



Annual Review 2016 Viet Nam Country Office



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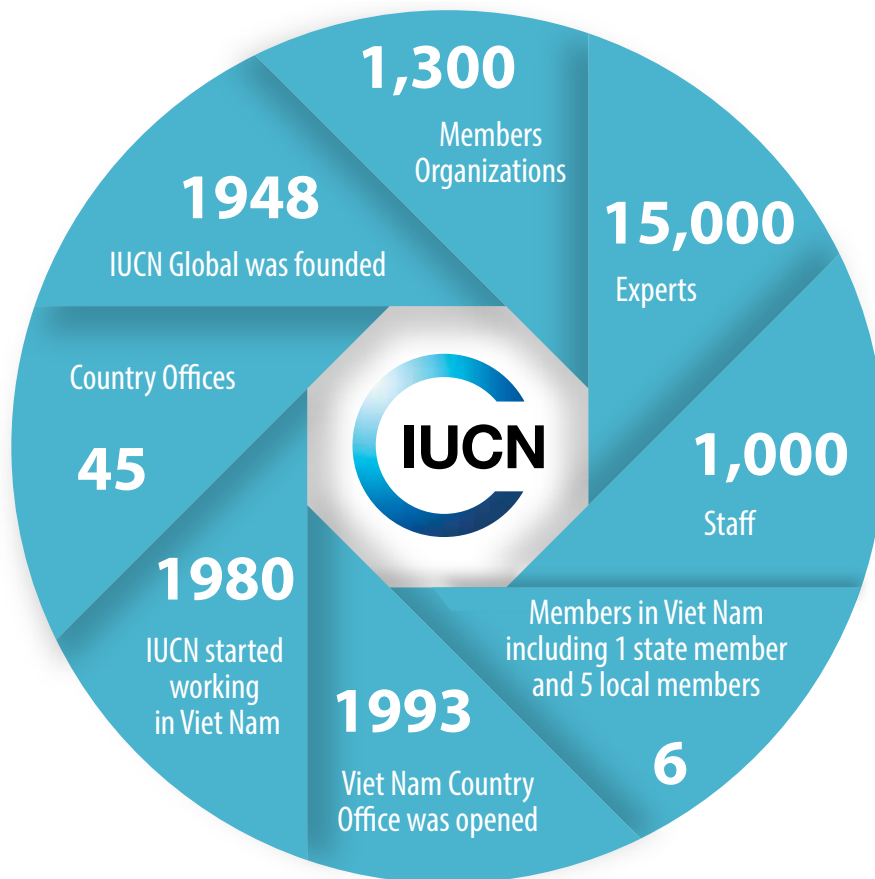
Message

In 2016, IUCN made steady progress in all areas of work, particularly at the provincial level. Quang Ninh and Hai Phong agreed to cooperate to renominate Ha Long Bay World Heritage Site to include the Cat Ba Archipelago, a long standing IUCN objective. Quang Nam and Da Nang agreed to cooperate on managing the Vu Gia-Thu Bon River Basin using a reef to ridge approach that takes into account the downstream impacts of upstream development. Mekong Delta provinces started to take the first steps toward coordinated land and water use planning. Under PM Decision 593, we've facilitated high-level inter-provincial workshops in the Plain of Reeds to transform the agro-ecological landscape of this large and critical flood-plain and their ecosystem functions in supporting biodiversity and moderating disaster risk. And in the coastal areas, we've started work in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh to expand the area of certified mangrove polyculture, building on the successful model that our partner SNV has established in Ca Mau.

We were delighted that we could bring all IUCN members of Viet Nam to the IUCN World Conservation Congress on Hawaii in September 2016.

These achievements reflect the fact that to improve environmental conditions in Vietnam, IUCN, and development partners, should always bear in mind that more often than not it's the lack of institutional coordination and strategic clarity that limits progress, not lack of funding or staff.

Jake Brunner
Head, IUCN Indo-Burma



IUCN Vietnam

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Viet Nam has made an important contribution to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection, primarily through support to the development of laws and policies such as the National Biodiversity Action Plan (1995), the Law on Forest Protection (2004), the Law on Environmental Protection (2005) and the Biodiversity Law (2008). In addition, IUCN works with partners to both support and advocate for more transparency and accountability of the government. IUCN Viet Nam’s partners include the National Assembly, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Public Administration, ministries, businesses and local Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

IUCN Viet Nam’s activities and projects are organized in five programmes: marine and coastal conservation, water and wetlands management, forest conservation, biodiversity conservation, and business and biodiversity. The programmes include the formation of multi-stakeholder groups to supervise project activities, support local NGOs through small grant financing, finance pilot projects to test improved practices, improve the quality of environmental news, engage businesses to improve their environmental performance, and cooperate with provincial governments to demonstrate the benefits of nature-based solutions to environmental problems.

www.iucn.org/vietnam

Project locations



U.S. PAVILION



U.S. PAVILION



Membership

 **USGS**
science for a changing world

NASA

IUCN Viet Nam has six members: one state member (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, MONRE) and five NGOs/research centres, including the Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES), the Institute of Ecological Economy (ECO-ECO), Action for the City (ACCD), the Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development (MCD), and the Centre for Environment and Community Research (CECR).

In May 2015, the IUCN headquarters granted formal recognition to the Viet Nam National Committee of IUCN Members. Viet Nam National Committee (VNNC) includes all six members in which Dr. Hoang Van Thang (CRES) and Dr. Pham Anh Cuong (Biodiversity Conservation Agency/Viet Nam Environmental Administration - BCA/VEA) were appointed as Chair and Co-chair of VNNC respectively.

In September 2016, Viet Nam's National Committee members attended the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii, USA, along with a delegation of MONRE. A positive impression of the Congress and of IUCN's unique position in the world was shared by all members, in particular that more than nine thousand participants working towards similar conservation goals could be gathered together.

During the Congress, all members joined the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing ceremony between BCA/VEA and United States Geological Survey (USGS) to cooperate in earth sciences and managing natural resources.

The forum sessions during the Congress created lots of interaction between speakers/facilitators and participants. Members had a chance to work together, network, participate in different activities, and learn new skills.

The voting system was appreciated by member organizations. They had the right to vote on the discussion/motions and they were fully informed of IUCN programs, agenda, finances, and organisations, which made them feel part of the IUCN team.



A man with dark hair, wearing a white polo shirt, is smiling broadly. He is holding a pink plastic basket filled with large, fresh shrimp. He is outdoors, with green trees and a clear sky in the background. A semi-transparent green banner is overlaid on the image, containing white text.

Highlights: Marine and Coastal Conservation

Mangroves and Markets

IUCN in partnership with SNV have worked with the Ca Mau People's Committee to ***issue a decision that sets minimum standards for all certified organic shrimp farming projects*** in the province. The decision recognizes that mangrove polyculture farmers are ecosystem service providers and therefore eligible for PES payments.

The project's phase 1 (2013 - 2016) review workshop was organised in Ho Chi Minh city to review the project results and lessons learnt. This was followed by a two-day trip to field sites in Ca Mau for 14 journalists and a delegation from Thailand's Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR). Journalists themselves saw the positive linkages between organic shrimp farming, environmental protection, and local livelihoods.

Phase 2 of this project (2016 to 2020) was launched in Can Tho with an extension to Ben Tre and Tra Vinh provinces.

Key points were raised during the launch: increased productivity through better Post Larvae (PL) selection and pond management offers a much greater financial incentive than the modest price premium that shrimp processors provide; and the type of certification suits the more fragmented mangrove forest landscape of Ben Tre and Tra Vinh where IUCN will work in the second phase.

<https://www.iucn.org/regions/asia/our-work/regional-projects/mangroves-and-markets-mam>



Ha Long - Cat Ba Alliance

An important ***milestone of the Alliance is the re-nomination of the Ha Long Bay WHS adding the Cat Ba Archipelago.*** In a letter to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Quang Ninh Province agreed to cooperate with Hai Phong City on the extension by the February 2018 deadline.

This is a step, IUCN has strongly recommended for over 20 years, which has accelerated since the launch of the USAID-funded Ha Long-Ca Bat Alliance (HLCBA) in 2014. In parallel, at the request of the Hai Phong city government and in coordination with IUCN headquarter, IUCN Viet Nam has recommended international consultants to assist with the preparation of the dossier to expand Ha Long Bay WHS to include the Cat Ba Archipelago and add criteria on species diversity.

As a part of the HLCBA, IUCN has collaborated with Coca-Cola to open an EKOCENTER in Ha Phong Ward, Ha Long city. EKOCENTER is a community project focusing on drinking water, women empowerment and community welfare (3Ws). Ha Phong Ward is a resettlement area of floating villages in Ha Long Bay WHS. They were moved to Ha Phong in 2014 to reduce the environmental pressure to the core zones of Ha Long Bay.

In the coming time, IUCN will partner with a local (NGO) to ***enhance women empowerment in management of the EKOCENTER*** so that it becomes ***a community area for exchange of good practices on environmental protection and sustainable livelihoods.***

Engaging businesses in project activities is also a key driver of the project. Since 2015, IUCN in collaboration with Bhaya Cruises and local partners organised several coastal clean-up events in Ha Long Bay. In 2016, the activity attracted more than 100 volunteers to participate in trash collection in Vung Ha islet, Ha Long Bay. There were large blocks of expanded polystyrene accumulated on beaches. They may have come from the floating fishing villages that had encroached into the bay and were relocated in 2014.

During the Leadership Committee meeting of HLCBA organised in May by IUCN and hosted by Vinpearl - a partner of the Alliance, the issues of polystyrenes pollution has been raised for discussion among other topics. Leadership Committee meetings are held every six months and provide a forum to discuss strategic environmental policy issues.

As result, in June, ***the Ha Long City People's Committee issued a decision banning the use of expanded polystyrene, which was used for floating fishing villages*** that were relocated out of the World Heritage Site in 2013.

Upon the proposal from tour operators in Ha Long and Cat Ba, IUCN organised a training course on the biodiversity and natural values of Ha Long and Cat Ba for 32 tour guides. ***Their lack of knowledge has been identified by tour companies as a major problem in terms of visitor experience.*** Alliance member Indochina Junk has since asked for additional training for their remaining tour guides.

<https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/viet-nam/ha-long-cat-ba-alliance>

Support for Community Based Marine Turtle Nesting Beach Conservation and Bycatch Reduction in Viet Nam

With U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service support, this is the third year running that IUCN has advertised for volunteers to help protect marine turtle nesting beaches in Con Dao National Park and every year the number of applications increases.

In 2016, IUCN posted the announcement and received 1,000 applications, of which we could only select 36 volunteers. In May, we posted a similar announcement for Nui Chua National Park (NP) and received almost 500 applications. We also posted an announcement for Hon Cau Marine Protected Area (MPA). Such *high levels of public interest reflect the increasing concern of the youth to environment protection, positive reputation of the volunteer program and increasingly effective social media communications.*

<https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/viet-nam/marine-turtle-conservation>





Mangroves for the Future (MFF)

Small Grant Facilities (SGF) is one of the important mechanisms of MFF to restore marine ecosystems, support sustainable coastal livelihoods in response to the impact of climate change. During 2016, MFF ran a training workshop for six SGF grantees. These SGF projects are all in and around Hoi An WHS and Biosphere Reserve. The training ***gave participants practical skills in improving reporting through better monitoring of project outputs and results.*** A key part of the training was to come up with a set of indicators to assess the impact of all six projects together.

In parallel with activities of SGF projects, MFF and Directory of Fisheries (D-FISH) organised a workshop for staff from Vietnam's 10 MPAs ***to review a Management of Effectiveness Evaluation (MPA MEE) system.*** This was funded by MFF's Mangroves and Climate Change component with technical oversight provided by U.S National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA). ***D-FISH will share the final MPA MEE system online and make it an annual mandatory requirement for all MPAs.***

In Nha Trang, a Blue Economy workshop was organised by MFF, back to back with the second MFF National Coordinating Body meeting in 2016. The presentations were used to set up interventions for pollution control, ecosystem protection, and fisheries recovery depending on ease/complexity. The presentations also identified a conflict of interest within state management agencies and weak law enforcement as cross-cutting challenges.

IUCN organised the second MFF Sino Viet Nam initiative exchange visit and workshop in China to explore the potential for collaboration on the management of transboundary coastal and marine ecosystems, particularly mangroves. The workshop came up with ***recommendations to establish MFF-like structures and processes in China that could be funded by the Chinese government and other donors.***

<https://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/>

A photograph of two men standing in a lotus field. The man on the left is wearing a light blue polo shirt and grey trousers, looking down at the plants. The man on the right is wearing a light-colored bucket hat, a checkered short-sleeved shirt, and grey trousers, holding a large green lotus leaf. The background shows a vast field of lotus plants under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Water and Wetlands Management

Integrated Planning for Climate Change and Biodiversity

At the request of the Dutch Embassy, IUCN participated in a workshop in Can Tho for senior central and provincial government officials on adaptive delta management. The main output was a set of recommendations **delivered to the Deputy Prime Minister when the Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment visited Hanoi at the end of March on the Mekong Delta management plan**. Several recommendations drew on IUCN's experience in the Mekong Delta under IP and the World Bank Technical Assistance.

The IP project held an Advisory Body meeting in Can Tho whereby the Advisory Body agreed that **national government policies supporting the third rice crop in the Mekong Delta have begun to change, but pressure needs to continue at the provincial and local levels**. More importantly, farmer supported alternatives to the third rice crop are needed. The study of lotus farming alternatives suggests one possible feasible alternative that is resilient to both floods and drought while having biodiversity and ecosystem benefits. The outcomes of the studies will be presented at a second Mekong Delta Forum.

IUCN also organised a media training tour of the Mekong Delta for 10 journalists from 10 newspapers and TV channels. The trip was organised after a prolonged drought had caused hundreds of millions of dollars in crop losses. But as the site visits made clear, **an extreme weather event was exacerbated by a "rice at all costs" policy that over the last 10-15 years has greatly reduced the absorptive capacity of the upper delta**, thereby reducing dry season river flow, and delayed farmers from transitioning out of rice into (*more profitable*) brackish aquaculture in coastal areas. The evaluation feedback was very positive and by the end of June, the journalists had published 12 articles in the national media.

The Mekong Delta Forum in Hochiminh City, was organised by the World Bank, Dutch, German, and Australian Embassies, and IUCN and was opened by the Prime Minister. IUCN organised a working group on flood-based livelihoods in the upper delta. **Striking was how attitudes of provincial government officials have changed since the first forum in February 2015 in favour of more natural adaptation options particularly in considering alternatives (especially lotus) to the third rice crop**, which is responsible for increasingly severe environmental problems.

The IP project also supported a workshop for top officials from Dong Thap, Long An, and Tien Giang Provinces in the Mekong Delta to **develop a vision for economic development and conservation in the Plain of Reeds**. The Plain of Reeds used to be a huge wetland straddling the Vietnam-Cambodia border, now largely converted to intensive rice farming. The vision included a commitment to inter-provincial coordination on land and water, clean agriculture, and the restoration of the ecosystem functions of the Plain of Reefs. It includes an intention to **move away from the third rice crop by investing in flood-based livelihoods in flood retention areas** that would moderate both wet season flood risk and dry season salinity intrusion.

IP is a project funded by BMUB (Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety), and IKI (International Climate Initiative). During a Knowledge Management Workshop in Germany, fifteen staff from IKI projects from around the world including Viet Nam provided feedback on the IKI knowledge management system. Globally, IKI has about 500 projects and is challenged to capture knowledge in a timely manner and to provide high-level input to Conference of Parties (COPs).

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/projects/integrated-planning-climate-change-and-biodiversity>



Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE)

IUCN spoke at a BRIDGE-funded workshop organised by PanNature at which the Stimson Center, a think tank in Washington DC, presented a new study on strategic hydropower planning in Lao. The key message is that ***Lao is getting a bad deal from hydropower because it lacks a national grid that allows it to move supply across the country in response to changes in demand. And as power demand from Thailand flat-lines, there are doubts over who will buy Lao hydropower. This gives Vietnam the opportunity to significantly increase its (currently minimal) imports of Lao hydropower and seek a veto over dams that threaten the Mekong Delta, Vietnam's rice, fruit, and aquaculture basket.***

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/water/our-work/bridge>





Forest Conservation



Protected Area Solutions for Biodiversity and Climate Change: Achieving quality elements of Aichi Target 11

This is a 4-year BMUB funded project to help promote and strengthen **diverse and equitable governance of Protected Area systems**. The project launch was organised in Ha Noi involving visitors from IUCN headquarters and partner organizations in France, Korea, and China. The three-day workshop in Ha Noi was followed by a three-day field trip and follow up discussion in Cuc Phuong National Park. This included a visit to Van Long Nature Reserve, a stronghold of the Critically Endangered (CR) Delacour's langur, whose global range is confined to the nature reserve and nearby hills. Van Long will probably be one of the project's focal sites in Vietnam.

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/projects/protected-area-solutions>

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) project

As part of the global program on FLR, IUCN organised an inception workshop in Quang Tri to **discuss forest management and restoration opportunities** in the province **where acacia and cassava have expanded rapidly**. After the inception, IUCN met with partners in Hanoi to discuss the next steps based on the results of the workshop and their own FLR research.

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/forests/our-work/forest-landscape-restoration>

A woman wearing a blue headscarf and an olive green jacket is smiling in a lush green field. She is holding a bundle of harvested plants. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees. A semi-transparent orange banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Biodiversity conservation".

Biodiversity conservation

Beyond Enforcement: Involving indigenous peoples and local communities in combatting illegal wildlife trade regional workshop

The workshop was funded by USAID and GIZ and aims to document the role of local communities in combating the illegal wildlife trade (IWT). It follows previous ones in South Africa and Cameroon. This one covers Southeast Asia with a focus on the Lower Mekong countries.

Two overview papers and 22 case studies from 10 countries in South and Southeast Asia were presented on aspects of local community participation in the illegal wildlife trade.

Several themes emerged: the challenging nature of combating the IWT given the region's rapid market integration and high levels of endemism; the fact that projects typically **offer abundant positive incentives for community participation but provide few real disincentives for continued poaching; and the lack of trust in the police and judiciary and absence of fair and effective law enforcement.** One of the most interesting conclusions was ***to legalise hunting and ban the industrial snaring that is driving many species to extinction.***

The Beyond Enforcement workshop's statement was concluded at a side-event of the Hanoi Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Conference. This is a high-level international conference organised by the Government of Viet Nam. IUCN President delivered the IUCN statement at the conference highlighting the role of local communities and science in addressing IWT.



Business and Biodiversity

IUCN and Holcim Partnership Agreement

Fauna and Flora International (FFI) press release focussed on the results of an IUCN Red Listing workshop in Cambridge on mollusks and arthropods in karst hills in Kien Giang threatened by quarrying by cement companies including Holcim. The workshop concluded that *these hills contain the world's entire populations of at least 31 globally threatened species* (six of which are Critically Endangered) and that this area contains a larger number of globally threatened endemic species than any other habitat of comparable size on Earth.

<https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/viet-nam/biodiversity-management-system-bms-holcim>

Photo credit

Cover page: O Loan Lagoon, Phu Yen Province © Tran Minh Phuong

Page 7: Director General of Biodiversity Conservation Agency/MONRE cum Co-chair of National Committee - IUCN Viet Nam signed MOU with a representative of USGS on managing natural resources in Viet Nam © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 8: Members and partners joined the MOU signing ceremony in WCC © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 9: A farmer collected organic shrimps from his farm in Ca Mau Province © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 11: The beautiful landscape of Ha Long Bay © IUCN Viet Nam & AMDI

Page 13: A newly-born-marine turtle in Con Dao National Park © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 14: Planting mangroves in Quang Tri Province © Quang Tri Environmental Monitoring Center

Page 16: Dr. Duong Van Ni is talking with a local farmer in Dong Thap about lotus farming © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 18: Buon Koup hydropower © Hoang Minh Duc

Page 19: Van Long Nature Reserve @ Le Khac Quyet

Page 21: A local farmer in the forest © Tung Pham/TRAFFIC

Page 23: Silver langur in Lo Coc island © IUCN Viet Nam

Page 25: Sarus crane in Tram Chim National Park © Nguyen Van Hung



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