



ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

VIET NAM COUNTRY OFFICE



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

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Abbreviations

ADB	The Asian Development Bank
AMELP	Adaptive Management, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
ATP	Asia Turtles Programme
BRIDGE	Building River Dialogue and Guidance
BMU	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
CECR	Centre for Environment and Community Research
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CMIC	Chip Mong Insee Cement Corporation
COP26	The 26 th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties
CPV	Communist Party of Viet Nam
CR	Critically Endangered
CSO	Civil Society Organization
D-FISH	Directorate of Fisheries
DP	Development Partners
DLA	Department of Legal Affairs
DOIT	Department of Industry and Trade
EBA	Ecosystem-based-Adaptation
ECO-ECO	The Institute of Ecological Economy
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
GL	Green List
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-countries
GreenViet	GreenViet Biodiversity Conservation Center
Greenhub	Center for Supporting Green Development
GSI	Gustav Stresemann Institute
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
HLB	Ha Long Bay
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICAFIS	International Collaborating Centre for Aquaculture and Fisheries Sustainability

ICUE	Institute for Construction and Urban Economics
ICEM	International Center for Ecosystems Management
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IKI	International Climate Initiatives
IMC	Indo-Myanmar Conservation
INSEE	The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies
IO	International Organisation
IPBES	The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IRD	Institut de Recherche et Développement
ISPONRE	Institute of Strategy, Policy on Natural Resources and Environment
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
L&L	Live & Learn Viet Nam
LOI	Letter of Interest
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDC	Mekong Delta Coastal Habitat Conservation
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MARPLASTICCs	Marine Plastic Coastal Communities
MRC	Mekong River Commission
MRF	Material Recovery Facilities
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MCD	Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development
MW	Megawatt
NEA	Norwegian Environment Agency
NBS	Nature based Solutions
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NPI	Net Positive Impact
NGO	Non-Profit Organization
NTFPs	Non-timber Forest Products
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value

PAs	Protected Areas
PEA	Political Economics Assessment
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PROVN	Packaging Recycling Organization Viet Nam
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TBMF	Transboundary Management Framework
UBS	The Union Bank of Switzerland
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
VNADAPT	Viet Nam Nature-based Solutions for Adaptation in Agriculture through Private Sector Transformation
VNU-CRES	Vietnam National University - Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
VB4E	Vietnam Business for Environment
WCC	World Conservation Congress
WCPA	The World Commission on Protected Areas
WHS	World Heritage Site
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

Message



Jake Brunner

Head, IUCN Indo-Burma Group
Acting Country Representative
IUCN Viet Nam

Arguably the highlight of the year was Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's net-zero by 2050 commitment at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021. Particularly encouraging was the passage: "All that we do must be nature-based and centred around people, for they are the actors and drivers of sustainable development, in order to leave no one behind." By placing nature at the heart of its economy and society, Viet Nam can capitalize on its extraordinary natural heritage.

Globally, achieving net-zero by 2050 requires ambitious emissions reductions (decarbonization of the economy) and nature-based solutions (NbS) to protect, manage, and restore ecosystems. By adding almost 2,000 MW of solar power between 2018 and 2021, Viet Nam has made a start toward reducing the carbon intensity of its energy supply. Progress requires major investments in transmission, regional power trade, and storage. But the direction of travel, as outlined in the CPV Resolution 55, issued in February 2020, which provides the political basis for a rapid transition out of fossil fuels into renewables, is clear.

When it comes to the application of NbS to reduce land-based emissions and increase resilience to climate change, the direction of travel is less clear. Viet Nam is a world leader in reforestation and forest cover is now close to 43%. But much of the forest is poor quality and composed of fast-growing exotic species. Arguably, the forestry sector's main challenge is tackling the persistently low level of quality of the different forest types. If Viet Nam invested in forest quality, this would sequester carbon and provide major co-benefits in terms of wildlife, Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs), and water retention. But in the absence of an institutional champion for forest quality, it is unclear who could lead this process.

In IUCN's own work, we see the need for new thinking on forest restoration. The Mekong Delta is home to 70% of Viet Nam's mangroves. But along many coastlines, the mangroves, trapped between rising sea level on one side and dirt dikes on the other, are disappearing rapidly. This is a global phenomenon known as the "coastal squeeze". Planting mangroves outside the dikes almost always fails because of the strong currents and lack of mud.

With funding from USAID and The Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) Optimus Foundation UK, IUCN is testing an approach that involves transforming the intensive shrimp farms behind the dikes into a landscape that integrates ultra-high productivity Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) technology and high-value ultra-trophic mangrove shrimp farms. If this were implemented at scale, it could increase Viet Nam's total mangroves area by 30%.

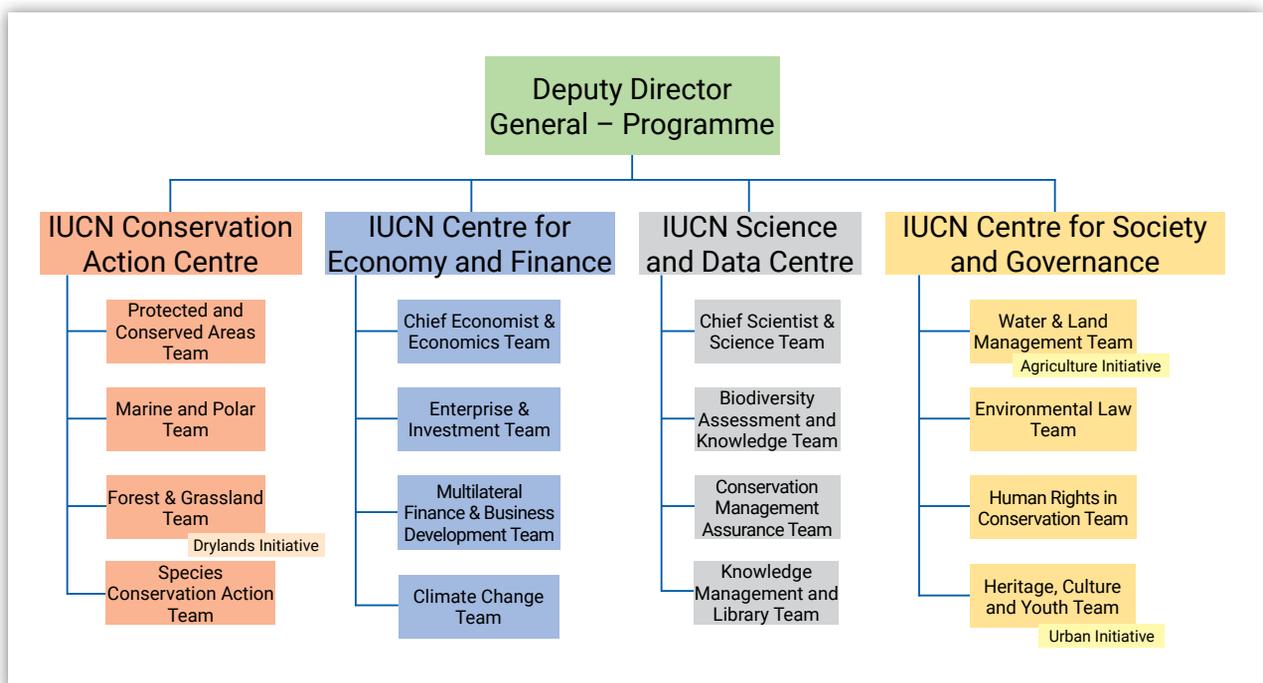
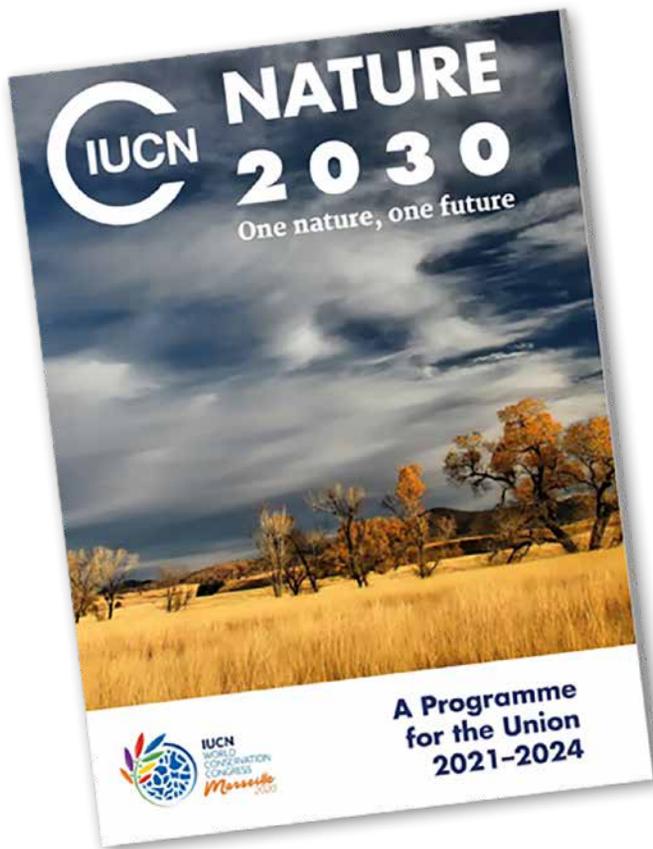
I would also like to draw attention to the work that IUCN has done with MONRE, our State member, and Packaging Recycling Organisation Viet Nam (PRO VN), which brings together 19 major food and beverage companies, to support the development of draft decree needed to implement the Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR) articles in the 2020 Environmental Protection Law.

With the role of Secretariat in the EPR National Platform, IUCN has been actively supporting the Department of Legal Affairs/MONRE in developing Decree and Circular on EPR and its implementation. This includes the support for establishing the National EPR Council and EPR Office, developing the EPR data portal, EPR financial and fund management, capacity building, awareness raising; providing expert teams, organizing workshop, meetings, forums, conducting consultation series, technical reports publications, etc.

The EPR rollout would potentially lead to a significant change in the economic operation and social activities, accordingly will have impact on the interest of some business sectors. However, looking at a broader scale, EPR will be opportunities to share the environmental costs and burdens of all sides, implement corporate social and environmental responsibilities.

IUCN One Programme 2021 – 2024

For details, please see: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/49292>



Asia Regional Programming 2021 – 2024

Since 2021, IUCN Asia has restructured the programme into three strategic themes and five programme areas as below, through which all country offices including IUCN Viet Nam will apply:

<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/49292>



IUCN Viet Nam’s activities in figures



Our activities in numbers



Programs areas in Viet Nam



Project locations

Updated December 2021





Membership

In 2021, some members changed their management roles to new leaders such as VNU-CRES and ECO-ECO, yet the membership list stays the same with ten organisations:

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) – state member
2. VNU-Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (VNU-CRES)
3. The Institute of Ecological Economy (ECO-ECO)
4. Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development (MCD)
5. Centre for Environment and Community Research (CECR)
6. GreenViet Biodiversity Conservation Center (GreenViet)
7. Live & Learn Viet Nam (L&L)
8. Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC)/Asia Turtles Programme (ATP)
9. Center for Supporting Green Development (Greenhub)
10. Institute for Construction and Urban Economics (ICUE)

In Feb, IUCN Viet Nam members met virtually with Dr. Dindo Campilan, the new Regional Director of the Asia Regional Office and the Hub Director of the Oceania Regional Office who replaced the predecessor - Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji. At the meeting, members updated the new Regional Director with relevant programmes/projects, and warmly welcomed and congratulated Dr. Dindo on his new role at IUCN.

IUCN and the French government have agreed to hold the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) 2020 from 3 to 11 September 2021 in Marseille. The event, originally scheduled for June 2020, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Viet Nam members were eligible for sponsorship to attend WCC physically, yet they all decided to attend virtually due to the high risks during COVID-19 pandemic.

During August, IUCN Viet Nam members attended the Regional Virtual Meeting of IUCN Members in Asia organised by Prof. Ma Keping, Chair of the Asia Regional Committee and Dr. Dindo. At the meeting, candidates for the position of IUCN President, treasurer, regional councillors from South and East Asia and WCPA Chair introduced themselves and had an interactive discussion with all Asia members including Viet Nam. This is to provide more opportunities for Asia members to give comments and questions about the candidates to be able to fulfil their vote most precisely.

In order to prepare for Viet Nam members to join WCC and exercise their votes virtually, IUCN Viet Nam National Committee organised a briefing session in August for all members to update about WCC and reply to all questions such as registration, voting at Member Assembly, proxy voting, motions and other sessions/events, etc.

At IUCN WCC in Marseille, IUCN Viet Nam National Committee motion titled “Supporting the Lower Mekong River Basin countries with the transboundary management of water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity” was officially adopted and became IUCN WCC 2020 Resolution 013 (<https://portals.iucn.org/library/resrec/search>).

IUCN WCC Res 013, when it is adopted, it becomes the responsibility of all members from Viet Nam National Committee as well as IUCN Viet Nam Secretariat to implement or contribute towards its implementation.

All Viet Nam members completed their duties as IUCN members including the vote for new IUCN President, Ms. Razan Al Mubarak from United Arab Emirates <https://www.iucn.org/about-iucn/iucn-governance/iucn-president-and-council/president>.

IUCN Viet Nam received some reflection from members, which highly appreciated the support from Viet Nam Secretariat. One member even though this Congress, despite being hybrid organised due to COVID-19, turned out to be the best conservation event that they have been to. In the meantime, they also proposed some recommendations for IUCN Viet Nam including:

- The main themes of the IUCN Congress 2021 are climate change, biodiversity conservation and COVID-19 pandemic. The solutions for these issues were discussed intensively including a motion on the establishment of a climate change commission at the IUCN. Therefore, the IUCN needs to focus on addressing this in the future;
- IUCN Viet Nam should have more agenda on protecting the PAs system and endangered species;
- Building capacity for youth and indigenous groups should also be a priority for IUCN Viet Nam;
- Currently, ten members are not representing for different views and effective actions for nature conservation in Viet Nam. Hence, IUCN Viet Nam should expand membership;
- IUCN might take a stronger lead on discussion with the Vietnamese Government about the most important threats that are destroying the biodiversity in the country;
- There should be a mechanism to collect ideas, concerns or proposed plans for nature conservation from the members in the country;
- Finally, how should members engage and support the implementation of adopted motion of IUCN Viet Nam National Committee?

Highlights

Species conservation





IPBES Global Assessment for Policy-makers

On April 27, IUCN organised a half-day workshop in Hanoi to distribute the Vietnamese translation of the IPBES Global Assessment for Policy-makers: <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202105/introducing-vietnamese-translation-ipbes-global-assessment-policy-makers>.

The summary has also been translated into Thai and Bengali as part of the same NEA grant. At the workshop, opened by the Vice-Minister of Public Security, IUCN gave presentations on solid waste management, rice production in the Mekong Delta, and MPAs. These show that while technically and financially feasible solutions to Viet Nam's growing environmental problems exist, they are often blocked by vested interests.

To make progress understanding the political economy that's driving decision-making must be taken into account. Often, these political barriers are well understood but because they are so intractable or politically sensitive they are effectively ignored. This is where IUCN, as an IO with state and non-state members, has a role to play in politely but persistently talking about the political barriers to change. IUCN has successfully done this in the Mekong Delta and is trying to do the same with solid waste management and MPAs.

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)

The first CEPF phase three call closed in February. IUCN received 12 Letters of Interest (LOIs) for large grants and 27 LOIs for small grants. After the technical review, four large grants were selected for development into full project proposals; three large grant applicants were invited to resubmit as small grants. The small grant selection process is underway.

For more information, please see: <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P03776>

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan

IUCN started drafting four targets for the new NBSAP on spatial planning; water, agro-chemical, and plastic pollution; climate change adaptation and urban biodiversity. IUCN has drafted an additional target on forest quality because of the large-scale conversion of natural forest to plantations, which means that Viet Nam is reforesting but has a poor quality forest. IUCN used FORMIS, a national GIS database with 7 million plots, to map forest quality and ownership.



Marine and coastal conservation



Ha Long - Cat Ba Alliance

In February, the government submitted the nomination dossier to UNESCO to expand the Ha Long Bay WHS to include the Cat Ba Archipelago. Expanding the property to include the archipelago, which forms part of the same marine ecosystem but is located in another province, has been an IUCN recommendation since HLB was inscribed in 1995. As part of the USAID-funded Ha Long - Cat Ba Alliance, IUCN supported the OUV research in the archipelago that forms the basis of the nomination dossier, on how the intermittently submerged caves function as “species factories”.

USAID Mekong Delta Coastal Habitat Conservation

IUCN signed the \$2.9M USAID Mekong Delta Coastal Habitat Conservation (MDC), a 3-year project that was announced during Vice President Harris' visit to Hanoi: <https://www.usaid.gov/vietnam/press-releases/aug-25-2021-vice-president-kamala-harris-announces-new-usaid-assistance>. WWF is an implementing partner. The project aims to protect key coastal habitats in the Mekong Delta region of Viet Nam to increase the sustainability of fisheries, enhance climate change adaptation, and improve biodiversity conservation.

In October, IUCN and the Directorate of Fisheries of the Viet Nam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development launched the project in Ha Noi. Geographically, the project's activities will focus on the delta's lowest lying and most vulnerable coastlines along the East and West Seas, Phu Quoc MPA, and three small island clusters in the West Sea (Hai Tac, Ba Lua, Nam Du).

The three main components of the project include: (1) Strengthen management of Phu Quoc MPA for more effective habitat and species conservation, (2) Establish a network of locally managed marine areas to protect coral reefs, seagrass beds in three island clusters, (3) Explore solutions to conserve and expand mangrove forests to increase fish nursery habitat and coastal biodiversity.

IUCN emphasised that the project is designed to support major government initiatives, notably the lifting of the EU Yellow Card, expansion of the MPA network, and implementation of fisheries co-management. It is expected that the project's outcomes will contribute to address the systemic threats in the Mekong Delta, in support of ongoing measures being taken by the Government of Viet Nam, such as the revised Fisheries Law, 2018 Resolution 36, Resolution 120, and 2019 Planning Law.

IUCN attended five half-day sessions with USAID to prepare an Adaptive Management, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP) for MDC project. An AMELP is now required by all USAID projects. This was an opportunity to substantially refine the project design and theory of change.

For more information, please see: <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P03979>



Political Economics Assessment (PEA) study

During September, IUCN led a USAID seminar on the political economy of environment and climate change, built on the PEA study that IUCN did for the Australian Embassy in 2020 in collaboration with the Asia Foundation (TAF), including case studies on rice reform in the Mekong Delta, solid waste management, and forest quality.

This seminar stimulated a lot of discussion, particularly on our analysis of arguments and entry points, on the need to reduce focus on laws and ministries (which have dominated our work in the past) and spend more time building alliances to address politically difficult decisions and on the fact that there are differences in perspective between different parts of the state (CPV, central government, provinces, state-owned enterprises, etc.).

Marine Plastic and Coastal Community (MARPLASTICCs)

The action plan on marine plastic waste management in the fisheries sector (2020 – 2030)

MARD issued the Decision 687/QD-BNN-TCTS in February to approve the action plan on marine plastic waste management in the fisheries sector (2020 – 2030), which IUCN supported through MARPLASTICCs (*please see: <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202103/viet-nam-develops-action-plan-reducing-plastic-waste-fisheries-sector>*).

In December, as part of MARPLASTICCs and VB4E initiatives, IUCN, D-FISH and WWF organised a forum on marine plastic waste management in the fisheries sector, where plastic leakage is high, and steps toward implementing the Decision 687.

IUCN presented the results of plastic waste monitoring in 11 MPAs, which showed large volumes of expanded polystyrene, fishing nets, and aquaculture waste. IUCN and ICAFIS have proposed a PPP on plastic waste management for shrimp aquaculture focusing in Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, and Ca Mau Provinces.



Media training on EPR

In June, IUCN collaborated with the Department of Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to hold an online training workshop on EPR to disseminate correct and clear information about EPR and its draft decree. Thirteen journalists from newspapers, radios and televisions attended the training including Viet Nam Television Channel, VOV2, VNExpress, Cong Thuong Newspaper, Tuoi Tre, Xay Dung, Environment and Natural Resources,...

A quick survey before and after the training workshop showed a significant increase in the understanding on EPR from attended journalists: 25% “No knowledge” about EPR before the training was decreased to 0% after the training, and 25% “Moderate high knowledge” about EPR was increased to 60% after the training. This is a considerable change in the knowledge of journalists towards such a new complicated topic as EPR.

For more information, please see: <https://www.vb4e.com/en/media-contributes-to-promote-epr-communications-in-viet-nam/>

Advocacy on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) draft decree

In November 2020, the National Assembly promulgated the Law on Environmental Protection Law (LEP) with radical changes in environmental management thinking. Development policies are institutionalised in Nature-based approaches, not sacrificing the environment for economic development. The 2020 LEP has also issued two Articles on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) including Article 54 (Recycling Responsibility) and Article 55 (Collection and Disposal Responsibility). In January 2021, IUCN and DLA/MONRE organised a consultation meeting about new articles about EPR for vehicle & motorbike sector, one of six product categories applying EPR. The objectives are to introduce EPR, to explain why EPR is needed, how does it work as well as inform about the EPR development in Viet Nam and EPR National Platform.

IUCN, GreenHub, Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance and E-policy organised a dialogue in December on strengthening EPR implementation to promote Circular Economy with more than 100 participants. The purpose was to discuss the response from the National Assembly’s Committee on Science, Technology and Environment to a petition sent by 30 national NGOs requesting no delay in approval of the EPR decree, the CSO’s role in the EPR National Council which will oversee EPR implementation, and higher compulsory recycling rates. It discussed the particular concern of businesses such as compulsory recycling rates and recycling standards.

For more information, please visit <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P03681>

Creating an observatory for measuring plastic occurrences in society and environment (COMPOSE)

In March, IUCN organised a workshop on micro-plastic pollution based on IRD’s analysis of micro-plastics in 21 freshwater and coastal areas in Ha Noi, Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Binh Dinh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, HCMC, Tay Ninh and Dong Nai. The results showed that “microplastic concentrations in surface waters varied from 0.35 to 2,522 items m³, with the lowest concentrations recorded in bays and the highest in rivers” of which fibers made up 47-97%.

Human activities were closely linked to microplastic concentrations as shown by the high concentration in rivers. This shows the importance of understanding the source of microplastics before taking appropriate measures.

For more information, please see: <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202106/maintaining-a-scientific-network-support-policy-microplastic-pollution-viet-nam>



**Wetlands
and water conservation**

Mekong WET: Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region through a Ramsar Regional Initiative

In April, IUCN met Loc Troi Group to discuss continued collaboration on flood-based agriculture in the upper delta. In the 2020 flood season, Loc Troi, Viet Nam's second largest rice processor and exporter, purchased the entire 30-hectare crop of floating rice from our Coca-Cola funded demonstration in a flooded high dyke located in the buffer zone of Lang Sen Wetland Reserve.

The Loc Troi General Manager committed to collaborate with the Mekong WET project to expand the area at Lang Sen to 200 hectares in the 2021 flood season and a long-term expansion plan. Loc Troi's interest in floating rice is linked to their long-term strategy, which is aligned with Resolution 120 on de-intensifying rice production and moving up the value chain. Loc Troi's strategy includes expanding its source of clean/organic rice to 450,000 hectares in Mekong Delta. Expanding investment in floating rice helps to break pest cycles enabling both the flood season and dry season rice crops to reduce or eliminate pesticide use.

For more information, please see: <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P01600>

Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE)

Mekong-U.S. Partnership Track 1.5 Policy Dialogue

In March, IUCN helped to facilitate the first of the Mekong-U.S. Partnership Track 1.5 Policy Dialogue conference series organised by Stimson and IUCN with State Department funding. This MPD conference was online; the next five will take place over the next two years. This event included sessions on NBS, non-traditional security threats, energy and infrastructure, and water governance. Participation ranged from 70-200 and the quality of the discussion was excellent. Of special interest was the report of the Thai government in strengthening the Mekong Agreement, which Viet Nam has long advocated.

For more information, please see <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P03899>

Sekong Dam A

In December 2020, IUCN delivered a letter from the Director General to the Prime Minister expressing concern about the Sekong A dam, which is being built by Song Da 6, a Vietnamese state-owned company, in southern Lao: <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202109/viet-nam-should-save-sekong-its-own-benefit>.



The letter cited the Prime Minister's commitment to Nature-based-Solutions in his COP26 statement. If completed, this dam will disconnect the Sekong, the Mekong's last free-flowing major tributary, from the mainstream. Not only would it prevent fish migrating upstream to breed, a major source of the region's fish catch, but it would generate a mere 86 MW. It would also undermine international support for Viet Nam's efforts to protect the Mekong Delta from the combined impacts of upstream dams and climate change.

IFC recommended maintaining a free-flowing Sekong in its assessment of hydropower options. In 2018, IUCN published a web story on the risks that this particular dam posed: <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/201805/xe-kong-1-dam-why-it-matters-vietnam>. The Prime Minister has asked relevant ministries to respond to the Director General's letter.

Groundwater governance project

On March 22-25, IUCN organised and facilitated a workshop for the Arcadis groundwater governance project in Can Tho, Ben Tre and Soc Trang. The aim was to assist MONRE understand the challenges the provinces face in implementing Decree 167 on zoning groundwater use.

Feedback revealed serious challenges with both the implementation of the decree itself and its objectives. Key issues include the lack of inter-provincial coordination on zoning shared aquifers, non-standardised licencing costs leading to inter-provincial competition over business investment that drives down the price of groundwater, and provincial governments having no say on licensing businesses that extract >3,000 m³/day (which MONRE decides on). IUCN has provided MONRE recommendations on how to improve Decree 167 in advance of a 13 province regional workshop in September.

ADB's new GMS environment program

IUCN participated in a workshop in September, to launch ADB's new GMS environment program, speaking about reforms in water and rice production in the Mekong Delta and implications for the Cambodia portion of the delta. The ADB office in Phnom Penh has invited us to submit a concept note on smart agriculture and transboundary cooperation. Sharing knowledge to help Cambodia avoid the mistakes that Viet Nam has made in terms of mal-adaptation is a program development priority.

AFD sustainable development in Southeast Asia

In October, IUCN joined an online AFD conference on sustainable development in Southeast Asia in which IUCN's representative was a panelist on the biodiversity session with colleagues from the MRC and Chulalongkorn University: <https://www.afd.fr/en/actualites/tackling-crucial-development-issues-southeast-asia>.

IUCN's point was that the MRC's strategic plan, which has maintained the integrity of the Mekong as one of five priorities, was fundamentally misguided because maintaining the river's ecological integrity will go a long way to delivering on the other priorities related to human development, climate change adaptation, etc. Official discourse on the river is still dominated by "flood control", despite the fact that it is the powerful but gentle annual flood pulse that forms the basis of its incredible natural productivity.



Protected & conserved areas



IUCN Green List

Recommendations for Van Long's Green List site

In early 2021, Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee decided to upgrade a road that bisects the Van Long Wetland Nature Reserve, Viet Nam's (and Southeast Asia's) first Green List site and a stronghold of the CR Delacour's langur. The widened road would stop the growing langur population dispersing into new habitat.

In October, IUCN sent a letter to the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) expressing our concerns and offering our assistance with design options to minimize the impact. At the request of the PPC Chair, the project management unit immediately asked to meet. After discussions with IUCN team who consulted with Viet Nam's top primatologists, the PMU agreed to change the original plan of building an elevated road in the hope that the langurs would use the underpass to build two 16-m wide overpasses à la Thailand's Khao Yai National Park.

IUCN recommended that the PMU install solar-powered electric fences to reduce road kill and force wildlife to use the overpasses, landscape the overpasses with langur-friendly plants, and establish a fund (managed by the nature reserve) to monitor use of the overpasses over next two years. The PMU has agreed in principle with our recommendations.

For more information, please see: <https://iucngreenlist.org/>

Transboundary Management Framework

IUCN completed a revised draft of a Transboundary Management Framework (TBMF) for Phong Nha-Ke Bang World Heritage Site (WHS) in Viet Nam and Hin Nam No National Park in Lao PDR, a proposed transboundary extension. The TBMF will be included in the nomination dossier.



Forest and agriculture landscape

Viet Nam Nature-based-Solutions for adaptation in agriculture through private sector transformation (VN-ADAPT)

On October 22, IUCN joined the kick off meeting for the €15M IKI VN-ADAPT on globally important agricultural landscapes/EBA/business engagement, which SNV will lead with IUCN, ICEM and UNEP as partners. IUCN has expected that the preparation phase will start in February 2022 and the implementation phase will be in October 2022.

In July, BMU sent an email confirming that our €15M proposal Viet Nam Nature-based Solutions for Adaptation in Agriculture through Private Sector Transformation (VN-ADAPT) was selected for the IKI Vietnam bilateral call. It will focus on the Mekong Delta and Central Highlands, our two focal agricultural landscapes.

Mekong Delta Climate Adaptation and Sustainability Project

On March 13, IUCN attended the third Mekong Delta Conference in Can Tho to review progress with implementation of Resolution 120, which was chaired by the Prime Minister. IUCN and other DPs presented a joint statement that was delivered by the World Bank. The statement included two IUCN examples of NBS that the government could commit to, flood-based agriculture and integrated mangrove shrimp, which would simultaneously reduce biodiversity loss, disaster risk, groundwater extraction, and land subsidence.

The event was not without controversy when in front of the Prime Minister, a former MARD vice-minister blamed MPI of rejecting his plan to build a huge ring-dyke around the delta. Such vocal support for large-scale structural solutions is a reaction to MPI's resistance to pouring ever more concrete and preference for cheaper/low-risk NBS.

In August, following on from the input to the Mekong Delta Integrated Master Plan, IUCN was invited by MARD and the World Bank to help design the Mekong Delta Climate Adaptation and Sustainability Project. The \$350M IBRD loan will support a transformation to a more resilient agricultural landscape in line with Resolution 120, which set policy directions to shift out of intensive rice and to adapt to floods and salinity through EBA.

The new project will support investments in NBS and other agricultural practices that restore ecosystem services in the freshwater and coastal parts of the delta. Over the next three months, IUCN led a team of nine experts from research institutes and universities to review concept proposals from the delta's 13 provinces.



**Business and private sector
engagement**

Flood - based livelihoods in support of water retention strategy of the Mekong Delta



Floating rice and lotus-fish mix model

In January, IUCN visited the project site in Long An in the Mekong Delta to monitor the results of the 2020 flood season in a high dyke outside the Lang Sen Wetland Reserve. In the 2020 flood season, farmers allowed the Mekong flood waters to enter the 150-hectare dyke that is normally used to grow high-yield rice. This is part of our strategy to show farmers that they can make more money from flood-friendly livelihoods than from high-yield rice. Farmers grew a mix of floating rice, lotus and fish. Profits from lotus-fish were 3 times higher than from just rice crop. High-yield rice and profits from floating rice-fish were 1.5 times higher. These results follow a high dyke demonstration in Dong Thap, which showed highly profitable outcomes from snakehead fish culture.

Lotus silk production

The project also had its first successful test by An Giang traditional silk-worn fabric weavers who were able to successfully weave lotus fabric from the thread that was produced by women in the 2020 An Giang lotus demonstration sites. The lotus thread produced by local women is being sold at over \$1,000/kg. By demonstrating that lotus fabric can be woven locally, there is now greater confidence within government that the more added value can be captured by the communities.

More information, please see:

<https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202104/iucn-supports-weaving-lotus-fabric-contributing-climate-change-adaptation-and-livelihood-improvement-mekong-delta>



Advocating for Nature-based Solutions to Address the Coastal Squeeze in Mekong Delta



With the financial support from the UBS Optimus Foundation, this project aims at increasing mangrove cover along 200 km of the lowest and most vulnerable coastlines of the delta. This requires the application of system thinking that adopts a holistic approach to coastal planning and investment. Key to success is forming a group of Vietnamese champions that will interface with government decision-makers.

IUCN's role is to provide resources and a platform for the champions to engage government over a 3-year-period (November 2021 – November 2024). IUCN will commission the champions to carry out joint studies of the coastal squeeze and hybrid-NBS so that new knowledge is internalised. Champions will engage their own institutions and the media to move these issues into the public domain.

For more information, please visit <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P04081>

Viet Nam Business for Environment (VB4E)



Small grant programme for CSOs and business on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development

VB4E partnered with GreenViet and GSI through the EU-funded project “Establishing a funding foundation for biodiversity protection and environmental sustainability in Da Nang City, Vietnam” called for the application of small grants on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. VB4E play the role to provide technical inputs for application screening, M&E and promote business participation in this process. Three out of four selected grantees mobilising business participation and funding. The below is the list of selected proposals:

- Establishing Zero Waste Community in An Hai Bac ward, Danang based on the community garden in Morrison street
- Promoting the experiential learning activities in environmental education at secondary schools in Da Nang city
- Piloting biodiversity conservation in West Truong Son through the implementation of the forest garden model in coffee farming
- Strengthen partnership in promoting the development of ecological public space models in Hue City

In addition, one of the above grantees “Strengthen partnership in promoting the development of ecological public space models in Hue City” has successfully mobilised crowd funding through Momo electronic wallet – owned by M-Service Company with the total budget of US\$8,700 from 105.618 contributors.



Plastic Alliance

IUCN, through VB4E, has collaborated with ISPONRE in different activities to support the implementation of Plastic Alliance – an initiative by ISPONRE and Ha Noi Department of Industry and Trade (DOIT) to call for supermarket and retailers joining the Alliance to reduce single use plastic consumption.

So far, sixteen supermarkets and retailers have joined the coalition aiming to reduce single-use plastics in their supply chain. The collaborative activities include the communications video production, dance contest on Tiktok, business consultation about the Alliance’s communications strategy, exhibition on reducing single use plastic waste consumption at members of Plastic Alliance.



Coral reef monitoring programme to propose effective management measures in Cat Ba National Park

IUCN collaborated with Cat Ba National Park and TH food chain joint-stock company to implement the project “Coral reefs monitoring in Cat Ba National Park”. Monitoring activities were conducted at three strictly protected areas namely Van Ta, Gio Cung and Ba Dinh.

The activity aimed to conduct the survey, evaluate the coral coverage and hard species composition and indicator species at the abovementioned areas. The first survey was conducted on September 21 and the second survey was finished in November 2021. The second survey result shows the health condition of coral reefs in Cat Ba is at medium level. The coral reef types are low and not diversified, no change compared with the previous survey.

The indicator species is low presence, especially there was no presence of herbivorous fishes. Coral bleaching has almost disappeared due to low sea temperature. The results from monitoring activities would help the expert team in releasing some advice for effective management and coral conservation at Cat Ba National Park in the coming time.

More information, please see: www.vb4e.com and <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P03414>



IUCN - INSEE partnership



Early this year, IUCN discussed with the INSEE CEO and senior staff to review the 2020 results and plans for long-term cooperation. INSEE has chosen Net Positive Impact as its 2030 target and invited IUCN to play the role of challenger and supporter to achieve this goal. NPI implies the use of biodiversity offsets. These have been defined in Viet Nam and are being designed in Cambodia.

In June, IUCN signed a 3-year-agreement with INSEE Viet Nam to assist the company achieve biodiversity net positive impact (NPI) by 2030 through biodiversity offsets outside its Hon Chong plant and biodiversity conservation measures inside and adjacent to its plants.

The main areas of collaboration under the new agreement are to (1) secure the Phu My Wetland Nature Reserve as an offset for the wetland inside the Hon Chong plant that is being dug out for clay; (2) establish the Kien Luong Karst Nature Reserve as an offset for the karst hills that are being quarried to provide limestone for the cement plant.

Next steps include a joint meeting with Kien Giang provincial leadership to secure political support for the Phu My and proposed karst hill nature reserves, which will serve as proposed offsets, and a biodiversity survey of the CMIC plant in Kampot, Cambodia. Kien Giang and Kampot are home to the Mekong Delta Limestones, which may contain the world's largest number of CR endemics.

For more information, please see <https://iucn.org/ur/node/18423>



IUCN – PROVN Strategic Partnership



Planning Framework for Businesses on Plastic Waste Reduction in Hoi An (2021-2023).

IUCN in collaboration with the People’s Committee of Hoi An City and the Quang Nam Provincial Tourism Association developed Planning Framework for Businesses on Plastic Waste Reduction, towards Hoi An, a Green Destination (2021-2023). The aim of the framework is to get businesses involved in plastic waste reduction and recycling. The framework will apply the “8T” principles (in Vietnamese) including reject; reduce; recycle/refill; replace; waste separation; communications, circular network and sustainable services and products.

Initially, 36 businesses have committed to the framework. Of these, 44% are in the restaurant sector, 22% in the hotel/resort sector, 14% in homestays, and 8% in cafes and grocery shops. Businesses supported the ideas but pointed out difficulties implementing waste separation at source, processing organic waste, alternatives to plastic, and benchmarks and rewards.

Given the fact that organic waste represents two-thirds of the total waste, as shown in IUCN published plastic waste audit report 2020 in Hoi An, IUCN is working with Green Youth Collective Social Enterprise to support Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) to encourage household and businesses to separate organic waste.

For more information, please see <https://open.iucn.org/projects/P03681>



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Page 32: Khoe la karst hill, Kien Luong, Kien Giang Province © INSEE Viet Nam

Page 33: Businesses signed commitment on waste reduction at a consultation organised by IUCN and other partners © IUCN Viet Nam

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