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USAID HA LONG – CAT BA ALLIANCE

2014 - 2019 | IMPLEMENTER: INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE | PLANNED BUDGET: \$618,000

The Ha Long Bay World Heritage Site and Cat Ba Archipelago Biosphere Reserve are two of Vietnam's most economically and ecologically important areas, renowned for their scenic beauty and biological importance. The Ha Long – Cat Ba Alliance was established in 2014 to build a partnership between government, business, and community leaders that catalyzes action to preserve and protect Ha Long Bay and the Cat Ba Archipelago.

The Alliance is implemented by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and it advocates for the preservation of the area's biodiversity through a high-level, business-led Alliance Leadership Committee. The committee members are business leaders, local and international non-governmental organizations, political representatives from Quang Ninh and Hai Phong provinces, national-level government agencies, and the U.S. Government. These stakeholders set a vision and give ongoing guidance on the Alliance's work plan, which includes increasing public awareness of environmental conditions; advancing a green certification standard for overnight cruise companies; improving water quality in Ha Long – Cat Ba; and nominating the Ha Long Bay UNESCO World Heritage Site to expand to include the Cat Ba Archipelago.

The second phase of the Alliance, which began in 2017, focuses on:

1. Advocating for effective environmental management and sustaining the Alliance by expanding business membership, diversifying the funding base, and policy dialogue.
2. Increasing public awareness of the importance of environmental protection in Ha Long and Cat Ba through business capacity building and media engagement.
3. Improving biodiversity conservation efforts in Ha Long and Cat Ba by supporting the expansion of the World Heritage Site protected area to include the Cat Ba Archipelago.

The Alliance is implemented with partner government authorities such as the Quang Ninh Provincial People's Committee, Ha Long Bay Management Department, Hai Phong City People's Committee, and Cat Ba Archipelago Natural Heritage Management Commission.

RESULTS

To date, the Alliance has partnered with nearly 20 cruise companies, local and international businesses, and civil society organizations. It has leveraged more than \$210,000 from the private sector to invest in awareness raising and community development activities in Hai Phong City and Quang Ninh Province. The Alliance has organized three large scale coastal clean-ups with over 300 volunteers that collected nearly four tons of trash along four kilometers of coastline. As more than 60% of the trash was expanded polystyrene, the Alliance worked with the Ha Long City People's Committee to issue a decision banning the use of this material in Ha Long Bay and worked with the Hai Phong City People's Committee on alternatives. The Alliance has trained over 70 tour guides on the environmental and biodiversity values of the site and has advocated for the need to design tourism infrastructure in ways that do not threaten the outstanding universal values of the expanded site.

Photo Credit: IUCN/AMDI