisational and management structure, including the extent and efficiency of collaboration between IUCN and the national project counterpart; the need for/role of the Project Steering Committee, and the level and type of support provided by the IUCN international network.

Type of evaluation: Final Project Evaluation

Period covered by the evaluation: August 1997 – October 1999

Commissioned by: Not clear

Audience: Donors, partners, project team and IUCN

Evaluation team: External

Methodology used:

The evaluation team reviewed documents and organised meetings with IUCN officials, implementing partners, donors, and other major stakeholders. Additionally, the review team made a field visit to Sa Pa, a pilot project area for community-based sustainable tourism development, and organised meetings with local government authorities and local communities.

Questions of the evaluation: Not specified (see ‘Objectives’ section above)

Findings:

- IUCN has implemented the STP with impressive efficiency and effectiveness. STP’s ability to raise additional funds from other sources was also found remarkable.
- STP is becoming increasingly relevant and important, as the concept of sustainable tourism and ecotourism is rapidly evolving in Vietnam.
- With a few exceptions, all activities outlined in the project document have been accomplished. A number of additional activities were also initiated, but these were not completed because of budget or funding constraints.
- All stakeholders have unanimously agreed that STP has been a vehicle in raising the awareness of the negative socio-economic, cultural and ecological impacts of tourism.

Recommendations:

1. Extend STP into Phase II with the following two priorities: (a) implementation of concrete actions for community-based sustainable tourism at the pilot sites; and (b) linking the pilot project experiences to the formulation of sustainable tourism policies for Vietnam.
2. Link STP with the State Steering Committee on Tourism so that the STP Project Steering Committee can influence the formulation of national policies.
3. Enhance the central government’s sense of ownership by financial contributions from the government counterpart in future activities.
4. Use a participatory approach to monitor programme activities and document project experiences so that they can be shared with stakeholders.

Lessons Learned: Not specified

Language of the evaluation: English

Available from: IUCN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, Gland, Switzerland; IUCN/Asia Regional Office (ARO)