

**Final Evaluation of the UNDP / GEF Project: Coastal and  
Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in  
the Con Dao islands region**

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## ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIG	Alternative Income Generation
CCG	Community Consultation Group
CDNP	Con Dao National Park
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (provincial level)
DoFi	Department of Fisheries (now included as a sub-department within DARD)
DoNRE	Department of Natural Resources and the Environment (provincial level)
DPC	District People's Committee
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment (provincial level)
DSI	Development Strategy Institute (of MPI)
FIPI	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute
FPA	Fisheries Protection Agency
FPD	Forest Protection Department
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOV	Government of Vietnam
IMER	Institute of Marine Environment and Resources
IP	Investment Plan (Construction Investment Plan or Project)
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	World Conservation Union
IMER	Institute of Marine Environment and Resources
LEP	Law on Environmental Protection (2005)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MIS	Management Information System
MoFi	Ministry of Fisheries (now included within MARD)
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
MPA	Marine Protected Area (not yet a legal entity in Vietnam)
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NIO	National Institute of Oceanography
NP	National Park
OMP	Operational Management Plan
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PM	Project Manager
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEDP	Socio-economic Development Plan
SEMLA	Strengthening Environmental Management and Land Administration programme
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
SoE	State of the Environment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-CO	United Nations Development Programme –Country Office
VNAT	Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
WG	Working Group
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Wildlife

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Con Dao islands region is listed as a highest priority conservation area in Vietnam's Biodiversity Action Plan and in the National GEF strategy. Over eighty percent of the Con Dao islands region is national park including both terrestrial and marine areas<sup>1</sup>. Prior to project start, management of the national park had mostly focussed on the terrestrial components with little active management of marine areas.

The UNDP / GEF project supported Con Dao National Park (CDNP) to establish a marine protected area management framework. It also supported the Con Dao islands region to incorporate strategic environmental assessment (SEA) into district planning frameworks, and advocated for sustainable tourism development. This was highly relevant to the Con Dao islands region due to the threat posed to globally significant biodiversity by planned unsustainable levels and patterns of economic development at project start<sup>2</sup>.

Con Dao is among the first three of fifteen proposed marine protected areas (MPA) which the Vietnamese Government aims to establish by 2010. Establishing an MPA system for Vietnam has been a national priority for some time, but final legislation is pending the results of different pilot models of MPA administration. Being a pioneer project for an integrated and participatory approach to marine conservation provided the Con Dao project with an opportunity to guide this national process but also had disadvantages, not least that the supporting national legislation for MPAs is not yet in place.

The project was primarily funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with joint funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and largely in-kind contributions from the Government of Vietnam (GOV). The project was endorsed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in April 2006 and subsequently approved by GOV and UNDP, which was the basis for official start of the project in May 2006. Project inception was however not finalised until a year later, in June 2007. This effectively means that main activities of the project have been undertaken in two years, rather than the three originally planned.

The project was implemented according to the UNDP National Execution Modality (NEX) which aims to ensure that projects are executed in close partnership with the relevant ministries and local government departments and in collaboration with local communities and community based organisations. Con Dao National Park (CDNP) managed the project on behalf of the Ba Ria - Vung Tau Provincial Peoples' Committee (BR-VT PPC) through a Project Management Unit (PMU) housed in CDNP offices on Con Son island. Technical support was provided by UNDP, through a Senior Technical Advisor (STA). The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) also provided technical support to some UNDP / GEF project components and was responsible for managing DANIDA funded components. Key community and public sector stakeholders were involved through a range of consultative processes and through direct involvement in a number of project activities.

The project aligned effectively with national and provincial strategic frameworks and established good ownership of key project outcomes with Con Dao National Park, who are the main agency responsible for biodiversity conservation in Con Dao. This positive outcome is strongly associated with the consultative design process, NEX modality and lead implementation of the project by CDNP.

The dual funding arrangements<sup>3</sup> and associated dual lead and support roles of WWF and PMU in implementing inter-dependent project activities did however cause a number of issues and challenges, although both agencies contributed strongly to achieving project outcomes. Co-ordination was complicated by the fact that WWF were based in Hanoi and CDNP / PMU in Con Dao. The remoteness and difficulty of organising travel to Con Dao exacerbated the situation.

The project aimed to contribute to GEF 4's strategic objective SO – 1: Catalysing sustainability of protected area systems. Six impact indicators were identified to assess this:

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<sup>1</sup> Including 80% of the terrestrial area and all of the inshore area, except for the shipping lane into Ben Dam port..

<sup>2</sup> The 2005 Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) includes planning for mass tourism and associated construction as well as expansion of the Ben Dam port.

<sup>3</sup> With GEF funds managed through UNDP and NEX and DANIDA funds managed through WWF from their head office in Hanoi.

- 'Integrity of coral reef ecosystems maintained or enhanced'
- 'Key species populations maintained or enhanced'
- 'Institutional and legal framework for an MPA established'
- 'District planning takes into account conservation principles defined in SEA'
- 'Local community actively involved and committed to terrestrial and marine conservation'
- 'Province and district buy-in to sustainable tourism development'

These are also the Goal and Objective indicators for the project.

The project had three immediate objectives:

Objective 1: Protection of globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region with increased participation of local communities

Objective 2: Improved enabling environment for management of coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region with links between biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development and strengthened institutional capacity and legal frameworks.

Objective 3: Sustainable protection and financing of coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region through support from ecotourism development.

Evaluation of project achievement focuses primarily on the project's immediate objectives and associated outcomes. Project objectives and outcomes were evaluated to be highly relevant, with achievement moderately effective and moderately efficient. Overall evaluation of project achievements was thus rated as moderately satisfactory.

The project contributed significantly to meeting three of the objective level impact indicators: 'Institutional and legal framework for an MPA established'; 'District planning takes into account conservation principles defined in SEA'; Province and district buy-in to sustainable tourism development'<sup>4</sup>. It had less success in achieving the impact indicator 'Local community actively involved and committed to terrestrial and marine conservation' as although the project placed a strong emphasis on community involvement and consultation, and although it raised their awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, it has to date<sup>5</sup> not been able to establish alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities, which limits their level of active commitment to conservation.

The project has not achieved the Goal level biodiversity conservation indicators: 'Integrity of coral reef ecosystems maintained or enhanced' and 'Key species populations maintained or enhanced'. Although coral reef cover improved over the life of the project, analysis of data in the May 2009 Performance Indicators report shows that this can not be directly attributed to the project. Key species biodiversity has significantly declined over the life of the project. The main reason for the lack of direct biodiversity conservation impacts is that the project had little success in decreasing current resource use pressure on marine and coastal biodiversity; in fact resource use pressure appears to have increased over the life of the project. Three issues are highly relevant in this:

- Complex, overstretched and under resourced marine enforcement systems;
- The impact of increasing numbers of offshore fishing boats coming into the area linked to expansion of the Ben Dam port, and reported high levels of illegal fishing and increased rubbish in near shore areas.
- The absence of alternative income generating opportunities for local fishers and declining fish stocks.

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<sup>4</sup> It helped to establish a framework for MPA management in the Con Dao islands region; strengthened the capacity of CDNP; strengthened consideration of environmental sustainability in some key development planning frameworks; and increased awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use amongst a range of stakeholders. Linked to this, the project worked strategically to support and advocate for sustainable levels and patterns of tourism development on Con Dao.

<sup>5</sup> DANIDA funded project components will continue to provide support to an alternative income generating pilot project until September of this year.

The project's Goal was to 'catalyse conservation and sustainable management of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity and ecological processes of the Con Dao islands region'. The Goal level indicators measure *achievement* of biodiversity conservation. Although a direct biodiversity conservation impact can not be quantified at project end, this final evaluation assesses that the project did contribute to the Goal in that key project outcomes are likely to have a level of *catalytic* impact towards improved conservation and sustainable management of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity and ecological processes of the Con Dao islands. The project's catalytic impact is demonstrated through its support to:

- Establish a legally recognised MPA zoning plan, designed to improve reef resilience.
- Install MPA demarcation buoys and disseminate information on the MPA.
- Install mooring buoys in the MPA to reduce anchor damage to coral.
- Develop an Operational Management Plan for CDNP.
- Strengthen CDNP's capacity for the conservation and management of coastal and marine areas.
- Strengthen CDNP's capacity for the management of eco-tourism activities in the park, including development of an Eco-Tourism Master Plan.
- Build the capacity of a number of local fishers for coral planting as part of efforts to rehabilitate damaged reefs.
- Strengthen consideration of environmental sustainability in District and Provincial planning frameworks, particularly in relation to planned tourism development and through the incorporation of provisions for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) into the new Con Dao Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP)
- Increase the awareness of a range of stakeholders on the importance of marine biodiversity conservation
- Develop plans and frameworks that increase the likelihood of sustainable financing of the park's core biodiversity management functions.

The likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes is evaluated to be moderately likely. Sustainability of key biodiversity conservation and sustainable use outcomes is strongly influenced by both 'current' resource use management issues and by the continuing threats to biodiversity conservation of planned 'future' developments. Although the project worked strategically to influence district planning frameworks, the sustainability of biodiversity conservation outcomes will depend on on-going national and provincial planning processes and the execution of these at the district level. It remains to be seen how provisions for SEA in the SEDP will play out in practice: whether the sector master plans which fall under the SEDP will in fact include adequate provision for environmental impact assessment and mitigation and whether District authorities will give the necessary weight to consideration of environmental sustainability within developments on Con Dao. The project influenced tourism development planning towards more sustainable levels and patterns of tourism development, however it did not directly capture the threat posed to biodiversity conservation by expansion of the Ben Dam port. Proposed expansion of the Ben Dam port<sup>6</sup> has a number of risks for prioritised tourism development and biodiversity conservation, including the potential impact of increased numbers of offshore fishers, petroleum vessels and cruise liners on the Con Dao islands resource base.

At the time of this final project evaluation, assessment of project impact is complicated by the fact that:

- a) integral DANIDA funded project components are continuing until September of this year and therefore a number of project activities are not yet completed,
- b) biodiversity conservation and sustainable use outcomes depend on on-going national and provincial development planning and decision making processes, the outcome of which will determine the effectiveness of project outcomes.

It is recommended that a post project evaluation is undertaken in one to two years time, when assessment of actual outcomes and impacts would be more realistic.

A number of lessons can be drawn from this final evaluation of the Con Dao Islands Region Coastal and Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Use Project. They will be of interest to UNDP / GEF in its support to coastal and marine biodiversity conservation initiatives internationally, as well as in Vietnam; associated

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<sup>6</sup> within both the 2005 and 2011 SEDP

recommendations are provided to UNDP / GEF. The lessons learnt will also be of interest to the Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province and Con Dao District in establishing an exemplary pattern of sustainable development for the Con Dao region, to support long term socio-economic benefits from sustainable use and effective conservation of the Con Dao islands natural resource base. Recommendations are also provided for consideration by the BRVT PPC and Con Dao District.

## **PURPOSE OF THE FINAL EVALUATION**

UNDP/GEF project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes have the following overarching objectives:

- To monitor and evaluate results and impacts.
- To provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements.
- To promote accountability for resource use.
- To document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learnt.

This report meets the requirements of UNDP GEF final evaluations in providing an independent evaluation of the relevance, performance and achievements of the Con Dao Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Project against established objectives and expected outcomes. A number of lessons learnt are highlighted for consideration by GEF, UNDP and the Government of Vietnam (GOV) in their planning and execution of future marine conservation and sustainable use projects.

This final evaluation of the UNDP /GEF project for 'Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in the Con Dao islands region' is of relevance both to Vietnamese stakeholders and internationally. Learning and knowledge from UNDP / GEF final project evaluations is shared amongst the GEF and its partners, as a basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management and projects, to improve knowledge and performance. GEF results are monitored and evaluated for their contribution to global environmental benefits.

The report is structured in four sections.

- Part 1 gives a background to the project and the development context in Con Dao.
- Part 2 outlines the final evaluation schedule and methodology.
- Part 3 presents the evaluation findings. It is divided into three sub sections:
  - Section 3.1 examines project design and implementation and includes ratings for the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation.
  - Section 3.2 evaluates the achievement of project objectives and gives ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency against the project's three immediate objectives and associated outcomes.
  - Section 3.3 evaluates sustainability of outcomes and gives separate ratings and analysis for financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental aspects of sustainability.
- Part 4 presents lessons learnt and recommendations.



## PART 1: ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

### Con Dao islands region natural resource base

The Con Dao archipelago consists of 15 islands located 180km south of Vung Tau, in the Ba Ria-Vung Tau province of Vietnam. The largest island, Con Son, is the only inhabited island in the archipelago. The Con Dao archipelago contains globally significant marine and terrestrial biodiversity.

The archipelago has shallow waters with coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangroves. The reefs cover approximately 7,000 ha, with over 300 species of coral. Coral fish densities at the start of the project were recorded to be some of the highest in Vietnam: 'IMER (1996) collected fish density data at 13 sites and calculated an average coral fish density on the reefs of 2,418 fish/500m<sup>2</sup>. ADB (1999) reported a similar average of 2,017 fish/500m<sup>2</sup><sup>7</sup>

The Con Dao marine eco-systems are important breeding and nursery areas for many marine species. From November to April the ocean currents follow the NE monsoon and from June to December the SW monsoon. Endangered marine species present in Con Dao include: Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelyx imbricate*), Dugong (*Dugong dugong*)<sup>8</sup> and Giant Clam (*Tridacna spp*). Seventeen beaches are marine turtle nesting sites five of which receive around 300 nesting turtles each year. The Giant clams in the Con Dao island region have the highest density of any reef waters in the South China sea. There are also over a dozen rare or endemic coral species. Eighty percent of the terrestrial areas of Con Dao are forested, mainly primary humid hill forest.<sup>9</sup>

### The Con Dao National Park (CDNP)

The Con Dao National Park is one of four decreed protected areas in Vietnam to include both terrestrial and marine globally important biodiversity and endangered species. Con Dao's protected area was originally created in 1984 as "Con Dao Protected Forest". Several expansions of the protected area have been approved. The area of the CDNP includes 19,998 ha including 5,998 ha of forest and 14,000 ha of fully protected ocean, 20,000 ha of marine buffer zone and 14 islands. Local communities are settled outside park boundaries.

Con Dao is listed as a highest priority conservation area in Vietnam's Biodiversity Action Plan and the National GEF strategy. The archipelago has Vietnam's most important sea turtle nesting beaches as well as some of the most pristine coral reef in Vietnam. CDNP is the only area in Vietnam which has developed a comprehensive turtle management programme<sup>10</sup>. It is home to 44 endangered species listed in the IUCN Red List and Vietnam Data Red Book.

Management of CDNP has been focussed on the terrestrial forested areas of the park while, as is common in Vietnam, little emphasis was placed on management of the marine area of the park, despite this having been gazetted since 1993<sup>11</sup>.

Protected area management planning is still in the design phase in Vietnam and institutional and legislative provisions for marine biodiversity protection have not yet been established. In the absence of clear national MPA legislation and strategies, the solution adopted by the donor community and by the CDNP for the Project

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<sup>7</sup> May 2009 Performance Indicators Evaluation Report

<sup>8</sup> All four species of turtle are endangered, while dugong and Giant clam are critically endangered.

<sup>9</sup> These forest areas contain globally significant biodiversity. Including an endemic squirrel (*Callosciurus finlaysoni*), the long tailed macaque (*Macacca fascicularis condorensis*), the Hairy footed flying squirrel (*Belomys pearsoni*), the Indian python (*Python molorus*), the Nicobar pigeon (*Caloenas nicobarica*), the Giant Black squirrel (*Ratufa bicolour condorensis*) and Monitor lizards (*Varamis salvator and V. nebulosus*) The forests also contain globally unique plant species. From 2003 Project Document

<sup>10</sup> including nesting beach protection, tagging programmes, satellite tracking, and awareness and training programmes targeting local fisheries and aimed at reducing at-sea by-catch of turtles.

<sup>11</sup> In 2000 an ADB supported project introduced a basic zoning plan outlining 'core' and 'buffer' areas but this failed to be formally adopted. The plan did not in fact achieve the standard of MPA design criteria for biological conservation and sustainable resource management or public participation. There was therefore very little MPA management prior to the implementation of the UNDP / GEF project.

has been to develop an Operational Management Planning process that can operate within the given financial and human resources limitations to concentrate on biodiversity issues and protection.

### Con Dao Socio-Economic Background

Con Son Island has 4,000 permanent residents, however a considerable number of temporary residents also live on the island. There are no indigenous people living in Con Dao and the Government operates a residency restriction for new settlers unique in Vietnam. In addition to the permanent population several thousand military personnel are based in Con Son to guard the border areas and offshore fishing grounds. The non-military workforce comprises government officials (60%), farmers (20%), service providers (17%) and fishermen (3%). The fishing households are among the poorest.

Most of the inhabitants and economic activities of Con Dao are concentrated in eight villages in the central area of Con Son. This has developed into an urban complex which has created employment for nearly 2,000 people. Ben Dam port is in the south of the island and is not a residential area. Ownership of land and permission for housing construction is dependent on having a permanent residence permit. However many houses have been constructed without permission<sup>12</sup>. Each village or 'household cluster' has elected village leaders (village chief and deputies) and a village police person. A number of mass organizations exist on Con Dao including a Farmers Union, Women's Union, Veterans Union, and Youth Union. However there is no Fishers Union<sup>13</sup>.

Con Son was formerly a penal colony under the French colonial administration and remained infamous for its harsh prisons under the former Saigon regime up to 1975. The associated historical sites as well as the terrestrial and marine natural history of the islands are key tourist attractions, although limited flight availability to the island currently restricts visitor numbers. Tourism is a key development priority for Con Dao as identified in the Prime Minister's decision 264/2005/QĐ -TTg of 25 October 2005. The Vietnam Tourism Plan 1995 - 2010 also identifies Con Dao as one of seven priority tourism destinations in the country. A tourism master plan is currently being prepared for Con Dao.

Con Dao currently has approximately 18,000 visitors annually of which about 4,000 visit the National Park. Total income from tourism in 2006 was VND 9,847 million, an increase of 12% from 2005<sup>14</sup>. Tourism is seasonal: nearly half (45%) the tourists visit between May and July, the season of calm seas and Vietnamese summer holidays. Very few come between December and February when the weather is inconsistent and there are rough seas. Accommodation provision, only available on Con Son Island, is the largest sector of the tourism industry<sup>15</sup>. CDNP are the largest tour operator, offering day tours to key attractions on Con Son Island and visits to the outer islands. Flights and water availability are currently the main constraints to tourism development.

Most economic sectors have shown considerable growth in recent years. Between 2005 and 2006 commerce grew by nearly 50%, telecom services by 35%, tourism by 25%, marine transportation by 22% and services by 22%. Agricultural produce increased in value by up to 10% but marine production declined by 4.25%. This is partly due to the relocation of a large fishing company to the mainland but is also symptomatic of the decline in near shore fish stocks. In 2006 10% of Con Dao households were assessed as living in poverty, with temporary fishing households being among the poorest<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Only 1/3 of the surveyed households (12 out of 36) in the 200 socio-economic baseline survey lived in houses that had been constructed with legal permission. Ref 2006 Socio-economic baseline survey 4.5 3.2

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting that Fishers Unions do not appear to exist in Vietnam. As will be shown later in the report this provides a challenge to marine and coastal conservation and livelihood support projects when they try to establish effective representation of fishers interest / consultation processes.

<sup>14</sup> In 2005, 13,800 tourists visited Con Dao, which was 2,000 more than in 2004 Approximately 10-15% of visitors are foreigners. (Ref socio-economic baseline survey 2006)

<sup>15</sup> At present (2009) there are 9 hotels/guest houses. Only 3 of these have more than 10 rooms and are classed as two star holiday resorts. The remaining 6 are guest houses. Over 140 people are employed in tourism on Con Dao.

<sup>16</sup> Ref December 2006 Socio-economic baseline survey where the classification of "Poor" by the District Office and confirmed by the self assessment of villagers surveyed was a lack of land and capital, being unemployed or having old or ill family members and non permanent residence

According to the 2006 socio-economic baseline survey there are 52 fishing households in Con Dao, scattered throughout the nine villages. These are those permanently settled whether with or without residence permits. There are a further variable number of temporary fishing households who come for the fishing season, bringing the total of fishers up to anything between 65 and 100. As well as registered fishers, many members of the Con Dao community also harvest the reefs at low tide or fish from the shore. The WWF Fisheries Survey in July 2008 identified three groups of local inshore fishermen, grouped according to the permanency of their residence in Con Dao and the type of fishing gear used and therefore the fishing area frequented.

Group 1 are fishermen with a permanent residency permit in Con Dao. These are the oldest settlers in Con Dao. They are mostly divers although many also fish with lines and fixed or drift gillnets. Their primary fishing grounds are not more than 7 miles offshore. As permanent residents, many own and farm small areas of land and their wives engage in local retailing, especially in sea food, and in cow breeding under the Women's Union program. Most of the adult children of these households have jobs other than fishing.

Group 2 are also long term residents in Con Dao, some having been settled for more than ten years, but who do not have permanent residency permits. They may own houses on the mainland but have migrated to Con Dao with their families where they rent houses. They mostly use gillnets, fishing between 5 and 20 miles offshore.

Group 3 are temporary residents who come mostly from other districts of Ba Ria- Vung Tau Province to fish in Con Dao during the fishing season only. They have houses on the mainland and rent houses on Con Dao for a few months, bringing their families and boats with them. They use mainly drift nets, fishing anything from 5 to 30 miles offshore and therefore outside the MPA, although they may fish inshore during bad weather.

Between 500 and 1000 offshore fishermen also currently use the Con Dao area. They come inshore to access services offered by the Ben Dam port on Con Son island and to shelter from storms<sup>17</sup>. The number of offshore boats coming into Con Dao waters has increased over the life of the project due to the development of Ben Dam port as a service provider to offshore boats. The port provides ice and fuel services and has been actively encouraged by the District authorities as a source of revenue and employment. The port has a planned capacity for 5000 boats per annum.

Offshore boats mainly fish over 30kms from Con Son, only returning after 20 to 60 days fishing. They do not land their fish in Con Dao as there are no fish processing factories and the local market is small, serving only local consumption and tourists. Ben Dam port is the only docking area permitted to offshore boats except in an emergency when they are allowed to use Phi Yen port in Con Son Bay.

#### Institutional Context

Vietnam is in the early stages of trying to establish marine conservation. Pressure on fish stocks to supply the home and foreign markets as well as rapid unsustainable tourism development in coastal areas has put marine biodiversity under significant pressure.

A National Management Strategy for a Protected Area System in Viet Nam to 2010, (MASPAS) was approved by Prime Ministerial Decision 192/2003/QD-TTg on September 17, 2003. The MASPAS Strategy provides the framework for the future development and management of Vietnam's protected area system until 2010 with a vision to 2020, and provides the framework for management of Con Dao National Park.

In 2003 the Ministry of Fisheries (MoFi), now included within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), was given the mandate to design and manage a system of Marine Protected Areas for Vietnam. Fifteen priority MPA sites were identified, including Con Dao. Con Dao National Park is one of only four already decreed protected areas in Vietnam to include a marine component (the others are Cat Ba, Bai Tu Long and Nui Chua National Parks).

In the absence of dedicated MPA legislation, the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency of MARD has the primary responsibility for enforcement of marine areas under the Fisheries Law. They are supported by

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<sup>17</sup> Offshore vessels are allowed to anchor inshore during rough weather.

Border Army Station 504 in terms of patrolling international borders and control of illegal activities and CDNP whose main role is to patrol and report any illegal issues in the park.

The Ministry of Fisheries (MoFi) are responsible for all marine areas. MoFi was mandated by the Prime Minister to develop draft national legislation for MPAs which was presented to the Prime Minister in 2006 but is still awaiting approval. In the meantime MoFi has proposed various decrees and orders regarding control over and the protection of MPAs which have received Government approval.

There is considerable interest at the national level in development planning for Con Dao, with the District Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) requiring national level approval. In 2005 the Prime minister approved a Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) for Con Dao (PM Decision 264/2005/QD-TTg Oct 25 2005). A new SEDP is currently being finalised; this is the strategic document for the 2011 – 2015 planning cycle with a vision to 2020.

#### Biodiversity Conservation Issues and Threats

Threats to marine biodiversity conservation in Con Dao include human impact, climatic events, inadequate national or provincial protective legislation and poor local enforcement of regulations. At project start management of the marine areas of the park was weak with little effective zoning or associated management.

There is no comprehensive system for monitoring catch/effort data. However, the July 2008 WWF Fisheries survey found that local fishers consider the inshore fishing grounds, particularly reef areas, to be no longer viable. The survey reported evidence of illegal fishing activities including the use of dynamite and cyanide as well as damage to reef and sea grass by inshore trawling. It also reported that protected species such as sea horses, sea snakes and giant clams are caught and sold in local markets and to restaurants. Although all boats with 20HP or over are forbidden to operate in the coastal zone (up to 6 nautical miles out) “compliance is low and enforcement weak”<sup>18</sup> Increasing numbers of offshore fishing boats, attracted by the port facilities at Ben Dam, are thought to contribute to over fishing and to damaging reefs and sea grass beds when they fish illegally or anchor inshore.

Previous unsustainable road construction, building and the Ben Dam port have caused damage to reefs and coastal areas. Unsustainable long term planning at the provincial and district level was identified as a significant threat during project design, particularly linked to proposed tourism developments for Con Dao. Solid and liquid waste pollution affects the area surrounding the port and solid waste pollution has increased and is thought to be linked to the increase in offshore vessels entering the Con Dao region.

Climatic events that have had a negative impact on the biodiversity of CDNP include a typhoon (1997) and two coral bleaching events (1998 & 2005). Ecosystem resilience is reduced by anthropogenic stress and both anthropogenic impacts and climate change are likely to increase the risk of climate related impacts on CDNP’s resource base.

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<sup>18</sup> WWF Fisheries report 2008. The inadequacy of enforcement is also amply documented in Primmer’s Enforcement Report (2007) He found that enforcement at a local level in CDNP was weak due to not only legislative inadequacy but also poor management arrangements, lack of training of rangers and lack of adequate equipment.

## PART 2: METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH USED FOR THE FINAL EVALUATION

The evaluation was undertaken by a two person team, comprising an international team leader and a national expert, through a process of literature review, stakeholder consultation and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Due to the difficulty of organising travel to the Con Dao islands the team's schedule was fixed by UNDP prior to the start of the evaluation. The overall evaluation schedule included 15 days for literature review, in country consultation with key stakeholders, analysis and report writing and 5 days in country and international travel.

The 15 days allocated was inadequate for a comprehensive final project evaluation and the international team leader has had to put in considerable extra time to complete the evaluation effectively. The evaluation team would have also preferred to have had the opportunity to discuss the evaluation schedule in order to develop an appropriate methodology for the evaluation, although they realise the constraints on this, given the difficulty of organising transport to Con Dao. Ideally the team would have had the opportunity to consult with all stakeholders prior to presenting the evaluation findings at the evaluation workshop in Vung Tau. The team re-oriented the nature of this workshop towards a consultation on preliminary findings, as they did not feel that it would be appropriate to present the evaluation's 'findings' after only 4 days of District level consultations. One of the recommendations of this evaluation will be on the need to allow adequate time for GEF project terminal evaluations in order to enable comprehensive assessment of project achievements. Giving an adequate weighting to final evaluations within the project and monitoring and evaluation process is important, both for accountability and if GEF and GOV are to be able to draw out lessons from project experiences towards an improved understanding of effective approaches for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Schedule for the final evaluation:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Days</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> June	International Travel to and from Vietnam (international consultant)	2
10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> & 15 <sup>th</sup> July	Background literature review, identification of stakeholders & arrangements for consultations	3
16 <sup>th</sup> July	Travel to Con Dao ( 6 hour flight delay)	1
17 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> July	Consultations with Con Dao stakeholders:	4
22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Round table discussion with PMU and preparation for provincial workshop to present preliminary findings	1
23 <sup>rd</sup> July	Travel to Vung Tau (international consultant)	1
24 <sup>th</sup> July	Presentation of Preliminary Findings and provincial level consultations (international consultant)	1
25 <sup>th</sup> July	Travel to Hanoi from Vung Tau (international consultant)	1
26 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup>	Consultations with stakeholders in Hanoi and presentation of findings to UNDP	3
	Preparation of report (international consultant)	3

The key background literature reviewed by this evaluation is given in Annex 7. The May 2009 Performance Indicators report was particularly helpful in providing quantitative data for the evaluation.

The evaluation team used a consultative process to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project, achievement of project outcomes and the likelihood of sustainable impacts. A mix of group and individual consultations enabled the team to discuss with key project stakeholders in the limited time available. The team used semi structured interview techniques to gauge what key stakeholders felt to be key project achievements and shortcomings and the main reasons for these. These consultations also explored specific issues emerging from the literature review. Findings were crossed checked throughout the final evaluation process. A list of stakeholders consulted during the evaluation is given in Annex 3.

The time available for in country consultation and evaluation was:

- 4 days for consultations with district level stakeholders on Con Dao
- 1 day for consultation with provincial level stakeholders in Vung Tau
- 3 days for consultations with stakeholders in Hanoi

Three presentations were made during the in country evaluation and these provided the opportunity for the evaluation team to receive feedback on preliminary findings from key stakeholder groups. Preliminary findings were presented to:

- PMU at a round table discussion in Con Dao
- Provincial stakeholders, project steering committee and GEF / UNDP Regional Advisor at a workshop in Vung Tau
- UNDP Vietnam country office in Hanoi

Feedback by participants at the presentations has been incorporated into this evaluation report.

The evaluation follows standard GEF procedures for final project evaluations in providing ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency as part of the assessment of achievement of project objectives. An overall rating is also given for project monitoring and evaluation. Four separate ratings are given for sustainability, to assess financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental aspects of sustainability. The TOR did not however require ratings on stakeholder participation or Implementation Approach which are often integral to GEF project evaluations.

## **PART 3: EVALUATION FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

This section of the report presents the evaluation of project achievements. It is divided into three sub sections:

Section 3.1 evaluates project design and implementation, including rating the quality of monitoring and evaluation.

Section 3.2 evaluates the achievement of project objectives and provides ratings on overall relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Section 3.3 evaluates the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes and includes separate ratings on financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental aspects of sustainability.

### **Section 3.1 Evaluation of Project Design and Implementation**

#### **3.1.1 Project Design**

Con Dao National Park (CDNP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Indochina developed the original project concept in 1999. WWF had been working in Con Dao for a number of years and have a broad institutional involvement in MPA work in Vietnam. Key public sector stakeholders were involved in the design process. As early as 1998 WWF supported two workshops to discuss project design with 30 representatives from local Government, Ministry departments and the media. In 2003 a project proposal was developed which identified a number of threats to Con Dao's natural resource base including:

- Habitat destruction and pollution – associated with unregulated development in coastal areas.
- Over-exploitation of marine and coastal resources (over-fishing, hunting of endangered species, and the live reef food fish trade of groupers and other reef species);
- Inappropriate development (industry and aquaculture);
- Lack of policy, legal and financial backing;
- Unregulated access and weak law enforcement; and
- Lack of community awareness, understanding, participation and support.

Cost Effectiveness was assessed as part of the design process. In the 2003 Project Document three options for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of marine resources in CDNP were compared for outputs and cost which were then compared with other similar marine conservation projects within Vietnam. The design proposed was assessed as the most cost effective. WWF also incorporated lessons learnt from other projects across Vietnam during design. They considered that the Project had the potential to be a MPA pilot for replication in Vietnam and to influence and promote national MPA strategies and legislation.

The proposed project aimed to strengthen 'Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in the Con Dao islands regions' by:

- Strengthening local capacity for marine and coastal conservation
- Improving the integration of conservation and environmental management into development planning
- Establishing a sustainable financing mechanism for biodiversity conservation
- Linking local efforts to national strategies and policy development.

WWF were lead writers of the original project document in consultation with CDNP and other key stakeholders. The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) were identified as potential funding agencies.

The resulting project for 'Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in the Con Dao islands region' was primarily funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with joint funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and largely in-kind contributions from the Government of Vietnam (GOV). The project was endorsed by the GEF in April 2006 and subsequently approved by GOV and UNDP which was the basis for the official start of the project in May 2006.

UNDP / GEF project components were implemented according to the UNDP National Execution Modality (NEX). DANIDA funded components were implemented by WWF Indochina through a direct agreement between WWF and DANIDA.

Under DANIDA funding WWF project components focussed on park management, training for CDNP staff, law enforcement and compliance monitoring, habitat restoration and rehabilitation, community education and awareness, integrated coastal zone management training, development of alternative livelihoods and eco-tourism planning and feasibility assessment. WWF sub-contracted CDNP staff and the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency (FRPA) to work with them to undertake some of these activities.

The PMU was responsible for managing and implementing GEF funded components and for financial reporting against GEF budget expenditure. PMU also subcontracted WWF to implement four GEF funded components namely: i) the development of a communication and advocacy strategy with the required educational materials, ii) the development of environmental planning regulations and an action plan for Con Dao region, iii) the development and establishment of a Conservation Trust Fund and iv) capacity building.

The Provincial Peoples' Committee (PPC) of Ba Ria- Vung Tau were the National Implementing Partner (NIP) for the project under NEX. BRVT PCC appointed the Project Director who is also Director of the CDNP which was designated as the main executing agency. A project management unit (PMU) was established in 2006 to manage the project on Con Dao and was housed within CDNP. The PMU comprised a project director (also CDNP Director), project manager, conservation officer, secretary /interpreter and accountant. The PMU also included a part-time senior technical advisor (STA) who provided periodic technical advice to the PMU, but was not based in Con Dao.

The NEX modality adopted by UNDP is designed to ensure ownership of the project by relevant national institutions. National, Provincial and District authorities have an important stake in the Project, particularly relative to project objectives to support sustainable use and to strengthen strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in development planning. The NEX modality aims to achieve relevance and impact, internalization of external inputs and to support capacity building towards self reliance and sustainability. It is an arrangement whereby a national institution is responsible and accountable for overseeing project planning and management. In the case of Con Dao this has been achieved with the provincial PPC being the national implementing partner and the CDNP undertaking project management through the PMU.

The main public sector stakeholders include the various government departments of BR-VT province, including the Department of Fisheries, Sub-Department of Fisheries Resource Protection, Department of Tourism and Trade, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Science and Technology and the Border Army Station 504<sup>19</sup>. Community stakeholders were identified as the coastal communities of Con Dao, with local fishers identified as the main marine and coastal resource user group and therefore the most likely to be impacted by the project. Further detail on stakeholders is given in Annex 3.

An executive board was established with authority to approve annual work plans and budget revisions<sup>20</sup>. It had a Chairman from the Ba Ria-Vung Tau Provincial People's Committee (BRVT PPC) and eight members representing the Department of Fisheries (DoFi), Con Dao District People's Committee (CD DPC), the Con Dao National Park (CDNP), the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DONRE), Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI). Three additional invited members represent the Ministry of Fisheries (MoFi), UNDP and WWF.

The UNDP country office was responsible for oversight of the project as the Vietnam country implementing partner for GEF funds.

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<sup>19</sup> due to the remoteness of the Con Dao islands active involvement of these agencies was largely devolved to the representative offices at district level

<sup>20</sup> this was the forum for provincial-level engagement in the project.



A Community Consultative Group (CCG) was established in Con Dao to facilitate consultation with local stakeholders. In line with Vietnamese regulations, the Con Dao DPC nominated the members and, once formed, the composition of the CCG was fixed and could not be changed to incorporate new members. The CCG comprised 15 people: the elected heads of all nine villages in Con Dao; representatives of mass organisations including the Farmers' Union, Women's Union and Youth Union; representatives from state agencies including Border Army 504, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Fisheries Resource Protection Agency and the Department of Economics.

The project aligned with national Vietnamese development priorities and plans, including the National Management Strategy for a Protected Area System (MASPAS)<sup>21</sup>. There is provision for the establishment of 15 MPAs by 2010 with Con Dao included as one of three MPA pilot projects. Although there was (and still is) no national legislation in place for MPAs, the Project's aims and objectives are consistent with the principles and strategies outlined in MASPAS and with the existing fisheries law.<sup>22</sup>

The status of Con Dao's national park as a highest priority conservation area in Vietnam and national level interest and influence on Con Dao development planning processes was highly relevant to the project's approach to influencing planning and decision making for sustainable management and marine conservation.

The project also met GEF 4 strategic biodiversity conservation objectives of which SO-1: Catalysing sustainability of protected area systems was the most directly relevant. Two GEF Strategic Programmes and one cross-cutting activity were taken into account within the framework of the project:

- Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems.
- Increasing Representation of Effectively Managed Marine Protected Area Networks in National Protected Area Systems.
- Cross-cutting Capacity Building supported through each Protected Area Strategic Programme

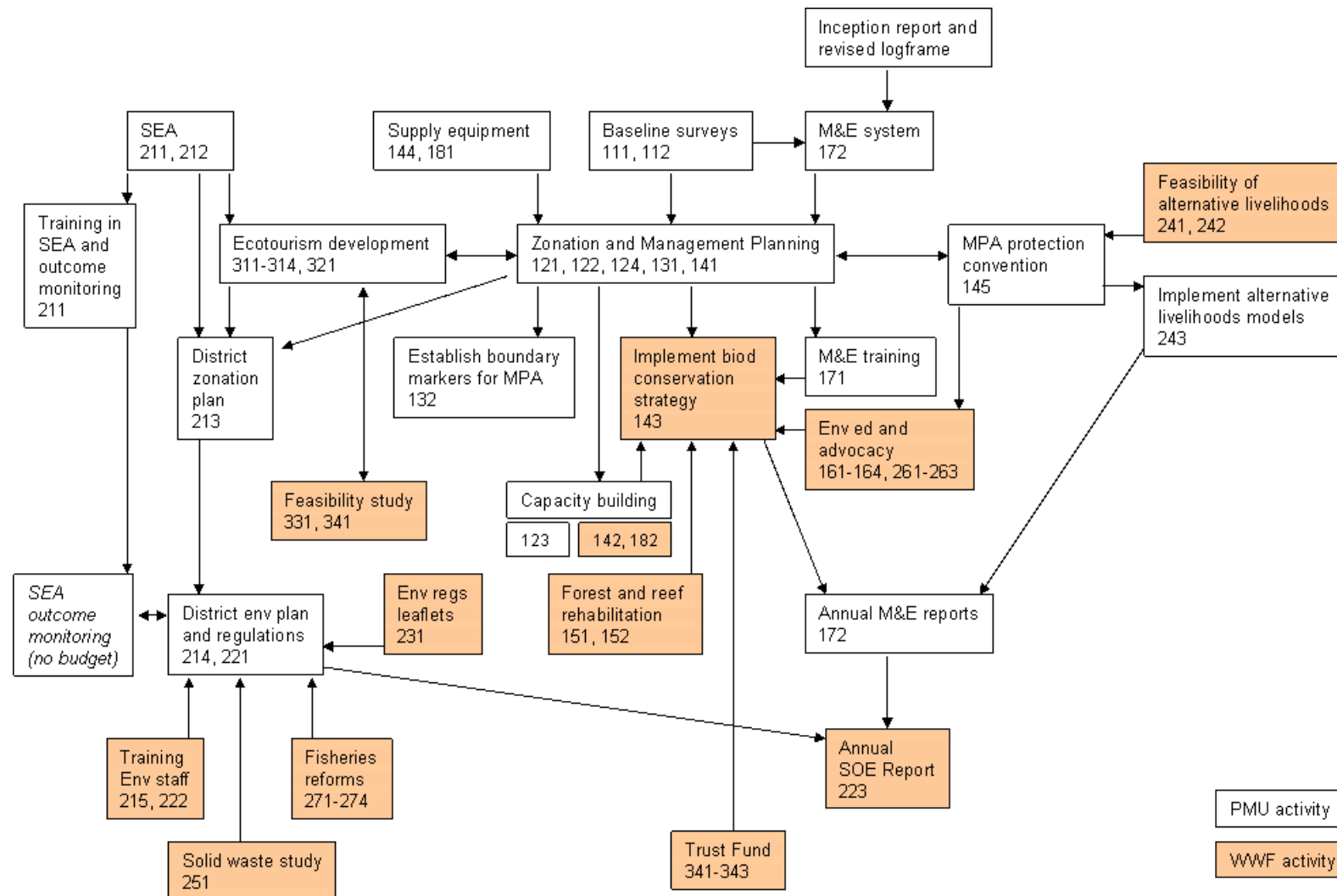
The project also contributed to fulfilling UNDP's objectives in Vietnam, which include supporting the Government of Vietnam to improve its capacity to meet its obligations under the Convention for Biodiversity Conservation and conserving Vietnam's globally important biodiversity in forests, wetlands and marine areas.

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<sup>21</sup> As outlined in the Introduction this strategy runs from 2005 - 2010 and supports the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPA)

<sup>22</sup> The Ministry of Fisheries drafted MPA legislation in 2006, but this is still awaiting Prime Ministerial approval.

Figure 1: The following diagram<sup>23</sup> shows how responsibility for implementation of project activities was allocated between PMU and WWF inputs and helps to demonstrate how the activities of both agencies were inter-dependent towards the achievement of overall project outcomes.



<sup>23</sup> From the project Inception Report, June 2007

The project had the following Goal, Objectives and Outcomes:

**Project Goal:** The project will catalyse conservation and sustainable management of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity and ecological processes of the Con Dao islands region.

**Objective 1:** Protection of globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region with increased participation of local communities

**Outcome 1:** Strengthened protection and participatory conservation and management of biodiversity in CDNP

**Objective 2:** Improved enabling environment for management of coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region with links between biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development and strengthened institutional capacity and legal frameworks.

**Outcome 2:** Strengthened Sustainable Environmental Management in Con Dao district

**Objective 3:** Sustainable protection and financing of coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region through support from ecotourism development.

**Outcome 3:** Development of Sustainable Financing for Con Dao Islands Region Biodiversity

These Objectives and Outcomes capture the main relevant areas of influence for addressing issues and threats related to biodiversity conservation in Con Dao. Further details of project activities, indicators, baselines, milestones, means of verification and assumptions are given in the project logframe in Annex 1. On the whole the indicators selected to assess achievement of these objectives and outcomes were clear and useful. However, the focus of some of the indicators did not fully enable assessment of impact or achievement of outcomes as will be discussed under the section on monitoring and evaluation below and within section 3.2.

The official start of the project was in May 2006 but project inception was not completed until June 2007, over a year later. An Inception workshop was held in August 2006, however the final Inception report was only presented in June 2007. This was largely due to a change in the senior technical advisor (STA) assigned to the project by UNDP during the inception period. The significant delay in project inception effectively means that the main activities of the project have been undertaken in two years (June 2007 – June 2009) rather than the three envisaged. The first year of the project largely involved procurement activities and some baseline studies.

The Inception report and associated logframe and monitoring and evaluation framework provided the basis for project implementation, monitoring and evaluation and are the key reference documents for evaluation of objectives and outcomes

The Inception Report includes:

- An analysis of the project situational context and background
- A review of project design, including project purpose, project objectives, outcomes and activities and implementation arrangements
- A revised Work Plan for 2007-2009
- Expenditure recorded for 2006 and an updated budget for 2007
- Findings from the Inception Workshop and stakeholder consultations

- An updated Project Planning Matrix (logframe) together with indicators, means of verification and assumptions
- A revised monitoring and evaluation framework for the project, elaborating impact and outcome indicators and means of verification

### **3.1.2 Project Execution and Implementation Modalities**

#### Ownership and Alignment

The overriding consideration of the NEX modality was the importance of country ownership and sustainability. The project established good ownership of key outputs and outcomes within CDNP who are the main agency responsible for biodiversity conservation in Con Dao. The appointment of CDNP as the main executing agency and the housing of PMU within CDNP were highly effective in supporting this outcome. However, the project did have some difficulty recruiting and retaining staff for the PMU because of Con Dao's remote location and there were a number of staff changes over the life of the project which to some extent disrupted the implementation of project activities and detracted from working relationships between PMU and WWF. The project also achieved significant buy-in from key provincial, district and national stakeholders for a sustainable approach to tourism development and for the incorporation of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) within District planning. Although communities were consulted extensively and were directly involved in a number of key project activities, their level of ownership of outcomes is tempered by the limited livelihood support outcomes from the project, particularly relative to their expectations.

Project implementation was effectively aligned within the national context of marine protected area management and with relevant district development planning strategies and processes. Despite the constraint of the lack of national legislation for MPA management the project worked strategically and effectively within existing MPA guidelines and terrestrial protected area and fisheries management laws and strategies. Good alignment was in part due to effective design but also due to adaptive and strategic management by the project. This is particularly demonstrated in the project's influence on the incorporation of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) into the new (2011 -2015) socio economic development plan (SEDP) and in its support to sustainable tourism development planning. Details are provided in Annex 2, from the May 2009 Performance Indicators report.

Along with establishing good ownership of project outcomes within CDNP, the project also worked strategically to ensure that outputs were adapted to meet local needs. Examples are in adaptation of the biodiversity monitoring manual and framework to suit CDNP needs and in adaptation of the original Conservation Trust Fund concept to fit into the legislative and institutional framework for Con Dao. This has both helped to increase ownership of outputs undertaken by external consultants and to increase the likelihood that outputs will be used and be effective.

#### Capacity Building

Capacity building was an inherent objective in Project implementation and is also a core consideration within the NEX modality. The Project focussed on building marine protected area (MPA) management capacity and has done so effectively within CDNP. The zoning plan and associated operational management plan will also be useful resources for future MPAs in Vietnam and CDNP will be able to share its experiences under the project to help build capacity in other areas. This *catalytic* effect was already being demonstrated at the time of the evaluation with a national IUCN team scheduled to visit CDNP, to learn about the Con Dao MPA experience.

WWF have an important institutional role in replicating lessons learnt from the project within their broader work in marine protected area management. They are involved in a nation wide programme, funded by DANIDA, which supports livelihoods and marine protected areas (LMPA). WWF have applied lessons from this broader LMPA work to feed into the Con Dao project and will take lessons learnt from the Con Dao project to feed into their wider MPA work. WWF incorporated lessons learnt from a review of national and international livelihood support programmes<sup>24</sup> into the Con Dao AIG pilot projects<sup>25</sup>. They are currently preparing a lessons learnt paper on the Con Dao seaweed pilot project and will be incorporating this learning into their support for seaweed aquaculture in other areas of Vietnam.

#### Implementing Agencies' Roles and Responsibilities

The dual funding arrangements for the project and the institutional roles of both PMU and WWF in managing different but inter-dependent components of the project created an unusual and somewhat complex implementation modality: This and the fact that WWF are based in Hanoi whereas the PMU were based at the project site in Con Dao, combined with the logistical difficulties of getting to Con Dao, caused a number of difficulties for effective project implementation.

Discussions during the final evaluation with PMU, CDNP, UNDP and WWF indicate that a complex interplay of issues was involved which impacted negatively on the effectiveness of implementation. The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) also reported confusion over roles and responsibilities due to the division between alternate 'lead' and 'support' roles, the implications of which were not sufficiently clearly defined. There was a level of confusion caused by the dual roles of manager and sub-contractor for different but inter-related activities in the project (refer Figure 1). Staff changes in PMU and the difficulty faced by the project in recruiting staff to work on Con Dao complicated communication between WWF and PMU and caused delays in follow up to some WWF activities. WWF inputs to the project were in periodic missions, with work plans and arrangements for these missions agreed and supported by PMU several weeks prior to the mission. The fact that WWF were sub-contracted to undertake a number of activities also appears to have led to a decreased level of ownership of 'WWF activities' by PMU/CDNP. Related issues reported to the evaluation team include:

- A lack of consistency and follow up in community consultation processes. Consultations were organised by PMU and although the project supported extensive consultation, WWF explained that there was a lack of consistency in the groups consulted. They found that they were not always able to consult with the groups or individuals requested, and that feedback was sometimes given to a different group than that initially consulted. This in turn led to a level of frustration amongst fishers some of whom did not receive feedback on the outcomes of the livelihood and AIG assessments.
- WWF had to hire CDNP and Fisheries Resource Protection Agency staff to undertake project related activities that were seen by WWF to be part of capacity building inputs (particularly in the area of CDNP inputs to AIG and in training of FRPA staff in collecting and analysing catch / effort data);
- WWF felt that it was difficult to get feedback on mission reports and other outputs sent to PMU, but this could also have been linked to changes in project managers within PMU who would have been responsible for reading and giving feedback to WWF.

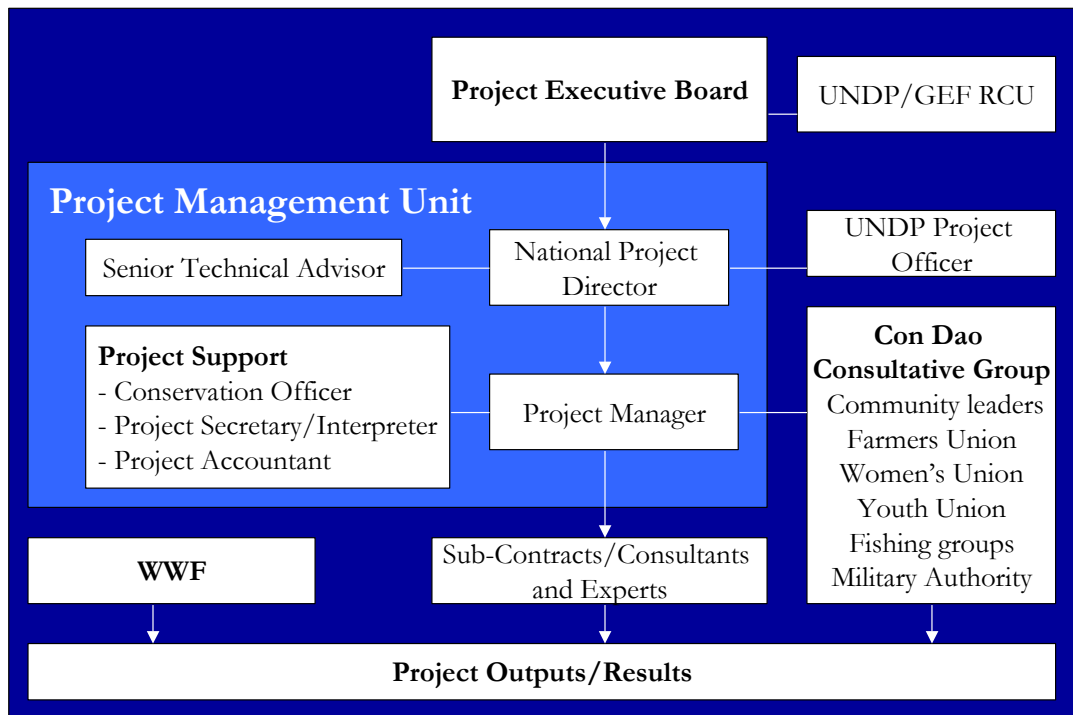
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<sup>24</sup> funded under a WWF / DANIDA cooperative programme 'Sustainable Livelihoods in and around Marine Protected Areas'

<sup>25</sup> under Objective 1

The following diagram from the Project Inception report shows Project Execution Arrangements:

Figure 2:



### Impact of Delays

A number of delays in initiating project activities also impacted on project outcomes. Delays in starting the Trust Fund work appear to have been largely due to the difficulty of finding a suitably qualified consultant within the limited budget. There were also delays in initiating the AIG pilot projects. Target beneficiaries for AIG support were identified as those fishers most impacted by MPA zoning, preference was to be given to those who had signed the MPA Natural Resources Conservation Convention. This meant that AIG activities could not start until the zones had been designated and the Conservation Convention completed. Both processes involved comprehensive community consultation. The AIG consultation process also itself involved extensive household and individual surveys and interviews, particularly with fishers. As outlined above, lack of consistency in the groups consulted complicated decision making on AIG projects, which was largely realised through the CCG. The end result of these delays is that at GEF/UNDP project end there are no concrete outcomes in terms of establishing either the Conservation Trust Fund or alternative income generating opportunities for local Con Dao fishers<sup>26</sup>. Had AIG and Trust Fund activities started earlier in the project cycle it may have been possible for the project to achieve outcomes by project end, although it should be noted that this may still be achieved by the end of the DANIDA funded components of the project in September of this year<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Although it should be noted that it may be achieved by end of the DANIDA funded part of the project relative to support to fishers in transferring fishing boats to tourism transport

<sup>27</sup> The MTE also picked up on this issue and stressed the importance of initiating Trust Fund and AIG activities.

The other key delay that impacted on the project was the late inception, described under 3.1.1 above. This essentially means that the project was implemented in two rather than three years. Achieving project outcomes in two years was very ambitious, particularly given the project's participatory and consultative approach.

#### Stakeholder Involvement

A basic stakeholder analysis was undertaken as part of project design which captured the key groups at project start that would either be impacted by or have an impact on the project. The project invested considerable time in ensuring that relevant public sector stakeholders were consulted as part of design and that relevant public sector and community stakeholders were involved in implementation of key project activities. In particular, the project undertook extensive consultations with Con Dao fishermen during implementation and involved them in a number of project activities, including development of the MPA zoning plan, alternative income generating pilot projects, coral rehabilitation work, development of a Natural Resource Conservation Convention and establishment of a Marine Resources Protection Public Group. Public sector stakeholders were involved in key development planning outcomes and the project worked strategically to establish effective information dissemination through a range of avenues. These included the preparation of analytical reports and workshops as well as support by the project to the agencies responsible for drafting development strategies. The impact of this towards achievement of project outcomes is evaluated in section 3.2.

The CCG was established as the official community liaison group and involved a mix of community and local government representatives. They consider that their involvement in the project has been both useful and effective. They see the mix of Government and community representatives in the CCG as appropriate and feel that the CCG provided a good platform for decision making and exchange of information and knowledge. Inclusion of the nine elected village heads is a logical approach to achieving community representation and is the accepted means of representation in Vietnam. However, as is often the case in projects, the 'community' was not a homogeneous group, but included various interest groups. A number of these were represented through mass organisations in the CCG, but one of the main interest groups of relevance to the project, the fishers, was not adequately represented. Recognising this, the project worked hard to achieve the active involvement of fishers in the project and consulted extensively with them.

The absence of a Fishermen's Union limits the extent to which fishers can be involved in official consultation under Vietnamese legislation. Consultations with fishers conducted as part of this final evaluation indicated that they felt a level of frustration with their involvement in the project. This was largely due to the lack of livelihood benefits accruing to them from the project, but was also linked to inconsistencies in the pattern of consultation as discussed above and the fact that fishers felt that decisions were being made by 'land based people' in the CCG<sup>28</sup>.

The project did not undertake a strategic review of stakeholders at mid term although analysis in the mid-term evaluation does assess stakeholder involvement. The Mid-Term Evaluation strongly recommended that fishermen should be incorporated into the CCG, however this was not possible under Vietnamese legislation as the DPC had agreed the composition of the CCG which was seen to be fixed and members could not be added or replaced.

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<sup>28</sup> They were not directly represented in the CCG due to the lack of a fishermen's mass organisation

The main stakeholder group to emerge during the life of the project were offshore fishermen. They were not identified as key stakeholders during design when their numbers were much lower. However, offshore fishermen had an increasingly significant impact on the marine resources of the Con Dao islands both through reported levels of illegal fishing in near shore waters and through an increase in rubbish in inshore waters. Although the project recognised the relevance and impact of this group of external stakeholders it did not develop a strategy to try to address the issue. Some information dissemination activities were carried out to inform offshore fishers about the MPA and associated resource use restrictions, however it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of this as there is no monitoring of the awareness of this group. The difficulty of capturing transient offshore fishers, who have little stake in the project area, within project implementation modalities, limits the extent to which it would have been possible for the project to incorporate activities to address this issue within exiting time and budget limitations. Although it may not have been feasible for the project to directly involve offshore fishers within project implementation modalities, strategic measures which could have been considered by the project as part of adaptive management include:

- a) Producing information and working strategically to raise the awareness of relevant district, provincial and national stakeholders on the risks associated with port expansion to prioritised tourism development and biodiversity conservation.
- b) An increased focus within the project on MPA enforcement. Time and budget limitations within the project, and the absence of dedicated MPA legislation, limited the extent to which the project could have effectively addressed the enforcement issue. A number of activities were undertaken to try to build enforcement capacity, however the outcome in terms of establishing effective enforcement was weak.

#### Financial Planning

At the time of the final evaluation mission, complete information was not available on 'actual expenditure'. A final project audit and completion report will be prepared by the project over the next month.

This final evaluation report has not attempted to pre-empt the results of the audit and has not undertaken an overview analysis of project expenditure because the data is not available. The information that was available from PMU is given in Annex 4a and 4b. Although Annex 4b, gives expenditure against line item, activities were grouped into budget 'packages' for ease of tendering and implementation and the expenditure against activity line item does not necessarily indicate the level of input towards completion of the overall output. The most significant activity groupings were:

<i>Nos.</i>	<i>Activity grouping</i>
211, 212	SEA
311-314, 321	Orientation strategy for tourism and eco-tourism master plan
121, 122, 124, 131, 141	Zonation and management planning
213, 214	District environmental planning
123, 161, 163-4, 182, 221, 231, 241-2, 261-3, 341-2	Training, communications and environmental education, development of environmental regulations, development of a trust fund
142-3, 151-2, 215, 222-223, 251, 271-4, 331, 341	Conservation and enforcement training and implementation, coral and forest rehabilitation, state-of-environment reporting, solid waste study, fisheries reform, tourism feasibility study

PMU does not have information on DANIDA funded activities which are ongoing until September of this year when DANIDA funded project components end. The inter-relation between GEF and DANIDA funded components, lack of complete financial data sets, and 'packaging' of activities within existing PMU data sets, means that it is difficult to draw many



conclusions from the available data as to how expenditure impacted on achievement of outcomes. It is not possible to quantify the extent to which in kind co-financing was effectively or incrementally provided to the project as provision of staff time and amenities were not quantified by the project and it is therefore not possible to measure or quantify these at project end.

The project followed standard UNDP financial reporting procedures, submitting quarterly and annual financial reports. The quarterly financial report listed expenditures by budget line and requested an advance of funds for the next quarter. No constraints were reported to the evaluation team in terms of financial reporting.

Overall, the available project budget was spread over a wide scope of outcomes and activities. This had the advantage of enabling the project to cover a considerable and integrated cross section of issues related to supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. It also meant however that activities and outcomes tended to have rather limited budgets. One shortcoming, in terms of effective expenditure to meet intended purpose, was in the purchase of a glass bottomed patrol vessel that not suitable for effective enforcement.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation within GEF projects is designed to provide project management with a basis for decision-making on progress and the GEF with information on results. In order to be used for decision making and evaluation, monitoring uses both qualitative and quantitative data to report accurately on the production of outputs and progress towards outcomes and impacts, and to identify key implementation issues and propose action to solve these. Monitoring and evaluation should include observational data and assessment methods that capture the views of key stakeholders. GEF project objectives and outcomes are required to be specific and measurable, so as to make it possible to effectively monitor and evaluate the project. Mid-term and final evaluations look specifically at objective and outcome indicators. Baseline data should provide clear information on the situation at the start of the project.

This Final Project Evaluation builds on previous monitoring and evaluation to provide an overall assessment of achievements against project objectives, assess the likelihood of sustainable outcomes and highlight lessons learnt.

GEF projects are expected to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework that includes:

- Active use of SMART\* indicators for implementation (output/progress indicators).
- Active use of SMART indicators for results (outcome and impact indicators).
- Establishment of objective baselines for the project and scheduled re-surveys to measure changes against these baselines, including collection and compilation of the data needed for progress reviews and evaluations.
- Establishment of an organizational structure for monitoring and evaluation and effective data collection and reporting.

\*SMART indicators are those that are: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Specific: The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to achieving an objective and only that objective.; Measurable: The monitoring system and indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what it covers and there are practical ways to measure it.; Achievable and Attributable: The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the result(s) are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention; Relevant and Realistic: The system establishes levels

The project performance monitoring system was developed in mid-2007 in parallel to finalisation of the project Inception Report. Design of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was delayed due to the delay in project inception described above.

Annual work plans were used by the project as the basis for assessing project progress, and the logframe was used for monitoring progress towards achievement of outcomes and impacts. The monitoring and evaluation framework outlined how the project would monitor:

- The activities implemented
- The resources committed
- The expected results/outputs achieved by the activities
- The outcomes of these activities and the resulting impacts
- External factors influencing the activities, expected results/outputs, outcomes and impacts

The project's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework established baselines, SMART indicators and a time line for regular progress reporting, with an adequate budget. Baselines were established through a series of quantitative and qualitative studies and assessments, including consultation with key stakeholders. Project reporting met the standard monitoring and evaluation requirements of UNDP/GEF projects. The May 2009 Performance Indicators Report provides a good assessment of project achievement by indicator against project baselines (refer Annex 2).

The logframe outlines baselines and means of verification, alongside milestones and assumptions. The indicators identified by the project were Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) and on the whole the logframe is well structured. It was actively used by project implementing agencies and governing boards as a management and monitoring tool. The CDNP indicated that they now have strengthened capacity for designing monitoring systems, establishing baselines, identifying indicators and using these within management. They will continue to use a monitoring and evaluation system based on the OMP and use SMART indicators to assess the effectiveness of CDNP in biodiversity conservation and sustainable management.

Three sets of indicators were identified:

Goal level: Global environmental objective indicators (key impacts):

1. Integrity of coral reef ecosystems maintained or enhanced
2. Key species populations maintained or enhanced

Objective level: Immediate objective indicators (impacts):

3. Institutional and legal framework for an MPA established
4. Local community actively involved and committed to terrestrial and marine conservation
5. District planning takes into account conservation principles defined in SEA
6. Province and district buy-in to sustainable tourism development

Outcome indicators (specific project achievements):

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of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders; Time-bound, Timely, Trackable and Targeted: The system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at desired frequency for a set period, with clear identification of the particular stakeholder group to be impacted by the project or programme.

7. Zoning and Operational Management Plan for CDNP in place and guiding activities of stakeholders
8. Local stakeholder attitudes and awareness of needs for conservation improved
9. Biodiversity monitoring information applied in decision making of CDNP and district
10. District Division of Natural Resources and Environment actively involved in the support of planning and environmental mitigation
11. Decrease of inshore fishing infractions by local community and of off-shore fishing fleet infractions
12. Tourism investment required to include appropriate environmental mitigation and monitoring
13. Sustainable financing mechanism identified and agreed

The means of tracking these indicators and evaluating success was clearly outlined in the project monitoring and evaluation framework.

In terms of monitoring impacts (objective level) and specific project achievements (outcome level): two indicators refer specifically to establishment of the MPA and its management, eight indicators relate to institutional and capacity building outcomes, reflecting emphasis of the project on capacity building and institutional reform towards improved biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; one indicator focuses on raising awareness.

The goal level indicators in the project logframe focus solely on *achievement* of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and do not include indicators that could assess the *catalytic* role of the project towards improved biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The focus of the Goal level indicators is firmly on the ultimate conservation objective of maintaining or enhancing levels of biodiversity (coral and key species). Considering the goal is to catalyse conservation and sustainable use, the Goal level indicators selected by the project do not enable evaluation of the project's catalytic role and it is perhaps overly ambitious to imagine that project outcomes would result in an increase in biodiversity levels over the 3 year (effectively 2 year) life of the project. It would have been appropriate to also include goal level indicators which enable assessment of the project's impact in building capacity for and awareness of biodiversity conservation, strengthening planning frameworks and in fostering sustainable patterns of use. This is examined in more detail in section 3.2.

Objective and outcome level indicators could also have been strengthened. This is examined in more detail in the analysis in section 3.2. In particular it would have been useful for the project to establish targeted indicators to enable assessment of biodiversity *protection* and enforcement under Objective 1. Objective 2 indicators could have then maintained a clearer focus on influencing district planning towards improved conditions for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, with Objective 3 indicators maintaining a focus on sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation.

### Summary

The project established a sound monitoring and evaluation framework with clear and measurable indicators and benchmarks for monitoring project performance against these indicators. Baselines were established at the start of the project and are now stored in a database in CDNP and will be made accessible to the public through the CDNP website. Monitoring and evaluation systems included both assessment of quantitative data and consultation with key stakeholders to collect qualitative data. A realistic timeline and budget were established and the project reporting system meets UNDP / GEF standard requirements. The logframe was reasonably well structured and provided a useful tool for project implementers and managers. The indicators selected to measure the achievement of outcomes and objectives were clear and measurable although they could have been

strengthened to improve focus on achievement of key outcomes and impacts and to improve monitoring and evaluation.

The experience of CDNP in using project monitoring and evaluation systems and SMART indicators has strengthened their capacity for effective monitoring and evaluation. CDNP staff also received specific training in biodiversity monitoring and assessment under the project and a biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system and database was established. CDNP will continue to apply their knowledge and experience to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness in achieving the key objectives of the CDNP Operational Management Plan.

Quality of monitoring and evaluation design and implementation is rated as: Satisfactory

## Section 3.2 Evaluation of Achievement of Project Objectives

### Introduction

The project had one 'Goal' and three 'Immediate Development Objectives'. Each objective has associated outcomes, activities and outputs. Performance indicators were established by the project to monitor and evaluate achievement of impact (objective level) and outcomes (outcome level). The following section assesses the achievement of project objectives and associated outcomes. It follows standard GEF project evaluation requirements in providing ratings on project relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The project Logframe is given in Annex 1. Quantitative data and further detail on project activities and outputs is given in Annex 2, from the May 2009 Performance Indicators report.

Overall the project was found to have contributed significantly to:

- Establishing an MPA framework for Con Dao and building the capacity of CDNP for marine protected area management;
- strengthening consideration of environmental sustainability in District and Provincial level planning frameworks;
- Raising the awareness of a wide range of stakeholders on the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for the Con Dao islands region, particularly in relation to sustainable tourism development.

These positive outcomes reflect the emphasis of project indicators on capacity building and development planning<sup>30</sup>. The project also established good ownership of key project outcomes with CDNP and aligned effectively with national and provincial strategic frameworks<sup>31</sup>. The project has contributed to strengthening conditions for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in Con Dao and to reducing the likelihood of future threats linked to unsustainable levels of tourism development in District planning agendas. However it has been much less successful in reducing actual *current* resource use pressures and therefore in improving or maintaining biodiversity levels in the marine and coastal areas of the Con Dao islands region. There are also still a number of significant future biodiversity conservation and sustainable use threats and these represent a risk to achievement of project objectives as is discussed in section 3.3.

The following section of the report assesses achievement of project objectives and outcomes. In summary:

- All project objectives and outcomes were evaluated to be highly relevant to the goal of catalysing conservation and sustainable management of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity and ecological processes of the Con Dao Islands Region.
- The project had mixed results in achieving its objectives and outcomes with some strong and other weaker outcomes. Project effectiveness is evaluated to be moderately satisfactory.
- The considerable delay in project inception means that most core activities were in fact implemented in two years rather than the three originally planned. The project covered a broad breadth of areas, which was efficient in enabling the project to influence an integrated cross section of issues relevant to biodiversity conservation

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<sup>30</sup> 8 of the 13 indicators focussed on institutional strengthening and capacity building

<sup>31</sup> Refer section 3.1

but also meant that the available budget was spread quite thinly. Efficiency is evaluated to be moderately satisfactory.

Overall project ratings are therefore:

- Relevance: Highly Satisfactory (HS)
- Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
- Efficiency: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Under GEF evaluation guidelines relevance and effectiveness are considered to be critical criteria and the overall outcomes rating of the project may not be higher than the lowest rating on relevance and effectiveness.

The overall outcomes rating of the project is therefore: Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

### **3. 2.1: Evaluation of the Contribution of the Project to its Goal**

Project Goal: The project will catalyse conservation and sustainable management of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity and ecological processes of the Con Dao islands region.

Two indicators were used by the project to evaluate achievement of the project Goal:

- Integrity of coral reef ecosystems maintained or enhanced
- Key species populations maintained or enhanced

The Goal level indicators assess the extent to which the project has *achieved* biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and do not include indicators that could assess the *catalytic* role of the project. The focus of the Goal level indicators is firmly on the ultimate marine and coastal conservation objective of maintaining or enhancing levels of biodiversity (coral and key species). In its evaluation against these indicators, the May 2009 Performance Indicators Report assesses that the project cannot be shown to have had a significant impact in increasing or maintaining biodiversity levels.

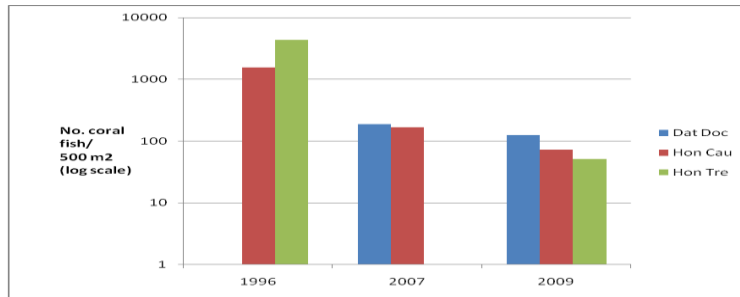
The May 2009 Performance Indicators report shows:

- Live coral cover for most areas appears to be stable or increasing due to natural rehabilitation, but stresses that it is not possible to attribute this impact to the project.
- Key species populations have declined over the life of the project. The quantitative data provided in the May 2009 performance indicators report (refer Annex 2) is also supported by qualitative data from fishermen consulted during this evaluation. Quantitative data in the May 2009 performance indicators report demonstrates a clear decline in total coral reef fish densities on three reefs in CDNP.
- Giant clams *Tridacne* sp have declined at most sites across CDNP and lobsters (genus *Palinurus*) were not seen during any surveys throughout the project. This represents a severe decline from surveys conducted by WWF in 1994 and by IMER where they were reported as common.
- The number of nesting turtles has shown a slight decline in recent years from an average of 270 during 1999-2002 to 245 during 2006-2008, although it is noted that the number of nesting turtles does fluctuate considerably. This slight decline (9%)

could be explainable as by-catch of females and some level of hunting around the Con Dao islands

- Sightings of dugongs are very infrequent and no statistical comparison was possible, but it is thought that the current population is not viable and that dugongs will become extinct in the area.

Figure 3: Trends in total coral reef fish densities on three reefs<sup>32</sup>



The Goal level indicators selected are ultimately the key indicators for assessing the state of marine biodiversity conservation and should continue to be used by CDNP to monitor biodiversity levels. However it is perhaps overly ambitious to imagine that project outcomes would result in an increase in biodiversity levels over the life of the project.

Although the project has not secured conservation and sustainable use of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity of the Con Dao islands region, it has acted as a catalyst to improve conditions for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in Con Dao in a number of ways. It would have been appropriate to also include goal level indicators which enable assessment of the project's impact in building capacity for and awareness of biodiversity conservation, strengthening planning frameworks and in fostering sustainable patterns of use. This would have also better reflected GEF strategic objectives under GEF 4 'SO-1 Catalysing sustainability of protected area systems'.

### 3.2.2: Evaluation of Achievement of Objective 1

Objective 1 includes core outcomes for the establishment of marine protected area (MPA) management in the Con Dao islands region. Indicators focus on establishing MPA frameworks, zoning and management plans and the active involvement of local stakeholders in biodiversity conservation. Although the Objective 1 description includes *protection* of the globally significant diversity, there are no indicators to measure the effectiveness of enforcement. Enforcement is instead considered under Objective 2.

The following section evaluates the achievement of Objective 1 and provides ratings on Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency. Supporting quantitative data and further detail on the activities undertaken is given in Annex 2.

- Relevance was judged highly satisfactory (HS);
- Effectiveness moderately satisfactory (MS) and
- Efficiency moderately satisfactory (MS).

<sup>32</sup> from May 2009 Performance Indicators Report

The overall achievement of Objective 1 is thus evaluated to be moderately satisfactory (MS)  
Objective 1: Protection of globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region with increased participation of local communities

Objective level Indicators:

- Institutional and legal framework for an MPA established.
- Local community actively involved and committed to terrestrial and marine conservation

Outcome 1: Strengthened protection and participatory conservation and management of biodiversity in CDNP

Outcome level indicators:

- Zonation and Operational Management Plan for CDNP in place and guiding activities of stakeholders.
- Local stakeholder attitudes and awareness of needs for conservation improved.
- Biodiversity monitoring information applied in decision making of CDNP and district.

### **Relevance**

The following section assesses whether the outcomes under Objective 1 are consistent with the relevant country and GEF strategies and priorities.

Protection of the Con Dao island region's marine biodiversity is highly relevant to national strategic objectives for the Con Dao archipelago and to GEF strategic priorities. Con Dao is listed as a highest priority conservation area in Vietnam's Biodiversity Action Plan and the National GEF strategy. Over eighty percent (19,998 ha<sup>33</sup>) of the Con Dao islands region has been declared a national park, emphasising the importance of biodiversity conservation to the area.

As is common in Vietnam, protected area management has focussed mainly on the terrestrial areas of the park with little strategic management of the marine areas. The focus of Objective 1 on establishing an institutional and legal framework for marine protected area (MPA) management, through a process that actively involved local stakeholders and which raised awareness of the importance of MPA management, is highly relevant to biodiversity conservation needs in the area and to local and national strategic priorities.

The approach under Objective 1 to actively involve local stakeholders in developing the zoning system and to increase awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation was both highly relevant and followed good practice. A range of Government and community stakeholders both impact on and stood to be impacted by improved MPA management.

Objective 1 is also consistent with the principles, strategies and actions outlined in the National Marine Protected Areas System Plan (MASPAS). The focus of Objective 1 on improving protected area management and planning; strengthening natural resource management and encouraging community participation and the sustainable use of marine resources aligns with MASPAS strategic priorities.

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<sup>33</sup> comprising a terrestrial component of 5,998 ha, a marine component of 14,000 ha, and a buffer zone area of 20,500 ha



Effective management of Con Dao's marine resource base is also highly relevant to district socio-economic development priorities and to supporting sustainable livelihoods for the local fishing community. The 2009 final draft of the new socio-economic development plan (SEDP) for Con Dao prioritises tourism development; a key tourist attraction is the Con Dao National Park. Effective biodiversity conservation and management of the marine areas of the park is important to ensure sustainable use and to therefore maintain the resource base for tourism. Establishment of an MPA framework and associated zoning is a key planning and management tool.

➔ Relevance Rating: Highly Satisfactory

### **Effectiveness**

The achievement of Objective 1 is evaluated against the two objective level indicators and incorporates assessment of associated outcome level indicators. Further detail and quantitative data to support the analysis is given in Annex 2. The likelihood of sustainable impacts is explored under section 3.3.

#### First objective level indicator: Institutional and legal framework for an MPA established

Related outcome level Indicators

- Zoning and Operational Management Plan for CDNP in place and guiding activities of stakeholders.
- Biodiversity monitoring information applied in decision making of CDNP and district

The project supported CDNP to establish zoning of marine areas through a participatory process. The MPA zones are consistent with national guidelines and establishment criteria, and with MPAs already legally established in Vietnam under the national MPA Project<sup>34</sup>.

The main MPA zones are:

- No Take Zones
- Ecological Recovery Zones
- Development Zone
- Remainder of the MPA (Buffer Zone)

Buoys have been installed to demarcate the zones and information prepared and distributed to a range of resource users on the activities permitted in the different zones.

The operational management framework to be applied to these zones was developed in an Operational Management Plan (OMP) which is currently awaiting final approval from the province. The OMP provides an integrated framework and operational structure for management of the terrestrial, coastal and marine areas of CDNP and includes:

- Comprehensive zoning and operational guidelines for all areas of the National Park: terrestrial, coastal and marine.
- Detailed definition of actions needed to achieve the objectives of the CDNP as defined by Government.
- A description of allocated and not yet allocated funding needed to support these actions.

The project increased CDNP's understanding of effective marine biodiversity conservation and management and increased their capacity to achieve this. This was partly through

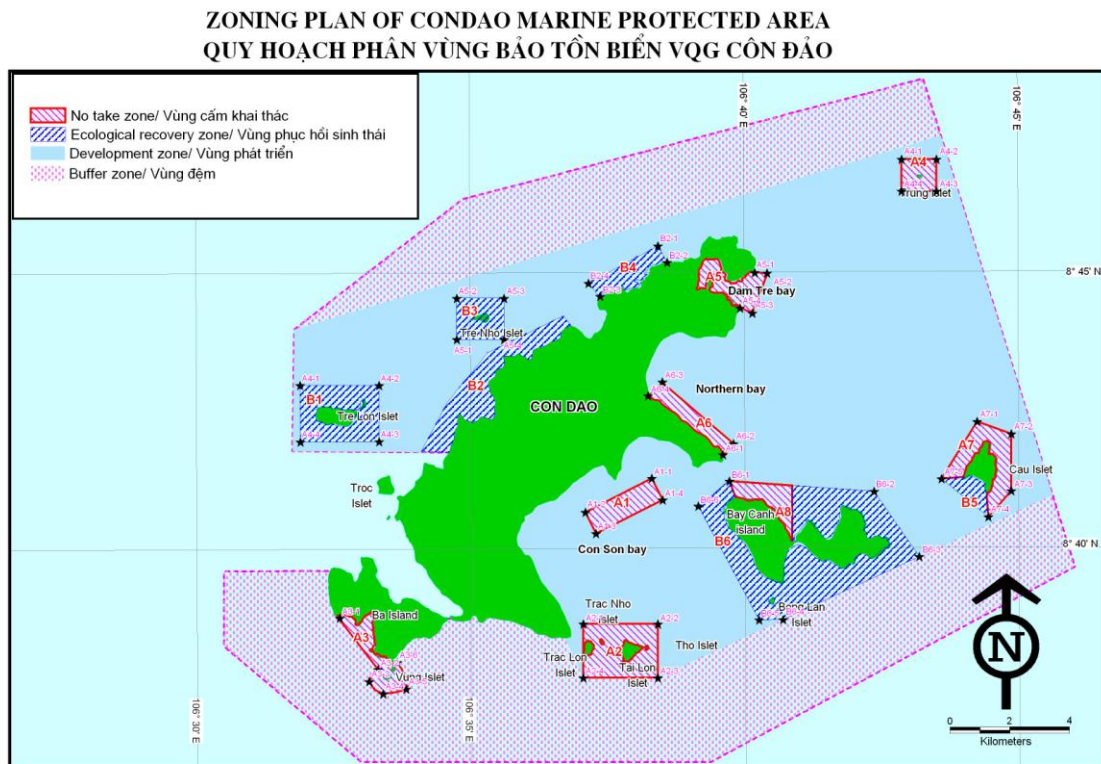
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<sup>34</sup> e.g. Nha Trang Bay MPA

CDNP's active involvement in developing the Zoning Plan and Operational Management Plan, and also through a range of training activities (refer Annex 2)

As outlined in 3.1, the project also effectively aligned its support under Objective 1 with existing national guidelines and legislation and followed international good practice for establishing zoning and MPA management. National legislation for MPAs has not been finalised by the Government. However the project developed the Zoning Plan and the operational management plan (OMP) in line with national guidelines on MPA zoning and within relevant sections of MASPAS and the national Fisheries Law.

Figure 4: Con Dao MPA Zoning Plan



In line with the outcome indicator Biodiversity monitoring information applied in decision making of CDNP and district, one focus of training and capacity building activities was to increase CDNP's capacity to monitor biodiversity and to apply monitoring information within management. Prior to project start there was no comprehensive or strategic monitoring of marine biodiversity by CDNP. The project established a biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system for CDNP that is now institutionalised within the park and included as a budget line for Government funding until 2020 (approved in Decision 120 of January 2009). Training in biodiversity monitoring techniques was provided to CDNP staff under the project along with monitoring equipment. A biodiversity monitoring manual was developed with CDNP that was tailored to their specific needs and a database and GIS system have been established in CDNP for analysing and storing information. CDNP staff have just completed collection of the first data set. It is not possible within the life of the project therefore to conclude whether the information will be used effectively within decision making on MPA management.

Establishment of an information-sharing system for the Con Dao District, whereby biodiversity monitoring data is considered within district planning, has not yet occurred. However, an associated positive outcome of the project under Objective 2 is provision for increased inclusion of SEA within development planning. Equally, the project has helped to increase the awareness of a broad range of District level stakeholders on the importance of biodiversity conservation, marine protected area management and associated biodiversity monitoring (refer Annex 2)<sup>35</sup>.

The likelihood of future active management of the MPA zones by CDNP is supported by CDNP's high level of ownership of the Operational Management Plan and Zoning Plan, their strengthened capacity and likely future financing of the majority of park activities by Government within the Con Dao Investment Plan. CDNP staff consider the zones and OMP to be core strategic tools for management of the MPA. The Con Dao Investment Plan 2009-2020, which was formally approved by Decision No. 120/QD-TTg of the Vice Prime Minister in January 2009, covers 93% of OMP management activities. The definition of park zones and boundaries in Decision 120 provides the legal basis for management of the marine section of the Con Dao National Park, in the absence of national legislation on MPAs. It should be noted that the Investment Plan was not part of the project, but was an outcome initiated in parallel to it by the CDNP park director (also PMU director). The Con Dao investment plan is, however, highly relevant to the achievement of outcomes under Objective 1 and was incorporated into project planning and decision making. Its influence on the likelihood of sustainable impact of project outcomes is discussed in section 3.3 of this report.

Some core biodiversity conservation and MPA management roles are not however covered under the Con Dao Investment Plan. The May 2009 Indicators report considers that this occurred because the Investment Plan was prepared by foresters who did not fully understand the MPA's needs. The Project recognised these funding gaps and supported CDNP to find ways to address them through other project outcomes, in particular through the Conservation Trust Fund (under Objective 3).

One key operational area which does not yet appear to have adequate resources or capacity is MPA enforcement. Sound enforcement will be central to the effective management of Con Dao's MPA, particularly given the apparent increase in impact of external and temporary migrant fishers on the marine biodiversity of the park. A measure of the effectiveness of enforcement is not included within the objective and outcome level indicators under Objective 1. It is however highly relevant to achievement of the outcome to *protect* globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region. An assessment of the project's contribution to establishing effective enforcement systems in achieving Objective and Outcome 1 is therefore included here.

Enforcement is also relevant to the Objective 2, outcome level indicator 'Decrease of inshore fishing infractions by local community and offshore fishing fleet infractions'. Assessment of the project's contribution to strengthening enforcement as part of measures to decrease fishing infractions will be examined under Objective 2.

A number of activities were supported by the project to strengthen enforcement of the MPA including a needs analysis and subsequent training of CDNP rangers, staff of the Fisheries

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<sup>35</sup> At project start the baseline shows that there was a very low awareness of the significance of environmental and biodiversity monitoring by district level stakeholders, the May 2009 surveys demonstrates a considerable increase in awareness at project end.

Resource Protection Agency of MARD<sup>36</sup> and other relevant agencies. Part of the Government in-kind contribution to the project was to provide increased support for subsequent enforcement activities.

Key enforcement issues identified in the needs analysis for the effective management of the MPA<sup>37</sup> include the need for appropriate national and local level legislation and a well co-ordinated enforcement system with a central operations unit and rapid response capacity, including appropriate patrol vessels and associated resources.

A significant shortcoming of the project was in the selection and purchase of an inappropriate marine patrol vessel for enforcement. The vessel purchased under the project is a glass bottomed boat, with high fuel costs and inappropriate stability and speed characteristics for marine patrolling. It is more suited to tourism activities than to enforcement. The selection of a glass bottomed boat suggests that its main future use will be focussed on eco-tourism activities rather than on enforcement, although the May 2009 Performance Indicators Report indicates that it is currently being used for patrolling. Provision of an appropriate, dedicated marine patrol vessel does not however appear to have been met by the project.

The other key issue impacting on the effectiveness of enforcement of CDNP MPA relates to the lack of dedicated MPA legislation. Given that the legal basis for enforcement currently largely falls under the Fisheries law, this is examined under Objective 2 in relation to the project's contribution to the outcome of decreasing inshore fishing infractions. Outcome 2 could in fact have been incorporated under Objective 1, rather than Objective 2 as it relates directly to protection of marine biodiversity under the MPA. This might have helped to increase the focus of Objective 1 indicators and outcomes on enforcement.

Second objective level indicator: Local community actively involved and committed to terrestrial and marine conservation

Related outcome level indicator: Local attitudes and awareness of needs for conservation improved

The participation of local communities in biodiversity conservation, parallel to the strengthening of institutions responsible for resource protection and enforcement was expected to increase local commitment to biodiversity conservation. Substantial efforts were put into engaging the community in processes that either directly involved them in conservation activities or strengthened the enabling environment for conservation and sustainable use. In particular it was anticipated that fishers' involvement in bio-diversity conservation<sup>38</sup> would enhance their support for MPA management and result in reduced fishing pressure on marine resources.

WWF led some of the main initiatives for establishing local community involvement in marine conservation including a livelihood support program for fishing households; development of the MPA Protection Convention and coral planting activities under the coral rehabilitation program. They encouraged the active participation of local stakeholders in the project through a range of activities and processes.

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<sup>36</sup> In the absence of national level legislation for MPAs, the Fisheries Protection Agency of MARD has the primary role of enforcement of the Fisheries Law in Con Dao waters under the Fisheries Law.

<sup>37</sup> Primmer 2007

<sup>38</sup> For example in the coral rehabilitation programme, Marine Resource Protection Public Group and in development of the MPA Protection Convention.

As described in section 3.1, the CCG was established as the main community consultation forum and is the accepted means of community representation within projects in Vietnam<sup>39</sup>. CCG members feel that their involvement in the project was effective and appropriate. The inclusion of village heads in the CCG was expected to ensure the representation of all interest groups within the villages (household clusters), including fishermen. As discussed under section 3.1 fishers do not have a specific organisation and therefore did not have direct representation on the CCG<sup>40</sup>.

Fishers were however directly involved in the project through individual and household consultation processes and through their subsequent involvement in a number of project activities, including alternative income generation (AIG) initiatives and coral rehabilitation. Consultation and livelihood support activities were led by WWF, in collaboration with CDNP. Fishers were also involved in establishment of the Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group under Objective 2.

#### Development of the MPA zoning plan

Local community and Government stakeholders were consulted by the project in development of the MPA zoning plan and there appears to be a general understanding and acceptance of the zones amongst the key local stakeholder groups. It is not known to what extent offshore fishers are aware of or comply with the MPA zones as this has not been monitored by the project. Local fishers stated that there are frequent infractions, involving both offshore and local fishers fishing in no-take zones<sup>41</sup>. They put this down to, on the one hand, poor enforcement by Fisheries Department and CDNP rangers and, on the other, lack of alternative options for local fishers. They suggested that although local fishers understand the zoning system they are forced to exploit all Con Dao fishing grounds to ensure that catch levels can support livelihoods as catch levels have significantly decreased over the last three years and they have few alternative livelihood options.

#### MPA Natural Resources Conservation Convention

An MPA Natural Resources Conservation Convention was developed through a consultative process under the project. The CCG and a CDNP working group drafted the convention and consulted widely with fishers on the draft. The CCG feel that the process of developing the convention was effective in raising awareness of local stakeholders on a number of biodiversity conservation issues. Fishers had mixed views on the effectiveness of the Convention as an awareness raising and resource use management tool. There was a certain level of resentment that it had been developed by 'land based people' within the CCG.

#### Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group

The project also worked with the Con Dao DPC and local fishers to establish a Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group<sup>42</sup>. The role of this group is to support relevant Government agencies (FRPA, CDNP rangers and Border Army) in enforcing the MPA. Fishers within the Marine Resources Protection Public Group are to report infringements when they encounter them. Fishers consulted during the final evaluation however suggested that this process is not working very effectively. They stated that whenever they call the relevant enforcement agencies either no one comes to investigate, or if enforcement agencies do arrive, they are so late that those undertaking the illegal activities have long

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<sup>39</sup> The CCG included both community and government stakeholders.

<sup>40</sup> As discussed under section 3.1 above, the incorporation of fishers into the CCG, following the mid term review, was not possible due to the fixed nature of the CCG within district legal provisions.

<sup>41</sup> Illegal fishing by offshore boats was reported by fishers to occur mostly at night

<sup>42</sup> Established through Decision No. 180/QĐ-UBND, dated 13 March 2009

since gone! They expressed their frustration at the inadequacy of enforcement, especially relative to offshore fishing boat infractions.

#### Coral planting

In April 2009, 20 fishermen were selected to assist the project in replanting an area of 40 ha of coral reef. The fishermen selected were all divers and priority was given to members of the Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group and experienced divers who in the past have been engaged in destructive fishing practices. This selection was partly based on the familiarity of these fishers with working in a submarine environment and partly because divers are the group most likely to use cyanide fishing to catch live grouper. The project hoped to increase their interest in coral conservation. Preliminary surveys undertaken by the project indicate that the replanted coral are developing well.

The fishers involved in the coral planting initiative were satisfied with their involvement in the project and felt that they had acquired considerable knowledge and skills in coral re-planting. They viewed coral replanting as a potential income earning opportunity and hoped to find some employment in future coral replanting activities but were unsure as to the likelihood of this. The Conservation Trust Fund (under Objective 3), has provision for the future involvement of fishers in coral replanting initiatives, if it is established.

#### Support for Alternative Income Generating activities (AIGs)

The project aimed to support sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in Con Dao alongside improved biodiversity conservation. There was provision for support to alternative income generating pilot projects. This also reflected recognition of the fact that establishment of an MPA, with associated zoning and management, would imply resource use restrictions for local communities and particularly for the small population of resident fishermen who have few other livelihood opportunities. Target beneficiaries of the AIG pilot projects were the local fishers most impacted by the MPA process, preference being given to those who had signed the MPA Natural Resources Conservation Convention. This meant that AIG activities could not start until the zones had been designated and the Conservation Convention completed. Both processes involved a comprehensive and lengthy process of community consultation

AIG support was part of the WWF led component of the project, largely funded by DANIDA and is ongoing until September of this year. WWF undertook an extensive process of consultation in early 2007 to identify livelihood issues and opportunities, using a mix of questionnaire based surveys, semi structured interviews and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) through group and individual consultations. Stakeholder groups consulted include the CCG, CDNP, district Government departments, Border Army, tourism enterprises and fishermen. Details of the consultative process and activities undertaken are given in Annex 2.

The consultation process identified aquaculture and simple tourism services as offering the greatest potential for AIG. An assessment of the potential of aquaculture to provide AIG for small scale fishermen and divers was undertaken. This identified seaweed farming as the only viable AIG initiative for Con Dao because of the high nutrient absorption capacity of seaweeds, high market value, and relatively low requirements for technical knowledge and investment. The engagement of fishers in well managed tourism transportation services, in collaboration with CDNP was also identified as an opportunity.

A Livelihood Development Programme was developed in consultation with local fishers and the CCG and the two potential pilot projects were presented to stakeholders in June 2008.

The seaweed farming project was approved by Con Dao District in November 2008. Three households volunteered to participate. Although the project showed initial signs of success, after three months of operation all farms had been attacked by a parasite and had to stop farming. An investigation led by WWF concluded that infrequent and improper cleaning practices were the main cause of failure of the pilots. The location of the seaweed farms may also have exacerbated this being far from the fishermen's homes and the area had poor water circulation. The seaweed farming pilot project did not therefore provide any concrete livelihood benefits to fishing households. WWF are preparing a lessons learnt paper to guide their work on livelihood support in other areas in Vietnam and there is some positive benefit from this pilot project in that learning will be institutionalised through WWF in their livelihood support work in Vietnam.

The tourism transport pilot project received the endorsement of Con Dao DPC in October 2008. There was significant interest in this initiative by fishers. 17 people in the target group and 20 other local community members were provided with training in small boat operation, basic communication and interpretation skills. Official certificates were issued to participants by the authorised organisations. The number of persons trained was too great for the budget available under the project and the community selected five fishermen in the target group to receive support under the project. Three other fishermen asked to join the project without financial support. In May 2009, a meeting was held with the selected fishermen and the CCG to determine the process for up-grading and converting fishing boats to tourist boats. This initiative will be continued under the DANIDA funded component of the project, led by WWF in collaboration with CDNP and the Department of Tourism. Most stakeholders consulted during the evaluation felt that tourism transport offers a potential alternative livelihood for fishers. Potential risks identified by fishers and the CCG include the fact that a boat can only be registered for fishing or tourism, therefore fishers cannot engage in tourism transport gradually as an additional livelihood activity but have to engage in it directly as an alternative livelihood. They were also concerned that the tourism season is limited, although they noted that fishing is also seasonal. The potential for tourism transportation to provide an alternative livelihood for fishers cannot be determined at this stage. Evaluation of project outcomes should be undertaken following the end of DANIDA funding in September.

The failure of the seaweed farming pilot project to provide an alternative income generating option to local fishers and the fact that the tourism transport pilot project is still in its infancy mean that at this stage there are no concrete livelihood outcomes for local fishers resulting from the AIGs supported under the project.

Fishers reported frustration with the lack of benefits accruing to them from the AIG initiatives, particularly relative to the high level of consultation. They felt that there had been a lot of talk with little result in terms of livelihood benefits. Part of their frustration was also levelled at the lack of effective follow up during consultation processes. Fishers consulted during the final evaluation stated that the results of the AIG feasibility study had not been communicated to them or discussed with them. Discussions with WWF on this issue suggest that, although there was extensive consultation and follow up there was a lack of consistency in the groups consulted, with feedback being given to different groups than those originally consulted. This it appears was largely due to communication and co-ordination issues between PMU and WWF. These have been discussed in section 3.1

#### Awareness Raising

An extensive environmental education and awareness raising programme was undertaken to support the outcome indicator 'Local stakeholders attitudes and awareness of need for conservation improved'. The project approach to combine training with the direct involvement of local people in project activities was good practice. Surveys undertaken at the end of the

project indicate that the majority of stakeholders involved in the awareness raising activities had a good general understanding of park values and threats, although this did not extend to understanding the more complex ecological functions of the MPA. Children were found to have a particularly good level of understanding and environmental education materials developed under the formal education programme for school children will be incorporated in the school extra curriculum in Con Dao. The May 2009 surveys indicate that the only stakeholder group who do not have an understanding of the value of the MPA and biodiversity conservation are the Fisheries Protection Agency. This is a matter of concern given their central role in enforcement of the MPA under current legislation and is discussed under Objective 2.

An interesting issue which arose during consultations with the fishers was that they felt that the project had actually had an impact in increasing fishing effort. They explained that when local fishers first heard that a 'marine conservation' project was about to start in Con Dao many of them started to fish more as they feared that conservation would bring bans and prohibitions.

### Summary

The project made a significant contribution towards establishing MPA frameworks and building the capacity of CDNP for MPA management. Although the project worked effectively and strategically to establish an MPA framework for Con Dao, at this stage it is not possible to say that institutional and legal frameworks have been *established* as this depends on both provincial approval of the OMP and approval of national MPA legislation. These processes are outside the scope of the project and are not due to any shortcoming by the project. One project shortcoming in terms of effective MPA management is in achieving effective *protection* of marine biodiversity. Qualitative information from a range of stakeholders indicates that enforcement remains largely ineffective.

The project could have established a clearer focus of Objective 1 outcomes and indicators on enforcement, given that the Objective 1 statement includes protection of globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity. The Outcome 2 indicator 'Decrease of inshore fishing infractions by local community and offshore fishing fleet infractions' would have sat more logically under Objective 1 and this would have helped to ensure adequate consideration of enforcement in achieving Objective 1.

In terms of increased participation of local communities under the second indicator, the project worked hard to involve local stakeholders in a range of awareness raising activities and to support alternative income generating projects. The fact that to date the AIG pilot projects have not provided livelihood support to local fishers appears to be the main reason for their frustration with their involvement in the project. It also means that the project has not as yet provided livelihood support for sustainable use. This and the decline in fish stocks over the life of the project mean that local resource use pressure on the marine environment has not decreased and may have in fact increased. Local fishers stressed that their *commitment* to biodiversity conservation is tempered by their need to earn a living and the lack of alternative options, although given alternative livelihood options they would support, and do understand the need for, conservation and sustainable use.

Project achievements under objective 1 are evaluated to be moderately satisfactory. Significant outcomes were supported by the project to establish institutional frameworks, build capacity and raise stakeholder awareness of coastal and marine biodiversity protection. However the poor outcomes in securing effective enforcement and in providing alternative income generating opportunities for local fishers reduce the achievement of Objective 1.



⇒ Effectiveness Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

**Efficiency**

The project covered a wide range of integrated areas under Objective 1 including establishing MPA frameworks and building related capacity, raising awareness, coral rehabilitation and support for alternative income generation pilot projects to support sustainable use. In terms of cost effectiveness it therefore covered a significant breadth of areas within the available budget. However this also meant that financing of some areas, and particularly AIG support, was spread quite thinly. As outlined in section 3.1, budget and time limitations affected the achievement of outcomes and this is particularly relevant to Objective 1.

The use of project funds to buy a glass bottomed boat was inefficient relative to the objective of improving enforcement capacity.

The extent to which in kind contributions materialised under this objective is also questionable, particularly relative to the need for WWF to sub-contract government institutions to undertake work under the project and in the payment of communities to attend project meetings<sup>43</sup>. However, in-kind contributions are not easily quantified and no data currently exists to enable evaluation of the efficiency of in-kind contributions.

As outlined under section 3.1 the delay in project inception and the late start of the AIG pilot projects impacted on the extent to which it was possible for the project to achieve livelihood support outcomes within the life of the UNDP / GEF project. The end result of these delays is that at GEF/UNDP project end there are no concrete outcomes in terms of establishing alternative income generating opportunities for local Con Dao fishers<sup>44</sup> and related frustration amongst fishers over lack of results. Had AIG activities started earlier in the project cycle, and had consultation processes been implemented more efficiently, it may have been possible for the project to achieve more positive outcomes by project end, although it should be noted that this may still be achieved by end of the DANIDA funded components of the project in September of this year.

Overall, under Objective 1, the project was efficient in covering a broad scope of highly relevant areas within the available budget, but delays, limits on the budget available to support some key outcomes, shortcomings in use of funds for purpose and apparent limited in-kind contributions impacted on efficiency.

⇒ Efficiency rating : Moderately Efficient

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<sup>43</sup> Although this is common practice in Vietnam and was expected by communities and is not a shortcoming of this project

<sup>44</sup> Although it should be noted that it may be achieved by end of the DANIDA funded part of the project relative to support to fishers in transferring fishing boats to tourism transport

### 3.2.3: Evaluation of Achievement of Objective 2

The Objective 2 description is rather all encompassing, incorporating a broad spectrum of areas relevant to improving the 'enabling environment' for coastal and marine biodiversity management in Con Dao. It has some overlap with Objective 1.

The objective level indicator focuses specifically however on improving the consideration of environmental impacts within district planning.

Outcome 2 focuses on strengthening sustainable environmental management in Con Dao District.

The first outcome level indicator 'District Division of Natural Resources and Environment actively involved in the support of planning and environmental mitigation' was discarded by the project due to overlap with a SIDA funded programme that was approved by provincial planning authorities subsequent to the start of the UNDP GEF project. Achievement of this outcome is therefore not considered here. It should be noted however that the project did include DONRE in a number of relevant activities; further details are given in Annex 2.

The second outcome indicator focuses on decreasing inshore fishing infractions. As suggested earlier, this outcome might have sat more logically under Objective 1, with Objective 2 retaining a focus on strengthening the consideration of environmental sustainability within District Planning processes.

The following sections evaluate the achievement of Objective 2 in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Supporting quantitative data and further detail on the activities undertaken is given in Annex 2.

- Relevance was judged highly satisfactory (HS);
- Effectiveness moderately satisfactory (MS) and
- Efficiency moderately satisfactory (MS).

The overall achievement of Objective 2 is thus evaluated to be moderately satisfactory (MS)

Objective 2: Improved enabling environment for management of coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region with links between biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development and strengthened institutional capacity and legal frameworks.

Objective level Indicator:

- District planning takes into account conservation principles defined in SEA

Outcome 2: Strengthened sustainable environmental management in Con Dao district

Outcome level Indicators:

- (District Division of Natural Resources and Environment actively involved in the support of planning and environmental mitigation)<sup>45</sup>
- Decrease of inshore fishing infractions by local community, and of off-shore fishing fleet infractions.

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<sup>45</sup> Discarded by the project due to duplication with the SEMLA project

## Relevance

The following section assesses whether the outcomes under Objective 2 are consistent with relevant strategies and priorities.

Levels and patterns of economic development proposed in the existing SEDP for the Con Dao District<sup>46</sup> and actively pursued by District level authorities were identified as a significant threat to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development during project design.

Economic development priorities for the Con Dao District have a strong focus on tourism and at project inception planned tourism developments were identified as far outstretching the carrying capacity of the natural resource base<sup>47</sup>. The other main economic development priority is expansion of the Ben Dam port. The District plans to significantly<sup>48</sup> increase the number of offshore fishing vessels coming into the port and to include provision for petroleum vessels and cruise ships. The expansion of the port poses a number of threats to the marine and coastal biodiversity of the Con Dao islands region. This was not identified as a key issue during project design however and no outcomes or objectives were specifically focussed on addressing threats posed by expansion of Ben Dam port.

Given that 80% of the Con Dao islands region is protected within a national park and given Con Dao's status as Vietnam's highest priority conservation area<sup>49</sup>, strengthening the consideration of environmental impacts and of environmental sustainability within District planning processes clearly aligns with national priorities for the area. It is also highly relevant to GEF strategic priorities and to the overall Project Objectives and Goal.

The region's biodiversity as well as its historical sites are a key tourist attraction. Effective assessment of the environmental impacts of planned developments and effective management of resource use will be critical to maintain Con Dao's resource base and sustain long term socio-economic benefits for Con Dao.

Fishermen are key stakeholders in management of Con Dao's marine and coastal biodiversity. Resident local fishermen make up a small percentage of the total population (3%), however fishing effort in the coastal waters of the Con Dao archipelago includes non-resident fishers living permanently in Con Dao, migrant fishers from the mainland who come to Con Dao to fish only in the fishing season and a significant and increasing number of offshore fishers who are known to fish illegally in Con Dao waters (although this is not registered or quantifiable). Fishing impacts on the marine biodiversity of the Con Dao islands region result from destructive fishing methods, damage to coral caused by anchoring on the reefs and an un-quantified increase in fishing effort. Destructive methods used by local fishers include dynamite and cyanide fishing.

The focus of Objective 2 both on increasing consideration of environmental sustainability within District Planning processes and on reducing fishing infractions is highly relevant to the project's goal.

⇒ Relevance is thus judged to be Highly Satisfactory (HS)

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<sup>46</sup> under Decision 264

<sup>47</sup> Proposed tourist numbers and associated developments would have made Con Dao airport the third busiest in the world!

<sup>48</sup> From the current 1000 vessels to 5000 vessels

<sup>49</sup> within the national Biodiversity Action Plan

## **Effectiveness**

The achievement of Objective 2 is evaluated against the objective level indicator and incorporates assessment of the relevant outcome level indicator. Further detail and quantitative data to support the analysis is given in Annex 2. The likelihood of sustainable impacts is explored under section 3.3.

Objective level Indicator: 'District planning takes into account conservation principles defined in SEA',

GOV has a clear and defined process for the drafting of Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDP) as the strategic guiding document for development planning, however there is little experience or capacity in Vietnam for incorporating strategic environmental assessment (SEA) into development planning.

The incorporation of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) into SEDPs is now a legal requirement under the Law on Environmental Protection (LEP), Article 14, which requires SEA for 6 categories of strategies and plans including socio-economic and sector development strategies and plans. The Law on Environmental Protection requires the next generation of SEDPs<sup>50</sup> to incorporate Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) with the aim of ensuring environmental criteria are given equal weight to socio-economic criteria in drafting the plans.

The project worked strategically in a complex planning environment to influence and support the incorporation of SEA into the new (2011 -2015) SEDP<sup>51</sup>, in line with project objectives and national legal requirements under the Law on Environmental Protection (LEP). The project also prepared an SEA of the existing (2004) SEDP. However the May 2009 Performance Indicators report states that: 'during the project lifetime there has been no actual implementation of a strategic plan for the islands: the 2004 SEDP was never really implemented'. It also notes that consequently there is currently little active consideration of environmental impacts in annual district planning processes. Details are provided in Annex 2.

In particular the project worked to:

- a) Influence the SEDP to incorporate SEA in line with the Government 'three-pillars' approach to sustainability.
- b) Establish a basis for monitoring of environmental performance in SEDP implementation.
- c) Promote the fact that SEA should also be integral to sector master plans prepared to implement the SEDP.

The May 2009 Performance Indicators Report gives a clear pictorial outline of the various planning processes currently underway for Con Dao district and the influence of the project in a number of key areas and is shown in Figure 5 below. It concludes that while not all recommendations of the project are included in the new SEDP, and while the draft 2011-2015 SEDP has yet to be accepted by province, the 2011 -2015 SEDP presents 'a far better balance of environmental, social and economic goals than previously'.

A series of Sector Master Plans are also currently being prepared. These sit under the SEDP and include the Tourism Master Plan and Construction Master Plan. They are required by law, under the LEP, to incorporate SEA. At the time of this final project evaluation it is not possible to assess to what extent SEA will be effectively incorporated into Sector Master

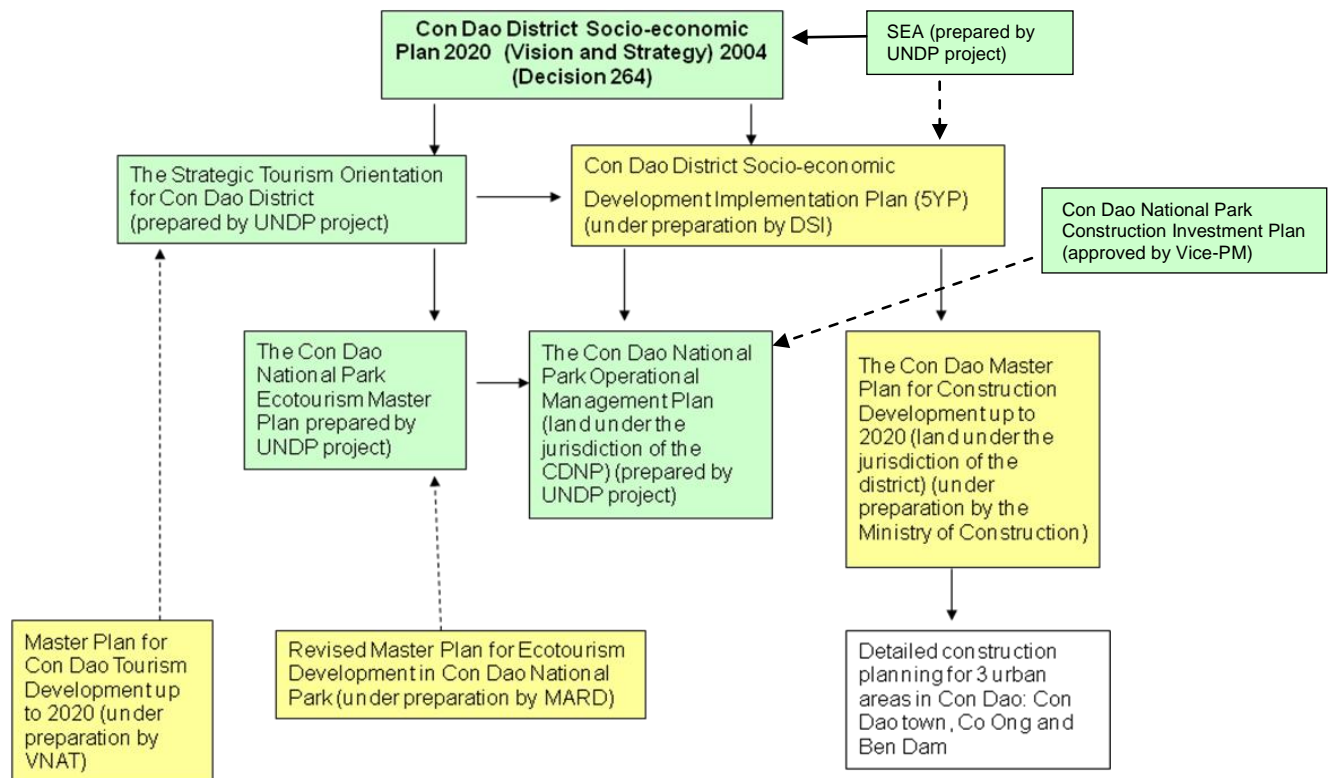
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<sup>50</sup> 2011-2015 with a vision to 2020

<sup>51</sup> which was being drafted over the life of the project.

Plans. The CDNP Director confirmed to the final evaluation team that he felt the project had helped to increase the awareness of District and Provincial level stakeholders on the importance of biodiversity conservation, SEA and sustainable development. He felt that this increased awareness was already beginning to have an influence on planning and decision making processes for Con Dao, towards greater consideration of environmental impacts.

Figure 5: Con Dao District Planning Framework



The project also worked strategically to influence tourism development planning as is demonstrated under Objective 3 below. The project has not been able to directly influence the Construction Master Plan, although this plan should be required to align with the new SEDP and to incorporate SEA under the Law on Environmental Protection. A number of stakeholders suggested during the evaluation that the draft Construction Master Plan includes high impact developments that would pose a significant threat to the Con Dao islands natural resource base and to biodiversity conservation. The draft plan is however not yet available for public consultation and was not seen by the evaluation team.

As demonstrated under Objective 1, the project also played a lead role in developing the Operational Management Plan for CDNP and associated Zoning Plan. These are key strategic planning tools for the park. The OMP was presented to Province in March 2009 and is currently in the process of being approved. It prioritises biodiversity conservation with some zones identified to be managed for sustainable development of ecotourism or sustainable off-take of marine products. The project also supported CDNP to develop an Eco Tourism Master Plan to guide tourism activities in the park.

Overall it is evaluated that the project worked strategically to influence development planning processes for Con Dao; key outcomes are the inclusion of SEA into the new (2011 – 2015)

SEDP, project support and influence for sustainable tourism development planning<sup>52</sup> and project support to strengthen management of the marine and coastal areas of the National Park. The project did not have a specific focus on the other key biodiversity threats linked to both the Construction Master Plan and District proposals to expand the Ben Dam port, as these were not included as direct outcomes of the project. It is to be hoped that the requirement for SEAs under the SEDP will influence port and construction development. This is discussed further in Section 3.3.

Outcome level Indicator: Decrease of inshore fishing infractions by local community and of offshore fishing fleet infractions.

This indicator was selected by the project to assess achievement of Outcome 2: 'Strengthened sustainable environmental management in Con Dao district'. As outlined above, the other indicator 'District Division of Natural Resources and Environment actively involved in the support of planning and environmental mitigation' was discarded due to overlap with the Swedish funded SEMLA project<sup>53</sup>.

The WWF Fisheries Survey undertaken between September and November 2007 gives a detailed assessment of near-shore and off-shore fishing including assessing use of illegal and destructive fishing methods. The assessment gives information on the overall status of fisheries resources in 2007 and current management systems and provides information on the three different categories of local inshore fishers. The assessment recommends several steps to improve fisheries management, including a focus of AIG and livelihood support activities on divers, establishing community involvement in sustainable fisheries management, capacity building for the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency and the improvement of cooperation between the key enforcement agencies<sup>54</sup> by establishing an inter-sectoral inspection team.

In the absence of dedicated MPA legislation, the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency (FRPA) of MARDC has the primary responsibility for enforcement of marine areas under the Fisheries Law. They are supported by Border Army Station 504 in patrolling international borders and for control of illegal activities, and by CDNP whose main role is to patrol the national park and report any illegal issues. CDNP rangers currently have little power to actively prevent infractions in the marine areas under their jurisdiction. Effective enforcement therefore relies on good inter-agency co-ordination between CDNP, FRPA and Border Army Station 504 as well as adequate resource allocation within these agencies. This situation complicates effective enforcement of the MPA. In addition, significant increases in the number of offshore fishing vessels coming into the area currently exceed the capacity of enforcement agencies to patrol and police them.

The project tried to strengthen inter-agency co-ordination by pressing for the establishment of an inter-agency task force and by providing training to the range of relevant agencies involved in enforcement. In September 2008 Decision (603/QĐ-UBND) of the Con Dao DPC established an inter-sectoral inspection team headed by the Vice-Chairman of the DPC. The team directs the task force in their regular activities. There have been two patrolling trips by the inter-sectoral team since its establishment in September 2008 (refer Annex 2).

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<sup>52</sup> Increasing the sustainability of planned tourism development was a core focus of Objective 3.

<sup>53</sup> initiated after design of the UNDP /GEF project

<sup>54</sup> Fisheries Resource Protection Agency, CDNP, Border Army Station 504 and Ben Dam port authorities

CDNP and the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency have also formally agreed to co-operate in communication and information dissemination to local and offshore fishermen, with support from Border Army Station 504 and Ben Dam port.

Training provided under the project includes rapid response training for 37 CDNP rangers, 3 Fisheries Protection staff, 3 Border Army Staff and 5 local fishermen. Further capacity building activities are currently ongoing. One area of capacity building currently being supported under the project is training for the Con Dao Fisheries Department in the collection and monitoring of fisheries catch/effort data. There is currently no systematic monitoring of catch / effort data for Con Dao and it is therefore not possible to assess the sustainability of fishing levels. WWF are providing training under the project but have had to sub contract the Fisheries Department to undertake this work. It is not clear whether the training and associated capacity building will have the outcome of establishing a long term system for monitoring catch and effort data within the Fisheries Department, as WWF report that there is currently little provision for this within Fisheries Department work plans. The outcome of this activity may become clearer by the end of the DANIDA funded component of the project in September of this year.

The project also aimed to increase the involvement of local fishers in surveillance of the MPA by establishing improved co-ordination and collaboration with enforcement officers. The project established a Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group (Decision No 180/QD-UBND.13 March 2009) as part of the MPA Natural Resources Conservation Convention process (under Objective 1). The role of the Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group is to support relevant Government agencies (FRPA, CDNP rangers and Border Army) by reporting any illegal activities that they witness. As outlined under Objective 1, fishers who were consulted during the final evaluation suggested that this process is not working very effectively as they find that enforcement officers do not react to fishing infractions which they report.

Fishers report a considerable increase in fishing effort over the life of the project. They estimate that 80% of fishing effort in the MPA is currently through illegal fishing by offshore boats. They reported that offshore fishermen regularly fish in the MPA, mostly at night. Local fishers feel that enforcement of offshore fishing boat infractions is currently ineffective. They also reported that many local fishermen continue to fish in core zone areas, although they understand that this is illegal and are aware of the likely negative impact in decreasing the long term sustainability of resources. They stressed that local fishermen have little option but to fish in all areas of the park, including core zones, because of the decline in fish stocks in the Con Dao region over recent years and their need to achieve adequate catch levels to support livelihoods. Biodiversity data on reef fish and other target species (lobster and giant clams) collected by the project would appear to confirm this qualitative information from fishers in showing a significant decline in key species biodiversity over the life of the project.

Representatives of the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency (FRPA) and CDNP rangers consulted during the evaluation however feel that there are currently few fisheries infractions. This opinion conflicts with that of most other stakeholders consulted during the evaluation (including the CCG, fishers, WWF, STA and some CDNP staff) who indicated that there are a high level of fishing infractions, particularly by offshore fishing vessels. The data provided in the May 2009 Performance Indicators report on 'Cases of fisheries violations recorded by the Fisheries police and Border Army' also indicates an increase in infractions<sup>55</sup> (refer Annex 2)

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<sup>55</sup> Consultations during the evaluation mission however indicate that this data does not necessarily represent an increase in illegal fishing activities as no differentiation is made by the Fisheries Department or Border

## Summary

The project worked strategically to influence District Planning process and has succeeded in increasing consideration of environmental sustainability within the latest draft of the Con Dao socio-economic development plan (SEDP) which is the overall strategic planning document for the District, and in including provision for SEA. Sector development plans fall under the SEDP and should therefore include SEA which is also required under the Law on Environmental Protection. Both the Strategic Tourism Orientation assessment and the Eco Tourism Master Plan supported under Objective 3 are likely to strongly influence tourism development planning for the District towards more sustainable levels and types of tourism and this will also contribute to Objective 2. However, the project has had less impact in its influence over other key threats to biodiversity conservation represented by the expansion of Ben Dam port and the Construction Master Plan. These were not included as core focus areas of the project.

There is a weak outcome in decreasing inshore fishing infractions. Fishers consider enforcement to be ineffective, particularly enforcement of illegal fishing by offshore boats. They also confirm that there are regular infringements by local fishers. Enforcement officers however identify few if any enforcement issues. This appears to suggest a lack of awareness of, or acceptance of, the need for enforcement by enforcement agencies. The Performance Indicators report gives data from awareness surveys conducted under Objective 1. These indicate a lack of awareness and understanding by the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency on the role and functions of the MPA (refer Annex 2). Enforcement systems in Con Dao are complex involving various agencies and no dedicated MPA legislation. Increasing use of the area by offshore vessels means that effective enforcement is beyond the capacity of existing enforcement officers and resources. This presented the project with a number of real challenges in achieving the indicator to 'decrease fishing infractions'. However, the selection by the project of a glass bottomed patrol vessel that is more suited to tourism than marine patrol also contributed to the weak outcome under this indicator. The project could also have strengthened its focus on enforcement by including specific indicators to assess the effectiveness of enforcement systems (capacity building).

⇒ Effectiveness rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

## Efficiency

The project worked strategically within the available budget to influence Government development planning processes and was cost effective in achieving the outcome of inclusion of SEA within the SEDP. The project's cost effectiveness in decreasing the level of fishing infractions is influenced by the inappropriate selection of a glass bottomed boat for CDNP patrolling. An increase in the number of patrols along with improved efficiency of enforcement, including adequate provision of fuel and allowances for working at night, was expected by the project as part of the Government in-kind contribution. Although the extent to which in kind contributions materialised is difficult to quantify, the number of patrol trips undertaken do not appear to represent a significant increase over previous levels of enforcement.

⇒ Efficiency rating: Moderately Satisfactory

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Police between illegal fishing activities and other infractions, for example linked to an out of date licence or lack of adequate safety gear. The extremely short time available to the evaluation team for consultations and analysis in Con Dao (4 days for the entire process of consultations and evaluation on Con Dao) prevented then from conducting any further specific data collection or analysis on infringement statistics.



### 3.2.4: Evaluation of Achievement of Objective 3

Objective and outcome 3 have a strong focus on sustainable financing and ecotourism, although the objective statement also includes reference to protection of coastal and marine biodiversity which is a slight overlap with the Objective 1 statement.

The objective level indicator would have perhaps sat more logically under Objective 2, with the outcome 3 level indicator 'Tourism investment required to include appropriate environmental mitigation and monitoring' more directly relevant to Outcome 2. Objective and outcome 3 could have then maintained a clear focus on sustainable financing of biodiversity conservation and in developing links between sustainable financing and eco-tourism development. However that being said, there is also an obvious link between overall tourism development on Con Dao, sustainable financing of biodiversity conservation and mitigation of environmental impacts from tourism. The three project objectives are interlinked towards achievement of the overall goal and some level of overlap is acceptable.

The following sections evaluate the achievement of Objective 3 in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Supporting quantitative data and further detail on the activities undertaken is given in Annex 2.

- Relevance was judged highly satisfactory (HS);
- Effectiveness satisfactory (MS) and
- Efficiency satisfactory (MS).

The overall achievement of Objective 3 is thus evaluated to be moderately satisfactory (MS)

#### Objective 3: Sustainable protection and financing of coastal and marine biodiversity in Con Dao islands region through support from ecotourism development.

Objective level Indicator:

- Province and district buy in to sustainable tourism development.

Outcome 3: Development of Sustainable Financing for Con Dao Islands Region  
Biodiversity

Outcome level indicators

- Tourism investment required to include appropriate environmental mitigation and monitoring.
- Sustainable financing mechanism identified and agreed.

#### **Relevance**

The following section assesses whether the outcomes under Objective 3 are consistent with relevant strategies and priorities.

Tourism has been identified as a development priority for the Con Dao region in Decision 264 of the Prime Minister and within the associated SEDP. The Vietnam Tourism Master Plan 1995-2010 identifies Con Dao, together with Vung Tau and Long Hai, as one of seven priority tourism destinations in the country. The Strategy for Tourism Development in Vietnam for 2001-2010 also has Con Dao as one of 21 national tourism sites listed for tourism development.

GOV is promoting the decentralisation of responsibility for protected areas to the provinces. In order to cover the operating costs associated with protected area management provincial authorities tend to encourage protected areas to generate their own income, with tourism development promoted as the main means of revenue generation.

The May 2009 Performance Indicators report identifies two main issues relevant to this push to develop tourism in protected areas in Vietnam:

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- Firstly, tourism is generally regarded as provision of amenities for the masses - the more tourists the better – and developments have focused on mainstream low-cost large-numbers developments. Catering for the masses typically involves a ‘cover-it-in-concrete’ approach, focusing on hotels and other services. Examples would be the development of Nha Trang bay or Phu Quoc island, which have had serious impacts on the protected areas and the natural environments and biodiversity in general.<sup>56</sup>
- Secondly, protected area management boards have tended to take on the role of tourism operators, diverting their staff and resources from what should be their main job as mandated under Decision 08 – that of protecting the landscape and its biodiversity. Protected area management boards have thus frequently come down on the side of intensive tourism development, for reasons of revenue generation, and not paid due attention to the impacts of the tourism development on the natural resources entrusted to them to manage. Clearly, the first issue needs to be addressed in order to ensure sustainable development of protected areas, and the second issue needs to be addressed in order to ensure appropriate management and avoid conflicts of interest.” (May 2009 Performance Indicators Report)

At project start development planning for Con Dao District was focussed on mass tourism, with predicted high costs in terms of sustainability. The negative impact on biodiversity of planned mass tourism development, with inadequate provision for environmental impact assessment and monitoring and high levels of construction, was clearly an issue which the project needed to address. The project's aim to incorporate lessons learnt from other areas in Vietnam and to influence District planning towards more sustainable levels and patterns of tourism is highly relevant to the project's biodiversity conservation and sustainable use objectives.

⇒ Relevance Rating: Highly Satisfactory (HS)

### **Effectiveness**

The achievement of Objective 3 is evaluated against the objective level indicator and incorporates assessment of the outcome level indicators. Further detail and quantitative data to support the analysis is given in Annex 2. The likelihood of sustainable impacts is explored under section 3.3.

#### Objective level indicator: Province and district buy-in to sustainable tourism development

- Outcome indicator: Tourism investment required to include appropriate environmental mitigation and monitoring.

The project developed a Tourism Orientation Strategy for Con Dao. This presented a strategic framework for sustainable tourism development based on assessment of carrying

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<sup>56</sup> There is a salutary lesson to be learnt from experience on Phu Quoc, where land speculation and disregard for any normal planning processes for the expected mass tourism development reached such a pitch that an investigation and subsequent court action was undertaken by Government.

capacity and establishment of socio-economic benefits for local residents. The Tourism Orientation Strategy was presented to the Province in a workshop in February 2008 and was approved by the PPC Vice-chairman and all departments present. The Strategy outlined an approach to achieving sustainability and excellence in service provision that would give maximum economic returns, with low visitor numbers and a high quality experience, bringing social and economic benefits to the local community. It stressed that tourism development should aim to protect the historical and natural resource base of the Con Dao islands region and should become an example of best practice for replication in Vietnam.

The Tourism Orientation Strategy influenced the new SEDP and the project worked strategically to promote the incorporation of sustainable tourism development objectives into the new 2011 -2015 SEDP. Consultations during this evaluation mission indicate that District and Provincial level stakeholders consider that the Tourism Orientation Strategy was also very useful in guiding their comments on the draft Con Dao Tourism Master Plan that is currently being prepared. It is hoped that it will also guide stakeholders comments on the Construction Master Plan towards a focus on sustainability and incorporation of SEA.

The latest draft of the 2011 - 2015 SEDP includes a clause that requires all developments on the islands to be subject to environmental impact assessment and mitigation<sup>57</sup>. In addition, clause 2.4 of Decision 120 of the Con Dao Investment Plan requires socio-economic development on Con Dao to follow the zoning plan and CDNP conservation and management objectives. The Zoning Plan<sup>58</sup> identifies sensitive development areas as 'Ecosystem Rehabilitation Zones'<sup>59</sup>. Sustainable tourism development is allowed in ecosystem rehabilitation zones, whereas it is forbidden in strict protection zones. Both the strict protection zones and ecosystem rehabilitation zones are under the control of the CDNP<sup>60</sup>. CDNP propose to develop the ecosystem regeneration zones as eco-tourism sites. The management of these sites by CDNP is likely to ensure that developments pay due attention to environmental mitigation and that environmental regulations are upheld, particularly considering the increased capacity of CDNP staff for MPA management.

The project has had a significant influence in securing the 'buy-in' of key Provincial, National and District stakeholders to sustainable tourism development. The Tourism Master Plan for Con Dao is currently being developed by VNAT who are the national consultants employed by the project to work on the Tourism Orientation Strategy. It is expected to follow the sustainable tourism orientation developed under Objective 3. The project has also helped to strengthen the strategic and legal grounds for environmental mitigation and monitoring of tourism developments and activities on Con Dao, through its influence on the new SEDP under Objective 2 and through the zoning plan developed under Objective 1.

CDNP is responsible for managing all tourism activities in the park; any activity within the boundaries of the park requires their permission. CDNP also operate their own tours in the park and there is a potential for this business role to detract from their core biodiversity conservation and park management function. This emerged as an issue during the life of the project. The May 2009 Performance Indicators report states that 'the CDNP management board is driven by the need to generate its own income...in line with Government policies for self-financing...the intention of the CDNP management board at present is to continue to develop as an operator, with a possible intention to develop more of a managerial role in

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<sup>57</sup> This is also required under the Law on Environmental Protection

<sup>58</sup> Developed under Objective 1 of the project

<sup>59</sup> e.g. potential developments on turtle nesting beaches

<sup>60</sup> as outlined in Decision 120 of the Con Dao Investment Plan and the associated Operational Management Plan

future as outside investors come forward'. It also comments that CDNP's focus on running a tourism business is likely to impact on the level of achievement of project conservation management outcomes in that 'project resources such as the patrol-monitoring boat, car, monitoring equipment (including dive equipment), and staff resources, will continue to be hired out for tourism purposes as the opportunities arise'.

Given the status quo of CDNP's dual role as park managers and tour operators however, the project worked strategically to strengthen CDNP's capacity to manage and operate tourism within the park towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable use objectives. The project supported CDNP to develop an Ecotourism strategy and Master Plan for the park. The ecotourism strategy outlines an approach focussed on provision of quality tourism services to a low volume of tourists, maintaining a core focus on biodiversity conservation and preservation of the scenic and historical values of the park. The strategy outlines a mechanism to control visitor numbers through a concession and lease system. The aim of the concession system is to manage visitor numbers and still enable CDNP to generate funds to cover associated tourism management costs and for maintenance of the terrestrial and marine resources used by tourists within the park. Provision of services for tourists involves a minimum of infrastructure development in Ecosystem Rehabilitation Zones and on Con Son Island. The tourism services proposed in the strategy are designed to be manageable within current CDNP staff capacity and capability. Training in tour guiding was also provided under the project<sup>61</sup>. The Ecotourism Master Plan includes a focus on community participation in eco-tourism service provision, to provide livelihood benefits to the local Con Dao community. Financial support to enable the community to develop capacity to operate in the tourism sector is envisaged through the Conservation Trust Fund (refer outcome objective below).

Outcome: Development of Sustainable Financing for Con Dao Islands Region Biodiversity

Outcome level indicators:

- Sustainable financing mechanism identified and agreed.

The establishment of a Trust Fund was identified during project design as an appropriate mechanism for sustainable financing of conservation activities on Con Dao. It was envisaged that the Fund would capture a portion of tourism revenue and potentially also establish a conservation tax on development activities and fisheries charges.

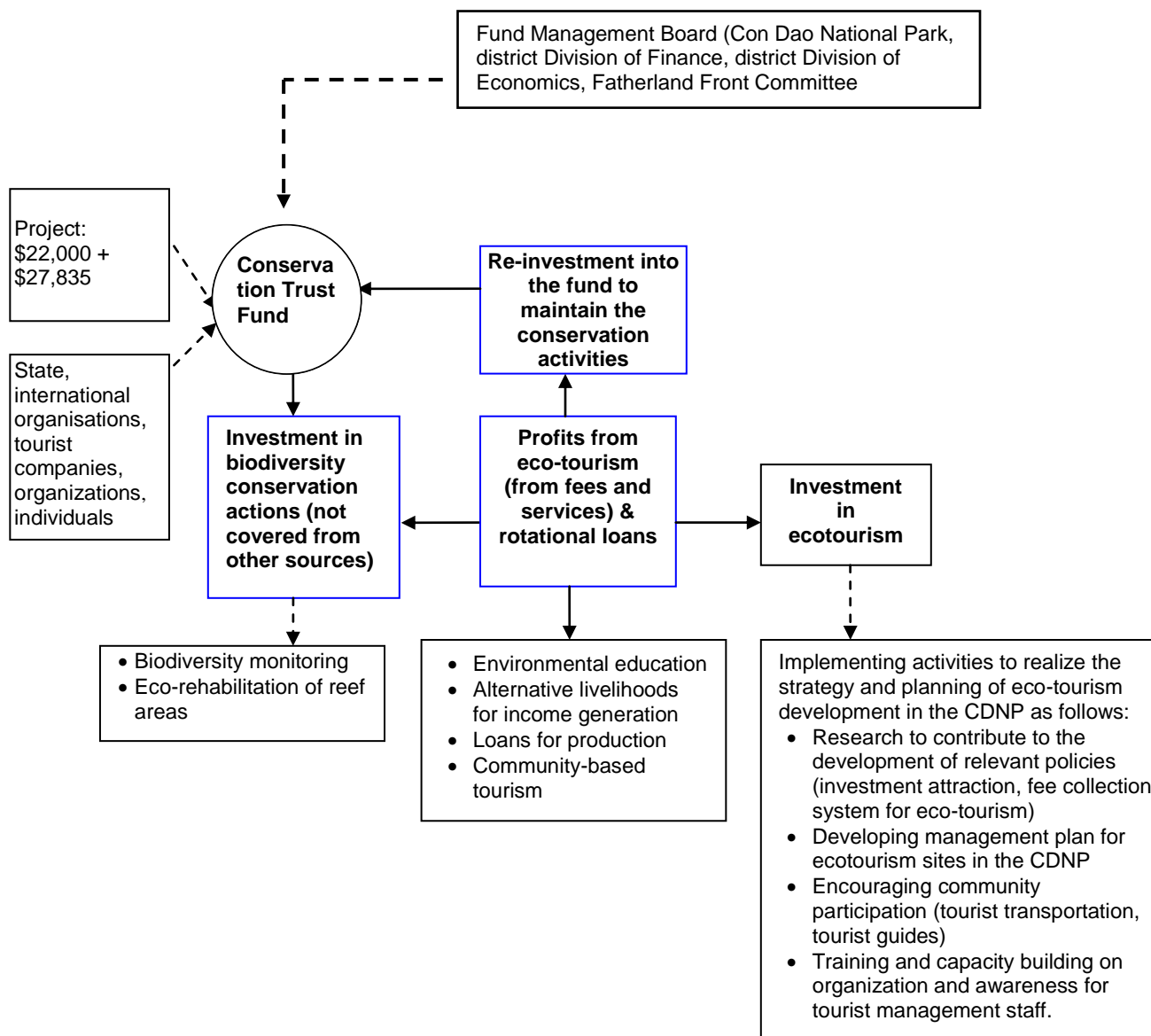
The Project aimed first to secure approval from the relevant Government authorities and the private sector for the creation of the Trust Fund, following which it would negotiate a fee structure and obtain the agreement of all stakeholders on a sustainable financing mechanism. This was a complex task involving a detailed study of legal mechanisms and the identification of a sustainable financing mechanism that could be agreed by all stakeholders.

At the time of the project's Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) in May 2008 there were no concrete outputs towards establishing the Conservation Trust fund and the MTE report stressed the urgency of initiating work under this outcome. Unfortunately WWF sub contract managers were not able to start work on this activity until March 2009 and delays appear to have been partly due to the difficulty of finding a suitably qualified consultant within the available budget. In March 2009 a national consultant was hired by WWF to work with relevant stakeholders to develop a Trust Fund proposal. This was presented to the Project at the end of May 2009, just before the project's end in June 2009.

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<sup>61</sup> Although originally envisaged as a Training of Trainers activity for CDNP, this activity was in fact implemented to provide direct training for CDNP.

The May 2009 Performance Indicators report outlines the structure of the proposed Trust Fund for Con Dao:



The proposal was developed in consultation with key stakeholders and is tailored to suit the conditions and biodiversity management context on Con Dao. It has good ownership by CDNP. The Trust Fund focuses on providing sustainable financial support for key conservation management activities that are not currently funded by the Government and that will not be covered under the Con Dao Investment Plan (Decision 120)<sup>62</sup>. It also has a focus on providing support to communities for the establishment of community based ecotourism activities / AIG. This is strategic as it provides a mechanism through which the CDNP can provide livelihood support to communities and develop biodiversity conservation and eco-tourism partnerships with them. If successful and well managed, this is likely to increase community incentives to adopt more sustainable patterns of use. The Trust Fund

<sup>62</sup> The proposed Conservation Trust Fund helps to address the funding gaps identified in the Con Dao Investment Plan (Decision 120).

proposal includes an outline of how the Fund will operate, however detailed operational planning is envisaged once the legal and institutional framework of the Trust Fund has been agreed by the Province / GOV.

The late start of this activity in the project life cycle means that at project end, although a Trust Fund proposal has been developed and a road map prepared by CDNP towards obtaining approval from provincial authorities, there is as yet no outcome of actually achieving sustainable financing for Con Dao islands region biodiversity. This outcome is dependent on considerable further provincial and national decision making processes. GOV have recently passed a decision on Payment for Environmental Services (PES) (Decision 380 QD/TTCP) although the implementing guidelines for PES arrangements remain uncertain pending completion of various official pilots. This national process is likely to influence the establishment of a conservation trust fund on Con Dao.

### **Summary**

The project worked strategically to influence tourism development planning frameworks for Con Dao and was effective in influencing the 2011 – 2015 SEDP so that the latest draft incorporates SEA and represents a more sustainable approach to, and level of, tourism development. The Con Dao Tourism Orientation Strategy was influential in raising key Provincial and District stakeholders' awareness of the importance of incorporating environmental impact assessment into tourism development on Con Dao and in advocating for a low numbers, high quality approach. The project also supported CDNP to develop a zoning plan that identifies strict protection zones and ecosystem rehabilitation zones; the official approval of these zones (Decision 120) secures CDNP's role in managing tourism activities within the park. CDNP's tourism management role was further strengthened through project support to develop an Eco Tourism Master Plan.

Late start of activities to design a Conservation Trust Fund means that at project end the Trust Fund proposal is currently in the initial stages of provincial level assessment. It is not possible to predict government decision making on this issue and to evaluate the likelihood of the outcome of achieving sustainable financing.

⇒ Effectiveness Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

### **Efficiency**

The project was strategic and cost efficient in identifying channels to influence tourism development planning towards more sustainable patterns and levels of tourism. The extremely late start of trust fund activities however means that at project end there is no outcome to meet the indicator 'sustainable financing mechanism identified and agreed'. The difficulty of finding a suitably qualified consultant within the budget available appears to have contributed to the delay in starting this activity.

⇒ Efficiency Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

### **Section: 3.3 Evaluation of Sustainability**

Sustainability of outcomes is central to evaluating project impact. At the time of the evaluation, assessment of project outcomes is complicated by the fact that:

- a) A number of project outcomes depend on on-going national decision making processes, which extend beyond the life of the project.
- b) DANIDA funded components of the project will be continuing until September of this year.

The likelihood of sustainability of outcomes towards 'conservation and sustainable management of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity and ecological processes of the Con Dao islands region' is affected by ongoing anthropogenic and climatic impacts. The following sections include individual assessment of four aspects of sustainability: financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental. As will be demonstrated below a number of significant risks continue to influence the likelihood of achievement of the Project's overall conservation and sustainable management objectives.

The likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes is rated as:

Moderately Likely (ML): There are moderate risks that affect the sustainability of desired project objectives.

#### **Evaluation of Sustainability of Outcomes**

##### **Socio-political**

Socio-economic development priorities for Con Dao outlined in both the current and final 2009 draft of the SEDP include tourism development and expansion of the Ben Dam port, although as discussed under section 3.2 a high priority is placed on tourism development.

The project has worked strategically and effectively to influence tourism development planning towards more sustainable levels and patterns than those envisaged by District authorities at project start. However the actual conservation and sustainable use outcome will depend on: the final GOV Tourism Master Plan for Con Dao, the extent to which tourism developments are in practice required to incorporate EIA and whether tourism operators are required to monitor environmental impacts. The Con Dao Tourism Master Plan is currently in the design stage and it remains to be seen what strategic direction it will outline for Con Dao. The likelihood of a positive outcome within the master plan towards sustainable tourism development is however supported by the high level of buy-in by some key District and Provincial stakeholders for the vision and approach outlined in the Tourism Orientation Strategy developed under the project. The fact that the national consultants who were employed by the project to work on the Tourism Orientation Strategy are also those in charge of drafting the Tourism Master Plan also augers for a positive outcome.

In line with legal requirements under the Law on Environmental Protection, the project supported the Province to incorporate strategic environmental assessment (SEA) into the current and future (2011 -2015) SEDP. It had less influence on annual district planning processes linked to the current SEDP, which were beyond the scope of project influence. The extent to which sector plans will align with the SEDP and incorporate effective provisions for SEA remains to be seen. The Construction Master Plan has the potential to have a significant impact on Con Dao's resource base. Poorly regulated and / or high levels of construction pose significant risks to the biodiversity of the Con Dao islands. The implied

increase in anthropogenic impacts from increased construction (including residential, industrial and tourism activities) also increase likely impacts on the natural resource base and hence on biodiversity conservation. District authorities' ambitions are known to be in favour of a significant level of construction that will bring short term economic gain. The influence of the project in supporting the inclusion of SEA into the SEDP and in increasing the awareness of key stakeholders on the importance of sustainable, low impact development should influence future development planning. However it is not currently possible to evaluate the extent to which this is likely to result in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use outcomes for the Con Dao islands region.

The potential impact of continuing expansion of Ben Dam port (as outlined in the new 2011 – 2020 SEDP) represents a significant risk for biodiversity conservation in Con Dao. Planned expansion of the port includes provision for an increase in offshore fishing vessels (from the current 1000 to 5000 vessels) and use of the port by cruise liners and petroleum vessels. It is not possible at this stage to assess whether requirements for SEA outlined in the latest draft of the 2011 – 2020 SEDP and in the Law on Environmental Protection will in practice ensure effective management of the significant environmental risks associated with proposed port developments. There are a number of issues:

- The potential impact of planned increases in petroleum vessels coming into the area and associated risk of oil spills is a significant threat to biodiversity and to proposed tourism developments.
- The potential negative impact of large numbers of tourists associated with Cruise liner tourism is well documented internationally and environmental and social impacts will need to be well managed if this style of tourism is to fit within the high quality tourism vision outlined in the Tourism Orientation Strategy.
- The impact of illegal fishing on reef fish stocks by offshore fishing vessels is currently thought to be significant<sup>63</sup>. Effective enforcement would help to reduce the impact of illegal fishing by offshore vessels but, as outlined under section 3.2, enforcement in Con Dao is currently weak. The project undertook a number of activities to try to build enforcement capacity and reduce illegal fishing infractions but did not achieve the desired outcomes. The proposed five fold increase in offshore vessels coming into the port has the potential to decimate local marine biodiversity and is also likely to result in a continued increase in solid waste in marine and coastal areas. These impacts will threaten tourism development on Con Dao as one of the core tourist attractions is Con Dao's marine and coastal resource base.

Although not directly incorporated into the scope of the project, proposed expansion of the Ben Dam Port therefore poses significant risks for both biodiversity conservation and sustainable use outcomes and for tourism development.

Local fishers have few alternative livelihood options and declining fish stocks in the Con Dao region limits the extent to which they feel that they are able to establish sustainable levels and methods of fishing if they are to still support basic livelihood needs. The project has to date not been able to provide local fishers with alternative income generating opportunities, although this may still be achieved to some extent under DANIDA funded components of the project which continue until September of this year. A Sustainable local fishery is unlikely unless there is:

- a) effective enforcement to manage current fishing effort and allow fish stocks to recover adequately.
- b) alternative income generating opportunities available to fishers

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<sup>63</sup> although there is no quantitative data to demonstrate this and this assessment is based on qualitative information from a range of stakeholders.



The development of tourism and particularly the proposed involvement of local communities in provision of well managed tourism services, as outlined in the CDNP Ecotourism Master Plan and Conservation Trust Fund proposal, presents a potential AIG avenue for local fishers. Community involvement in ecotourism also often helps to establish economic incentives for biodiversity conservation amongst local communities. In the Pacific, for example, community-led turtle, whale watching and snorkelling tours have helped to increase communities' interest in conservation. Direct revenue from ecotourism to the communities provides an economic incentive for biodiversity conservation. It is not possible at this stage to assess the likelihood of this outcome in Con Dao as community involvement in provision of tourism services depends on considerable further capacity building and support. By September of this year, at the end of DANIDA funded project components, it may be possible to evaluate the likelihood of achievement of this outcome to a greater extent, depending on whether a) the pilot project to transfer fishers' boats to tourism operation is successful and b) the Conservation Trust Fund has been agreed and established.

The project established good ownership of key project outputs and outcomes in CDNP. It also increased the awareness of a wide range of stakeholders on the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, particularly relative to effective management of marine and coastal resources and to sustainable tourism development.

In summary the likelihood of sustainable project outcomes in Con Dao is strongly influenced by on-going development planning processes. Although the project has strengthened MPA management frameworks and built capacity and awareness, biodiversity conservation outcomes will depend on effective management of resource use, which in turn depends on socio-political decision making processes.

➔ Rating: Moderately Likely (ML)

### **Institutional**

One significant project achievement was in strengthening the institutional capacity of CDNP for marine protected area management. The project supported a number of outputs all of which have strong ownership by CDNP. This augers well for their continued use by CDNP towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable use outcomes.<sup>64</sup> Key outputs include the Zoning Plan, Operational Management Plan<sup>65</sup>, Eco-Tourism Strategy and associated training and resources. The Conservation Trust Fund also has good ownership by CDNP who will need to actively lead the process of securing Government approval and to develop an operational plan if it is approved. The Trust Fund provides an avenue for CDNP to support community involvement in eco-tourism. If it is established, this will help to strengthen CDNP's institutional relationship with local communities. The consultative approach adopted by the project has also helped to strengthen CDNP's institutional capacity for involving local stakeholders in key biodiversity conservation outputs and processes. The project's participatory approach in developing the Zoning Plan and the involvement of fishers in coral rehabilitation are particularly relevant.

Currently, marine enforcement systems are complex, involving various agencies. The Fisheries Resource Protection Agency and Border Army Station 504 play a key role in management of marine resource use. There is as yet no dedicated MPA legislation, which

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<sup>64</sup> CDNP are the institution responsible for conservation of biodiversity in over 80% of the Con Dao islands region

<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that the Province have not yet approved the OMP but consultations during the evaluation indicate that it is highly likely that they will do so in the near future.

limits the extent to which CDNP rangers can effectively patrol the MPA. This and the fact that, despite project provision for one, CDNP rangers still do not have an appropriate, dedicated patrol vessel makes effective enforcement of the MPA unlikely. Purchase of a patrol boat is also not incorporated as an expected financial input under the Con Dao Investment Plan to 2020. Although the CDNP have a relatively strong institutional capacity, weakness in MPA enforcement systems reduces the likelihood of effective management to support sustainable use and biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The project recognised the importance of interagency co-operation for effective enforcement and worked to establish an inter-agency task force and to build the capacity of the Fisheries Department. The institutional capacity of the FRPA for effective enforcement of the MPA however remains weak and it is currently unlikely that effective enforcement will be an outcome of the project.

The project also established two community based institutions: the Community Consultation Group (CCG) and the Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group. The CCG indicated to the evaluation team that they would not continue to function as an official group after the end of the project. They felt however that their awareness of biodiversity conservation and sustainable management issues had been increased through the project and that this has strengthened their capacity to have a positive influence in their individual representative roles (village heads, heads of Mass Organisations and Government agency representatives). Although not an institutional impact per se, this outcome is a result of a community institution having been established under the project and the individuals' increased awareness is likely to continue to have a positive influence on conservation objectives in Con Dao. As outlined in section 3.2, the Con Dao Marine Resources Protection Public Group was established to support enforcement of the MPA. Although they will continue to exist as a group, their impact in supporting effective management of resource use is limited by the shortcomings in the enforcement system.

As discussed under section 3.1, the broader institutional role of WWF in MPA and livelihood support work in Vietnam means that the incorporation of learning from the Con Dao project into other MPA initiatives in Vietnam is highly likely.

As one of the first MPAs to be established in Vietnam, the project's outputs and outcomes are likely to guide future MPA establishment in Vietnam. The CDNP Director actively promotes and shares his agency's biodiversity conservation experiences through national channels. The process and outputs for establishing the zoning plan, operational management plan, ecotourism master plan and associated management tools (including biodiversity monitoring, coral rehabilitation and design of the Conservation Trust Fund) are all likely to contribute to institutional strengthening of future MPA initiatives in Vietnam.

In summary, although the project has established good ownership of project outcomes with CDNP, built their capacity for MPA management, strengthened the consideration of environmental sustainability within local planning frameworks and is likely to result in replication of learning within other MPA initiatives in Vietnam, the institutional weakness in current enforcement systems<sup>66</sup> limits the likelihood of sustainable outcomes towards achieving the overall objective of conservation and sustainable management.

➔ Rating: Moderately Likely

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<sup>66</sup> both in terms of the legal and strategic mandates of the institutions involved in MPA management and their capacity

## Financial

The Con Dao Investment Plan 2009-2020 which was formally approved by Decision No. 120/QĐ-TTg of the Vice Prime Minister in January 2009 covers 93% of core park management activities identified in the OMP and represents a considerable increase in financial resources<sup>67</sup> to CDNP. The CDNP's Director was largely responsible for securing the Con Dao Investment Plan, which was not an outcome of the project per se. However, project outcomes, such as the Zoning Plan, OMP and Ecotourism Master Plan, and the project's role in increasing CDNP's capacity, particularly for MPA management, will serve to strengthen biodiversity conservation outcomes associated with the increased financial resources.

As outlined under section 3.2 some funding gaps were identified in the Investment Plan. In particular MPA enforcement is unlikely to receive adequate resources to enable enforcement agencies to function effectively. The UNDP / GEF project has supported CDNP to design a Conservation Trust Fund which includes financial support for CDNP activities not covered under the Con Dao Investment Plan. It is not possible at this juncture to evaluate the likelihood of establishment and effective operation of the Conservation Trust Fund which is still in the initial stages of Government approval and assessment.

The Conservation Trust Fund also incorporates provision for funding community involvement in eco-tourism towards establishing alternative livelihoods for fishers and livelihood benefits to the Con Dao community. If the Trust Fund is set up and if local communities are able to establish livelihoods within the eco-tourism sector, this would help to provide them with sustainable income generating alternatives to fishing and provide communities with an economic incentive for biodiversity conservation.

Currently CDNP generates income from managing tourism in the park. Any activity undertaken within the boundaries of the park requires a permit from CDNP and economic returns from the permit process are income generated for the CDNP<sup>68</sup>. As outlined under section 3.2 the role of CDNP as a tourism operator raises the potential for a conflict of interest between their role in biodiversity conservation and in tourism. If tourist numbers increase in line with the objectives of the SEDP, CDNP may increasingly feel the need to use resources to manage their tourism business and this would detract from biodiversity conservation outcomes. Equally financial benefits from tourism could influence decision making on sustainable visitor levels relative to the carrying capacity of the natural resource base. The eco-tourism strategy presents an approach for managing this, to some extent, envisaging a limit on visitor numbers and with CDNP moving into more of an overall management role, where tourism operations are leased or contracted out to the private sector and with increased involvement of local community groups.

Financial sustainability is also highly relevant to the Fisheries Resource Protection Agency given their key role in enforcement of the MPA. The FRPA do not currently have adequate fuel and other allowances to cover MPA patrol and this impacts negatively on their effectiveness. As outlined under Section 3.2, effective enforcement is a key issue for MPA management and biodiversity conservation, particularly given the increasing impact of offshore boats. There are currently significant funding gaps both for CDNP and FRPA in the area of enforcement.

In summary, although Decision 120 represents a significant financial resource for CDNP, uncertainty over the Conservation Trust Fund and the lack of funding for effective

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<sup>67</sup> VND 350,000 million (US\$ 20 million) for the period 2009-2020

<sup>68</sup> although profits are currently not recycled directly to cover park expenses but are administered separately with expenditure dependent on provincial approval.

enforcement of the MPA make the outcome of sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation moderately likely.

Rating: Moderately Likely (ML)

### **Environmental**

The impact of climatic events on the biodiversity of the Con Dao islands was demonstrated by the 1997 typhoon and the 1998 and 2005 coral bleaching events. Climate change is predicted to result in an increase in climatic events world wide and is a priority concern for Vietnam. The project design did not include any consideration of climate change impacts and Con Dao will need to establish a Climate Change adaptation strategy that assesses likely social and environmental impacts of climate change and that establishes adaptation and response mechanisms.

Part of the assessment of climate change impacts will involve sound biodiversity monitoring and the project has significantly increased CDNP's capacity to monitor marine biodiversity in the park. As discussed in section 3.2 further data sets are required before it will be possible to evaluate whether CDNP are effectively monitoring biodiversity and it would be interesting to evaluate this in a year's time. The project is also currently supporting the Fisheries Department to collect and analyse catch and effort data in order to establish data sets that could be used to assess fishing pressure and thus guide fisheries management strategies. It is also not currently possible to evaluate the likelihood of this activity becoming institutionalised within the Fisheries Department, although this may become clearer by the end of the DANIDA funded component of the project in September.

The project also initiated some coral rehabilitation work and trained fishers in replanting coral on damaged reefs. This was successful in that the planted coral is growing well and fishers consider they have acquired skills and knowledge that would enable them to replant coral without any further training. They are interested in being paid to continue to undertake this activity. There is provision for this within the Conservation Trust Fund, if this is established.

The socio-political, financial and institutional aspects of establishing environmental sustainability have been discussed above and will not be repeated here.

In summary, the above analysis suggests that environmental sustainability will be influenced by:

- National, provincial and district level planning and development processes that are currently 'in process'. In particular environmental sustainability will depend on the type and level of tourism development, construction and on high risk developments associated with Port expansion.
- Active implementation of SEA and of environmental monitoring outlined in the SEDP within sector master plans.
- Provincial agreement on the CDNP Operational Management Plan
- Establishment of improved enforcement capacity within CDNP and FRPA and establishment of dedicated MPA legislation.
- Effective support to local communities and particularly fishers to enable them to establish sustainable livelihoods
- Agreement on and establishment of the Conservation Trust Fund
- A clear focus by CDNP on their role in biodiversity conservation relative to their role in running tourism operations in the park.

➡ The likelihood of environmental sustainability is evaluated to be Moderately Likely (ML)

## **PART 4: LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1: Lessons Learnt**

A number of lessons can be learnt from the UNDP / GEF Project for 'Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in the Con Dao islands region' and these in turn feed into a series of recommendations for consideration by UNDP / GEF and Ba Ria-Vung Tau province / Con Dao District.

#### Ownership, Alignment and Stakeholder involvement

The project clearly demonstrates the positive impact of fostering good ownership of project objectives and outcomes within the national agency responsible for biodiversity conservation and with relevant Government institutions responsible for development planning. It also demonstrates the effectiveness of aligning project outcomes with relevant national strategic planning frameworks.

The project worked strategically to adapt implementation mechanisms to influence Government planning processes towards achievement of project outcomes. This can be seen particularly in relation to project support for incorporation of SEA into the SEDP and in influencing development planning towards more sustainable levels and patterns of tourism development. The project identified the key agencies responsible for SEDP outcomes and manoeuvred effectively to ensure that it was able to support them directly in achieving SEA outcomes. Direct engagement<sup>69</sup> of the national consultants responsible for preparing the District Tourism Master Plan in the project is also likely to contribute to positive outcomes towards planning for sustainable tourism development.

The emphasis on community involvement and engagement in project design was appropriate and followed good practice, as was the focus on identifying and establishing alternative income generating opportunities for the resource user groups that would be most affected by establishment of the MPA. The difficulties which the project faced in establishing sustainable use, and in achieving the 'active commitment' of local communities to biodiversity conservation, offer a number of lessons for future MPA initiatives in Vietnam.

The Community Consultation Group (CCG), although effective as an accepted representative forum for local stakeholder involvement in Vietnam, did not adequately represent fishers. The absence of a Fisherman's Union in Con Dao is typical of the situation in Vietnam. It is important that MPA support projects recognise that inclusion of elected village heads within a CCG does not necessarily result in effective representation of fishers. The fact that fishers are not represented as a group should be recognized in project design and ways identified to improve representation of fishermen within project implementation mechanisms. The most appropriate way to achieve this is likely to depend on the project's socio-political context and assessment should form part of project design studies.

In Vietnam opportunities for establishing community based organisations are limited. However in the Caribbean, for example, marine protected area projects have supported fishermen to form Fishers Associations with elected representatives sitting on MPA consultative committees. In the Pacific projects have supported fishers to establish fishing co-operatives. These focus on commercial marketing but can also play a representative role in MPA projects.

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<sup>69</sup> In developing the Tourism Orientation Strategy

#### Local perceptions of biodiversity conservation project impacts

Fishermen reported that when they first heard that a marine conservation project was to be implemented on Con Dao, many were concerned that this would mean fishing bans and prohibitions. This perception resulted in a number of fishers increasing their effort in order to make use of the status quo before the onset of any restrictions. The lesson here is on the need to include fishers in project design so that they can contribute to, have an understanding of, and sense of ownership of MPA project objectives and outcomes. Project design and implementation processes should include consultation with all local resource user groups to identify potential livelihood impacts of biodiversity conservation measures and to identify ways to support sustainable livelihoods. It is also important for conservation projects to raise local awareness very early on in the project cycle of objectives, activities and opportunities for local involvement.

An interesting comparison is with a current atoll ecosystem conservation project in the Maldives. The project is supporting a range of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use outcomes, including alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities. One of the priority issues which the project is helping to address is the unsustainable level of shark fishing for overseas shark fin soup markets. A number of local fishermen interpreted 'alternative livelihood support' to mean that shark fishermen would receive financial incentives to start alternative businesses to shark fishing. The result was a move by a number of fishermen into shark fishing, as they perceived that this would make them more eligible for alternative livelihood benefits under the project. The immediate impact was thus an increase in shark fishing effort, which ran counter to project biodiversity and sustainable use objectives. The project is currently working to change this perception and is consulting widely with atoll communities to develop a range of alternative livelihood support projects that will benefit a broad cross spectrum of local stakeholder groups.

#### Support for Alternative Income Generation (AIG) initiatives for fishers

Although the incorporation of initiatives to support alternative income generation within the project was highly relevant, one lesson learnt from the project to date is that viable options for effective AIG support in remote locations such as Con Dao may be limited. Identification and support for AIG pilot projects also requires a considerable time input and the project was not able to achieve concrete livelihood benefits for local fishers in the project timeframe. There is an associated risk of causing frustration among fishers if their expectations on outcomes from AIG are not met. This in turn impacts negatively on consultation processes, as fishers become frustrated with too much talk and no concrete results which can also limit their support for and active commitment to the project.

#### Stakeholder review / impact of external stakeholders

There are also lessons to be learnt about the potential for stakeholders to emerge during the life of the project and have a key impact on the achievement of project outcomes. In the case of the Con Dao project this was an external stakeholder group, the offshore fishermen. The impact of offshore fishermen through illegal fishing in near shore areas is reported to be significant by a range of stakeholders. Recognition of this impact points to the importance of effective enforcement and of the need for careful assessment of the impacts of proposed expansion of Ben Dam port. As outlined in section 3.3, the other proposed users of the Ben Dam port, petroleum vessels and cruise liners, also pose a significant threat to the biodiversity of the Con Dao islands region and may emerge as significant groups likely to have an impact on achievement of biodiversity conservation objectives in the future.

The project recognised the increasing impact of offshore fishers and targeted some information dissemination activities at this stakeholder group. However it did not directly incorporate measures to address the threat posed by offshore fishers and port development.

As outlined in section 3.3, time and budget limitations restricted the extent to which it would have been possible for the project to address these issues. Nevertheless a stakeholder review could have been undertaken along with a strategic review to assess options<sup>70</sup>. It is often the case in conservation and development projects that stakeholders emerge during the life of the project<sup>71</sup> and it is important for projects to review the initial stakeholder analysis. This is particularly important if it becomes obvious to project implementers that new stakeholders are impacting on the achievement of project outcomes or if key stakeholders have been left out of project design and implementation processes.

### Enforcement

In relation to the above, enforcement has come out of this evaluation as a key issue for achieving sustainable use and biodiversity conservation in Con Dao. The increasing number of offshore boats in the area is beyond the capacity of current enforcement systems to police. Weakness in MPA enforcement is exacerbated by the complexity of national legislation relative to patrolling and enforcing marine protected areas. There were also project shortcomings in selection of an inappropriate glass bottomed enforcement vessel and more focus could have been placed on enforcement through selection of specific indicators related to the objective of achieving effective 'protection'. The lessons learnt here are perhaps in the need to:

- a) recognise that enforcement is a key issue for achieving sustainable use of marine protected areas, particularly where there are significant numbers of non resident fishermen with a low stake in sustainable use of the area and who cannot be captured within usual project consultation processes;
- b) explore opportunities for / increase the focus of project outcomes on establishing community fishing zones, where fishers undertake managed fishing activities, in line with sustainable use objectives and where they collaborate with MPA enforcement agencies to ensure the areas are managed effectively. Establishment of community fishing zones within MPAs can enhance local fishers' livelihoods and increase their ownership of and support for MPA management. Establishing sustainable patterns and levels of use will, however, still rely on effective patrolling by official MPA enforcement agencies.
- c) include SMART indicators that focus on improving levels and efficiency of enforcement within monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes and objectives.
- d) ensure that equipment purchased under the project is suitable for the purpose intended; and
- e) (although this is outside the scope of project influence) the need for MPA legislation that enables park rangers to effectively enforce MPAs

### Project Implementation Modalities

In terms of project implementation modalities, there are lessons to be learnt on the potential impact of delays in achieving project outcomes by project end. This relates both to recognition of the difficulty of recruiting staff to remote locations and to the sequencing of activities within a project. Consultative processes take time and it is important to recognise for example that if starting AIG activities is dependent on establishment of MPA zoning and identification of the user group most likely to be affected by zones, then this is likely to delay the start of AIG pilot projects and reduce the time available to achieve livelihood support outcomes. Adaptive management by a project could include adjusting the criteria for identification of AIG beneficiaries to ensure AIG pilot projects broadly benefit local fishers, with an emphasis on poor fishing families.

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<sup>70</sup> As outlined in Section 3.3 the project could possibly have identified opportunities to work with the Ben Dam port, to influence port development targets within the SEDP and to increase its focus on enforcement.

<sup>71</sup> By bringing additional resources into an area a project can even itself create new stakeholder groups which previously did not exist and can create new decision making structures

The involvement of two implementing agencies with different financial reporting requirements to different donors also had an impact on project implementation. Although both WWF and PMU within CDNP contributed significantly to the project, there are lessons to be learnt on the benefit of establishing simple and streamlined implementation modalities within projects. WWF were not incorporated into PMU. The sub-contracting arrangement decreased CDNP ownership of 'WWF activities'. The inputs of both agencies were inter-dependent and critical to the achievement of project outcomes, yet the dual implementation mechanism complicated effective co-ordination and communication. The fact that the two agencies were based in different locations (Con Dao and Hanoi) and the logistical difficulties of organising transport to Con Dao, exacerbated co-ordination issues. Projects should seek to ensure that implementation modalities are simple and streamlined with clear definition of management responsibilities. Donors should try to harmonise funding modalities in line with the Paris and Hanoi declarations. If funding by multiple donors results in multiple management responsibilities, then a considerable focus should be given to find ways to ensure effective collaboration and partnership between the key implementing agencies during design. One way to achieve this could be to find ways to incorporate all relevant implementing agencies within the scope of the project management unit. The limitations of this in the context of the Con Dao project are recognised, given that WWF were based in Hanoi and the PMU in Con Dao. However WWF could perhaps have been more closely associated with the PMU, in a process similar to that used to enable involvement of the senior technical advisor (STA) in the PMU.

#### Climate Change

Climate change is a central issue for MPA initiatives and climate change adaptation has been identified as a priority development concern for Vietnam. GOV have established a national target programme and Con Dao is identified as one of the target areas. Climate change was not considered within project design and no specific project outcomes or indicators were included to assess or plan for the impact of climatic events on the MPA. This may be largely due to the fact that design was initiated ten years ago, although realignment of design would have been possible prior to project start in 2006. The lack of specified outcomes and associated budget limit the extent to which the issue could have been picked up at inception in 2007 or MTE in 2008<sup>72</sup>. Climatic events have severely impacted reefs in the Con Dao islands region over the last 12 years (in 1997, 1998 and 2005). The zoning of the MPA was conducted with reference to reef resilience, but the park needs to develop a climate change adaptation strategy.

Consideration of the likely impacts of increased climatic events associated with Climate Change is also a pressing issue for Con Dao development planning. Climate related events will exacerbate anthropogenic impacts on marine biodiversity and the combined impact of climatic and anthropogenic stresses on marine systems will reduce their overall resilience. The marine areas of Con Dao are an important tourist attraction and proposed tourism developments will rely on effective conservation of marine biodiversity and in establishing sustainable patterns of use. The marine areas of CDNP are highly vulnerable to climatic events linked to climate change and a climate proofing exercise is needed for the whole development strategy for the islands. The lesson learnt here is on the need for both MPA projects and development planning to consider the potential impacts of climate change.

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<sup>72</sup> where it was also mentioned as an issue



## 4.2 Recommendations

A number of recommendations are summarised for GEF / UNDP and for GOV below:

### Recommendations to GEF / UNDP

- 1) Given the fact that achievement of project outcomes depends on a) ongoing national development planning processes and the future pattern of development on Con Dao and b) completion of DANIDA funded activities under this project<sup>73</sup>, it would be useful for GEF / UNDP to undertake a post project review of impact in one to two years time. This would enable more effective evaluation of the actual impact of the project in supporting improved biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in the Con Dao islands region.

GEF may also like to consider this recommendation in relation to other projects within the GEF portfolio, particularly given GEF strategic objectives for projects to act as 'catalysts'. Evaluation of a project's impact on development planning, awareness raising and capacity building towards sustainable biodiversity conservation and sustainable use outcomes implies a time frame far greater than the life of a GEF project.

- 2) The implications of complex implementation modalities with a number of agencies involved in management and with reporting to different donors should be noted and where ever possible GEF / UNDP should seek to ensure implementation modalities are streamlined, management responsibilities are clear and well co-ordinated and donor inputs are harmonized.
- 3) The extent to which in kind co-financing by GOV was effectively provided is difficult to evaluate in this project as it largely covers staff time and provision of amenities which were not quantified or measured over the life of the project. UNDP / GEF projects should try to ensure that co-financing is more measurable and can be quantified. Monitoring of in-kind contributions should be undertaken during project implementation to support evaluation.
- 4) The lack of a fishers union should be noted as typical in Vietnam and of a number of countries worldwide. Fishers rarely have organised representation and projects need to consider how fishermen can be represented within MPA project design and implementation. The recommendation here is also perhaps broader than this to stress the importance of ensuring effective involvement / representation of key interest groups in project design and implementation. Often both Government consultation processes and international projects consider 'the community' to be a homogeneous stakeholder group that can be consulted through one community representative. This is rarely the case. Projects should seek to understand who the key interest groups are within communities and how relevant groups can be involved in a project / consultation process. This has associated time and budget implications, particularly if there is a felt need to support key interest groups in establishing representative structures or organisations.
- 5) The project demonstrates the difficulty of establishing effective alternative income generation (AIG) for fishers in a remote location, such as Con Dao, within a two year time frame. It highlights the potential negative impact of AIG pilot project failure, in creating frustration amongst intended beneficiaries and in decreasing community

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<sup>73</sup> which continue until September of this year

support for MPA projects. Recommendations related to this are to ensure that projects:

- broadly assess livelihood support opportunities as part of design
  - ensure that appropriate timeframes and budget are allocated to maximise the potential for effective AIG outcomes, recognising that effective consultation processes take time, especially where the key beneficiaries do not have group representation and extensive individual and household consultation is required.
  - consider other ways to improve target beneficiary groups' existing livelihoods, if AIG opportunities are limited, towards increasing their overall wellbeing (examples could include improving safety of fishing vessels, establishing managed community fishing zones, or improving opportunities for fishers wives and children.) Potential support priorities should be set through consultation with local stakeholders.
- 6) Enforcement emerged as a key issue for achieving effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in MPAs, particularly where there is a significant impact by non resident resource user groups and high levels of reported illegal activity. The recommendation to UNDP / GEF is to recognise the importance of enforcement in this context. A stronger focus on enforcement within projects should be accompanied by participatory approaches that build trust between local resource users and park rangers, raise awareness, establish community participation in project activities and consider livelihood implications of MPA management. Projects should consider supporting outcomes which give communities controlled and managed access to specified community fishing zones in order to enhance livelihood and poverty alleviation outcomes and increase fishers support for and involvement in MPA management.
- 7) Climate change should be an integral consideration within MPA project design.
- 8) It is also recommended that adequate time is allocated for final evaluations of GEF projects and that evaluation schedules are discussed with evaluators in order to enable development of an appropriate evaluation methodology. 15 working days is inadequate for a final project evaluation of this nature<sup>74</sup>. Giving an adequate weighting to final evaluations within the project monitoring and evaluation process is important both for accountability and if GEF and GOV are to be able to draw out lessons from project experiences towards an improved understanding of effective approaches for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

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<sup>74</sup> Excluding travel days, UNDP allocated 15 days for this final project evaluation; the international team leader has had to input considerable extra time to complete the evaluation effectively and GEF should not consider this report to be an outcome of 15 days input.

### **Recommendations for Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province and Con Dao District**

A number of recommendations are also provided for consideration by Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province and Con Dao District authorities.

- 1) It will be important for Province and District authorities to ensure that development planning prioritises sustainable levels and patterns of development for the Con Dao islands region, recognising the key value of the terrestrial and marine natural resource base to long term socio-economic prosperity in the region. Long term benefits from tourism will rely on establishing sustainable levels of tourism and in supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use that maintains the natural and historical attraction of the Con Dao islands region.
- 2) It will be important for development planning processes to identify and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for local residents and particularly for local fishermen who are amongst the poorest sectors of Con Dao society. Livelihood opportunities need to be identified that can provide Con Dao residents with alternatives to unsustainable patterns or levels of resource use.
- 3) Current development plans for expansion of Ben Dam Port present a number of risks to prioritised tourism development and biodiversity conservation objectives for Con Dao. The number of external fishers fishing illegally in near shore waters appears<sup>75</sup> to be having a significant negative impact on fish stocks in Con Dao waters. Proposals to increase the number of offshore fishers coming into the area will only exacerbate this situation, making it harder for local fishers to support basic livelihoods and degrading marine biodiversity. Proposals to attract petroleum vessels to the port represent a significant threat to marine biodiversity from associated risks of oil spills. These risks in turn also threaten the establishment of world class tourism on Con Dao, which will rely on the quality of the natural resource base. Proposals to attract cruise ships to the port also have associated social and environmental risks as has been demonstrated internationally. The carrying capacity of the Con Dao islands social and environmental resource base needs to be assessed as part of impact assessments associated with provision of services to cruise liners. It is recommended that Provincial and District authorities consider commissioning an assessment of environmental and social impacts of proposed port developments in line with national legal requirements under the Law on Environmental protection for SEA on all proposed developments (Circular No. 08/2006/TT-BTNMT). This assessment should also examine the potential risks of port expansion for sustainable tourism development and biodiversity conservation in the national park.
- 4) Effective enforcement of CDNP marine areas will be critical to achieving effective management of the newly established marine protected area. Provincial and District planning authorities should recognise the importance of enforcement and where ever possible provide adequate financial and planning support to CDNP and the Fisheries Department for effective enforcement of the marine areas of the park, particularly given the challenges faced by these agencies in patrolling the increasing number of offshore boats in the area. Key issues for consideration by provincial and district authorities are outlined in the lessons learnt analysis above. It will be important for National, Provincial and District Planning authorities

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<sup>75</sup> from consultations undertaken during this evaluation and from qualitative data on resource levels in the May 2009 Performance Indicators report

to recognise the need for appropriate national and local level MPA legislation that supports effective enforcement.

- 5) Provincial and District authorities should continue to support CDNP to effectively manage the park, recognising the important role of CDNP as guardians of both the historical sites in the park and the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity which is a key attraction for tourism.
- 6) Related to this, it is recommended that Provincial and District authorities work with CDNP to establish the Conservation Trust Fund, following the proposal currently submitted under the project.
- 7) Consideration should be given to providing the Fisheries Department with adequate resources to enable them to establish an effective system for recording catch / effort data and assessing fish stocks. This is important to enable analysis of the sustainability of the Con Dao fishery and would build on training received under the project in fish stock assessment.
- 8) Consideration of the likely impacts of increased climatic events associated with climate change is a pressing issue for Con Dao development planning. The marine areas of CDNP are highly vulnerable to climatic events linked to climate change and the combined impact of climatic and anthropogenic stresses on marine systems will reduce their overall resilience. The marine areas of Con Dao are an important tourist attraction and proposed tourism developments will rely on effective conservation of marine biodiversity and in establishing sustainable patterns of use. Beach and coastal developments are particularly prone to climatic impacts and economic returns from coastal developments will depend on effective climate change planning and adaptation. It is strongly recommended that a climate proofing exercise is undertaken for the SEDP.

## **ANNEXES**

Annex 1: Project Logical Framework (Logframe)

Annex 2: Analysis of quantitative data, Activities and Outputs from May 2009 Indicators Report

Annex 3: List of Key Stakeholders

Annex 4a: Planned and Actual Expenditure table showing currently available data

Annex 4b: Currently available PMU expenditure data

Annex 5: List of People Consulted

Annex 6: Relevant GEF Strategic Priorities

Annex 7: List of Documents Consulted

Annex 8: Final Evaluation TOR