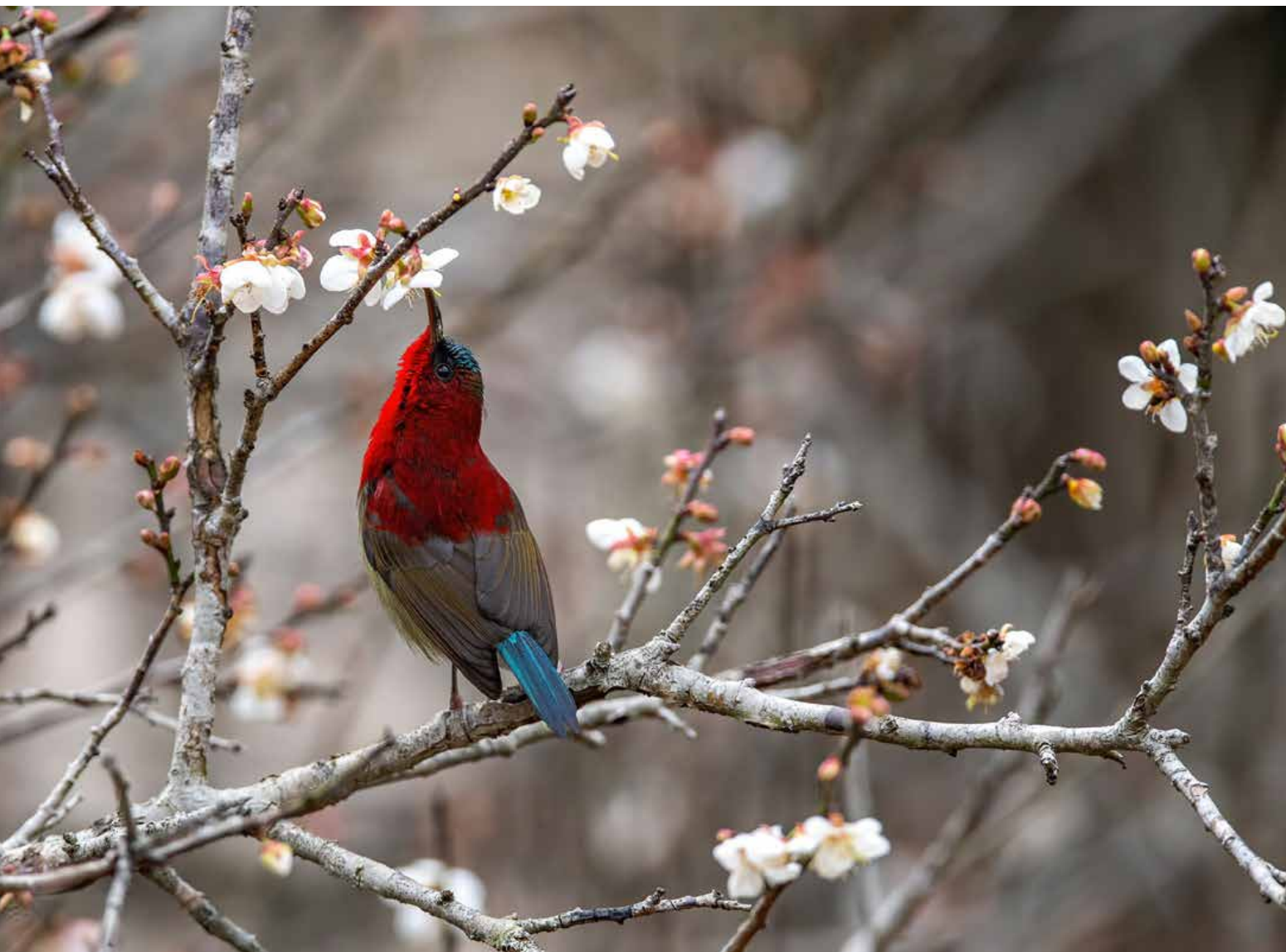




ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

VIET NAM COUNTRY OFFICE



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE



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About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and some 18,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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Abbreviations

2S	Srepok and Sesan rivers basins
3S	Sekong, Sesan and SrePok river basins
BRIDGE	Building River Dialogue and Governance
BMAC	Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative
BMWK	The German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action
CECR	Centre for Environment and Community Research
COP 26	Conference of the Parties 26
CTU	Can Tho University
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
D-FISH	Directorate of Fisheries
EbA	Ecosystem-Based Adaptation
ECN	Ecotourism Cluster Network
EJN	The Earth Journalism Network
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FFPOs	Forest and Farmer Producer Organisations
FPAs	Fishery Protection Areas
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GreenViet	GreenViet Biodiversity Conservation Center
Greenhub	Center for Supporting Green Development
GSI	Gustav-Stresemann-Institut
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
IBG	Indo-Burma Group
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IKI	International Climate Initiative
IMC	Indo-Myanmar Conservation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature

Lao PDR	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
LEP	Law on Environmental Protection
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MCD	Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development
MRFs	Materials Recycling Facilities
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NC	National Committee
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NP	National Park
NPs	National Parks
NPI	Net Positive Impact
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NR	Nature Reserve
PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
P3DM	Participatory 3D Mapping
PCAs	Protected and Conserved Areas
SCCC	Siam City Cement Company
SDC	The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SUF	Special-Use Forest
TCPVN	T.C. Pharma Vietnam
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VB4E	Vietnam Business for Environment
VN-ADAPT	Viet Nam Nature-Based Solutions for Adaptation in Agriculture through Private Sector Transformation
VSF	The For Vietnamese Stature Foundation
VSIP	Viet Nam Singapore Industrial Park Company
WHS	World Heritage Site
WU	Women’s Union
WWF-VN	World Wide Fund for Nature in Viet Nam

Message



Jake Brunner
Head, IUCN Lower
Mekong Subregion
Viet Nam Management

My personal highlight of 2022 was a visit to four caves close to the Lao PDR border in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park and World Heritage Site (WHS). Oxalis, the adventure tourism firm, wanted to promote these caves to diversify the park's attractions and attract visitors away from the epic Son Doong cave, which is usually booked up a year ahead. I was fortunate to be accompanied by the director of UNESCO in Viet Nam and a journalist from HCMC.

As well as the beauty of the caves, what struck me was how Oxalis had built a tourism business based on employing 500 locals as porters, cooks, tour guides, and other service providers. Because these include former hunters and loggers and because the presence of tourists in the forest has a deterrent effect, we should expect wildlife to recover. This model differs from community-based tourism because although local people benefit, they are not expected to manage tourists.

The Oxalis business model works in Phong Nha-Ke Bang because Son Doong, by far the world's largest cave, is a globally unique attraction. The park's WHS status also raises its international profile. Crucially, Oxalis has an exclusive contract to take tourists to Son Doong so that it captures the huge investment it makes in visitor safety, environmental management, and community benefits.

Could this model work elsewhere in Viet Nam? The country has other sites with spectacular scenery such as the northwest mountains, including Fan Si Pan, and Bi Doup-Nui Ba in Da Lat. But it would be hard to identify attractions that could be managed exclusively by a company in the same way as the caves in Phong Nha-Ke Bang. Without such exclusivity, the risk is that popular destinations will get overwhelmed by visitors, as we've seen in Ha Long Bay WHS.

What is clear is that post-covid, there is a growing demand among Viet Nam's middle class for the kind of high-quality outdoors experience that Oxalis offers. With the right kind of government support, this could create new ecotourism opportunities that both conserve nature and generate jobs and economic growth.

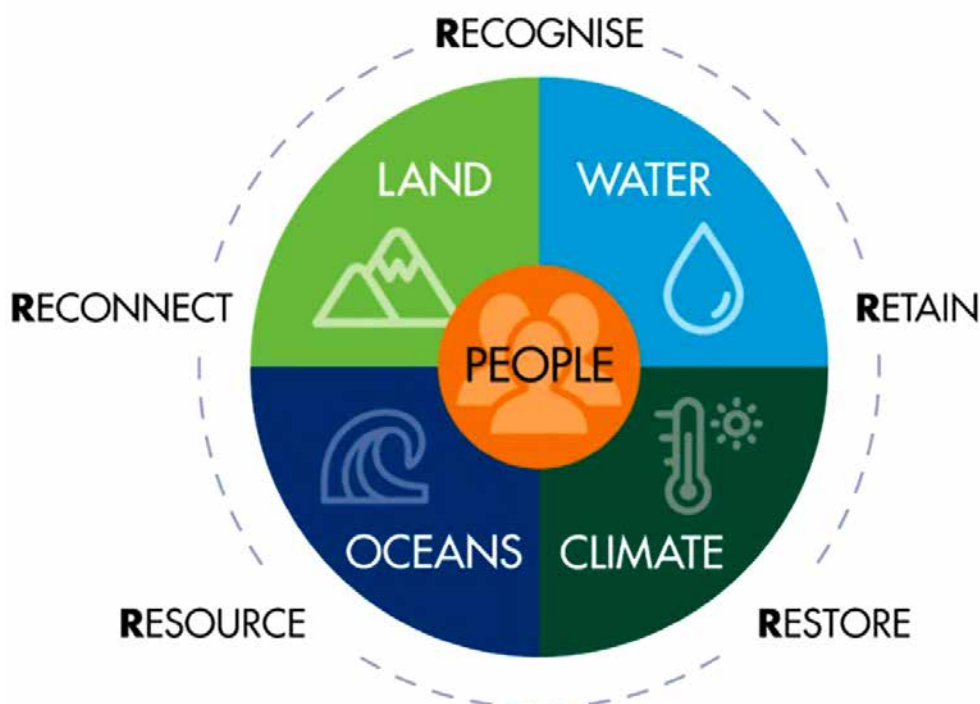
IUCN Nature 2030 – One nature, one future!

The **Nature 2030** IUCN Programme, for the first time, sets its ambition in a decadal timeframe (2021–2030) and is a call for mobilisation to the entire Union. The **Nature 2030**, as envisaged in the IUCN “One Programme Charter”, aims to strengthen the Union’s delivery and impact more effectively by leveraging the respective roles, capacities and unique features of the constituent parts of the Union – our Members, Commissions, National and Regional Committees and Secretariat.

IUCN’s heart respects for nature and respect for people. IUCN’s foundational expertise is particularly well placed to connect the biosphere elements of the SDGs with a commitment to work towards more just and equitable societies and economies, and in doing so to build stronger partnerships for People and Planet.

Over the next decade IUCN’s 1,400+ State, Government Agency, Indigenous Peoples and NGO Members, its network of 16,000+ scientists and its Secretariat will mobilise collectively around the **Nature 2030** agenda. Through this global call-to-action, we commit to delivering a clear and demonstrable contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as well as global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Union will take advantage of its unique structure: generating the necessary science-based evidence and knowledge that decision makers require, building trust and consensus among stakeholder groups, identifying feasible policy options and, critically, fostering a culture of delivery and action that accelerates early and sustainable implementation. It will deliver concrete and tangible positive impacts to **People, Land, Water, Oceans** and **Climate** using the following five pathways (**5Rs**) to transformative change:



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

IUCN Asia Regional Programming

03

STRATEGIC THEMES

- 1 Nature-based Solutions (NbS)
- 2 Livelihoods for Nature
- 3 Governance & Rights

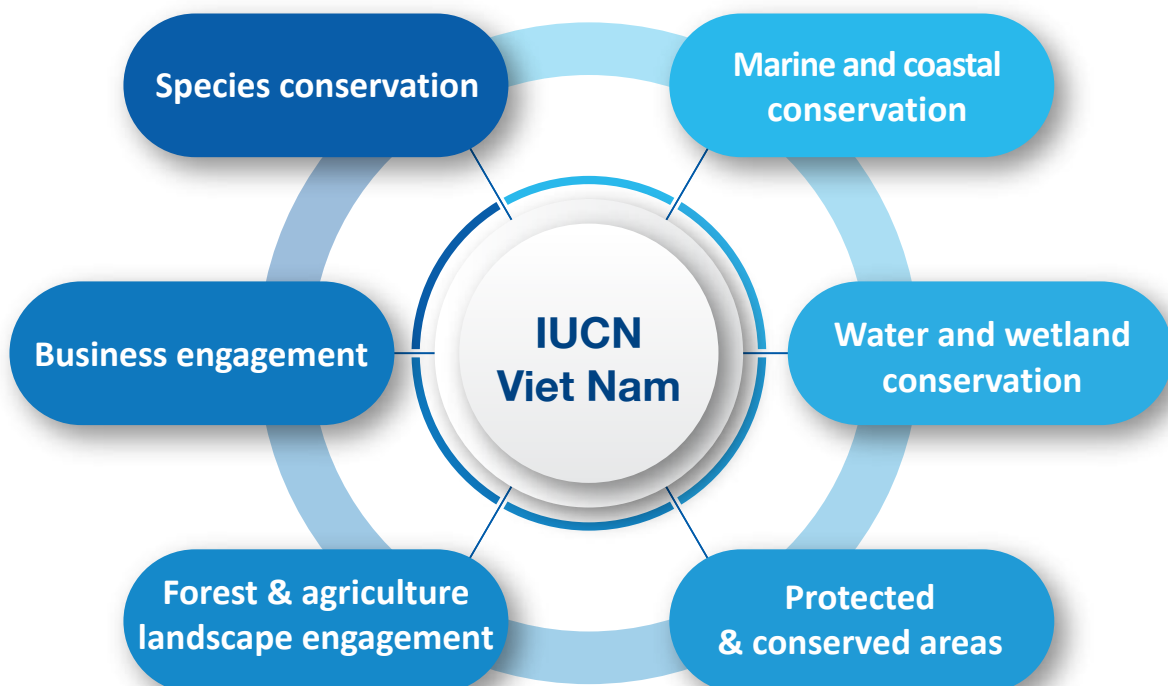
05

PROGRAMME AREAS

- 1 Species and their habitats
- 2 Marine and coastal ecosystems
- 3 Forest and agriculture landscapes
- 4 Water and wetlands
- 5 Protected and conserved areas

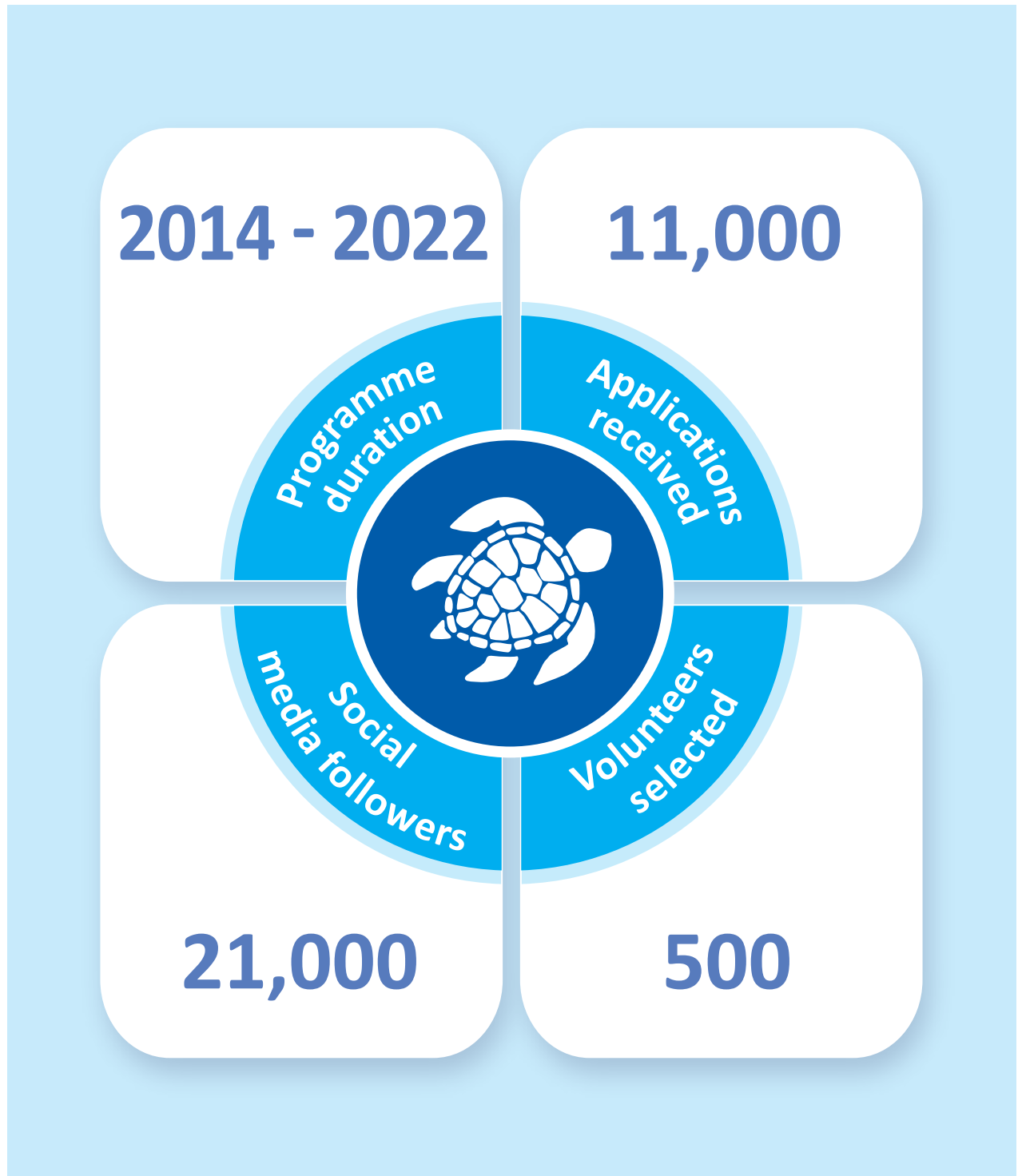
IUCN Viet Nam Programming

IUCN programme in Viet Nam aligns with five key thematic areas above with business engagement as cross-cutting theme.



Some key figures

Marine turtle conservation volunteer programme in Viet Nam



Project locations





Membership

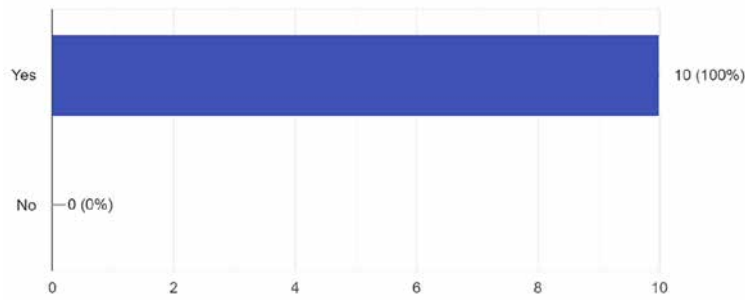
On October 17-19, 2022, IUCN Asia Regional Director, Dr. Dindo Campilan, visited Hanoi to meet with MONRE Minister Tran Hong Ha. The meeting introduced IUCN's program of work in Asia and Viet Nam, seeking advice on three major projects:

- **Fostering Water and Environmental Security:** In the Ma/Ca Transboundary River Basins and Related Coastal Areas (Viet Nam and Lao PDR, GEF International Waters, \$8 million);
- **Enhancing Sustainability:** Of the Transboundary Cambodia-Mekong River Delta Aquifer (Viet Nam and Cambodia, GEF International Waters, \$15 million);
- **Viet Nam Nature-based Solutions:** For Adaptation in Agriculture through Private Sector Transformation (IKI, €15 million).

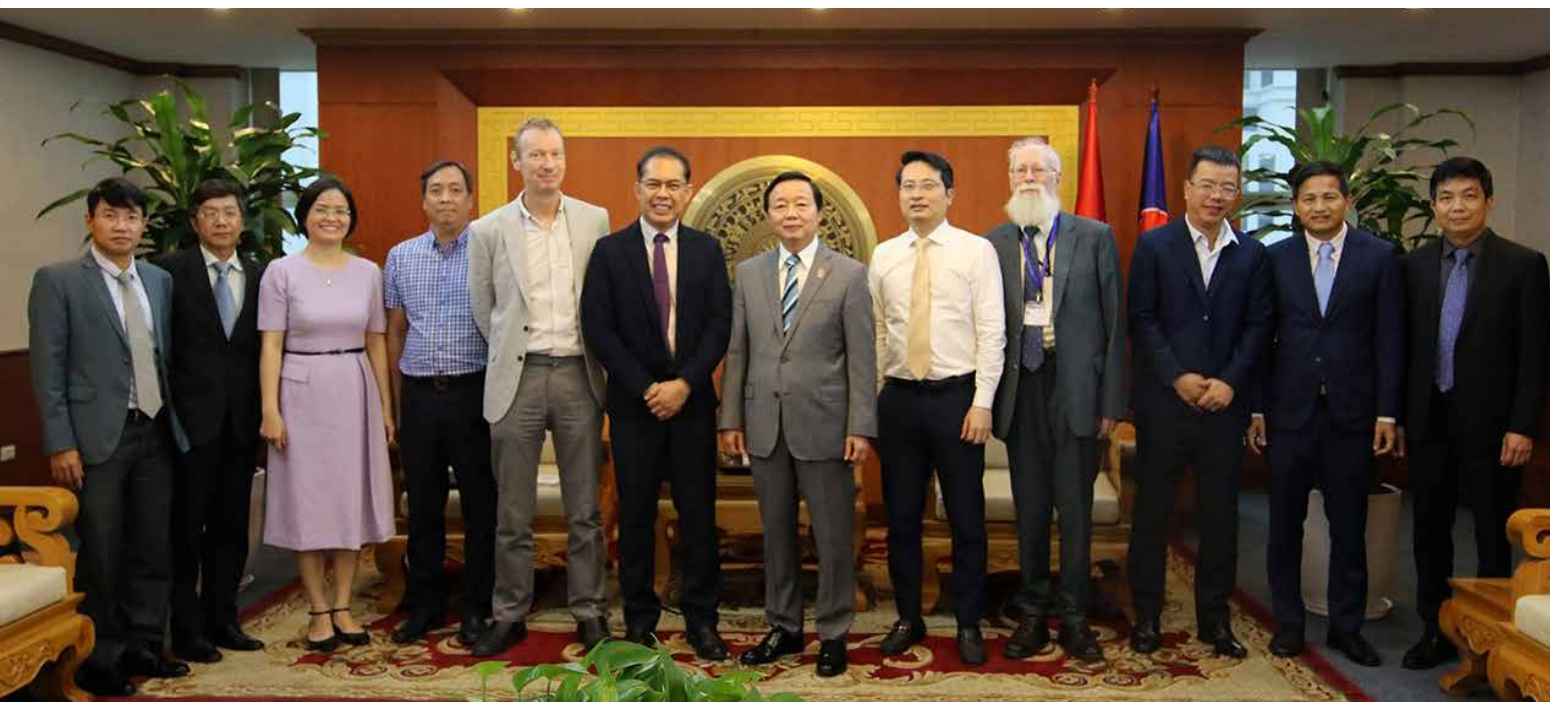
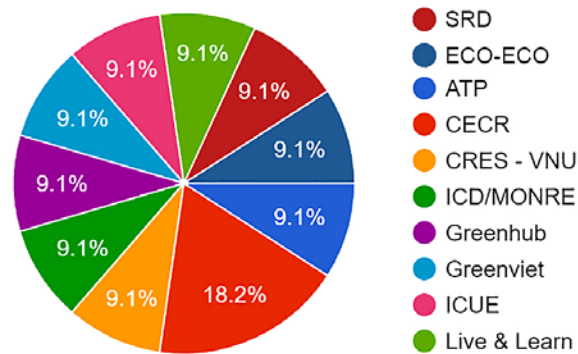
Minister Tran Hong Ha appreciated IUCN's efforts and contributions to conservation work in Viet Nam.

The IUCN Viet Nam National Committee (NC) organised a member meeting on June 16, 2022. The purpose was to provide updates on program work and re-elect a new Chair following Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Ly's withdrawal due to family reasons.

Through an online voting with all members, Ms. Ho Thi Yen Thu, MCD Standing Deputy Director, and Deputy Chair of the Management Board, was unanimously elected as the new Chair of IUCN Viet Nam National Committee. The vote results are graphically represented below.



Two individuals from CECR, including the former NC Chair and Director, submitted responses, bringing the total to 11. The voting, which comprised 10 responses from 10 members (excluding MCD), resulted in unanimous agreement for Ms. Ho Thi Yen Thu as the new NC Chair. Refer to the graph below for a visual representation of the voting outcomes.



In October 2022, IUCN extended an invitation to MONRE to participate in the IUCN Leader Forum Jeju 2022. Specifically, MONRE was invited to join the LEAD session titled “Leaders Exchanges for Action and Decision-making - Paving the way to successful COPs – What role for Nature-based Solutions?”.

Mr. Le Ngoc Tuan, Director General of the International Cooperation Department at MONRE, actively participated in the session. He presented insights on how Viet Nam plans to integrate Nature-based Solutions (NbS) into its commitments for climate change and biodiversity as well as its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).



Species Conservation

1. Community-based marine turtles nesting conservation and bycatch reduction in Viet Nam

Marine turtle conservation volunteer programme

Since 2014, IUCN Vietnam has actively engaged volunteers in Bai Tu Long, Nui Chua, and Con Dao National Parks (NPs), as well as Hon Cau and Ly Son Marine Protected Areas. The primary objectives include:

- **Raising public awareness:** Emphasising the significance of marine turtle conservation.
- **Assisting rangers:** Supporting the relocation of thousands of eggs to incubator areas during the June-September nesting season and subsequently releasing hatchlings into the sea.
- **Environmental stewardship:** Removing beach debris and fostering biodiversity protection and marine conservation nationally.

In 2022, IUCN, in collaboration with Con Dao NP and Hon Cau MPA, issued two calls for volunteers, resulting in the selection of 91 from 673 applicants between May and September.

Each year, Con Dao National Park witnesses the nesting of over 600 mother turtles, resulting in the rescue and release of more than 150,000 baby turtles into the sea—the highest number in Viet Nam.

Hon Cau Marine Protected Area serves as a crucial spawning ground for sea turtles during the breeding season. Since 2013, the Management Board of Hon Cau MPA has successfully protected turtle nests, although the number of hatchlings has varied from 6 to 13 nests, with exceptions in 2019 and 2020 when no hatchlings were found.



As 2022 drew to a close, IUCN hosted an award ceremony honoring the dedication of marine turtle conservation volunteers. The event aimed to acknowledge the commitment over the past eight years, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and grant additional resources to support sea turtle conservation efforts in the country.

During the ceremony, winners in four categories—photos, videos, project ideas, and the most public votes—were announced. Nine volunteers were awarded prizes totaling 45 million VND (approximately \$1,900 USD). The establishment of the IUCN Sea Turtle Alumni was also made.

Throughout this eight-year journey, the program garnered significant participation:

- **11,000** applications received nationwide.
- Selection of **500** dedicated volunteers.
- Over **20,000** followers on IUCN’s fanpage.
- **70%** female volunteer representation.

Many volunteers, demonstrating their commitment, have participated in the program multiple times, with a consistent increase in returnees since 2014. The program’s success is attributed to the crucial support received from the government.



2. Coral reef monitoring in Cat Ba National Park to propose effective conservation measures

In response to the critical decline of coral reefs in Viet Nam, notably the recent mass coral deaths at Hon Mun, Nha Trang MPA, IUCN partnered with Cat Ba National Park through the VB4E alliance. Together, they implemented the programme: “Coral reef monitoring to propose effective conservation measures in Cat Ba National Park”, funded by TH Food Chain Joint Stock Company, TH Group.

The programme goal is to conduct scientific surveys and monitoring at three key points within the strictly protected areas of Cat Ba National Park—Ba Dinh, Van Ta, and Gio Cung. This data will serve as a foundation for proposing robust management and protection measures for reefs. Monitoring focuses on key indicators such as coral coverage, coral species composition in monitoring plots, and the presence of indicator species.

Throughout 2021-2022, experts carried out four comprehensive coral surveys. The findings revealed a moderate level of coral reef health, with a growth trend in average coverage. Some areas displayed low biodiversity in coral reef species, persisting unchanged over two years. Indicator species, particularly fish, exhibited very low presence, contrasting with the common occurrence of large sea urchins in nearly all areas. Coral bleaching, particularly in *Pocilloporidae*, was observed.

The programme demonstrates the significant impacts on coral reef ecosystems from aquaculture, fisheries, tourism, and marine litter. This collaborative effort provides insights for effective conservation strategies, ensuring the preservation of Cat Ba National Park’s marine environment.



Marine and Coastal Conservation

1. USAID Mekong Delta coastal habitat conservation

Rapid assessment of three island clusters in the West Sea

Within the USAID Mekong Delta Coastal Habitat Conservation project, IUCN worked with Kien Giang Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to quickly assess three island clusters in the West Sea: Nam Du, Ba Lua, and Hai Tac. These islands host threatened marine species such as dugong, Irrawaddy dolphin, Green turtle, and Hawksbill turtle. To address conservation needs, the project proposed Fishery Protection Areas (FPAs), crucial for both the environment and commercially significant fish species.

IUCN, through interviews with commune leaders and other locals, drew some initial conclusions. First, the marine habitats of these islands are relatively intact and the fishing is still rich, particularly for blue swimming crabs and octopus, which are in high demand from tourists.

Furthermore, there is a shift from capture fisheries to mariculture. Australis, a US-based company (<https://www.thebetterfish.com/>), is in the planning stages for a 2,000-hectare high-technology Ocean farm in Nam Du, aiming to produce (Asian sea bass) for export.

Additionally, local communities engage in smaller-scale mariculture activities, cultivating grouper and cobia for export to China. Cross-border fishing between Viet Nam and Cambodia poses a significant challenge, with Vietnamese fishers fined in Cambodia and vice versa. Vietnamese trawlers have a more damaging impact on the seabed compared to Cambodian boats using gillnets for swimming crabs.

Despite challenges, leaders in all three island clusters strongly desire FPAs. Challenges, like the abandonment of a 500-hectare FPA in Ba Lua in 2018, highlight the need for robust government action against illegal fishing to sustain local interest and prevent conservation efforts from collapsing.

Establishing a co-management model to protect silk clam resources in Kien Giang Province

On November 19, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Kien Giang province collaborated with IUCN to convene a consultation meeting with stakeholders focusing on the sustainable management and exploitation of silk clam resources in the coastal areas of Kien Giang province.

In a move to enhance the governance of the undulated surf clam (*Paratapes undulatus*) industry, the Kien Giang Province People's Committee (PPC) issued Decision No. 1772 on July 19, 2022, approving a project aimed at establishing a co-management model in Son Hai commune, Kien Luong District. The project, covering an area of 500 hectares, is scheduled for implementation from 2022 to 2024.

The primary objectives of the project are as follows:

- **Capacity enhancement:** Improve the capacity of local community organisations associated with the management rights for silk clam resources.
- **Sustainable resource management:** Implement measures to manage fishing activities and protect aquatic resources sustainably.
- **Model replication:** Propose solutions for replicating the co-management model in the protection of aquatic resources beyond the initial project scope.

This initiative between local authorities and IUCN reflects a proactive stance in fostering a co-management model. The aim is to ensure the enduring sustainability of the industry whilst safeguarding the delicate balance of aquatic ecosystems.



2. Community-based marine turtles nesting conservation and bycatch reduction in Viet Nam

Mobilising business for marine turtle conservation through plastic waste management



On May 31, 2022, IUCN, worked with the Binh Dinh Fisheries Department, to organise a training workshop dedicated to the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats. The workshop aimed to equip participants with knowledge on sea turtle conservation and engage in discussions around waste management, particularly emphasising the role of businesses in mitigating plastic pollution.

Bai Xep and Ghenh Rang, attractive tourist areas boasting high-end resorts for both domestic and foreign visitors, face challenges related to waste littering by local residents and beach encroachment by food businesses. These problems have underscored the need for stronger environmental compliance measures and regular monitoring by local authorities.

The workshop brought about an initial consensus between businesses and community groups to actively participate in marine turtle and habitat conservation efforts. Avani Resort took a proactive lead in this process, demonstrating commitment by signing an agreement with the Binh Dinh Fisheries Sub-Department. This agreement outlines a coordinated effort to support marine turtle conservation initiatives in Quy Nhon Province.

Integrated training to enhance effective management of 11 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)/National Parks (NPs) in Viet Nam



In collaboration with the Nha Trang Institute of Oceanography (NIO), World Wide Fund for Nature in Viet Nam (WWF-Viet Nam), and the Directorate of Fisheries (D-FISH) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, IUCN organised a training program at Phu Quoc Marine Protected Area.

The integrated training, focused on several critical aspects of marine conservation:

- **Rescue skills:** Training participants in the rescue skills of sea turtles and marine animals.
- **Reef check technology:** Providing insights into reef check technology and addressing emerging environmental issues such as ocean acidification and microplastics.
- **Plastic waste monitoring:** Instructing participants on monitoring plastic waste on coral reef surfaces and education on the removal of coral reef ghost nests.
- **Advanced diving skills:** Offering training in advanced diving skills and proficient underwater maneuvers for rescue and supervision, facilitated by VietDivers, a reputable diving company.

The positive feedback received from Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and National Parks (NPs) underscores the success of the training programme. It played a crucial role in promoting information exchange within the network, building the capacity of management staff, and making tangible contributions to the protection of the marine environment in Viet Nam.



Wetlands and Water Conservation

1. Capacity building for River Dialogue and Governance Project (BRIDGE)

IUCN and the Stimson Center have jointly published a series of articles focused on the implementation of Viet Nam's COP26 commitments.

This collection of articles is a part of the BRIDGE project, generously funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Operating on a global scale, the BRIDGE project, coordinated by IUCN, spans 15 transboundary river basins, including the Mekong River. To explore the comprehensive insights provided in these six articles, please follow the link below:

- i. <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202205/vietnams-cop26-commitments-a-moment-truth>
- ii. <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202205/sekong-a-dam-lao-pdr-and-mekong-delta-a-moment-decision-viet-nam>
- iii. <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202205/unlocking-international-finance-vietnams-renewable-energy-transition>
- iv. <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202205/opportunities-and-challenges-expanding-wind-vietnams-electricity-mix>
- v. <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202205/grid-integration-renewables>
- vi. <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202206/regional-cooperation-electricity-trade>

New study on coffee transition for multiple benefits in the Central Highlands

Through its BRIDGE Program, IUCN is actively supporting transboundary river cooperation in the Srepok, Sesan, and Sekong (3S) River Basins. In the Central Highlands of Viet Nam, the headwaters for the Srepok and Sesan (2S) Rivers, coffee stands out as the predominant commercial land use and a significant water consumer.

In 2019, IUCN initiated a rapid assessment to explore opportunities for transitioning the prevalent coffee monocultures in the Central Highlands into a diversified crop mix. This transition increased total crop value, enhanced drought resilience, improved coffee supply, and greater availability of water during the dry season, benefiting downstream flows. The initial assessment focused solely on Dak Lak, Viet Nam's largest coffee-producing province, and was subsequently updated in 2020.

Building upon the insights gained in 2020, IUCN in 2021 by commissioned a more comprehensive analysis. This in-depth assessment delved into the costs and benefits associated with the proposed transition from coffee monocultures to diverse, higher-value, and less water-intensive agroforestry practices across all five provinces in the Central Highlands—Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, and Lam Dong.

Published in 2022, the report scrutinised various options for agricultural transformation, considering factors such as coffee production, water conservation, profitability, and climate change mitigation at both the landscape and farm levels. The report concludes with valuable insights and recommendations for sustainable land use practices in the region.

TEDxĐakao: How transboundary cooperation inspires natural conservation & economic growth

In June, Jake Brunner, Head, IUCN Lower Mekong Subregion Viet Nam Management, shared the advantages of nature conservation among Mekong countries in a TED talk video. His presentation discussed the potential for cooperation between Viet Nam and neighbouring countries, Cambodia and Laos, to enhance the collective ecosystem of natural conservation. The proposed partnership not only aims to benefit the environment but also aims to promote tourism and bolster economic development across the nations. By inspiring a positive shift in public policy, these transboundary collaborations aspire to create a mutually beneficial framework for sustainable environmental practices.



Protected and Conserved Areas





1. The GIZ funded sustainable tourism and Protected Area in a post-COVID world project

A new take on Health and Safety for community tourism in a post-COVID era in Cuc Phuong National Park (NP) and Van Long Wetlands Nature Reserve (NR)

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project introduces a novel perspective on health and safety for community tourism in Cuc Phuong National Park (NP) and Van Long Wetlands Nature Reserve (NR).

During July and August 2022, a training session on Health and Safety implications on community tourism took place in Cuc Phuong NP and Van Long Wetlands NR. The objectives were to provide operational guidance for managing health risks across various experiential activities, address cultural considerations in the post-COVID-19 era, and share recommendations on minimising the spread of bacteria while anticipating potential H&S risks.

A total of 58 participants from two villages in Cuc Phuong NP and 125 individuals from three villages in Van Long Wetlands NR engaged in the training. To ensure targeted relevance, the training content was divided into two sessions—one for all community members and another tailored specifically for households offering tourism activities.

The success of these efforts relied on an understanding of the distinctive situations, beliefs, and characteristics of each community, allowing for the customisation of training to meet their specific needs. The initiative reflects a commitment to advancing community-based tourism while prioritising the health and safety of both visitors and hosts in a post-COVID landscape.

Fostering sustainable tourism: Inception of Ecotourism Cluster Network (ECN)

In August 2022, IUCN and the Planeterra Foundation organised a consultation meeting in Ninh Binh Province to lay the groundwork for the Ecotourism Cluster Network (ECN) – Cuc Phuong & Van Long. The primary focus centered on the dual objectives of nature conservation and enhancing community livelihoods.

The diverse group of participants included representatives from Cuc Phuong NP, Van Long Wetland NR, hotels, travel agencies, cooperatives, and local authorities/communities. The meeting served as a platform for rich discussions, feedback, and recommendations that contributed to the formulation and sustainability of the ECN – Cuc Phuong & Ninh Binh.

During the post-COVID recovery phase within the tourism industry, the establishment of an ECN becomes imperative. This strategic network not only promises economic benefits but also stands as a pivotal force in preserving and protecting the natural environment.

Empowering communities through Participatory 3D Mapping (P3DM) for sustainable ecotourism

Participatory 3D Mapping (P3DM) is a dynamic method to build knowledge-sharing with local and indigenous communities to enhance the effective management of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs). This approach not only heightens participants' spatial awareness but also empowers them to analyse, communicate, and interact on various issues, ranging from tourism to conservation and resource management.

To cultivate resilient community-based ecotourism, a comprehensive P3DM exercise was conducted with 21 local villages in and around Cuc Phuong National Park. This initiative specifically engaged the local ethnic Muong communities, aiming to develop sustainable and resilient ecotourism itineraries while supporting post-COVID-19 recovery.

The P3DM exercise unfolded through five key steps: Legend crafting, blank model creation, community consultation, presentation to Cuc Phuong Management Board before digitalisation and GIS integrating the 3D model.



Empowering communities: Pilot tour trips in Cuc Phuong National Park and Van Long Nature Reserves

Local community members, IUCN, and Planeterra worked together to plan and initiate tourist tours in Cuc Phuong National Park and Van Long Wetlands Nature Reserves (NR). The goal was to go beyond simple exploration and create meaningful, practical impacts for the communities involved.

These pilot excursions serve as a valuable opportunity for community members to engage with diverse visitor markets and put their sustainable tourism activities into practice in real-life settings. Two distinct itineraries were proposed for these excursions:

1. **Weekend getaway in Van Long NR:** This itinerary seeks to provide visitors with a weekend retreat in Van Long NR, offering a chance to experience the natural beauty of the wetlands while minimising the impact on the village's reliance on Park tourism.
2. **Exploration of "Muong" ethnic minority culture in Cuc Phuong NP:** Designed to showcase the rich cultural tapestry of the "Muong" ethnic minority, this itinerary aims to reduce dependence on Park tourism. Activities such as biking and vegetable picking have been strategically planned outside of the Park's territory.

Through these pilot excursions, local communities not only reach diverse visitor markets but also improve their sustainable tourism practices and expand economic opportunities for the local villages.



Forest and Agriculture Landscape



1. Forest and Farm Facility (FFF)

The Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) stands as a joint partnership involving FAO, IUCN, IIED, and Agricord, overseen by the Viet Nam Farmers' Union. This initiative focuses on building networks between Forest and Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and various stakeholders, including companies, investors, and markets.

A significant outcome of the FFF initiative has been the roundtable discussions at the commune, district, and provincial levels. These discussions serve as a vital platform, linking FFPOs with scientists, the private sector, and decision-makers.

Notable achievements include the transformation of a group of 18 farmers into a registered cooperative, Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative (BMAC). This cooperative now manages 60 hectares of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified plantation and operates a chain of custody certified sawmill with a processing capacity of 700 m³ of timber per month.

FFF also organised tailored training sessions for BMAC on market analysis, development, and organisational management. Additionally, small grants were provided for technical training sessions focusing on FSC requirements for cooperative members and other farmers' groups.



2. Viet Nam Nature-Based Solutions for Adaptation in Agriculture through Private Sector Transformation (VN-ADAPT)

Supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) and the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), the project, led by MONRE, MARD and technical partners aims to enhance institutional capacity and build partnerships.

The goal is to direct private innovation and investment toward the rapid adoption of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) and Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA) in the agriculture sector. The project will be prepared from May 2022 to Jan 2023 and implemented from Feb 2023 to Jan 2028. It will target specific locations in the Mekong Delta provinces (An Giang, Long An, Dong Thap, Ben Tre, Tra Vinh, Ca Mau, Kien Giang) and the Central Highlands (Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Lam Dong).

Business Engagement



Siam City Cement Group (SCCC) and IUCN partnership to support SCCC Group's sustainability ambition 2030 and biodiversity conservation in Asia

MOU extension between IUCN and SCCC

SCCC Group and IUCN have renewed their partnership for an additional three years, solidifying their commitment to the INSEE Sustainability Ambition 2030. This initiative aims for a Net Positive Impact (NPI) on biodiversity at SCCC Group sites.

The primary goal is to minimise biodiversity loss. Over the next three years, SCCC Group and IUCN will work together to implement biodiversity offsets. These offsets will compensate for any adverse effects resulting from SCCC Group's quarrying and cement production processes across its plants in Thailand, Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka.

This partnership aims to enhance the cement and related industries in the region with a focus on biodiversity conservation. SCCC Group and IUCN are exemplifying responsible corporate practices in line with global sustainability goals.



IUCN and Can Tho University collaborate to preserve biodiversity

IUCN and Can Tho University (CTU) organised a capacity building workshop at the 1,000-hectare Phu My Habitat and Species Conservation Area.

CTU presented the results of a recent biodiversity assessment, revealing alarming threats to the grassland and proposing viable management solutions. The assessment unveiled a stark decline in biodiversity, exemplified by the *Sarus* crane population plummeting from 152 in 2009 to a mere 35 in 2021. Native fish numbers and the *Lepironia* grassland area also experienced significant reduction.

The workshop concluded with proposed conservation measures, encompassing the preservation of existing *Lepironia* grassland, restoration of feeding areas for cranes with a targeted water depth, development of ecotourism potential, and the construction of a dike to prevent paddy encroachment. Sluice gates within the dike will be utilised to control water levels and expedite natural grassland recovery.

With INSEE's support, IUCN supported stakeholders to reduce biodiversity loss in Phu My. If successful, this initiative could serve as a biodiversity offset for the wetland adjacent to INSEE's plant.





IUCN's partnership with PAN and CP Group to restore Lang Sen Wetland Nature Reserve

In 2022, IUCN joined forces with PAN and CP Group in an initiative aimed at restoring the *melaleuca* forest in Lang Sen Wetland Nature Reserve. This two-year project plans to plant 340,000 *melaleucas*, vital for water birds and various freshwater species.

The urgency of such restoration efforts is highlighted by a 2021 survey revealing a decline of 139 hectares in the total area of Special-Use Forest (SUF) in Lang Sen Wetland NR since 2014. Responding to this, the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) approved a plan in September 2021 to reforest 30 hectares by the end of 2022.

To kickstart the project, IUCN, along with the Lang Sen management board, organised a consultation in December. Valuable insights were gathered on planting density, timing, suitable areas, and techniques. Notably, experts recommended calculating the carbon capture of the new forest—a crucial consideration as Viet Nam plans to pilot a carbon trading market in 2025, aligning with COP26 commitments to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.





TCP moving toward circular economy and enhancing EPR practices in Viet Nam



Led by MONRE, the revision of the Law on Environmental Protection (LEP) secured National Assembly approval in December 2020, introducing Articles 54-55 that establish Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR) for six sectors. Subsequently, MONRE, in January 2022, issued Decree No. 08/2022/ND-CP and Circular No. 02/2022/TT-BTNMT, providing detailed guidance on EPR implementation.

In July 2022, IUCN and TCPVN Company Ltd entered agreement during 2022-2024, aiming to test EPR models for waste separation, collection, and recycling of aluminum cans, PET plastics, and carton papers. The project, initially targeting Viet Nam Singapore Industrial Park Company (VSIP), evolved its focus to households in northern Viet Nam due to insufficient waste volume at VSIP. While this strategic shift addresses domestic waste collection and recycling, it maintains an emphasis on capacity building and awareness programs, especially for Viet Nam Singapore Industrial Park (VSIP) workers, ensuring a holistic and sustainable approach to waste management.

Advocating for Nature-based Solutions to address the coastal squeeze in the Mekong Delta



UBS

The Mekong Delta, harboring half of Viet Nam's mangroves, faces a critical challenge as sea level rise induces a phenomenon known as coastal squeeze.

This intricate issue, outlined in the 2019 IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere, is poorly grasped. While conventional coastal planners lean towards costly measures like mangrove reforestation with concrete wave breakers, a more sustainable approach is imperative.

The project strives to bolster mangrove cover across 200 km of the delta's most vulnerable coastlines. Adopting a system thinking approach, the initiative seeks to redefine coastal planning and investment holistically. Over a 3-year period, IUCN will facilitate this engagement, providing resources and a platform for effective collaboration.

The project unfolds across three integral components:

- **Generating knowledge for policy advocacy:** Conducting in-depth research to inform evidence-based policy advocacy on coastal squeeze.
- **Building capacity for hybrid Natural-based Solutions (NbS):** Equipping government bodies, businesses, and communities with the necessary technical, financial, and political know-how to implement hybrid NbS effectively.
- **Engaging stakeholders in advocacy:** Fostering synergy between government, businesses, civil society, and development partners to advocate for policies supporting hybrid NBS as a viable solution to coastal squeeze.

IUCN – PRO Viet Nam Strategic Partnership

Celebrating the contribution of female waste pickers in plastic waste reduction



PACKAGING
RECYCLING
ORGANIZATION
VIETNAM
LIÊN MINH TÀI CHẾ BẢO BI VIỆT NAM

In partnership with the Hoi An Women's Union, the Green Development Support Center (GreenHub), the Association of Vietnamese Handicapped and Orphans in Quang Nam province, and the Building Up Sustainability centre (BUS), IUCN organised an event to recognise and honour the

invaluable contribution of female waste pickers in Hoi An City.

With approximately 100 female waste pickers in Hoi An, the city recently established a "Group of Female Waste Pickers" comprising 40 individuals, supported by a network of Materials Recycling Facilities (MRFs). IUCN contributed by providing 54 recycling houses for collecting recyclable waste.

Despite playing a crucial role in solid waste collection and recycling, waste pickers often face societal disrespect, workplace accidents, exposure to hazardous environments, health issues, strenuous labour, unstable income, and low living conditions. This event aims to shed light on their significant efforts and address the challenges they encounter in their vital role.

Promoting waste separation in Hoi An City

On March 10, 2022, IUCN delivered 100 trash cans made from recycled plastic to the Hoi An City People's Committee. Each trash can, constructed from 3,500 pieces of plastic waste (equivalent to 25kg) sourced locally, features three compartments to facilitate waste sorting.

The Hoi An City People’s Committee, Hoi An City Women’s Union, and Greenhub and IUCN organised a programme to present 54 recycling houses to the Hoi An City Women’s Union. These recycling houses, designed for collecting recyclable waste, aim to encourage residents to separate high-value and low-value plastic waste, alleviating the city’s burden in garbage collection and reducing pressure on landfills.

As part of future initiatives, IUCN and Greenhub plan to collaborate with the Hoi An Women’s Union to educate the local community on effective plastic waste sorting. The income generated from selling waste will be directed towards supporting women and children facing economic challenges in the city.



Vietnam Business for Environment (VB4E)

Grant programme to support female journalists reporting on plastic waste pollution

IUCN and the For Vietnamese Stature Foundation (VSF) partnered on the “Female Journalists Take Action to Reduce Plastic Waste Pollution” project, funded by the Earth Journalism Network (EJN), Tetra Pak Viet Nam Joint Stock Company, and VB4E. This initiative empowered female journalists to address plastic pollution in Viet Nam, offering a “Financial & Technical Aid Package.” Following a six-month call for proposals, eight journalists received grants, producing 31 articles.

GreenViet and GSI, with IUCN through the EU-funded project “Establishing a funding foundation for biodiversity protection and environmental sustainability in Da Nang City, Viet Nam” launched a small grants program on biodiversity conservation. VB4E facilitated business participation, selecting five proposals with a EUR 70,000 budget.



- **Greenhouse library model:** Implemented at Hermann school and SOS village Da Nang;
- **Indigenous Sa Sam tree planting:** Led by the Women’s Union in Hai Ninh Commune, Quang Ninh District, Quang Binh Provinces;
- **Ethnic minority medicinal plant conservation:** Emphasising medicinal plant resource conservation, this model involves local ethnic communities in preserving valuable plant species;
- **Circular Economy Program for youth:** An educational initiative in Da Nang City focusing on plastic waste and Circular Economy principles;
- **Public awareness against poaching:** Situated in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, this campaign aims to raise awareness, minimise poaching and consumption of endangered species.

Waste management training program for 10 secondary schools in Nghe An Province: Sorting and treating used milk cartons

During October - November, The Education & Training Department of Vinh City, Nghe An, TH Group, Lagom Joint Stock Company and IUCN organised a training program on sorting and treating used milk cartons at 10 secondary schools.

The training sessions, attended by 50 teachers from the selected schools in Vinh City, equipped them with the knowledge and skills needed to guide students in the proper collection, sorting, and treatment of used milk cartons for recycling. Following the training, teachers were empowered to develop school-specific plans for collecting and recycling both used milk cartons and plastic waste.



As part of this initiative, “The Golden Bell” contest engaged 200 students from the participating elementary schools. Students learned the power of recycling and had witnessed recycled products first-hand including tables and trash bins. This hands-on experience allowed them to comprehend the significance of waste separation at the source and contributing to the reduction of plastic waste pollution.

Sustainable Tourism and Protected Area in a Post-COVID World project

MOU signing between Oxalis Adventure (Viet Nam) and Green Discovery (Laos) to promote cave tourism in Viet Nam and Lao DPR

In September 2022, IUCN, together with Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park Management Board and key stakeholders from Vietnam and Lao PDR, facilitated a pivotal MOU signing during a consultation meeting to boost cave tourism. This MOU outlines the efforts to develop transboundary tourism activities in Phong Nha – Ke Bang and Hin Nam No National Parks (NPs), ensuring high - quality experiences for tourists while preserving natural resources.

Phong Nha – Ke Bang and Hin Nam No National Parks, adjacent to each other, share a vast karst system along the border of Viet Nam and Lao PDR. Recognising the importance of this shared ecosystem, a Transboundary Management Framework is crucial for both NPs to exchange information, share experiences in forest protection patrol, biodiversity conservation, livelihood development, and tourism initiatives.

The partnership between Oxalis Adventure and Green Discovery Laos is expected to contribute to promoting nature tourism between Quang Binh and Kham Muon Provinces. It will involve developing transboundary tourism products, enhancing local livelihoods, and alleviating pressure on the National Parks.

Photo credit

- Cover Page:** Crimson Sunbird and Apricot Blossom at Cuc Phuong National Park © IUCN Viet Nam/ Nguyen Manh Hiep
- Page 14:** Dr. Dindo Campilan, IUCN Asia Regional Director, meeting Dr. Tran Hong Ha, MONRE Minister, during his trip to Vietnam in October 2022 © IUCN Viet Nam
- Page 15:** Group photo between IUCN and MONRE delegates © IUCN Viet Nam
- Page 16:** A newborn sea turtle heading to the ocean in Con Dao National Park, Vietnam © IUCN Viet Nam
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- Page 18:** A species of *Acropora* genus found during monitoring activities in Cat Ba National Park, Vietnam © Cat Ba National Park
- Page 19:** Butterflyfish and snappers in Binh Tien, Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam © MCD
- Page 20:** A tourist boat in Phu Quoc Beach, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam © IUCN Viet Nam
- Page 21:** Newborn sea turtles returning to the ocean in Con Dao National Park © IUCN Viet Nam
- Page 22:** Staff of Marine Protected Areas and National Park joining training on advanced diving skills organized by IUCN in Phu Quoc MPA, Vietnam © VietDivers
- Page 23:** Staff of IUCN, PAN Group, and CP Group planting *melaleuca* in Lang Sen Wetlands Nature Reserve, Vietnam © IUCN Viet Nam
- Page 24:** A farmer in a coffee plantation in the Central Highlands of Vietnam © Alisher Sharipau, Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung
- Page 25:** A beach view in Cu Lao Cham Marine Protected Area, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam © IUCN Viet Nam/Nguyen Thuy Anh
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Page 27: Communities joining Participatory 3D Mapping (P3DM) for sustainable ecotourism in Cuc Phuong National Park © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 28: A forest ranger guiding tourists in Cuc Phuong National Park, Vietnam © The Planeterra Foundation

Page 29: Floating rice in Long An Province, Vietnam © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 30: A sawmill factory at Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative (BMAC) under FFF project © Vietnam Farmers' Union

Page 31: Representatives of IUCN, PAN, and CP Group planting *melaleuca* in Lang Sen Nature Reserve © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 32: Dr. Dindo (second from the left) and Mr. Aidan (second from the right) attending the MOU signing ceremony © INSEE

Page 33: Local farmers collecting *Lepironia* in Phu My Habitat and Species Conservation Area © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 34: A local farmer checking the newly planted *melaleucas* in Lang Sen NR © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 35: Mr. Jake Brunner (left) and Mr. Nguyen Thanh Huan (right) signing a partnership agreement between IUCN and TCPVN © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 37: Representatives of IUCN, Hoi An Women's Union, Greenhub at the delivery of trash cans © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 38: Waste pickers separating plastic waste at Hoi An waste treatment plant, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 39: Students learning how to recycle plastic waste into consumption products in the campaign © IUCN Viet Nam

Back Cover: A staff member of CP Group planting a *melaleuca* in Lang Sen Wetlands Nature Reserve © IUCN Viet Nam



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