

Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project

**The World Conservation Union (IUCN)
Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR)**

VIETNAM

REPORT OF THE REVIEW/EVALUATION MISSION

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| ACAP | Annapurna Conservation Area Project |
| CBST | Community-based Sustainable Tourism |
| ESCAP | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| FPD | Forest Protection Department |
| ICCO | Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation |
| IOF | Institute of Forestry |
| ITDR | Institute for Tourism Development Research |
| IUCN | World Conservation Union |
| MARD | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development |
| NES | National Ecotourism Strategy |
| NGO | Nongovernmental Organisation |
| NTSC | National Tourism Steering Committee |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| RECOPTC | Regional Community Forestry Training Centre |
| SDC | Swiss Development Corporation |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Agency |
| SNV | Netherlands Development Organisation |
| STB | Sustainable Tourism Board |
| STP | Sustainable Tourism Project |
| STRC | Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre |
| TMI | The Mountain Institute |
| UNDP | United Nations Development |
| VNAT | Vietnam National Administration of Tourism |
| WTO | World Tourism Organisation |

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Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project

REPORT OF THE REVIEW/EVALUATION MISSION

A. INTRODUCTION

This evaluation report of the Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project summarises information collected during an evaluation/ review of the project which took place at the end of the project period. The evaluation/review was performed by a review team including one national consultant and one international consultant, and took place between October 3 and 9, 1999. The evaluation team reviewed documents, and organised meetings with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) officials, Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) officials, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) officials, other major stakeholders, and representatives of appropriate donor agencies in Hanoi, Vietnam. Additionally, the review team made a field visit to Sa Pa, a Pilot Project area for community-based sustainable tourism development, and organised meetings with local government authorities and local communities. The terms of reference for the evaluation mission, the itinerary of the review team and a list of people met are included in Annexes i, ii and iii respectively.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project (STP) is one of the pioneer initiatives to raise awareness about the negative impacts of tourism and design models for community-based sustainable tourism which promote biodiversity conservation in Vietnam. The STP evolved as International NGOs working in Vietnam observed, and grew concerned about, the negative impacts of tourism on Vietnam's ethnic minority groups and biophysical environment. The negative impacts of tourism were particularly evident in Sa Pa district, Lao Cao Province, an area which had experienced rapid tourism development in the mid 1990s. The World Conservation Union (IUCN), with its counterpart the Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) were entrusted to implement the project. The STP Project budget for the first two years was US \$ 250, 305.

The STP Project document states the goal of the STP as;

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

STP combines six different objectives into a mutually supportive and dynamic set of activities. These objectives are: (a) Networking and Information Exchange; (b) Research and Analysis; (c) Education and Training; (d) Support for a Pilot Project and (e) Advocacy.

The Project document states that:

...“Sustainable tourism” is often equated with nature or alternative or eco-tourism; but sustainable tourism development means more than protecting the natural environment – it means proper consideration of host peoples, communities, cultures, customs, lifestyles, and social and economic system. It is tourism that truly benefits those who are on the receiving end, and that does not exploit and degrade the environment in which they live and from which they must earn a living after the last tourist has flown back home....

C. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

1. Institutional Arrangements

Planning for the STP began in mid 1997 and the Project was officially launched on October 17, 1997 after the Project Advisor commenced working. The Project Director began work on December 4, 1997. The STP also established an office at the IUCN building after the Project Advisor was appointed.

The Project document made a provision to establish a Project Steering Committee (PSC) which would play an advisory, consultative and facilitatory role in the project by reviewing the work of project and making recommendations for developments, and possible continuation of the project.

The Project took the initiative to establish the PSC in February 1998, but it was not able to establish the PSC until October 1998. After consultation with the potential government stakeholders, the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) and the National Environment Agency (NEA) finally agreed to assign the Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) as the IUCN's government counterpart for the STP project (see Annex iv).

An officer from the ITDR commenced part time work with STP on October 20, 1999. This has improved coordination with the counterpart agency and enhanced the skills and knowledge of staff in the area of sustainable tourism.

2. Project Management Efficiency

The evaluation mission is convinced that the IUCN has implemented the STP with impressive efficiency. The STP management makes efficient use of the donor contributions- the Ford Foundation, Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and the Oxfam International family. At the end

of August 1999, the STP has delivered US\$ 189,187 (76%) of the total budget to carry out various activities.

The evaluation mission also found STP's ability to raise additional funds from other sources to be impressive. In particular, STP obtained funds from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, ESCAP, SIDA and SDC totaling of US \$76 365 (30.50% of the total budget of the project).

3. STP Management Structure

STP's management is led by a Project Advisor, who is supported by the Project Director and a part-time officer from ITDR. These professionals provide excellent analytical skills and administrative services, and implement STP activities effectively.

The evaluation mission found that the titles of both STP staff did not reflect their real roles and responsibilities. The Project Advisor has several roles, including overall management, coordination, project formulation and development, administration and advocacy. In reality, the Project Director acts as a project assistant. It is crucial to clearly define the specific roles of each staff member, and have a periodic review of their performance based on their responsibilities.

Given the size of project and budget, more national and local professionals need to be recruited, and the Project Director should be empowered so that he/she can conduct activities independently as well as in coordination with the Project Advisor and the other professional staff.

4. Collaboration between IUCN and ITDR

The support of a part time officer from the ITDR to IUCN/STP has helped the project management coordinate activities with government counterparts. The officer acted as a 'liaison' for the government counterpart and implemented STP activities in a consultative and collaborative manner.

It is found that ITDR under the aegis of VNAT and IUCN had only one year of partnerships and their professional relationship has developed in a relatively short period of time. More collaboration is essential to develop to true "ownership" of the project where the IUCN will act solely as a technical project facilitator. This might include involving the project Steering Committee in the selection and implementation of community-based sustainable tourism pilot projects.

5. Role of the Project Steering Committee

The project had difficulty forming the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Even after the committee was established, committee meetings were infrequent. This is because it was a new partnership among the stakeholders. Infrequent meetings have led to confusion regarding the roles and responsibilities of committee members. Nevertheless, the STP management staff was able to discuss policy matters and share project issues with committee members individually, on an informal basis.

In innovative projects such as STP, the role of the PSC should be advisory. The PSC should meet at least twice in a year. The STC meetings also can be held at the pilot project sites, which will provide opportunities to monitor and review the progress of the project.

D. RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE

The Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project (STP) is more relevant and important as the concept of sustainable tourism and ecotourism is rapidly evolving in Vietnam. The following is the initiative of the Vietnamese government.

1. The National Tourism Steering Committee

Under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister, the National Tourism Steering Committee (NTSC) has been established to assist the Government to direct and coordinate Ministries, sectors, and relevant local authorities to develop and implement plans and national programmes related to tourism. The establishment of the NTSC is a positive and constructive move. It is also 'ground breaking' as its cross-sectoral composition indicates recognition of the need for collaboration in order to achieve sustainability. The NTSC comprises of seven representatives: the Government Office (the deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Committee), VNAT, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Information, and Vietnam Airlines.

2. The Ordinance on Tourism

The Ordinance on Tourism is the highest level document governing tourism in Vietnam. It comprises of 57 articles, six of which pertain to "Protection, Exploitation, Utility and Development of Tourism Resources".

3. The State Tourism Action Programme

The State Tourism Action Programme and Tourism Events for 2000 "Vietnam – a destination for the new millennium" was approved by the government in January 1999. It has six components: (1) Tourism promotion; (2) Cultural tourism/national

festivals; (3) Development and upgrading of tourism destinations; (4) Raising the quality of tourism services; (5) Facilitating and encouraging tourist activities; and, (6) Improving the effectiveness, organisation and management of tourism authorities.

E. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

This section evaluates the activities undertaken by STP and assesses the impacts of those activities. Outstanding achievements are discussed to provide insight on the effects of raising awareness on sustainable tourism in Vietnam in general, and among the stakeholders in particular.

1. Activities and Achievements

The STP has designed and initiated a number of activities based on the 6 objectives outlined in the project document. With the few exceptions noted below, the STP management team has accomplished virtually all the activities outlined in the project document. The STP management also initiated a number of additional activities as the project evolved, but these were not completed because of budget constraints, or because it was not possible to secure funds from donors despite efforts from the Project management. Although the original project document is not clear about the specific activities to be undertaken, the activities initiated by the STP management are discussed below. Activities have been categorized according to their contribution to the programme outputs.

Output A: Networking and Information Exchange

| S.N. | Activities | Achievements |
|------|--|--|
| 1. | Establish the Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre (STRC) | Completed and services have been provided to tourism related students and researchers, academics and stakeholders Internet and email: websites accessed, information included in Resource Centre and passed on to counterparts e.g.: ITDR, VNAT Cataloguing system of the STRC library is not yet complete |
| 2. | Compilation of sustainable tourism resource kit | Materials have been translated over a twenty month period and distributed to key stakeholders. Major stakeholders such as VNAT has highly appreciated the information exchange initiatives |
| 3. | Subscription to journals and | Journals and newsletters have been subscribed to, |

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|----|--|--|
| | newsletters, and obtaining memberships to tourism related groups | and memberships have been obtained from Eco-tourism Society, WTO, Tourism Concern, Cultural Survival |
| 4. | Translation and dissemination of international standard sustainable tourism publications | <p>“Ecotourism: A guide for planners and managers I” and “Beyond the Green Horizon” have been translated and widely circulated in Vietnam</p> <p>“Ecotourism: A guide for planners and managers II” is in the pipeline</p> <p>“Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas” has been translated but not published.</p> |

Impressive Information Bank through Establishment of STRC

The STP management team has completed all of the major tasks of this area as planned during the project period. STP demonstrated commendable flexibility in preparation of work plans. A database on key local, national, regional and international tourism stakeholders and experts has been created. This has contributed to the establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre, which networks with leading tourism organisations such as the Ecotourism Society, Tourism Concern and Cultural Survival. It also subscribed to international tourism newsletters such as the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) newsletters and Cunters. Although the project document did not explicitly mention which international organisations would be best suited for networking and information exchange, STP management felt it was necessary to link with the institutions mentioned above as those institutions generate high quality information on sustainable tourism and disseminate their information internationally.

Partnership Building through Networking and Information Sharing

Partnership building and coordination efforts from the counterpart institutions such as VNAT/ ITDR and IUCN have been encouraging, and the development of such partnerships has been essential for effective networking and information exchange regarding sustainable tourism development in Vietnam. The STP’s efforts to translate materials such as “Ecotourism: a guide for planners and managers” have greatly benefited all stakeholders, as stakeholders are able to expand and update their knowledge and gain access to information on sustainable tourism from a global perspective. Policy-makers have also been able to benefit from the STP’s information exchange activities, as they are able to gain access to information on ‘sustainable tourism’, which is a relatively new concept in Vietnam.

Output B: Research and Analysis

| S.N. | Activities | Achievements |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1. | Conduct research on the impacts of tourism | Completed the research on "The Impact of Tourism on Ethnic Minority Inhabitants of Sa Pa District |
| 2. | Conduct research on level of awareness and impacts of tourism among Vietnamese Tour Operators | Commissioned research by ITDR but incomplete. ITDR has made commitment to complete by November 1999 |

Study on Impact of Tourism, and Level of Awareness

This output has been achieved to some extent with the commissioning of two research projects. First, the study on “The Impact of Tourism on Ethnic Minority Inhabitants of Sa Pa District, Lao Cai: their participation in, and attitudes toward tourism” was commissioned to the Human Geography Research Centre of the National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities of Vietnam. The report was completed on time but insufficient attention was given to the environmental impacts of tourism.

The second study was entrusted to ITDR, and was entitled “Level of Awareness of Sustainable Tourism and the Impacts of Tourism: Vietnamese Tour Operators”. The ITDR has not been able to produce the final report even after a 15 month extension on the initial 3 month anticipated completion time. The research findings could have been used as a benchmark for identifying the level of awareness of Vietnamese tour operators and other private sectors. STP and ITDR should discuss the progress of study and set a more realistic time frame to complete the report and disseminate the report information throughout Vietnam.

The STRC has demonstrated to some extent that an information bank is necessary for research and analysis on sustainable tourism in Vietnam. STP, through the STRC, has provided useful information to several international researchers, academics and international NGOs. Stakeholders should be encouraged to use the resource materials available at the STRC for research and analysis on sustainable tourism in Vietnam.

As envisaged in the project document, research activities led directly into actions to reduce the negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts of tourism in areas inhabited by ethnic minority groups or ecologically sensitive uplands areas of Vietnam such as Sa Pa district. STP has used the information from the research activities in the design of a new project for Sa Pa district.

Output C: Education and Training

| S.N. | Activities | Achievements |
|------|--|--|
| 1. | Community-based Tourism for Conservation and Development Training | Three participants from ITDR, TEW and STP participated in one month course in Nepal in February 1999 organised by RECOFTC/TMI/IOF. STP was successful in securing US\$ 5,000 from SDC to support the training cost |
| 2. | Community-based Tourism Training and Workshop | Conducted the training between 14 and 18 July 1999 in Sa Pa. Attended by 23 participants including local government officials, H'mong and Dao community members from three communes |
| 3. | Ecotourism Training for National Parks and Protected Area Managers | Funding of US\$ 42,000 has been secured from the Netherlands Embassy. Selection process of internationally recognised training institutions is in progress. |
| 4. | National Workshop for | Successfully completed National Workshop from 7 |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam | to 9 September 1999 in collaboration with VNAT and ESCAP with strong contributions from internationally recognised conservationists and ecotourism experts from Nepal, Australia, Thailand and Malaysia. STP successfully managed for mobilisation of additional funds of US\$ 29,365 from ESCAP and SIDA |
|--|---|---|

Education and Training: A Vehicle for Community Empowerment

STP assisted key stakeholders in community-based sustainable tourism development training and conservation and development training both in Vietnam and outside the country. This has enhanced the stakeholders' understanding of how sustainable tourism is linked with conservation and development issues.

Although STP has successfully secured funding from the Netherlands Embassy for conducting a one month "Ecotourism Training for National Parks and Protected Area Managers and Staff", it has not been able to conduct the training workshop due to a lengthy application process for selecting appropriate training institution. At the time of the evaluation mission, the STP was still in the process of screening potential training institutions. Some of the leading institutions including Lincoln University's Lincoln International have been identified. The Forest Protection Department (FPD) has expressed their interest in collaborating and organising the training as soon as possible.

STP demonstrated an outstanding example of synergic efforts by successfully organising the National Workshop for Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam, with input from international experts on ecotourism and sustainable development. STP and ITDR with support from VNAT, ESCAP and SIDA jointly organised the workshop which has raised the awareness of a large circle of tourism officers in Vietnam. It is expected that ITDR shall follow up by submitting a draft to the government for the development of an National Ecotourism Strategy (NES).

Output D: Support for a Pilot Project

| S.N. | Activities | Achievements |
|------|---|--|
| 1. | Selection of pilot project site | Selected Sa Pa district as pilot project site |
| 2. | Sustainable Tourism Study Tour | Completed the study tour from 2 to 21 September 1998 in Nepal with observation of sustainable ecotourism projects in Langtang National Park, Royal Chitwan National Park and the globally renowned Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). The Sa Pa People's Committee has adopted "user fee philosophy" and introduced entry fee system for international visitors in three sites |
| 3. | Community-based Tourism Training and Workshop | Conducted the training between 14 and 18 July 1999 in Sa Pa. Attended by 23 participants including local |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | | government officials, H'mong and Dao community members from three communities |
| 4. | Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop | Successfully completed the workshop with contributions from ecotourism experts from Nepal and Thailand Established Tourism Support Board in February 1999, which is considered to be an influence and outcome of the workshop |

Selection of Appropriate Site

The project has selected Sa Pa district, a site with a lot of potential for tourism development, for implementing the Pilot Project. The Project moved steadily by mobilising the local government bodies, local communities and NGOs to initiate the Pilot Project activities. Initial activities concentrated on capacity building of the local stakeholders, including study tours, training activities and workshops both in Vietnam, and overseas.

Innovation after Study Tours

The Sustainable Tourism Study Tour in Nepal was a fundamental component in creating awareness on sustainable tourism and translating that awareness into actions. After his visit to the Annapurna Conservation Area, and to the Langtang and Chitwan National Parks in Nepal, the Chairman of the Sa Pa People's Council, Mr. Nguyen An Toan, said that he understood how tourism can be linked with environmental conservation and socio-economic development because he had observed how trekking permit and park entry fees have greatly contributed to poverty alleviation and environmental conservation in remote Nepali villages.

After their study tour in Nepal, the Sa Pa People's Council started to charge tourism fees (see table 1) at the entrance of most frequently visited villages in the district (Ta Phin, Cat Cat and Ta Van) (see map in Annex v).

| S.N. | Description | Entry Fee (VND) |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Tourist (adult)/person | 5000 |
| 2. | Tourist (children)/person | 2000 |
| 3. | Motorbike | 2000 |
| 4. | Car/van > 12 persons | 7000 |
| 5. | Car/van < 12 persons | 10,000 |

Table 1: Tourism entry fees in Sa Pa District

There is, however, an immediate need to formulate a clear policy on a charge/fee system from tourism, with a coherent and systematic tourist fee system, in which the revenues from fees and hotels are used for development and conservation purposes which benefit the local people.

The current entry fees of VND of 5000 (approximately 37 cents) is considered to be too little. The fee for international and domestic tourists also should be different as been practised elsewhere.

The ticket sales counters at Cat Cat and Ta Phin village also can be used as Visitor Information Centres where tourists can get information on the socio-

cultural and environmental conditions of the area prior to their visit. STP could collaborate with the local authorities and the Forest Protection Department (FPD) to establish the visitor centres. For example, a visitor centre at Cat Cat (a gateway to Nui Hoang Lien Nature Reserve and Fan Si Pan (3143m)- the highest peak in Vietnam) could be established in collaboration with the Forest Protection Department (FPD) of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

Expedite the Pilot Project: Sustainable Tourism in Sa Pa

IUCN/STP in collaboration with SNV Vietnam have supported the Sa Pa District People's Council in the preparation of a project proposal developed in consultation with local stakeholders, government representatives and the Tourism Support Board (STB). The proposal is currently under review by concerned stakeholders and potential donors. The proposal is for a three-year project which has two key objectives (1) to establish mechanisms for a more equitable sharing of the benefits from tourism among a greater part of the population, and (2) to increase the capacity of local stakeholders in reducing the negative impacts of tourism. Project activities are expected to commence in the beginning of 2000.

Establish Strong Linkages Sustainable Tourism in Sa Pa with STP Phase II

STP has successfully initiated training, workshops and study tours for the stakeholders of the Pilot Project in Sa Pa. The experiences and lessons learned by the STP should be integrated into the proposed Sustainable Tourism in Sa Pa plan, as STP has already established 'social capital' and developed partnerships with local governments, women's unions, and tour operators in Sa Pa. There is a need to strengthen the TSB in terms of capital generation and capacity building. The findings of the research carried out by STP (refer to Output Research and Analysis) should be incorporated in the planning process of community-based tourism development in Sa Pa.

Ensure 'real' Community-based Sustainable Tourism Development

The assistance of the IUCN and SNV in the formulation of the draft project proposal for Sa Pa District People's Committee and the residents of Sa Pa district is commendable. However, the draft project proposal does not adequately adapt a 'grassroots' approach to Community-based Sustainable Tourism (CBST) development. During meetings with local stakeholders in Sa Pa district, stakeholders expressed the need for the development of an integrated and holistic community-based sustainable tourism strategy which would benefit the local communities directly, and at the same time cater to tourism-related infrastructure development, such as drinking water, camp sites, toilet, health and sanitation, trail repair/ construction, and conservation oriented activities.

The local communities must be truly involved in the decision making process for 'ownership' of the programme and to sustain the project in the long run through community partnerships. Community-based sustainable tourism requires strategically designing a concrete plan of action with a process, yet output oriented implementation strategy. The CBST programme should support the communities' ability for marketing tourism products with strong 'backward and forward' linkages. The following is a summary of some of the suggestions for implementing a CBST programme.

- Develop a long term strategy- proper tourism planning
- Involve local communities as partners using the social mobilisation approach
- Conduct action research on tourism impacts and marketing (backward and forward linkages- see Annex vi) for benefit sharing
- Use an integrated and holistic approach to implement project activities (e.g., waste management, alternative energy, multi-purpose forest nursery, community development, income generating activities etc.) to ensure conservation of cultural heritage and biodiversity

The Sa Pa pilot project needs to design and plan tourism activities with local communities' participation as an experimental model in Vietnam.

- Start with people through the social mobilisation approach "Social Preparation Phase"
- Organise study tours, exposure visits to see model tourism projects/tourism development and management
- Conduct capacity building- training e.g., lodge management, English language, income generating activities -both Micro-enterprise Assistance(MEA) and Micro-enterprise Creation(MEC), alternative energy development
- Linkage development (local, national and international marketing)

Social mobilisation is a widely used community participation approach for poverty alleviation programmes in South Asia. Development of settlement level broad-based self-help organisations of men and women, generation of capital and enhancement of skills are the three foundation elements which together are helpful in harnessing willingness and potentials of the people to improve their environment and socio-economic well being through their own efforts.

- Operation of eco-friendly lodges/hotels well equipped with basic tourism infrastructure
- Support more equitable distribution of income from tourism for sustainable community development activities, biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation.

Output E: Advocacy

| S.N. | Activities | Achievements |
|------|--|---|
| 1. | Advocacy about sustainable tourism in Vietnam through participation in national and international forums | <p>Participated in the <u>National Workshop on Participation of Local Communities in Management of Protected Areas in Vietnam</u>, organised by Vietnam National Parks and Protected Areas Sub-Association, Vietnam Forestry Science-Technology Association of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. HCMC 17-18 December 1997;</p> <p>Participated in the <u>National Workshop on Exchanging Information on Development Approaches and Experiences with Highland People Communities</u>. Organised by the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) and UNDP as part of the UNDP Highland People's Programme:" Hanoi, 16-20 February 1998.</p> <p>Supported ITDR in organising <u>Ecotourism's Role in Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam</u>. Hanoi, 22-23 April 1998.</p> <p>Participated in the <u>Culture and Development Workshop</u>. Organised by the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) and UNDP as part of the UNDP Highland People's Programme:" Hanoi, October 5 –12, 1998.)</p> <p>Participated in the <u>2nd and 3rd Workshops on EIA</u>. Organised in the framework of the EU funded project "Capacity Building for Environmental Management in Vietnam". Organised by the National Centre for Science and Technology and the National Environment Agency, Hanoi, 23 January and 25 September 1998.</p> <p>Involved in the <u>Workshop to Review the Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam</u>. Organised by the National Environment Agency in collaboration with SIDA, IUCN and WWF, Hanoi, October 22-23 1998.</p> <p><u>Global Biodiversity Forum</u>, Montreal, June 18-20, 1999. Organised by a number of environmental organisations including IUCN. An open pre-cursor to the 4th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity.</p> <p>Presented a paper on Impacts of Tourism on Coastal Zone Environments: International Initiatives tackling the problems</p> |

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| | | <p>during <u>Environmental Management for Marine and Coastal Tourism Activities with ISO14001</u>, Halong Bay, Quang Ninh, October 22, 1999. Organised by the Directorate for Standards and Quality of MOSTE.</p> <p>Responded to request from the environment and natural resources section of UNDP in Hanoi to review a proposal by the World Tourism Organisation for revision of the Tourism Development Master Plan for Vietnam. IUCN STP (with input from IUCN PPA and Tourism Taskforce) made several recommendations which were all taken up by UNDP in its response to WTO.</p> <p>WTO sent a consultant with sustainable tourism credentials to Vietnam in September 1999 to rewrite the proposal.</p> |
|--|--|--|

Influenced on National and Local Stakeholders

Although STP is still a young project, it has significantly influenced the national and district level stakeholders in two ways. First, through the workshops, conferences, seminars and meetings described in Outputs a to d, project results have been presented to national level senior government policy makers. The various activities of STP, especially networking and information dissemination and exchange, education and training all greatly contributed to advocacy work as envisioned in the project document. This has resulted in a greater understanding of sustainable tourism by Vietnamese government officials.

Second, district and community-level stakeholders have been influenced in initiation of community-based sustainable tourism development especially in Sa Pa district. STP has clearly demonstrated and influenced the stakeholders at the central level where the VNAT and ITDR are taking the leading role for development of the project proposal for the STP Phase II. At the district and community level, the Sa Pa People's Committee and the residents of Sa Pa district have already prepared a draft project proposal with assistance from the IUCN and SNV.

Produce international quality Information Booklets and Video Documentary

The Project has made a good start in the production of booklets and video documentary, but all activities have not been completed yet. The writing and design of booklets has been completed, but due to unavailability of funds, they have not yet been produced.

The Project should prioritise and allocate budget accordingly so that the booklets and can be produced. A similar problem has occurred with respect to the production of documents, and future activities should be oriented toward more output oriented project management.

Output F: Project Extension

| S.N. | Activities | Achievements |
|------|--|---|
| 1. | Prepare detailed project proposal for extension of STP | Prepared a concept paper for "Sustainable Tourism Project Phase II" and submitted to ITDR and VNAT. IUCN/STP and ITDR developed initial draft proposal and meetings were held to develop a detailed project document for STP Phase II. |

Moving Towards Developing STP Phase II

STP prepared a concept paper and submitted it to VNAT and ITDR for their comments. The concept paper was later submitted to the National Tourism Steering Committee (NTSC) through VNAT. However, no official response has been received from VNAT and NTSC.

In our interviews and discussions with Vietnamese government officials from both central and local governments, they consistently expressed strong support for extension of the project. The initial meeting between VNAT/ITDR and IUCN for this effort was held on 27 September 1999 at which time all parties agreed to commence project proposal development and IUCN has already initiated the task with support from the stakeholders. The draft project proposal has two major components: a) micro-macro policy formulation for sustainable tourism in Vietnam which incorporates pilot project experiences into policy formulation, and b) selection and implementation of demonstration pilot projects (including Sa Pa which were selected during the STP Phase I period).

VNAT/ITDR and IUCN see that the project will complement national efforts to promote sustainable tourism development and increase Vietnam's capacity to achieve sustainable tourism development in the next millennium.

Development of Criteria for Selection of Pilot Sites

The success of the pilot projects also depends on the selection of appropriate sites. It is important to develop selection criteria for pilot projects which include a range of parameters that consider sustainable community development and biodiversity conservation.

Development of pilot sustainable tourism projects is imperative. It would provide an opportunity to foster and demonstrate 'cross-sectoral' collaboration to promote benefit sharing and show the positive links between community-based tourism, conservation and sustainable development.

F. Impact of the Project

The Project document provides ambitious goals and objectives. STP is proving to be surprisingly efficient and effective in achieving the goals of the project. Given the goal of the project, we undertook intensive meetings and interviews with the stakeholders and reviewed the existing information and documents. All the stakeholders that we have met have unanimously expressed that STP has been a vehicle in raising the awareness of the negative socio-economic, cultural and ecological impacts of tourism.

There are solid indications that STP can achieve its goal in Phase II through implementing pilot projects in selected areas including the Sa Pa district.

G. CONSTRAINTS

Considering the size of the budget and number of staff involved with the project, STP is a relatively small project. Given its limited budget and staff, the Project took on too many activities, and as a result was not able to effectively carry out all the planned activities. The following factors impeded effective project implementation:

- The lengthy process of formalising counterpart arrangements and forming the Project Steering Committee
- The size of project budget and staff
- The lack of clear work plans- Uncertainty about what the project aims to achieve because it is the first of its kind
- The lack of interest or priority given to tourism by National Environment Agency- IUCN's government counterpart
- The lack of linkages and coordination between NEA and VNAT

H. CONCLUSIONS

1. Towards Development of a Long-term Programme

The STP under the technical support of the IUCN has clearly demonstrated the need for the development of a long-term programme related to sustainable tourism in Vietnam. Policy dialogues through consultative meetings with VNAT/ITDR, other stakeholders and donor communities is leading toward formulation of long term projects such as STP Phase II and Sa Pa Community-based Sustainable Tourism Project.

2. Effective Partnerships take time

The IUCN is committed to participatory approaches to capacity building for sustainable tourism development. It has found that this approach often takes a longer time to produce results than conventional approaches, and very often takes longer than originally planned. The compensation for this extra time commitment should be results which are institutionally sustainable, and have long-term support from government and stakeholders, who share a real sense of ownership in their shared undertakings.

3. STP as a Capacity Building “software” Initiative

The STP has demonstrated as a capacity building initiative on sustainable tourism in a relatively short period of time. The evaluation mission found a high demand of capacity building activities from stakeholders. This is a positive aspect of the project as there is a recognition from the government and local communities. The project faces a greater challenges because the expectations of stakeholders have been high compared to what the project can support during the project period.

4. Potential not yet proven

STP is steadily progressing toward achieving its highly ambitious goal of raising awareness and development of community-based tourism models that can generate income for some of the country’s poorest and least advantaged communities while maintaining the cultural heritage and biodiversity of Vietnam. Concrete integrated activities were not carried out at the Pilot site in Sa Pa at the community level and it is vital to carry out ‘down to earth’ practical activities to generate sustainable income for biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Extension of STP

Extend STP into Phase II as originally planned, in order to provide demonstrations of successful pilot projects of capacity building for community-based sustainable tourism in Vietnam. The priority for implementation of STP Phase II should be first for implementation of concrete actions for community-based sustainable tourism at the pilot sites. The second priority should be to link the experiences gained from the pilot projects to formulation of sustainable tourism policies for Vietnam.

2. Strengthen and Broaden Linkages

For sustainability it is imperative to link STP with the State Steering Committee on Tourism so that the STP Project Steering Committee can influence the formulation of national policies on sustainable ecotourism.

3. Institutional Development and “Ownership”

Ownership of the project by the counterpart/host country is key to the sustainability of the project. IUCN is making impressive progress in establishing a sense of ownership at the central level by actively involving the counterpart. Central level government departments and local authorities are supportive of the activities, but view the STP more as an IUCN project than as their own project or a joint initiative. The central government's sense of ownership can be enhanced by financial contributions from the government counterpart ITDR in the future activities.

STP has successfully established the Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre (STRP) through strong international linkages and networking. VNAT/ITDR and IUCN should further discuss distributing research materials and publications to appropriate institutions so that more stakeholders, scholars and research and training institutions will have access to the information gathered by the centre.

4. Ensure Participatory Monitoring and Documentation

STP needs to use a participatory approach to rigorously monitor programme activities and document project experiences so that they can be shared with stakeholders.

Annex I Terms of Reference

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INITIATIVES PROJECT

13 TrÇn H-ng §¹o
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Hà Nội VIET NAM

Tel: ++84 4 8265 172

Fax: ++84 4 8258 794

Email: tourism.iucnvn@netnam.org.vn OR tourism@iucn.org.vn

SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CONTRACT External Review of the Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project Vietnam, 3-9 October 1999

Introduction

The Project Document for the Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project (STP) states the need for an external project review to be undertaken towards the end of the project.

An external review team of two, including one international consultant and one national consultant will visit the Sustainable Tourism Project during the period 3 to 10 October 1999, to undertake an impartial review of the project and produce a written report.

Dr Chandra Gurung, Country Representative of WWF Nepal and member of the World Commission on Protected Areas has assisted the STP in choosing the international member of the review team.

B. Background:

The Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project (STP) has as its goal "To identify and raise awareness of the negative socio-economic, cultural and ecological impacts of tourism, and contribute to the development of sustainable community-based models of tourism that can generate sustainable income for some of the country's poorest and least advantaged communities, while at the same time helping to maintain Vietnam's cultural and biological diversity."

The STP Objectives are in fact six 'activity areas':

- a) Networking & Information Exchange
- b) Research & Analysis

- c) Education & Training
- d) Support for a Pilot Project
- e) Advocacy
- f) Project Extension

The STP is funded by three organisations – the Ford Foundation, the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and Oxfam International.

The STP commenced in financial terms in August 1997, however project personnel were not assigned until mid October 1997 (Project advisor) and early December 1997 (Project director). The project is being extended until mid December 1999 due to some remaining funds and the need to finalise specific activities, including a proposal for a Sustainable Tourism Project II.

The project is implemented by IUCN Vietnam in collaboration with the Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT). All development projects in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are required by law to have a Vietnamese national counterpart organisation.

The Project Document and Mid Term Report (October 1998) are attached and form the basis of background information on the project.

C. Scope and Role of the Assignment:

To undertake a general review and assessment of the relevance, importance, achievements, impacts, shortcomings, constraints, risks and expectations of the Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Project.

To lead the review team and to collaborate with the national team member as necessary in developing the evaluation criteria and establishing the method for the review and format of the final report.

To evaluate the STP's programming work in terms of the six objectives or 'activity areas'. To consider priority setting, implementation of activities, follow up and monitoring, links and networks established internationally and with Vietnamese organisations and stakeholders, profile of the project at national and international level.

To provide comments and recommendations for improvements or future directions/priorities (eg: for a possible second phase project).

To evaluate the organisational and management structure of the project, including the extent and efficiency of collaboration between IUCN and the national project counterpart, ITDR; the need for/role of a Project Steering Committee, and the level and type of support provided by the IUCN international network.

D. Tasks

To carry out meetings in Vietnam with Vietnamese and international organisations, groups, individuals ('stakeholders') with whom STP has worked or had contact with. To liaise with the national team member and the STP Project Director to arrange meetings in Hanoi and the STP pilot project site, Sa Pa District, Lao Cai Province.

To work with the national team member to develop the schedule and evaluation criteria/methodology, and report format to be used.

Meetings in Hanoi should include at a minimum:

- Institute for Tourism Development Research;
- The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism;
- The Ministry of Science Technology and Environment (and/or its National Environment Agency) - IUCN Vietnam's official government partner;
- IUCN Councillor, Dr. Le Quy An;
- The Ford Foundation; and
- The Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV).

The review team has the discretion to arrange meetings with any (other) organisations or individuals as they see fit. Additional contacts will be provided by IUCN on request.

Two days in Sa Pa will be required (two nights train travel is preferred to save time). Meetings with a variety of stakeholder representatives will be arranged in collaboration with the STP Project Director.

E. Composition of external review team:

International team member: Mr Hum Bahadur Gurung; National Programme Manager, Sustainable Community Development Programme, Nepal Capacity 21 Programme, UNDP, P.O. Box 107, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Nepal.

National Team Member: Mr. Le Dong Phuong, Research Fellow, National Institute for Educational Development, Vietnam.

Interpreter (if required):

The STP Project Director will accompany the review team to Sa Pa, if appropriate and required.

F. Timing and duration of the assignment:

4-9 October inclusive (Mr Hum Gurung will arrive on the 3rd and depart on the 10th). Draft report will be submitted to IUCN within two weeks of the completion of the evaluation mission. IUCN and ITDR will respond to the draft within three weeks, and these responses should be included in the final version of the report. The final report is due no later than six weeks after completion of the evaluation mission.

G. Final report:

Six original signed copies are required, along with a complete copy on disc or sent by email. IUCN Vietnam will arrange translation of the report and circulate it amongst the relevant Vietnamese and international partners.

H. Fee:

Signed:

Nguyen Minh Thong
Country Representative

Mr Hum Bahadur Gurung
UNDP Nepal

Annex II List of Persons Met

The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Mr. Nguyen Minh Thong | Country Representative |
| Ms. Annalisa Coeman | Project Advisor, STP |
| Mr. Nguyen Van Lam | Project Director, STP |

Institute for Tourism Development (ITDR)

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Dr. Pham Trung Luong | Vice Director |
| Mr. Nguyen Duc Hoa Cuong | Division of Science and Economy Researcher |
| Dr. Nguyen Van Binh | Head of Administration and International Relations |

Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES)

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dr. Le Trong Cuc | Director, Ecologist |
| Ms. Nghiem Phuong Tuyen | Urban and Regional Planning |

Human Geography Research Centre, National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities

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|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Dr. Pham Thi Mong Hoa | Deputy Director |
|-----------------------|-----------------|

Forest Protection and Department (FPD)

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|-------------------|-------------------|
| Dr. Nguyen Ba Thu | Director General |
| Mr. Do Quang Tung | Programme Officer |

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

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| Ms. Nguyen Thi Dao | Conservation Science & Development Officer |
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Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT)

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|------------------------|---|
| Prof. Dr. Vu Tuan Canh | Vice chairman/ Director of ITDR |
| Dr. Nguyen Van Luu | Director, Department of International Corporation |
| Ms. Nguyen Thi Xuan | Officer, Department of International Corporation |

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Mr. Oystein Botillen | Programme Officer, Environment and Natural Resource Management Unit |
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Oxfam Hong Kong

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|----------------------|------------------------|
| Ms. Susannah Leisher | Country Representative |
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Annex III Evaluation Mission Members

Hum Bahadur Gurung, was associated with the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal from 1986 to 1996 as Conservation Officer & Officer-in-charge at ACAP Headquarters Ghandruk, and Conservation Education & Extension Officer in ACAP Pokhara. Since 1997, he is associated with the United Nations Development Programme in Nepal and involved in management of various UNDP assisted projects. He was Senior Planning Advisor and Acting Programme Advisor to Local Governance Programme till September 1997. He is now the National Programme Manager of the Sustainable Community Development Programme-designed in line with the Agenda 21 of the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio, Brazil.

Hum Bahadur Gurung received his degree of Masters of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management (Hons.) in Environmental Education from Lincoln University, New Zealand in 1993. He is widely involved in community-based tourism development/management in developing countries. He has published several articles in various newspapers and journals including book (co-author) 'Eco-tourism in the Southern Annapurna Himal'.

Le Dong Phuong, is a Research Fellow at National Institute for Educational Development in Vietnam. He is also associated with the Vietnam Environment and Sustainable Development Centre as Research Associate. His professional activities include organising and leading the design and implementation of research database on higher and professional education, development of training manuals and drafting guidelines for environmental planning.

Le Dong Phuong received his MA degree in Regional Planning from the University of Hawaii, USA in 1995. He has been involved in evaluation of many projects including UNDP funded projects in Vietnam. He has written articles, reports and books related with education, development and environment in Vietnam.