



Annual Review 2020

Viet Nam Country Office



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

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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.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Message | 6 |
| Indo-Burma Group Review | 7 |
| IUCN Viet Nam in Numbers | 8 |
| Our Activities in Numbers | 9 |
| Project Locations | 11 |
| Membership | 12 |
| Highlights | 14 |
| <i>Business and Biodiversity</i> | 14 |
| <i>Forest Conservation</i> | 23 |
| <i>Marine and Coastal Conservation</i> | 25 |
| <i>Water and Wetland Conservation</i> | 30 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 3S | Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok river basins |
| ASI | Assurances Services International |
| ATP | Asia Turtles Programme |
| ASI | Assurances Services International |
| BOBLME | Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem |
| BRIDGE | Building River Dialogue and Guidance: |
| CAWA | Climate Adaptation in Wetlands Areas |
| CECR | Centre for Environment and Community Research |
| CPV | Communist Party of Viet Nam |
| D-FISH | Directorate of Fisheries |
| DP | Development Partners |
| DLA | Department of Legal Affairs |
| ECO-ECO | The Institute of Ecological Economy |
| EPR | Extended Producer Responsibility |
| EAGL | Expert Assessment Group for Green List |
| GCF | Green climate fund |
| GL | Green List |
| GreenViet | GreenViet Biodiversity Conservation Cente |
| Greenhub | Center for Supporting Green Development |
| GoMP | Gulf of Mottama Project |
| HCMC | Ho Chi Minh city |
| ISPONRE | Institute of Strategy, Policy on Natural Resources and Environment |
| IBG | Indo-Burma Group |
| ICM | Integrated Coastal Management |
| IGLASS | Integrated Green List Assessment and Site Survey |
| FIT | Feed-in-Tariff |
| IFC | International Finance Corporation |
| ICUE | Institute for Construction and Urban Economics |
| IMC | Indo-Myanmar Conservation |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| KKFC WHS | Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex World Heritage Site |
| LEP | Law on Environmental Protection |
| L&L | Live & Learn Viet Nam |
| MONRE | Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment |
| MARPLASTICCs | Marine Plastics and Coastal Communities Project |
| MRWP | Mekong Regional Wetlands Project |
| MRC | Mekong River Commission |
| MPA MEE | Marine Protected Area Managing Effective Evaluation |
| MAM | Mangrove Ecosystem Based Adaptation in the Mekong Delta |
| MPAs | Marine Protected Area |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MPI | Ministry of Planning and Investment |
| MCD | Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development |
| NP | National Platform |
| NGO | Non-Profit Organization |
| NBSAPs | National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans |
| OECMs | Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures |
| PROVN | Packaging Recycling Organization Viet Nam |
| PFES | Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services |
| SNV | Netherlands Development Organisation |
| SCCC | Siam City Cement Company |
| TCPVN | TC Pharmaceutical Viet Nam |
| TRI | The Restoration Initiative |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| VNU | Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies |
| VB4E | Vietnam Business for Environment |
| WWF | World Wide Fund For Nature |

Message



Despite covid, which affected all of us, a lot happened in 2020. Several things stood out for me.

First, we may have reached a “tipping point” in how the region’s governments think about energy. In Viet Nam, CPV Resolution 55, issued in February 2020, provides the legal basis for an aggressive transition out of fossil fuels into renewables. Power Development Plan 8 proposes a 65% reduction in coal build out. Meanwhile, driven by an attractive FIT, solar power has exploded with 16 GW added over the last 18 months, which is three times all

of ASEAN and twice all of Africa. In March 2020, Cambodia issued a 10-year moratorium in Mekong mainstream dams. Thailand has so far refused to sign power purchase agreements for several proposed Mekong dams. This shift to a more diverse, lower cost, and lower impact energy mix, which has been strongly supported by IUCN and others, is good news for climate and the region’s highly productive freshwater ecosystems, including the Mekong Delta.

Second, when it comes to plastic waste, we saw substantial progress in both policy and practice. The Environmental Protection Law, approved by the National Assembly in November 2020, provides the legal basis for Extended Producer Responsibility, which gives producers significant responsibility for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products. IUCN is working with MONRE and PRO Vietnam, a social enterprise established by 19 national and international food and beverage companies to collect and recycle packaging and other recyclable waste by ensuring higher value, local recovery solutions, and setting the stage for a closed loop solution. PRO Vietnam is advising MONRE on the EPR implementing regulation, a good example of government and business cooperation on critical legislation.

Third, in September 2020, IUCN, MONRE, and TH Group, one of Viet Nam’s largest private companies, established Viet Nam Business for Environment, a platform to encourage business investment in biodiversity conservation. One of VB4E’s first events was to sponsor a business consultation in Hochiminh City on the need and opportunity to transition out of coffee monocultures in the Central Highlands into a less water-intensive, less drought-prone, and higher value mixed agroforestry systems. The idea received strong business support.

Finally, in July 2020, IUCN launched the first-ever Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to help users design, implement, and verify NbS actions. Since 2014, with IKI and Coca-Cola funding, we have worked with local communities and provincial governments in the upper Mekong Delta to test NbS alternatives to the third-rice crop consisting of flood-based crops such as lotus, floating vegetables, floating rice, and flood season aquaculture. When we applied the spreadsheet-based NbS self-assessment tool, we found that this work scored highly across all eight dimensions, but with room for improvement on biodiversity net gain, inclusive governance, and adaptive management. We encourage our partners to apply this tool to their own work.

Jake Brunner

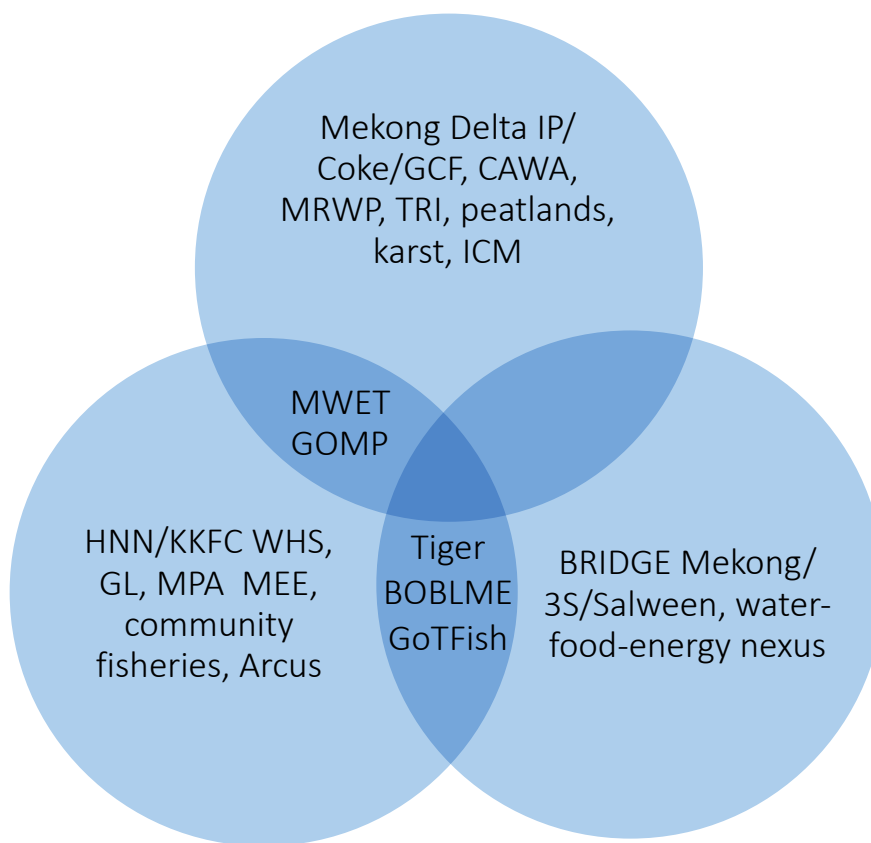
Head, IUCN Indo-Burma Group

Acting Country Representative, IUCN Viet Nam

Indo-Burma Group Review

On February 20-21, IUCN organised a strategic planning workshop for the Indo-Burma Group (IBG) and Natural Resources Group (NRG). As the NRG is involved in a growing number of wetlands-related projects within Asia, the two programs are tightly integrated. Despite the lack of a regional strategy, a review of the IBG projects, where IUCN Viet Nam Country Office is a part of, found that three distinct clusters have been formed. These can be seen below:

1. Biodiversity conservation/climate change adaption in production landscapes



2. Protected area management effectiveness

3. Transboundary natural resources management

IUCN Viet Nam in Numbers

www.iucn.org/vietnam

73

YEARS of **IUCN**
WORLDWIDE

28

YEARS of **IUCN**
IN VIETNAM

28

YEARS PARTNERSHIP
WITH MONRE

17

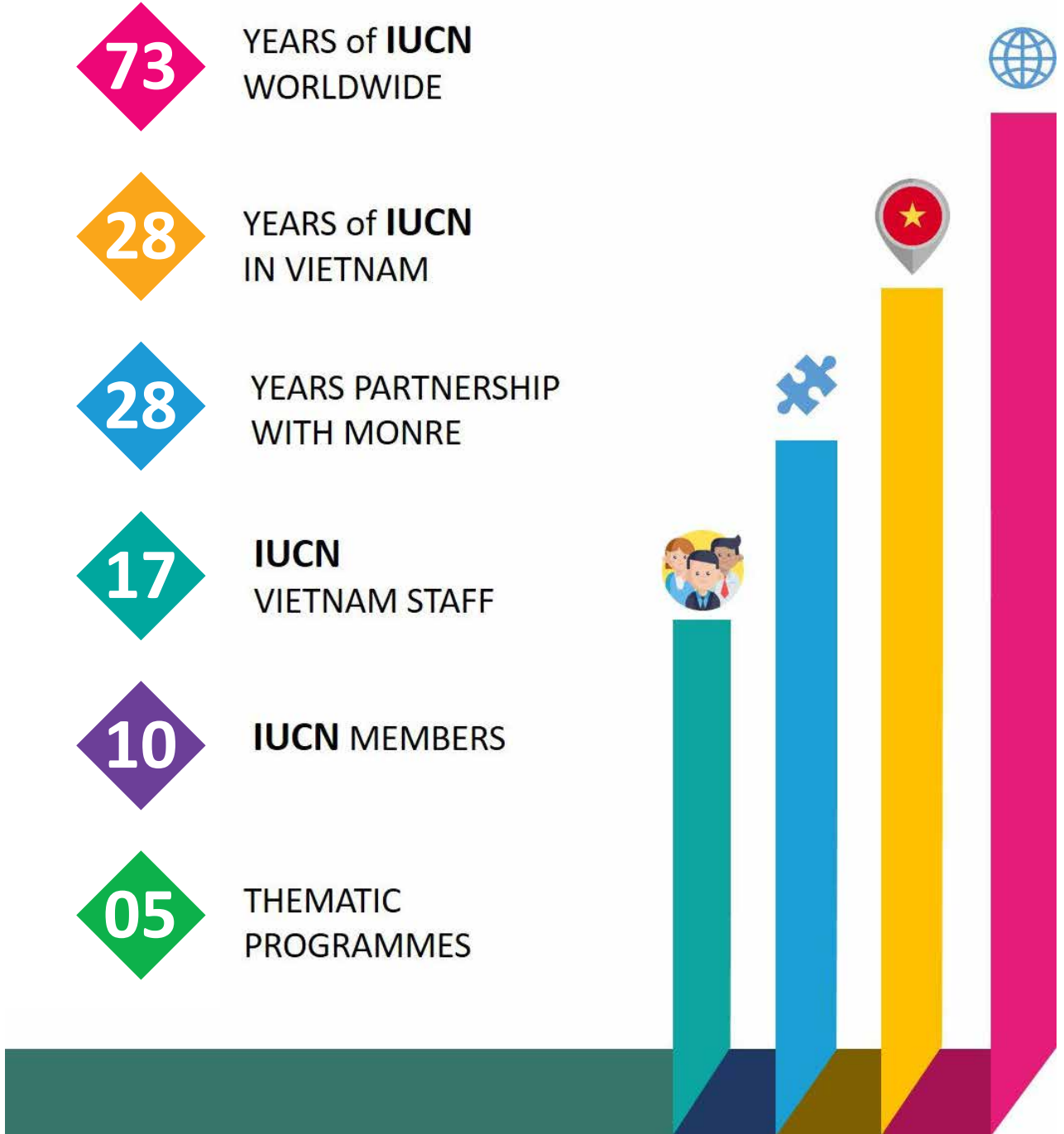
IUCN
VIETNAM STAFF

10

IUCN MEMBERS

05

THEMATIC
PROGRAMMES



Our Activities in Numbers



15 Workshops organized



18 Projects covered



5,617 People Trained



23 Provinces Engaged



~24,000
Social Media Followers



4 years, 2016-2020

Mangrove and Market project



107,725 tons of CO2 reduced emissions

15,600 hectares of mangrove forest protected

80 hectares of mangrove replanted

1,000 sanitary toilets built



5,617 farmers trained

3,200 farmers certified

80 farmer organizations established

60 model farms established



7 years

Marine Turtle Conservation program

2,316 nests
reallocated

7 Marine Protected Areas and
National Parks participated

111,108
Hatchlings released

427 volunteers selected

3,411 visitors supported



Project Locations

Updated December 2020





Membership

In 2020, Greenhub and Institute for Construction and Urban Economics (ICUE) became the latest members of IUCN Viet Nam. Ten organisations now make up the membership list:

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

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, which was originally scheduled for June 2020 was first delayed to January 2021 and then to September 2021. To prepare for the Congress, the IUCN Viet Nam National Committee met in August 2020 to discuss a motion that it had proposed entitled: *“Supporting the Lower Mekong Basin countries with the transboundary management of water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity”*. This motion, which is the first that the IUCN Viet Nam National Committee has ever proposed, was accepted and will be debated at the Congress in September 2021.

Asia accounted for just 17, or 7.6%, of all motions submitted. Of these, only six were accepted, including the one from Viet Nam, so it is a very competitive process. The table below shows the six Asia motions:

| Motion No. | Title |
|------------|--|
| 053 | Enhancing implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) (CHINA) |
| 108 | Adapting traditional medicine to achieve social and environmental sustainability (CHINA) |
| 015 | Supporting the Lower Mekong Basin countries with the transboundary management of water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity (VIETNAM) |
| 019 | Protection of natural flows of water for the conservation of wetlands (JAPAN) |
| 079 | Enhancing knowledge of natural resource conservation and alternative sustainable energy models through faith-based organisation networks (THAILAND) |
| 105 | Preventing the extinction of the Great Indian Bustard (<i>Ardeotis nigriceps</i>) in India (INDIA) |



Highlights

Business and Biodiversity



Viet Nam Business for Environment (VB4E)

2020 saw the **official launch of Vietnam Business for Environment (VB4E)** and the growing number of business project portfolios for IUCN Viet Nam. The goal of VB4E Alliance is to engage businesses in protecting the environment and conserve nature's value in the country. On June 17th, ninety participants from government, NGOs and companies attended for the unveiling of the new initiative in Hanoi. The launch also introduced a new conservation designation known as **“Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures” (OECMs)**. OECMs are seen as opportunities to recognize the contribution of businesses and communities to biodiversity conservation through improved management of their own properties. We are working with ISPONRE to try and get OECMs recognised in the revised Environmental Protected Law, which is under review by the National Assembly.



In September, we organised a half-day **business consultation in HCMC on the results of a BRIDGE feasibility study of transforming coffee monocultures in the Central Highlands**, which form the upstream portion of the 3S. A topic of discussion was the role of certification in ensuring best practice on the ground and how best to communicate this to clients and consumers. Participants agreed on the need to look beyond certification given its distorting effect on the market and the low benefits to farmers and companies. It is therefore necessary to consider alternative ways to achieve the same or better outcomes. This could be done on pilot basis by selecting a river basin. Current pilots at the commune level are too small.

December saw a busy month for VB4E with two important events occurring in quick succession. On December 17, with funding from Marplasticcs project, VB4E and IUCN-PROVN Strategic Partnership, IUCN and MONRE's Department of Legal Affairs **organised a business consultation on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** in Da Lat. EPR was included in the recently approved Environmental Protection Law and now needs to be operationalized through a decree, which was discussed. IUCN will support DLA to finalise the decree in close coordination with business in the coming time.

On December 24-25, IUCN organised a VB4E workshop and field trip in Dong Thap on water and wetlands conservation in the Mekong Delta with TH Group, La Vie, and TCPVN (which markets Red Bull in Vietnam). La Vie and TCPVN are interested in funding project work in the delta and ideas include flood friendly livelihoods that build on the successful pilots that Coca-Cola funded over the last three years. Coca-Cola have provisionally agreed to fund another 3-year program, this time on the "coastal squeeze", which is removing the remaining mangroves along large stretches of the delta coastline and is our major policy objective in the delta.

For more information, please visit:

www.vb4e.com and <https://www.facebook.com/VietnamB4E>



Flood-Based Livelihoods in support of Water Retention Strategy of the Mekong Delta

The 12th Annual Global CSR Summit and Awards 2020 gave the **IUCN-Coca Cola project a silver medal for the project titled ‘Flood friendly livelihoods in the Mekong Delta’** (also known as ‘Monkey Cheeks’) within the category of ‘Best Environmental Excellence’. The competition saw 300 entries from 120 countries around the world, with the Monkey Cheeks project coming in second place. See more at: <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202010/iucn-coca-cola-monkey-cheeks-project-received-silver-award-best-environmental-excellence>.

In the 2020 flood season, project assistance has successfully focused on restoring flood retention area inside the high dykes. This is a significant demonstration model as the use of flood based crops and aquaculture to restore flood area inside the high dykes remains the most challenging outcome to achieve because of years of farmer experience with subsidized rice cropping. As of 31 Dec 2020, 241 hectares of profitable flood-based livelihoods had been implemented for the 2020 flood season, retaining approx. 4.1 million m³ of flood water which has exceeded the third year deliverable of 2.9 million m³. Of the 4.1 million m³, 3.5 million m³ is restored flood retention area inside the high dyke polders in Dong Thap and Long An Provinces. An Giang conserved 0.6 million m³ of flood area.



In September, IUCN attended the third retreat of **the Mekong Delta Working Group**, co-chaired by the World Bank and German Embassy, which IUCN co-founded in 2014. Since IUCN has, by default, become the Working Group’s institutional memory, IUCN gave a presentation on its history. The German Embassy said that they are exploring the possibility of expanding the mandate of the Working Group to address the threats posed by upstream hydropower development to the delta. This would fill an important policy vacuum.

In October, IUCN attended a Development Partners (DP) with the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) to provide **input into the draft Integrated Regional Investment Plan for the Mekong Delta**. This is Vietnam's first integrated regional plan under the new Planning Law. IUCN led two DP sessions. The first discussed the role that NBS such as flood-based agriculture and integrated mangrove shrimp systems can play in mitigating natural compaction and subsidence; and one on the need to address the loss of mangroves due to coastal squeeze and potential solutions using a hybrid-NBS approach. IUCN is currently reviewing the draft plan on behalf of the World Bank, which is providing funding. The plan will be finalized in May 2021. The shift from intensive rice to flood-based agriculture in the upper delta is now a strategic objective. The coastal squeeze is recognized for the first time by the government, but a strategic response is not yet identified.



For more information, please visit:

<https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/viet-nam/monkey-cheeks-project>

IUCN – PROVN Strategic Partnership



On June 25th, IUCN signed a MOU with PRO Viet Nam **to jointly design and implement pilot projects for a circular economy and to support the EPR National Platform**. PRO Viet Nam, established in June 2019, is a coalition of 13 leading companies from the consumer goods and packaging industry that aims to contribute to a clean, green and beautiful Vietnam. The organization aims to achieve a circular economy and making the recycling of packaging more accessible and sustainable.

On the same day, through a strategic partnership, IUCN and the Department of Legal Affairs (DLA) of MONRE organised a workshop titled “Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Legal Framework – Shaping a Packaging Sector towards Circular Economy in Viet Nam” in Hoi An, Quang Nam Province. With the participation of more than 100 participants from National Assembly, MONRE, MARD, universities, businesses, and NGOs, the focus was on the legal framework for EPR in revision of the 2014 Law on Environmental Protection (LEP).

At the workshop, the draft text on EPR in the revised Environmental Protection Law was discussed, with PRO VN recommending a non-prescriptive definition with details to be included in a decree. DLA has invited IUCN to join the EPR National Platform. A key learning is that businesses are willing to invest in recycling but only if the supply is guaranteed, which requires waste separation at source. To incentivize waste separation at source, the draft law proposes a volume-based trash collection fee.



On November 17, 2020, the National Assembly passed the new Environmental Protection Law, which stipulates Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for businesses in Viet Nam. This means that businesses and producers now bear the responsibility for the waste stage of their products. MONRE has established an EPR National Platform (NP) led by the DLA to develop a national EPR strategy and action plan. The implementation details will be defined in an EPR decree. In Viet Nam, EPR will apply to six sectors: food and beverage, electrical goods, tires, batteries, lubricants, and electric vehicles.

To support this process, IUCN and DLA organised a consultation meeting in Hanoi on November 19, 2020. The aim of the meeting was to present the EPR NP Terms of Reference (TOR), action plan, and the outline of the EPR country report that DLA is preparing. Participants included representatives from DLA, ISPONRE, IUCN, WWF, Sub-Association of Recycle Waste in Viet Nam, Unilever, La Vie, Tetra Pak, Coca-Cola, and Friesland Campina.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/viet-nam/iucn-pro-vietnam-strategic-partnership>

Groundwater management and land subsidence in Soc Trang Province

During February and March, IUCN assisted the Arcadis-led project on groundwater and subsidence governance in the Mekong Delta through inception meetings with key coastal provincial administrations. The project aims to build capacity of local governments to understand and take decisions on the interlinked processes of groundwater overuse and rapid land subsidence (ten times faster than global sea level rise). IUCN's input to the project will focus on the role that NBS can play in reducing groundwater use.

IUCN will continue to collaborate with Arcadis – a Design and Consultancy Company - for the implementation of Strategic Framework for the Integrated River Sub-Catchment Management in Truong Giang River, Quang Nam, Vietnam.

IUCN - Siam City Cement Group partnership

The IUCN – SCCC partnership aims to protect the limestone hills in the company's quarrying sites, as well as surrounding areas in Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam and contribute to sector-wide improvements in the region. Siam City Cement Public Company Limited is the first company in Thailand's cement industry to have signed an MOU with IUCN. In Viet Nam, SCCC was named INSEE Viet nam.

In November, IUCN Viet Nam in collaboration with Southern Institute of Ecology co-published a photostory about the conservation efforts of INSEE and its partners in protecting the biodiversity in the Mekong Delta Limestones. The major results of the partnership have been illustrated in the digital story at <https://digital.iucn.org/regions/asia/results-of-12-year-conservation-IUCN-INSEE-Viet-Nam/>.

In December, IUCN met the INSEE Vietnam CEO and senior staff in HCMC to review the 2020 results. These include the production of a Mekong Delta Limestones map, which shows very high levels of plant and invertebrate endemism, a review of the 2012 Biodiversity Action Plan for INSEE's cement plant in Hon Chong and a story board.



INSEE has committed to using **biodiversity offsets** to achieve its 2030 biodiversity target of Net Positive Impact and invited IUCN to continue to serve as its technical partner in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. This formal commitment to offsets is a significant policy shift. Previously, INSEE has provided funding for biodiversity surveys to design a karst hill offset but no political support. As a first step, IUCN will do an assessment of opportunities to restore the Phu My Wetlands Nature Reserve, one of the delta's few remaining natural grasslands, which will be used offset the grassland in the Hon Chong plant that is being quarried for clay.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/viet-nam/iucn-insee-partnership-achieving-biodiversity-net-positive-impact-npi-2030-through-biodiversity-offset>





Forest Conservation



Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas

The IUCN Green List (GL) of Protected and Conserved Areas is the first global standard of best practice for area-based conservation. It is a programme of certification for protected and conserved areas – national parks, natural World Heritage sites, community conserved areas, nature reserves and so on – that are effectively managed and fairly governed.

In August, IUCN organised an Expert Assessment Group for Green List (EAGL) meeting in Hanoi with Assurances Services International (ASI)'s independent reviewer to assess the Van Long GL candidate site application. This was followed by a site visit. Van Long has been approved by the EAGL and independent reviewer and submitted to the global GL Committee for approval.



On October 2, ***the IUCN Green List Committee approved the nomination of Van Long Wetland Nature Reserve as Vietnam's and Southeast Asia's, first GL site.*** On October 13-15, IUCN and ASI organised an Integrated Green List Assessment and Site Survey (IGLASS) Capacity Building Workshop in Cat Tien National Park. The 24 participants from the Expert Assessment Group for Green List (EAGL) and five protected areas were trained on key elements of the GL Standard and its Assessment Process. This included a visit to the Ta Lai community tourism village where participants practiced governance assessment skills.



Marine and Coastal Conservation

Marine Plastic and Coastal Community (MARPLASTICCs)

On September 25, IUCN and Directorate of Fisheries (D-FISH)/MARD signed an **MOU on aquatic resources conservation and development 2020-2025**. Following the IUCN's MOU with D-FISH that ran from 2015 to 2020, the new MOU covers five areas of collaboration: (1) implementation of the Marine Turtle Conservation Action Plan by 2025; (2) improvement of MPA management effectiveness; (3) research on the legal and scientific framework for the Fisheries Resources Protection and Development Fund; (4) management and conservation of threatened aquatic species; and (5) management environment of aquatic habitats.



The MOU ceremony was held as a part of the workshop titled: “Plastic waste management in the ocean towards the conservation of biological diversity and living habitat of marine organisms”. The event was co-organised by D-FISH, IUCN, Quang Ninh Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, MARD and Center for Supporting Green Development (Greenhub). The focus of the workshop was to discuss the development of an action plan to reduce plastic pollution from the fisheries sector; share local experience with plastic waste management and seek voluntary commitments to reduce plastic waste from fisheries.

On November 18, a hybrid seminar was arranged to validate the Viet Nam Country results on National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hotspotting and Shaping Action. Discussions that followed the presentation primarily concerned the reliability and methodology of data collection. It was recommended that data and methodology should be context-based as sometimes different methodologies lead to the same policy interventions. Moreover, guidance results should be viewed from a legal perspective to see how they can be integrated into policy development. This will give a better scope to understand what can and cannot be used, and what is missing.

Through Marplasticcs, IUCN provided the Department of Legal Affairs and MONRE with consultancy experts to support EPR system development in Viet Nam that focuses on four main areas: technology, economics, legal and coordination.

Support Community based marine turtle nesting beach conservation and bycatch reduction in Viet Nam

In mid-December, IUCN collaborated with D-FISH, WWF and Greenhub to organise a series of activities to prepare for the 'Review Workshop of Decision 742' by MARD. These activities included:

- MPAs Managing Effective Evaluation (MPAs MEE) and network expansion
- Plastic waste pollution in MPAs
- Sea turtle conservation program and implementation of sea turtle conservation action plan (2020-2025)

At these events, the representatives of 11 MPAs across the country came together to work on a variety of uses with the leader of D-FISH. Discourse centered around the challenges and difficulties in effectively managing MPAs and updating the status of sea turtle conservation and plastic waste pollution at MPAs. In coming time, IUCN and partners are going to collaborate with D-FISH to support effective management of MPAs to expand the network. In particular, IUCN want to expand the strictly protected areas and the new conservation designation titled OECMs - "Other effective area - based conservation measures".

2020 also marks the **7-year-journey of the IUCN marine turtle conservation volunteer programme**. Over the past seven years, IUCN have worked with MPA partners and communities with nesting beaches, bycatch monitoring, communications and education. By the end of 2020, IUCN established a volunteer network of 20,000 members and the program achieved some major results. Seven MPAs and NPs from across the country now participate, with 427 volunteers selected from 10,000 initial applicants. This has enabled the reallocation of 2,316 nests and the release of 111,108 hatchlings, 179 patrol turns and 3,411 visitors support.

For more information, please visit:

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



Scaling up Mangrove Ecosystem Based Adaptation in the Mekong Delta (MAM)

On January 9-10, Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) in collaboration with IUCN and the German Embassy, Ha Noi, organised an end of project workshop for the second phase of the Mangroves and Market (MAM) project. The German Embassy's BMU representative attending the workshop was impressed with the project results.

The major impact of the project, by far, has been the initiation of **systemic change to transform the Mekong Delta Coast** through further development of organically certified shrimp production in integrated mangrove shrimp systems, supporting government and other actors in adopting this approach, leveraging additional resources and funding, changing behaviours and norms, scaling up the integrated mangrove-shrimp models and enabling a shift towards an “organic coastline” for the Mekong Delta.



The MAM project has achieved some significant results:

- 107,725 tons of CO2 eq reduced emissions from 2016-2018
- 15,600 ha of mangrove forest protected
- 5,617 farmers trained
- 3,200 farmers certified
- 1,000 sanitary toilets built
- 80 farmer organisations established
- 80 ha of mangrove replanted
- 60 model farms established
- Establishing Government Decree 156 by ensuring mangrove polycultures are within the Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services (PFES) system nationally.

For more information, please visit:

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

Monitoring and Assessment Programme on Plastic Litter in the coastal areas of Viet Nam

Since 2018, IUCN have partnered with GreenHub to run “Guidelines on beach debris monitoring and assessment”. Trainings and monitoring have been conducted across the 11 MPAs of Viet Nam. The monitoring is conducted on a semiannual basis over three years with the participation of MPA and NP staff.

In 2020, IUCN continued its partnership with MPAs, Greenhub and WWF to monitor plastic litter in coastal areas. The results of the monitoring activities in 2020 and 2019 were used to provide inputs for developing an action plan on plastic waste management of the fisheries sector by Viet Nam Directorate of Fisheries (D-FISH).

Findings from the 2020 monitoring program found plastic debris account for 92% of marine waste and 58% of the total mass of recovered items. Fishing activities proved to have the biggest plastic footprint as 44.8% of all plastic waste was derived from fishing. Single-use plastics were second most polluting, making up 26% of the number and 26% of total mass. Other plastics found from other activities made up the rest of the discarded materials at 21% with 12% of total mass.

For more information, please see:

https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/2021/beach_debris_mornitoring_2020_report_english-_1_july_2021.pdf





Water and Wetland Conservation

Building River Dialogue and Guidance (BRIDGE)

The BRIDGE project aims to build water governance capacities through learning, demonstration, leadership, and consensus-building with a particular focus on transboundary river basins.

In relation to this project, there was some good news from IUCN's work on water-energy-food nexus: Cambodia declared a 10-year moratorium on Mekong mainstream dams and Laos announced Asia's largest floating solar plant (1,400 MW) on the Nam Ngum reservoir near Vientiane. Furthermore, IFC is considering financing a transmission line between southern Lao and Vietnam that will connect dams off the Sekong mainstream, and Vietnam ***agreed to hugely increase hydropower imports (up to 6,000 MW) from Lao provided they exclude power from Mekong mainstream dams***. The bad news is that Vietnam is interested in participating in the Luang Prabang Mekong mainstream dam on the basis that if Vietnam doesn't build it then China will.

In August, as part of BRIDGE, IUCN published a study of the costs and ***benefits of transforming coffee monocultures in Vietnam's Central Highlands, which form the headwaters of the 3S, into a diverse, higher value, and less water consuming crop mix***. Using Dak Lak Province (which produces one-third of all of Vietnam's coffee) as a case study, it proposes transforming about 200,000 hectares of coffee monoculture into a drought-resilient coffee, pepper, durian, and avocado crop mix, which produces 2.5 times the crop value, maintains existing coffee production, and saves about 150 million cubic meters of water a year in reduced irrigation. The total cost is about \$300 million over 30 years (equivalent to a mere \$60/farmer/year).

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/202008/transforming-coffee-and-water-use-central-highlands-vietnam-case-study-dak-lak-province>.



Later in the year, IUCN briefed the Swiss Ambassador on BRIDGE Mekong and proposed that IUCN leads an initiative to support the Mekong River Commission to revise the Mekong Agreement using text from the UN Watercourses Convention, which is the gold standard for international water law. Signed in 1995, the Mekong Agreement limits the MRC's jurisdiction in key ways: it has no jurisdiction over tributaries, even major ones such as the 3S rivers; the rules governing transboundary environmental impacts are annexed to the agreement and have no legal weight; and it contains no viable conflict resolution mechanism. This is a politically sensitive challenge but one that by virtue of its neutrality and long-term support to MRC, Switzerland is well placed to undertake.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/mekong.pdf>

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