



# IUCN Viet Nam

**IUCN Viet Nam's Mission is:** To influence, encourage and assist Viet Nam's biodiversity conservation and equitable sustainable use of natural resources for improving its people's quality of life.

**IUCN Viet Nam's Vision is:** To become the leading knowledge-based conservation and environmental organisation working in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam, civil society and the private sector to promote best practices in sustainable development, maintain environmental integrity, and support sustainable livelihoods for its people.



Photo: IUCN Viet Nam

### History:

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature is an international membership organisation that brings together more than 1,000 government agencies and NGOs from more than 160 countries. IUCN began working in Viet Nam in the early 1980s, providing technical assistance to the government in developing its first National Conservation Strategy. In 1993, Viet Nam became a state member of IUCN, and the country office was established in Hanoi.

### Current Structure:

IUCN VN works in seven thematic areas – Business and Biodiversity, Climate Change, Communications, Forest Conservation, Marine and Coastal, Protected Areas, and Water and Wetlands.

### IUCN VN Strategic Planning:

To prepare itself for working in a changing Viet Nam, as well as to take stock of emerging trends in



Photo: IUCN Viet Nam

conservation, IUCN VN underwent a 10-month process of internal assessments and external consultations with representatives of the government, non-governmental and international organisations, members and donors to devise its Strategic Framework 2007-2010.

### The Strategic Framework prioritises the office's work in four areas:

1. **Governance** includes building government capacity, dispensing policy advice, and ensuring rural and disadvantaged communities have a voice resource management.
2. **Environmental Planning** addresses the issue of "greening" the development agenda and mainstreaming a focus on environment into compatible planning and policies.
3. **Environmental Services** encourages managers and policy makers to safeguard ecosystem services when making resource-use decisions.
4. **Climate Change** and sea level rise impacts are being studied to inform the development of adaptation and mitigation strategies.

### Partnerships:

The IUCN Viet Nam country office routinely works with funding and implementing partners to achieve its initiatives. From 2004-2008 the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) supported IUCN VN's mission through a core funding agreement.

IUCN VN benefits from its members. Local members are: Viet Nam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), the Institute of Ecological Ecology (Eco-Eco), the Centre for Natural Resources and Sciences (CRES) and the Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development (MCD)

### International members include:

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Birdlife International, TRAFFIC Indochina, Fauna and Flora International (FFI), and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

The Viet Nam office also supports national volunteer experts who contribute to IUCN's six global commissions: Commission on Education and Communication; Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy; Commission on Environmental Law; Commission on Ecosystem Management; Species Survival Commission; and the World Commission on Protected Areas.

Widening the range of potential actors in conservation, the country office is building partnerships with the business community to promote corporate social and environmental responsibility in the fields of sustainable development and climate change.

### Approaches:

IUCN Viet Nam's approach to achieving its strategic priorities is based on six basic operational principles:

1. Strategic partnership with government, donors and key stakeholders, including the private sector.
2. Knowledge, Empowerment and Governance (KEG) for conservation and sustainable resource use.
3. Innovation and leadership.
4. Excellence in technical assistance.
5. Focused and flexible programme delivery.
6. Communication outreach.



Photo: IUCN Viet Nam



# Business and Biodiversity Programme



**IUCN members are working closely with the private sector to achieve conservation and sustainable development goals. Stronger action by government, businesses and consumers is required to integrate environmental protection and poverty reduction into the pursuit of individual, corporate and national prosperity. IUCN VN views business partnerships as key to introducing sustainable development practices in Viet Nam.**

## What are the programme's goals?

### *An Environmentally Aware, Responsible and Accountable Private Sector*

IUCN VN is committed to raising corporate awareness about industries' impact on the environment and building capacity to mitigate it.

### *Market-Based Incentives for Conservation*

Asking companies to view their environmental impact as an operating expense allows bottom-line self-interest to guide

businesses toward sustainable development practices.

### *Effective Collaboration Between the Conservation and Business Communities*

IUCN VN can show the private sector how partnering with conservation organisations appeals to ecologically conscious consumers. We can educate conservationists about increasing coherence between international trade and environmental policies.

## Why is the programme important in Viet Nam?

After a decade of annual economic growth at a rate of 7 percent, Viet Nam has undergone rapid urbanisation,



industrialisation and infrastructure development that threatens the nation's rich biodiversity and widened the urban-rural divide. Accession into the World Trade Organisation has opened Viet Nam to the benefits of operating in a global marketplace, but also to the risks of developing too quickly, without a plan for sustainability.

National economic growth has outpaced the government's ability to draft and enforce environmental policies. While government investment in natural resource protection remains crucial, there is much the private sector can do to take the initiative in reducing its footprint and guaranteeing a decent standard of living for its employees.

## What are examples of past and present projects?

IUCN VN's **Strategic Framework 2007-2010** calls for private sector engagement, making corporate partnerships a formal part of our conservation agenda at a time when business activity is on the rise.

The 2007 **Corporate Social Responsibility Award** for national footwear and garment industries included an IUCN-created environmental prize. It helped raise awareness about what was working for one company, so others could follow its lead.

The **Viet Nam Business Council for Sustainable Development (VBCSD)** will provide a platform for firms to share information, promote best practices and dialogue with government to support sustainable development and climate change mitigation and adaptation in Viet Nam.

## Business and Biodiversity Programme Success Story:

In 2007, IUCN VN entered its first corporate partnership, signing a five-year agreement with Holcim Viet Nam Limited (HVL), the national branch of Holcim Ltd. -- one of the world's leading suppliers of cement and aggregates. The strategic partnership will allow IUCN VN and HVL to jointly implement a comprehensive biodiversity strategy, develop joint local initiatives -- particularly involving biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods -- and promote corporate social responsibility by sharing practices with the wider industry and conservation community in the region.

To learn more:

- Visit [www.iucn.org.vn](http://www.iucn.org.vn) for the latest news on activities or to download publications.
- Go to [www.iucn.org/about/union/members.index.cfm](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/members.index.cfm) to learn the benefits of membership and how to join.
- Send an e-mail to [newsletter@iucn.org.vn](mailto:newsletter@iucn.org.vn) to receive our electronic newsletter.

**To contact the IUCN Viet Nam Business and Biodiversity Programme Manager, please call Mr. Vu Minh Duc at (84-4) 3726-1575 ext. 135 or [duc@iucn.org.vn](mailto:duc@iucn.org.vn).**





# Climate Change Programme



All of Viet Nam's ecosystems are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, as are the livelihoods and cultures of the nation's people. The main focus of IUCN Viet Nam's Climate Change Programme is to support adaptation in the face of climate change. We envision a future where government and communities are ready with the knowledge and planning to reduce and appropriately react to climate change impacts.

## What are the programme's goals?

### Local Adaptation Initiatives

Climate change will affect Viet Nam's various regions in different ways, so IUCN encourages tailoring coping strategies to local conditions and obtaining local-level buy-in.

### Climate Change Considerations Integrated into Existing Planning Mechanisms

We consider climate change in our work on Integrated

Coastal Zone Management, water resource use, planning for environmental flows and government policy.

### Knowledge about Climate Change Impacts Consolidated and Disseminated

IUCN Viet Nam supports climate change studies that create knowledge where none existed before, and makes climate-related information public through outreach to environmental journalists and educators.

## Why is the programme important in Viet Nam?

With a coastline of 3,260 km and two of the largest low-lying deltas in the world, Viet Nam stands to suffer some of the world's gravest consequences from climate change. Projected effects like sea-level rise, strengthened monsoons and extreme weather could have major impacts on the country's biodiversity and resources, as well as on industries like agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Human settlements and human health are also at risk.

IUCN VN regards climate change as one of its important foci and is developing leading-edge knowledge on its potential impacts with special attention to biodiversity and the links to poverty.

## What are examples of past and present projects?

We are supporting government and research partners in completing a **Review of Climate Change Impacts and Local Vulnerability in the Mekong Coastal Zone**. The findings will result in an article about susceptibility



to climate-related hazards in the agriculturally rich area. IUCN VN is similarly supporting fieldwork to assess the need to **Direct Resource Conservation in Light of Climate Change**, and ways the phenomenon may change resource distribution in Viet Nam.

IUCN VN led a **Training Course on "Sustainable Development, Environmental Protection and Climate Change"** for National Assembly members in Vung Tau and Quang Tri provinces and Can Tho and Da Nang cities. We shared information with them ranging from a simple explanation of the problem to potential impacts on traditional ways of life, civil rights implications and adaptive strategies, in the hopes that the leaders would then pass the information on to provincial- and local-level leadership.

To learn more:

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- Send an e-mail to [newsletter@iucn.org.vn](mailto:newsletter@iucn.org.vn) to receive our electronic newsletter.

To contact the IUCN Viet Nam Climate Change Programme, please call Mr. Luong Quang Huy at (84-4) 3726-1575 ext. 127 or [huy@iucn.org.vn](mailto:huy@iucn.org.vn).



# Forest Conservation Programme



**Viet Nam's forested areas shelter a number of globally-threatened species, span tropical and sub-tropical habitat zones, and provide services and resources for human communities. IUCN Viet Nam's activities promote forest conservation through participatory poverty reduction approaches. We envision sustainable forest conservation and management plans that improve the well-being of vulnerable communities and ensure the integrity of forest ecosystems.**

## What are the programme's goals?

### Linking forest conservation to poverty alleviation:

Our projects encourage conservation through alternative livelihoods to eliminate the overexploitation of forests for short-term survival needs.

### Combating land degradation and desertification:

We support efforts to reverse land degradation and desertification so that future generations can enjoy the land's products and services.

### Strengthening forest governance:

We facilitate rural community participation in policy formulation to link livelihood security to forest biodiversity conservation.

### Why is the programme important in Viet Nam?

About 60 percent of Viet Nam is classified as forest land. Forests are located in the uplands and in mountains nationwide, contributing significantly to community livelihoods and global biodiversity.



Forests in Viet Nam are divided into three categories: (i) special-use forest; (ii) protection forest; and, (iii) production forest. Viet Nam has a number of policies on forest use, conservation and reforestation. However, rapid economic growth, increased population and inappropriate benefit-sharing mechanisms have resulted in severe loss and degradation of forest resources. IUCN VN supports existing legislation and works to create new policies to ensure the future health and survival of the nation's forests.

## What are examples of past and present projects?

The **NTFP Sub-Sector Support Project** helped research and management institutions promote ecologically sustainable non-timber forest products, by building the capacity of local people to develop and sustain NTFP livelihoods and advocating policies that support NTFP-resource conservation.

IUCN Viet Nam is one of six member states in the IUCN global **Strengthening Voices for Better Choices (SVBC)** project, which aims to improve forest governance in accordance with the EU's Forest Law Enforcement,

Governance and Trade action plan. It promotes multi-stakeholder dialogues to address that and other international timber trade regulations.

The **Landscape and Livelihoods Strategy (LLS)** strengthens the relationship between forest management and poverty reduction to achieve two major sustainable development challenges: ensuring national poverty reduction strategies benefit the forest-dependent rural poor; and implementing commitments on sustainable forest use and conservation.

## Forest Conservation Programme Success Story:

With 90 percent of Viet Nam's forest fires caused by human activity, local communities play an important role in regulating fire use and preventing the conflagrations that devastate biodiversity and destroy important carbon-removing trees. IUCN Viet Nam gave technical assistance to the Forest Protection Department (FPD) in formulating fire-safety guidelines for forest-dependent communities. Through consultations with local people, the regulations spurred local governance and gave inhabitants a way to protect important income-generating forest products from fire damage.

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- Send an e-mail to [newsletter@iucn.org.vn](mailto:newsletter@iucn.org.vn) to receive our electronic newsletter.



**To contact the IUCN Viet Nam Forest Conservation Programme, please call Mr. Nguyen Van Anh at (84-4) 3726-1575 ext. 313 or [vananh@iucn.org.vn](mailto:vananh@iucn.org.vn).**

# Marine and Coastal Resources Programme



The ecosystems, habitats and species of Viet Nam's marine areas and land-based coastal zones are some of the country's most valuable natural and economic assets. IUCN VN acts to catalyse, inform and enhance conservation and sustainable use of those ecosystems and resources. We envision a future where thriving ecosystems in Viet Nam's marine and coastal areas enrich the lives of local communities.

## What are the programme's goals?

### Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)

ICM brings scientists, managers and policy-makers together to develop long-term management strategies that accommodate the diverse needs of coastal areas.

### Species Conservation and Habitat Protection

We work to integrate transboundary habitat conservation into our projects, using an ecosystems-based approach,

as the health of a species depends directly on the stability and health of its surroundings.

### Marine Protected Areas (MPA)

We are particularly interested in efforts supporting the government target of establishing 15 MPAs by 2015. MPAs not only preserve Viet Nam's marine and coastal biodiversity, but also to protect resources and ecosystem functions that support livelihoods and stabilise coastal regions.



## Why is the programme important in Viet Nam?

Viet Nam's coral reefs, sea-grasses and mangrove forests are considered high bio-productivity ecosystems because of their significance in climate regulation, and as vital habitats and breeding grounds for thousands of marine species and waterfowl.

Maintaining marine and coastal ecosystem health is critical for sustaining dependent human communities. Tourism and ocean-related export industries contribute largely to the country's financial well-being, yet Viet Nam's unique ocean resources are at risk of harm or destruction from pollution and the loss of habitats and biodiversity.

## What are examples of past and present projects?

A project to promote **Provincial Coastal Management** (1998-2001) strategies demonstrated ways to balance conservation with marine and coastal resource use and provided technical assistance to provincial governments.

As part of the **North Tonkin Archipelago** project to maintain the biological diversity and ecosystem productivity in the economically important area, IUCN VN facilitated the signing of an environmental, social and commercial management agreement between the local governments of two connected coastal regions.

To achieve **Integrated Conservation and Sustainable Development for Phu Quoc Island**, IUCN VN is using a participatory process to develop a comprehensive management plan for its archipelago. The plan would

recognise the connectivity between the terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems, and the industries that use and affect them.

## Marine and Coastal Resources Programme Success Story:

IUCN VN trained teachers in Minh Chau Island, as well as Quang Tri Province, home to some of Viet Nam's last remaining Leatherback Turtle nesting spots, to administer extra-curricular sea turtle lessons to students in grades 6-9. They taught pupils about marine turtle conservation through the lessons and via competitions.

For a few pupils, at least, the information stuck. After spotting a beached turtle, a group of Minh Chau youth strapped it to their bike and delivered it to the proper authorities. Thanks to the students' quick thinking, and their impressive turtle-transport solution, officials released the turtle back to the ocean in good health.

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To contact the IUCN Viet Nam Marine and Coastal Resources Programme Manager, please call Ms. Bui Thi Thu Hien at (84-4) 3726-1575 ext. 123 or [hien@iucn.org.vn](mailto:hien@iucn.org.vn).





# Protected Area Programme



**Viet Nam is one of the world's ten most biologically diverse countries, with 10 percent of the world's mammal, bird and fish species. It is estimated that 40 percent of local plant species exist only in Viet Nam. IUCN VN works to increase the number of protected areas that safeguard the nation's variety of life and to develop management strategies that keep protected areas functioning successfully.**

## What are the programme's goals?

### *Biodiversity Conservation*

Protected Areas (PA) provide habitats in which flora and fauna can reproduce and thrive, removed from disruptive human activities.

*A Strong Policy Framework Backed by Capable Administrators*

IUCN VN both supports the development of protected area policies and trains managers in the best way to implement them.

### *Effective Management*

Sharing information and streamlining best practices in management through protected area networks keeps managers up-to-date on the most efficient administrative practices.



## Protected Area Programme Success Story:

The **Hon Mun Marine Protected Area Pilot Project** (2001-2005) established Viet Nam's first MPA, now known as the Nha Trang Bay MPA. The pilot project was part of a GBRMPA/IUCN/World Bank collaboration to develop a Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. Nha Trang Bay MPA, a zoned, multi-use MPA, protects some of Viet Nam's best remaining coral reef, mangrove and sea-grass bed ecosystems and promotes education, research and recreation. Nha Trang Bay's management system was designed using participatory planning and supports alternative income generation methods. Today, the MPA's management is self-sustaining, and incomes of target community members have increased. Nha Trang Bay MPA is a model for using collaborative management to achieve the MPA goals of sustainable use and poverty alleviation.

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**To contact the IUCN Viet Nam Protected Areas Programme, please call Ms. Nguyen Thi Yen at (84-4) 3726-1575 ext. 115 or [yen@iucn.org.vn](mailto:yen@iucn.org.vn); or Ms. Bui Thi Thu Hien at (84-4) 3726-1575 ext. 123 or [hien@iucn.org.vn](mailto:hien@iucn.org.vn).**

## Why is the programme important in Viet Nam?

Continued economic growth is creating both opportunities and challenges for protected areas. More funds are available for conservation, but demand for resources is increasing.

Despite a rise in the number and coverage of protected areas in Viet Nam, biodiversity has continued to decline. The underlying causes of that loss are linked to limited awareness of the wide range of services and products that protected areas can contribute to national development.

## What are examples of past and present projects?

The regional **Safeguarding Biodiversity for Poverty Reduction Project (SBPRP)** aimed to make biodiversity conservation more equitable and pro-poor, and to enhance the contribution of biodiversity in protected areas to poverty reduction. We implemented co-management agreements in and around protected areas to measure their effectiveness in achieving biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and poverty alleviation.

**Biodiversity Corridor Decree** – IUCN VN supported the government in drafting a decree regulating Viet Nam's biodiversity corridors – designated land that links protected area habitats so plants and animals can migrate to find food, water and mates, and escape threats.

**MPA Network Establishment and Support** – To standardise MPA management and enable MPA administrators to learn from one another, IUCN VN helped establish a nationwide network of marine protected areas.





# Water and Wetlands Programme

Viet Nam's identity and future are closely linked to the health of its rivers, deltas, rice paddies, aquaculture ponds, estuaries, lakes, mangrove swamps, streams and lagoons. Those wetland and water resources are home to important ecosystems, support the livelihoods of local communities, and provide freshwater for agriculture and consumption. IUCN Viet Nam envisions equitable wetland- and water-resource management that preserves biodiversity and improves livelihoods.



Photo: VEPA

## What are the programme's goals?

*Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)*  
IWRM projects demonstrate and clarify the relationship between restored water ecosystems and livelihoods. They highlight the need for collaborative water allocation and resource protection plans.

## *Introducing the Concept of Ecosystem Value for Sustainable Wetlands Use*

This innovative approach highlights the value of ecosystem services, which can be weighed against the economic gain expected from other development plans when making resource-use decisions.



Photo: IUCN Viet Nam

## *Upholding Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA)*

We help the Vietnamese government implement and enforce MEAs related to wetland and water resources and plan to support new agreements as they arise.

## Why is the programme important in Viet Nam?

Water resource management is a critical issue in Viet Nam, one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Typhoons, droughts, landslides and floods have worsened in recent years.

The impact of development on water and wetlands has not been addressed adequately. Further understanding of how local livelihoods are linked to wetland resources is vital for planning conservation activities.

## What are examples of past and present projects?

IUCN VN helped the Vietnamese government develop **legal and policy frameworks**, including a decree establishing a national wetlands action plan.

IUCN VN is facilitating the **Water for Food and Ecosystems (WFE)** partnership between the Vietnamese government and the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). The aim is to harmonise agricultural and economically productive water uses with ecosystems' need for water.

The **Mekong Regional Water Dialogues (MRWD)** aim to facilitate transparent decision-making in the Mekong Region by enabling involvement from government, private sector and civil society stakeholders in water resource governance.

## Water and Wetlands Programme Success Story:

Tram Chim National Park, a vestige of the once extensive Plain of Reeds in the Mekong Delta, was established in 1998 for the "conservation of typical ecosystems of the Mekong Delta." For many years, however, managers artificially overrode the park's natural six-month dry season by permanently stocking high water to prevent fires.

To restore the degraded habitats at Tram Chim National Park, IUCN Viet Nam and partners piloted an Integrated Fire and Water Management Strategy that specifies monthly target water levels for each zone in the park based on the needs of the main aquatic vegetation.

Grassland habitats exhibited an almost immediate recovery and, through our monitoring programme, we discovered that mimicking the natural flood pulse allowed biomass to decompose, reducing the risk of fire in a more sustainable way. It was an example of how IUCN VN can create new knowledge to develop management systems that conserve biodiversity while addressing human concerns.

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Photo: IUCN Viet Nam

To contact the IUCN Viet Nam Wetlands and Water Resources Programme Manager, please call Ly Minh Dang at (84-4) 3726-1575 ext. 143 or e-mail [dang@iucn.org.vn](mailto:dang@iucn.org.vn).



# IUCN Viet Nam Inventory

## Major Projects 2004 - 2008



Duration and Site: 2006-2009. Hai Phong City and Quang Ninh Province.

Partners: NOAA, MARD, PPCs of Hai Phong and Quang Ninh.

### **Community-based marine turtle nesting beach conservation in Quang Tri Province**

Objective: Identify and enhance benefits of marine biodiversity conservation for local communities, and increase knowledge about threats to nesting and migrating sea turtles.

Duration and Site: 2007-2009. Quang Tri Province.

Partners: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MARD, Quang Tri Dept. of Fisheries, Hai An and Trieu Lang communes.

### **Ha Long Bay Institutional Management Building**

Objective: Develop a "Strategy for Conservation and Development of Ha Long Bay" that is linked to formal training, on-the-job mentoring and reviews for site managers.

Duration and Site: 2007-2009. Ha Long Bay.

Partners: UNESCO, Ha Long Bay management department, Quang Ninh PPC.

### **Hon Mun Marine Protected Area Pilot Project**

Objective: Conserve a representative sample of internationally significant and threatened marine biodiversity.

Duration and Site: 2001-2005. Hon Mun.

Partners: Ministry of Fisheries, WB, DANILA, Vietnamese government.

### **IUCN - Holcim Cooperation Programme in Viet Nam**

Objective: Integrate environmental considerations across

the Holcim chain in Viet Nam and implement related pilot projects.

Duration and Site: Feb. 2008 – Feb. 2012. Holcim sites nationwide.

Partners: Holcim Vietnam Ltd.

### **Livelihoods and Landscapes Restoration Strategy (LLS)**

Objective: Link resource conservation to poverty reduction in national and local policy.

Duration and Site: August 2007 - December 2008. Quang Nam and Lam Dong provinces.

Partners: MARD.

### **Marine Turtle Conservation Action Plan to 2010 in Viet Nam**

Objective: Reduce threats to marine turtles through capacity building and raising public awareness.

Duration and Site: 2005-2008. Quang Ninh Province.

Partners: Danida, Bai Tu Long National Park and Minh Chau Commune, Van Don District, Quang Ninh Province.

### **Mekong Regional Water Dialogue**

Objective: Improve water governance in the Mekong region by facilitating a transparent and inclusive decision-making process.

Duration and site: Sept. 2008-Sept. 2011. Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia.

Partners: Department of water resource management.

### **MPA Management Capacity Building Training Pilot Project**

Objective: Ensure tourism activities in the South China Sea impact MPAs in a positive way.

Duration and Site: 2005-2008. National Marine Protected Areas.

Partners: NOAA, NOS, Sida.

### **Non-Timber Forest Product Sub-Sector Project**

Objective: Create a viable NTFP market sector to provide alternative, sustainable livelihoods that take pressure off timber as the sole forest income-generator for local communities.

Duration and Site: 1998-2007. Field sites in Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Quang Ninh, Bac Giang, Bac Kan provinces and policy work at national level.

Partners: RNE, MARD.

### **Strengthening Voices for Better Choices**

Objective: Promote forest governance arrangements in accordance with international regulations.

Duration and Site: Feb. 2005 - June 2009. Yen Bai, Ha Tinh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam, Lam Dong, Dong Nai and Binh Phuoc provinces.

Partners: EU, MARD.

### **Trans-boundary Conservation of the Annamite Range (Laos, Viet Nam)**

Objective: To catalyze and support trans-boundary conservation through consolidated, high-level government commitments, enabling policies and on-ground activities in the Annamite Range.

Duration and Site: Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park in Viet Nam and Hin Nam No in Lao PDR.

Partners: Regional Natural Heritage Programme of the Australia Department of the Environment and Heritage, FFI, CRES, WWF, TRAFFIC, Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development; Natural Resources and Environment; Culture and Information; Foreign Affairs, Provincial Peoples' Committees of Quang Binh, Ha Tinh and Nghe An, Management boards of relevant parks, Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism.

### **Viet Nam Business Council for Sustainable Development**

Objective: Create a private sector consortium dedicated to sharing best practices, developing strategies and piloting projects that enhance sustainable development and climate change mitigation in Viet Nam.

Duration and Site: 2009-2011. Nationwide.

Partners: RNE, National and international businesses.

### **Water for Food and Ecosystems**

Objective: Support the partnership between MARD and the Dutch government to develop a management scheme that provides for both human and ecosystem water needs.

Duration and Site: July 2007-Dec. 2008. Bac Duong, Ben Tre, Xuan Thuy and Hoa Binh lake.

Partners: MARD, LNV.