

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

**Creating Protected Areas for Resource Conservation  
Using Landscape Ecology (PARC)**

Project Number VIE/95/G31/B/1G99 and VIE/95/031/B/01/99

Report of the Final Evaluation Mission

**March 2005**

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## ACRONYMS AND TERMS

BBNP	Ba Be National Park
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
DPC	District People's Committee
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EVN	Electricity of Vietnam Company
FPD	Forest Protection Department
FPE	Final Project Evaluation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOV	Government of Vietnam
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Project
IUCN	The International Union for the Conservation of Nature – the World Conservation Union
IUCN-VN	IUCN Vietnam
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoENR	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NEA	National Environment Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHNR	Na Hang Nature Reserve
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NPO	National Project Office
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
PA	Project Area
PARC	Creating Protected Areas for Resource Conservation Using Landscape Ecology
PC	Peoples' Committee
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PM	Project Manger
Prodoc	Project Document
PRUP	Participatory Resource Use Planning
RUP	Resource Use Plan
SEIA	Supplementary Environmental Impact Assessment
SFE	State Forest Enterprise
SHCA	Species and Habitat Conservation Area
SMPR	Secretariat Managed Project Review
SPAM	Strengthening Protected Area Management Project
SW	Scott Wilson
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VND	Vietnamese Dong <sup>1</sup>
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature Conservation
YDNP	Yok Don National Park

<sup>1</sup> The exchange rate current at the time of the Final Evaluation mission was approximately US\$1 = 15,600 VND and has been used as the conversion throughout.

Final Evaluation of the Project:  
Creating Protected Areas for Resource Conservation  
Using Landscape Ecology (PARC)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Key Points

- *Project overall successful.*
- *Implementation on the ground particularly successful – strong link made between conservation objectives and development activities and the way they were implemented.*
- *Key problem areas – low level of country ownership; external factors; complex management chains.*

### Background

*The Creating Protected Areas for Resource Conservation Using Landscape Ecology (PARC) Project was designed to adopt an integrated conservation and development approach by addressing two Immediate Objectives – the first focused on improving operational capacity of the three Project Areas in order that they be efficiently managed; the second to reduce external threats to biodiversity through integrating conservation and development objectives and activities at the local level.*

*PARC was the first UNDP-GEF project to be nationally executed (NEX) in Vietnam, but was NEX largely in name only with the Forest Protection Department (FPD)<sup>2</sup> (where the National Project Office was located), backed by an IUCN contract for planning and technical support in the early stages, performing only a small part of the implementation. An agreement between the executing agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), and UNOPS enabled the latter to sub-contract the majority of the implementation to two companies – Scott Wilson at Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve, and GTZ at Yok Don National Park, the latter being replaced by Scott Wilson part way through the project.*

*PARC encountered a large number of significant problems within its lifetime that raised serious questions about its ability to achieve its objectives and to deliver its intended results. Since these were covered in detail by the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) and a parallel GEF Secretariat Managed Project Review (SMPR), it was agreed with UNOPS and UNDP that this FPE will provide only a summary of these events and management, and concentrate instead on evaluating subsequent actions particularly those relating to the recommendations made in the two studies.*

*The Final Project Evaluation (FPE) was conducted within the last six weeks of the Project's intended lifespan between 16<sup>th</sup> November to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2004 (29 days) by a team of two international and two national consultants. Seventeen days were spent at the three Project sites.*

### Project Design

*The project design was weak in a number of ways, notably that it was overly ambitious in attempting to introduce two major and relatively new concepts – integrated conservation and development, and landscape ecology – simultaneously into Vietnam within a short timeframe; the landscape ecology approach was inadequately researched resulting in the failure of this concept to be achieved<sup>3,4</sup>; it was*

<sup>2</sup> UNDP Country Office's comments have been included separately in full in Appendix IX and cross-referenced throughout the text. See UNDP comment #1 Appendix IX.

<sup>3</sup> There is a difference of opinion here. The Project Team Leader comments that *"this is entirely wrong; resource use planning is based on landscape ecology, and through resource use planning two additional protected areas were established within the landscape"*. However, the FPE team view the concept of Landscape Ecology as operating over a wider purview than natural resource planning in buffer zones and the establishment of new protected areas, excellent as these achievements were. It should include a strategy based on management of an overall system of habitats in a wider ecological landscape extending biodiversity conservation into the productive landscape beyond any influence on protected areas and which is supported by reoriented policy and legal frameworks and institutional arrangements promoting integrated ecosystem management – something conspicuously absent from this project.

overly complex; and the risk assessment was inadequate so that the emergence of major infrastructure projects at two of the sites (a hydropower dam at Na Hang and a highway at Yok Don) had major repercussions for the project coming close to closing it down, incurring significant delays, and forcing a change of direction and new activities upon it.

Perhaps more than any of these, however, it was wholly site-oriented and lacked the policy level activities crucial to spreading knowledge and lessons learned cross-sectorally at the highest political levels where the changes necessary to institutionalise ICDP gains need to be made if conservation is to be integrated into regional planning<sup>5</sup>.

## Results

Despite the weak design, overall the project was successful to varying degrees in all four of its implementation programmes.

### Conservation Management

Although the key concept of using Landscape Ecology failed<sup>6</sup> to create a single cross-Provincial protected area out of Ba Be National Park, Na Hang Nature Reserve and land between them, PARC managed to facilitate the establishment of two new protected areas in the same locality – South Xuan Lac Species and Habitat Conservation Area (SHCA) (1,788ha) gazetted in Bac Kan Province primarily to protect three globally-threatened species; and Francois' Langur SHCA (15,350 ha) at Sing Long-Lung Nhoi to be gazetted shortly after completion of the project. At Yok Don National Park PARC facilitated two extensions totalling about 60,000 ha, thereby effectively doubling the size of the Park.

Operational Plans have been developed for all three original Project sites (Ba Be, Na Hang, and Yok Don). PARC deliberately did not attempt to produce classic international-style management plans because operations in Vietnam's Protected Areas are directed by an Investment Plan which governs the available finances for a period of usually 10 years. Instead, emphasis was placed upon providing guidance and assistance for the Management Boards to produce Operational Plans leading to investment plans themselves. Designation of the two new protected areas has also led to two initiatives being piloted in Vietnam for the first time – inclusion of local community representation on a protected area Management Board, and the development of Operational Plans which will guide investment and not the other way around; the latter also being trialled at two other existing National Parks, and the upcoming Vietnam Conservation Fund.

The institutional presence at the three sites has been strengthened by the construction of a number of ranger posts, and in Na Hang by three floating stations, and by the marking of reserve boundaries, and internal limitations of protected areas and areas subject to legal agriculture and forestry activities. All ranger stations, have been placed at strategic locations to provide a focus for ranger activities, maintain vigilance in and control access to key areas, and to coordinate community-based

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<sup>4</sup> The National Project Manager comments that: "Since the concepts – ICDP and landscape ecology were and remain relatively new and inadequately researched in Viet Nam, projects like the PARC project were and remain necessary to explore whether these two concepts are useful and how they can be applied. This aim was clearly stated in the ProDoc "the ... project aims at developing and piloting innovative methods for protecting Vietnam's unique and highly threatened species and habitats". Thus it would be less constructive if the PARC project should have waited until the concepts are adequately researched. In addition, if nobody should take the risk to test something new no progress could be expected. Indeed, innovation and willingness to take risk is expected from international funded projects and is one of their advantages". The FPE team do not disagree with these sentiments, however the points being made are a) that to introduce two such new concepts simultaneously was overly ambitious – one at a time would have been better – and b) the idea of landscape ecology was not properly researched at the design phase or the political will militating against a cross-provincial boundary protected area would have been discovered at that point and the design altered to accommodate this.

<sup>5</sup> See UNDP comment #2 Appendix IX.

<sup>6</sup> The Project Team Leader comments "the failure was not in the implementation interpretation of landscape ecology, but because of political reasons between the two provinces". Then FPE team agrees that the failure cannot be laid at the door of the project implementation team – but it arises from weaknesses in project design.

management activities. Rangers' chief tasks remain those of a policing nature – forest protection, checking on illegal activities, patrolling – and although they have received training in, and been tasked with, monitoring biodiversity, there still seems to be an absence of actual conservation management activities and others such as guiding tourists. Increased numbers, efficiency, activity, and increased morale of rangers, arising from new facilities, equipment and training, have resulted in significantly reduced illegal activities in the protected areas.

Numerous other initiatives have been undertaken. Shifting cultivation within the PAs has ceased to a certain extent as a result of the Community Development Programme activities, although grazing within the forests has still not been fully curtailed. A community-based Lake Management Cooperative established at Ba Be has eradicated activities detrimental to conservation including dynamite and electric fishing from the Lake. Hunting pressure has been reduced (but not eliminated), in part by a gun exchange programme whereby guns were exchanged for domestic animals or improved crop seeds, and also by the improved conservation capacities of the protected areas.

A biodiversity monitoring programme has been established to help direct management operations and a GIS database called PARCman in which violations and species sightings are recorded and can be mapped has been developed and will be exported to all PAs in Vietnam. The concept is sound in theory but the practice seems a little less so – the software is still giving problems; the level of biodiversity identification training of the rangers seems low; and the majority of species are left outside of official records.

### **Environmental Education and Ecotourism**

Training attempted to reach all parts of society at both formal and informal levels, and there is no doubt that an overall awareness of the need to protect natural resources has been achieved. A total of 20,746 persons were trained in 42 technical subjects. One notable success of the project was the development of nine environmental education courses for primary and secondary schools of the project areas. These were taught for one hour per month and have been accepted as a model for the GOV to mainstream environmental education into the national curriculum.

Tourism varies markedly between the three project sites with Ba Be attracting 30,000 tourists a year (15% of them foreigners), Yok Don only 8,000 (450 foreigners), and Na Hang none. PARC provided information centres at Ba Be and Yok Don but that proposed for Na Hang was not built according to the recommendations made by the MTE. Similarly, nature trails had been constructed at Ba Be and Yok Don but not at Na Hang. Information boards and signs were well designed and informative.

There is one big problem still to be overcome at the project sites, and perhaps more widely across Vietnam and South-east Asia as a whole, and that is the major difference in the concept of eco-tourism as understood by GEF and developed countries and what is being developed. This leads to singularly inappropriate development such as plans for big hotels/ restaurants; concrete lakes, road bridges rather than as small-scale naturally-based facilities.

### **Community Development**

This is the most successful part of the project. With food sufficiency not assured by many of the households near the three Project sites, PARC attempted to relieve pressure on the forests by introducing agricultural improvements largely through conventional ways of farm modernization, such as the introduction of high-yielding rice varieties, improved livestock breeds, and intensified vegetable production. Excellent results have been achieved by introducing bee-keeping and utilising the natural mountain stand of "shan tea" for tea production and improving its processing. Farmers visited claimed a two to three fold increase in their levels of income.

One major area that deserves further attention is the under-utilised potential from the domestication of endangered secondary forest products. These products are agricultural, medicinal, and horticultural species, often fetching high prices in trade markets. It would seem feasible, particularly

to a biodiversity protection project, to pay extra attention to these species and develop products and forest-farming systems adapted to specific sites.

### **Land-use Planning and Forestry**

In all sites, land-use is characterised by complex patterns of crop and livestock farming, fish-keeping and fishing, and by collecting forest resources for daily consumption, medicine, and trade. The project has succeeded in the introduction of a trend away from forest utilisation practices toward controlled production under modernized schemes. A vital part of most production schemes is the integration of tree species, and the Project deserves particular credit for the fact that all species recommended and used were of local origin.

The fire-control system at Yok Don is wholly unsympathetic to biodiversity conservation and requires immediate changing<sup>7</sup>. This was recognised by the PARC project and specialist forest ecologists were consulted in a bid to improve it. Unfortunately, the time lost at the beginning of the project, meant that this aspect was never completed.

## **Findings**

### **Regional Planning**

Perhaps the biggest single problem that the PARC project faced was that of infrastructure inappropriate to PAs which significantly impacts them – a 342MW hydropower dam on the edge of Na Hang Nature Reserve, and a proposed highway through Yok Don National Park. Major economic development projects are always a sensitive issue in developing countries when they clash with environmental priorities. It is fully acknowledged by the FPE team that the GOV is genuinely committed to nature conservation and has initiated many exemplary actions supporting this. However, the key point that the FPE team wish to stress to the GOV is that this genuine commitment to nature conservation is significantly undermined when infrastructure schemes of the scale and nature affecting this Project are allowed to progress in globally sensitive sites. For the GOV to then propose not one, but two major infrastructure schemes which will significantly degrade globally important sites and negatively impact globally-threatened species, sends completely the wrong signals to the international donor community and seriously damages the credibility of the GOV in the eyes of the global conservation community. The GOV's only partial implementation of the recommendations arising from the supplementary EIA further exacerbates the signals being sent. However, significant credibility could be re-established if the GOV took a rapid decision to use 2% of the projected revenues from the dam to fund urgently needed conservation actions at the construction site now (such as increasing the ranger force by 15 as recommended in the SELA), rather than wait until an academic study reports. The FPE team strongly urge the GOV to take this action<sup>8</sup>.

### **Country Driven-ness**

Despite the commendable aims of the Government's Strategy there has been weak country buy-in to the Project and little ownership beyond FPD, partly because the project has been nationally executed only in name, but mostly because the planned make-up of the National Steering Committee (NSC) by the project designers proved too innovative under Vietnamese Law and a solely government-orientated and single ministry NSC resulted. This committee failed to provide the strong leadership

<sup>7</sup> The National Project Manager comments that "Yok Don National has applied a controlled burning practice to control forest fire. Though the impact of this practice has not been studied thoroughly, it can not be concluded hastily that such a practice is wholly unsympathetic to biodiversity as done by the FPE since dry Dipterocarp forest at Yok Don National is known for its fire tolerance". The FPE team disagrees. While dry Dipterocarp forest maybe tolerant to fire, like many other savannah-type habitats, it is tolerant to a natural cycle of fires which burn once every so many years leaving time for the natural regeneration of epiphytes, creepers, and understorey species. The Forest Department lays fires in Yok Don once or twice a year, each and every year, and the result is an almost monotypic stand of trees with only one or two species of fern on the ground layer – epiphytes, creepers, and understorey species are effectively absent.

<sup>8</sup> See UNDP comment #3 Appendix IX.

role that an ICDP needs, meeting only six times in the whole of the project. Thus, the links to and from the political levels above, so necessary to an ICDP, were rendered largely ineffective<sup>9</sup>.

### **Coordination**

UNDP took a hands-off approach unless there were external problems, hence they used their influence to try and resolve political conflicts over the proposed infrastructure projects. However, such a hands-off approach cannot be viewed as a complete success and closer involvement would undoubtedly have helped avoid the problems with the GTZ contract<sup>10</sup>. It would also have improved the functioning of the Steering Committee and helped in pushing the conservation aims of the project at higher levels within the GOV – see below<sup>11</sup>.

The project management suffered from excessively convoluted and complex management chains which made communication and coordination difficult even when all parties were acting professionally and with good faith. The complexity of the institutional arrangements, the separate contracts between UNOPS and Scott Wilson for site implementation; between UNOPS and UNDP (Hanoi) for communications; between UNOPS and IUCN for prescribed technical support; not to mention between UNOPS and GTZ/WWF during the early stages of the project for site implementation in Yok Don, has led to many stakeholders being unclear as to which group has authority and responsibility for what area of activity. These difficulties were exacerbated by the distance over which communications were taking place, particularly with UNOPS being the core agency. Most players have identified the fact that the absence of UNOPS having an in-country presence was a major problem. A single focal point such as a project officer, based say in Hanoi, through whom face-to-face communication could have been made, would have helped significantly.

At the local level there were also complex arrangements to ensure that the project fully involved all the many stakeholders. However, these appear to have been successful, and most Provincial and District PCs report that cooperation between the project implementers (SW) and themselves was good and praised the involvement of lots of local people as one of the big successes of the Project.

### **The Broader Context**

In the PARC project, neither UNOPS nor Scott Wilson were well positioned to deal with a number of shortcomings such as the fact that government ownership of the project was not well promoted<sup>12</sup>; or that communication of the project's results was often ineffective. While the legal letter of contracts was being fulfilled, the spirit of the project was not entirely so, and opportunities to complete the whole picture, particularly the follow-up necessary to obtain government ownership and impart policy

<sup>9</sup> See UNDP comment #4 Appendix IX.

<sup>10</sup> The National Project Manager comments: "There was regular communication between UNDP with the NPO, subcontracts and other stakeholders. And UNDP had made any interventions which were appropriate and necessary to assist the project in achieving its objectives. The problems with GTZ contract were first and foremost those between UNOPS and GTZ since the LOA between MARD and UNOPS had provided and enabled UNOPS to deal with all issues related to the sub-contracts. The successful project implementation at Yok Don suggested that any deeper intervention from UNDP or the National Steering Committee would have worsened the situation. Therefore it can not be concluded that UNDP took a hands-off approach toward project implementation. And closer involvement from UNDP would have helped avoid the problems".

<sup>11</sup> See UNDP comment #5 Appendix IX.

<sup>12</sup> The National Project Manager disagrees and comments thus: "It is unclear what government ownership means in this report. If government ownership is understood as its willingness to promote project objectives and trying to adopt, adapt and sustain project achievements and innovations there is clear evidence that that governments at both national and local levels have tried to do so. The decisions to double the size of Yok Don National Park, to establish two new protected areas at Ba Be/Na Hang sites and to consider and adopt project initiatives such as operational planning, community-based resource management, participatory resource use planning, etc.". For the record, by Government ownership, the FPE team is referring to wider scale involvement of the National Government (Local Governments appeared more supportive of the project's initiatives) rather than the single sector (MARD) promotion of the project witnessed. All of the eminently admirable achievements listed by the NPM arise through MARD. Only MARD ended up being represented on the Steering Committee. As an example, if the Government had truly owned the project, then the problems arising from inappropriate infrastructure development that bedevilled the project would not have occurred.



change, were lost. In cases when leadership was necessary, there was a vacuum – such a role fell beyond UNOPS and the contractors, and should have been picked up by UNDP. There appears to have been a tendency for UNDP to have abdicated responsibility in these situations. It is important that improved use is made of the UN system, and through synergies with other organisations, to push the broader objectives and more effective functioning of GEF projects at the highest national levels to ensure post-project sustainability.

In some instances, leadership could have been played by a reputable international NGO, attached to the project or even given the task of implementing it. Both IUCN and WWF were involved in the project at one stage or and both organisations have an in-country presence, and nature conservation is their *raison d'être*, hence both might have been able (and probably willing) to have provided that extra impetus, influence, and long-term view that would have made this project more effective and sustainable. Technical agencies with a vested interest in a project's success beyond contractual obligations and with an in-country presence before, during, and after project implementation, should be considered for implementation wherever their capacity is deemed able to cope.

### **Global Dimension**

GEF projects are special in that the international community is funding the incremental costs associated with the extra efforts needed to manage and conserve globally-important biodiversity. The national project partners and beneficiaries showed no understanding of this global dimension of GEF and viewed it as simply another international donor package. Had this concept permeated wider and higher in the GOV, it is possible that the inappropriate infrastructure projects may not have been located in areas of critical global biodiversity.<sup>13</sup>

At the local levels, PARC was seen as just part of the Government's general drive to alleviate poverty, and criteria for success were almost always viewed as being development-oriented. The biodiversity aspects of the project were not mentioned by local leaders, let alone any reference to their global importance. Similarly, PA leaders still focussed on infrastructure, equipment and training, all with an emphasis on forest protection through a policing function. The global importance of the biodiversity that their PAs supported has got totally lost in the imperative to protect the trees<sup>14</sup>.

GEF must do more, in marketing terms, to position itself better to differentiate itself from other donors or the important message it is bringing with its funds about global biodiversity is being lost in the flood of projects focused more sharply on poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. It is important that the site-based demonstration projects so beloved by GEF are not allowed to become parochial in outlook and that designers should take extra steps to ensure that the global message gets through to at least the main implementing agency of a project so that stronger links can be forged with others in the international arena with the same focus.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned are given on pages 27-28.

<sup>13</sup> The National Project Manager comments: "Were the decisions to double the size of Yok Don National Park and to establish new protected areas at Ba Be/Na Hang sites which have added nearly 70,000 ha to conservation, and efforts and time spent to look for alternative options for the dam at Na Hang and the "highway" at Yok Don (note that the construction of "highway" at Yok Don is still pending), to drop out a proposal to build a hydro project at Ba Be and to mitigate the impact of the infrastructure, etc. not extra efforts made by the government to manage and conserve globally-important biodiversity at the project site? Unfortunately, the time was probably too short for the FPE team learn all about that". The FPE team believes that this comment is illustrative of the problem.

<sup>14</sup> The NPM comments: "From interview with local leaders the FPE team might have the impression that at the local levels, PARC was seen as part of the government's general drive to alleviate poverty. This is not to wonder since poverty alleviation is nation's top priority and the policy is well penetrated to and perceived by all government structures, from the top to the bottom. However, the fact that PARC was able to accommodate both conservation objectives and development activities as observed rightly by the FPE "Implementation on the ground particularly successful – strong link made between conservation objectives and development activities and the way they were implemented" revealed that there might be a gap in understanding the term "poverty alleviation" between the FPE team and local leaders, for whom poverty alleviation and conservation were often mutually depending and supplementary."

## APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The Final Project Evaluation (FPE) was conducted within the last six weeks of the Project's intended lifespan. It was carried out over the period 16<sup>th</sup> November to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2004 (29 days) by a team of two international and two national consultants. The approach was determined by the terms of reference (Annex I) which were closely followed, via the itinerary detailed in Annex II. Throughout the evaluation particular attention was paid to careful explanation of the purpose of evaluation and the importance of listening to stakeholders' views. Wherever possible, information collected was cross-checked between various sources to ascertain its veracity, but in some cases time limited this.

The PARC Project has encountered a large number of significant problems within its lifetime that have in turn raised serious questions about its ability to achieve its objectives and to deliver its intended results. As a result, the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) had terms of reference which emphasised that all options were to be considered, ranging from continuing with minor modifications, through redesigning site interventions, to possible termination of the Project and return of remaining funds to the GEF Trustee. The MTE undertook a thorough review of the problems and their causes encountered to that time and made substantive recommendations to improve the chances of meeting national and global environmental goals. Concurrent with the MTE, a GEF Secretariat Managed Project Review (SMRP) was undertaken whose final assessment evaluated the project as "*Marginally Satisfactory*". Both studies recommended that the project made significant changes in direction to accommodate proposed large scale infrastructure developments impacting the project sites and to re-focus management efforts to better address the conservation management issues that the project initially set-out to influence.

Since the issues involved leading up to the time of the MTE and SMRP were complex, time-consuming to evaluate, and have been covered in detail in the two studies, it has been agreed with UNOPS and UNDP that this FPE will provide only a summary of these events and management, and concentrate instead on evaluating subsequent actions particularly those relating to the recommendations made in the two studies.

The overall objective of the Final Evaluation is to:

1. assess degree of achievement of the project's objectives and outputs, taking into account the changing conditions during implementation and other constraints within the implementation environment;
2. analyse the project performance in meeting project objectives and examine the project results against anticipated outcomes;
3. assess the likelihood of the project achieving its intended impacts, given the degree of assimilation of project outputs and strategies and sustainability of project interventions; and,
4. provide any recommendation deemed necessary for the closure of the Project and for potential future support from GEF and UNDP.

A verbal presentation of results was made to stakeholders on 14<sup>th</sup> December, attended by 19 people – see Appendix VIII.

## PROJECT CONCEPT AND DESIGN

The project concept arose from a 1993 WWF proposal which led to a UNDP project document being prepared in 1995. The three sites selected were identified by the VBAP as priorities for management. The project was re-designed and finally approved in November 1998, and commenced implementation in 1999. It is the biggest (in terms of finance) and longest running GEF project in Vietnam to date.

The concept was that to conserve protected areas, it is necessary to raise the economic levels of the very poor people living in and around them. The level of management existing in the PAs was inadequate to address all areas of management required, and therefore the project was designed to build the capacity of the Management Boards. Furthermore, the PAs were very fragmented and the idea was developed to use landscape ecology to link them and to integrate with regional planning.

The following key objectives were formulated:

#### Development Objective

*To provide for effective biodiversity conservation in Vietnam's anthropogenically impacted and fragmented habitats, through application of a landscape ecology approach to protected area management at Yok Don National Park and the Ba Be National Park/Na Hang Nature Reserve complex.*

#### Immediate Objectives

*To improve operations capacity at the two sites in order to efficiently and sustainably manage and maintain the respective protected areas.*

*To reduce external threats to biodiversity, through integrating conservation and development objectives and activities at the local level.*

Unfortunately the project design was weak in a number of ways:

- It was overly ambitious in attempting to introduce two major and relatively new concepts – integrated conservation and development, and landscape ecology – simultaneously into Vietnam and within a short timeframe. The short-timeframe was highlighted by the Project Executive Secretary at Yok Don (where it was exacerbated by the replacement of GTZ) who recommended that the sensitisation process requires more time but not more money, and that a pre-project sensitisation period would greatly facilitate the introduction of new methods.
- The landscape ecology approach was not properly researched with neither Bac Kan nor Tuyen Quang Province accepting the idea of a common management regime for Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve and the “corridor” areas between. As a result, this concept has failed in the current circumstances though other achievements have been made<sup>15</sup>.
- It was overly complex with project sites too far apart leading to subcontractors initially treating each site as a separate sub-project with little coordination; with complicated institutional arrangements and the large number of institutional partners; and being too dependent upon many international and national consultancies to provide technical guidance.
- It was wholly site-oriented and lacked the policy level activities<sup>16</sup> crucial to spreading knowledge and lessons learned cross-sectorally at the highest political levels where the changes necessary to institutionalise ICDP gains need to be made if conservation is to be integrated into regional planning<sup>17</sup>. In fact, the project's contractors recognised this weakness and have

<sup>15</sup> The NPM comments: “For PARC, landscape ecology is more than just a common management regime for Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve! Thus the disagreement of Tuyen Quang and Bac Kan provinces to have a single managed protected area, including Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve can not be used to conclude that the concept of landscape ecology failed.” See footnote 2 on page iv.

<sup>16</sup> It is understood that the WWF Indochina Strengthening Protected Area Management Project was designed and implemented during the same period and that the designers may have omitted a policy level approach because the SPAM project was deemed to be covering it. However, no reference to this project is made in the Project Document and no links were developed with it – both projects being undertaken in isolation.

<sup>17</sup> The NPM comments: “It is the lesson learned in the country that a conservation policy which is not based on what actually happens on the ground is likely to fail. Thus, it is very important to have a project which pilots innovative approaches on the ground which can provide practical feedback to the policy-making process. That was the approach the PARC project took. It was a site-oriented project. And the project has produced a number of useful lessons learned which can be incorporated into conservation policies. Such lessons learned can be found in the project reports and in the various policy briefs. What and how to incorporate the various lessons learned into the relevant conservation policies is primarily the task of the relevant

produced a suite of five policy papers aimed at top-level government, and a policy study summarising lessons learned and recommending policy actions is planned.

- The risk assessment was inadequate. It is inconceivable that the large infrastructure projects were not known to the project designers since the dam was first proposed in the 1960s and by 1997 (when the project design was being revised) the dam had become a serious concept and the first feasibility studies were being undertaken. If risk equals probability multiplied by consequence, then even if the project designers still viewed the probability of a dam being constructed as very low, the consequences of even a low probability were immense and should have warranted more serious assessment and perhaps selection of a different project site, even if that meant completely revising the project concepts. As it is, the emergence of these infrastructure projects (dam and road) has had major repercussions for the project coming close to closing it down, incurring significant delays, and forcing a change of direction and new activities upon it.
- Its could have had a low success of replicability since the same activities were designed to be applied (and perhaps tested) at all sites irrespective of their vastly different ecological, institutional, social and cultural contexts. In fact it appears that those implementing the project have worked hard to ensure that successful measures were adapted to suit the varied socio-economic, cultural and political contexts in which they were replicated.
- It did not take enough notice of lessons learned. There have been numerous studies over the past several decades showing that successful ICBPs start small and scale up once project partners have learned to be effective and efficient. Instead, the project design was one a large number of activities to be undertaken within a relatively short time meaning the project was activity driven with little time for reflection. Again, the project's contractors tried to overcome this, particularly with the community work, by undertaking training, then selecting a small number of demonstration farmers/villages, and then implementing an extension programme – e.g. the number of villages involved in the project in Ba Be/Na Hang increased from 11 in 2000, to 21 in 2001, and to 31 in 2002.

Finally, two completely opposite views were expressed over the relative timing of the investment programme. On the one hand, the Project Executive Secretary at Yok Don suggested that the construction of infrastructure projects should be moved to the back end of a project so that all the conservation awareness activities come first. In that way the people receiving the investment know why the infrastructure is being built and what its function is. The opposite view was opined by Buon Don DPC who recommended that investment was made earlier in a project so that the rewards of caring for the environment were obvious earlier, and that conservation would be promoted by the local people more effectively as a result.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

### Participating Agencies

This is the first UNDP-GEF project to be nationally executed in Vietnam. It is executed through the **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)** which has overall responsibility for managing the system of Special-use Forests, which includes all but a few of Vietnam's protected areas. It was implemented through the **Forest Protection Department (FPD)**. The co-implementing agency is the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)<sup>18</sup> who, under a Letter of Agreement

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*national agencies. The willingness to up take project lessons learned and initiatives proves national ownership!'. The point remains, that the project design was weak in this aspect and that failure to have included a policy level objective has led to this aspect remaining outstanding.*

<sup>18</sup> See UNDP comment #6 Appendix IX.

between MARD and UNOPS dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 1999 outlining the operational modalities of UNOPS in the implementation of the project, contracted IUCN-Vietnam (IUCN-VN), Scott Wilson Asia-Pacific Ltd., and GTZ (in collaboration with WWF) to undertake most of the Project's activities and to work closely with various national stakeholders.

Financing contributions have come solely from UNDP-GEF, UNDP, and the Government of Vietnam. (GOV). No other agencies or donors have supplied funds to the Project.

Key other agencies involved in terrestrial protected area management include:

- The **National Environment Agency**<sup>19</sup> (NEA) responsible for the Convention on Biological Diversity, and serving as the country's GEF focal point. It also co-ordinates the implementation of Vietnam's Biodiversity Action Plan, the Ramsar Convention, and wetlands policy. The NEA also has responsibility for water and air pollution issues, environmental assessments and monitoring (including for roads or dams in protected areas), produces the annual State of the Environment Report for the National Assembly, developing environmental strategies and action plans, as well as environmental policy, legislation and planning.
- The **Ministry of Culture and Information** (MCI) is delegated by the Government to be responsible for the management of "cultural-historic-environmental sites", one of Vietnam's categories of Special-use Forests.
- The **Vietnam National Administration of Tourism** (VNAT) is responsible for developing the tourism strategy for the country and promoting tourism to national parks and cultural-historic-environmental sites.
- The **Ministry of Planning and Investment** (MPI), through the annual budgeting process, is responsible for setting funding levels and negotiating budget allocations with sectoral ministries and the provinces.

At the provincial level, **Provincial People's Committees** (PPC) are required to implement forest management policy in line with Decision 245/TTg of the prime minister on public management for all levels of forests and forest land. Most PPCs include one Vice-Chairman responsible for the agro-forestry sector including formulating plans to protect, develop, and use forests and establishing special-use forests in the province after being appraised by MARD and other relevant ministries. The **Department of Agriculture and Rural Development** (DARD) and the **Forest Protection sub-Department** (FPsD) are the main technical agencies involved in forest management at provincial level falling under the PPC, which appoints and pays staff within them. There is no formal mechanism for coordination between central and provincial level departments; however, there tends to be a strong link between MARD and FPsDs. All nature reserves, national park buffer zones, and the majority of State Forest Enterprises (SFE) come under provincial control. Nature reserves may come under DARD in one province and under FPsD in another.

At the district level, again in accordance with Decision 245/TTg, **District People's Committees** (DPC) are responsible for the state management of forest and forestry land including management planning for forest protection and development, as well as for forest and forestry land use in the district. In principle, the organizational structure of FPsDs and DARDs should be replicated at the district level by sections responsible to the District People's Committee. At the commune level, the **Commune People's Committee** (CPC) are responsible for forest management including instructing and guiding villages to formulate and implement forest protection regulations, and cooperating with forest rangers, related agencies, and public organizations in protecting forests and preventing deforestation. In theory, DARD staff should be posted to each commune where there is forest land to

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<sup>19</sup> From its creation in 1995 to mid 2002, NEA was under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE). On 11 August 2002, a new Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE) was created, and NEA is now part of this ministry. The name and functions of NEA are slated to change.

assist the CPC in carrying out these responsibilities. In reality, however, such staff are often not available and capacity at commune level is limited.

## National Level Arrangements

The Project is executed at the national level by the FPD of MARD. The Director of FPD (Mr. Nguyen Van Thu) was been appointed as the **National Project Director** (NDP), but in mid 2000, he was replaced by Mr. Nguyen Van Cuong (Vice-director of FPD). He is assisted by the **National Project Manager** (NPM) Mr. Nguyen Huu Dzung<sup>20</sup>. The NDP is responsible for achieving the Project's objectives and is accountable to the GOV and UNDP for the use of Project resources. He holds the ultimate authority to expend funds from the Project budget. The NDP and NPM were both part-time positions – the NDP spending no more than 5% of his time with the project and the NPM about 50%<sup>21</sup>. A **National Steering Committee** was established to oversee the project and to provide cross-sectoral links at higher political levels. Its work was mirrored at the local level by a **Provincial Steering Committee** in each of the three provinces in which the project was active – Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang, and Dak Lak.. Actual implementation of the project was controlled by National Project Management Board whose secretariat was the **National Project Office** (NPO), and **Local Project Management Units** (LPMUs) working through **Local Project Offices** located in each of the project sites – Ba Be National Park, Na Hang Nature Reserve<sup>22</sup>, and Yok Don National Park.. The LPMU worked closely with the subcontractors who liaised closely with the **Commune Working Groups**.

The project had a very complicated operational protocol dominated by GOV regulations regarding the implementation of international assistance projects. As a result, many of the innovations in the project document and initially attempted by the subcontractors at the beginning of the project became stifled as implementation progressed. For example, the original design concept for the steering committee included UNDP and representatives from the three Provincial People's Committees as well as wider representation from academic institutions<sup>23</sup>. In the event, GOV claimed that Vietnamese law did not allow such innovative representation and only government departments, UNDP, and project contractors were included. Furthermore, it was supposed to meet four times in the first year of the project and twice yearly after that, but actually met only six times over the whole Project implementation period<sup>24</sup>. Another example was the GOV request to implement field activities through Commune Working Groups, a structure that needed to be created specifically for the project, but it was reported to the FPE that it would probably have been more effective operating through one of the established village level mass organizations (e.g. farmer's or women's union).

<sup>20</sup> The anglicised spelling of the Vietnamese name Dung is used throughout since the correct character is unavailable.

<sup>21</sup> See UNDP comment #7 Appendix IX.

<sup>22</sup> This term is used throughout, although technically it is one of the categories of "Special Use Forests".

<sup>23</sup> Annex VII, p.60 of the Project Document.

<sup>24</sup> The NPM comments: "*The national steering committee included three provincial representatives (vice-chairman of PPC). It is the lesson learned that a steering committee consisting of a great number of representatives is less effective because committee members are often senior government staff who are often very busy and can not find time to participate in committee meetings, especially those from provinces. This happened often to PARC. It was very difficult for the project to arrange steering committee meetings with the full membership. However, it should be noted that the Steering Committee was not the only structure which guided project implementation. MARD as the executing agency had played crucial role. There were weekly meetings at MARD and the project management, particularly NPD had the opportunities to report project progress and constraints to MARD leadership and requested for guidance. Approval of project annual project plans and a number of important interventions such as those related to GTZ contract, supplementary EIA, road construction at Yok Don were some of the examples which highlight the leading role of MARD in project implementation. Therefore it can be concluded that having both the steering committee and MARD, PARC benefited from improved coordination and strong leadership*". This comments highlights an important issue – that senior government officials are often pressed for time and that project designers should take account of this when designing implementation arrangements. That said, if a government has taken proper ownership of a project and prioritised it accordingly, a requirement for a properly constituted steering committee to meet 12 times over five years would not appear to be overly taxing.

## International Support

The project collaborated with the World Conservation Union-Vietnam (IUCN-VN), to which ten sub-contracts were let as per Table 1. The first of these, to supply technical and secretarial support to the NPO for the first 18 months of project implementation, with specific assistance with forward planning and facilitation of coordination between the various project stakeholders, was critical for effective project startup. Two lead sub-contractors<sup>25</sup> were employed to implement field activities at the three Project sites – Scott Wilson at Ba Be NP and Na Hang NR, and GTZ at Yok Don NP. Mr. Fernando Potess was **Site Task Manager** for Scott Wilson. After significant difficulties, delays, and disagreements, the GTZ contract was suspended in February 2001 and terminated by GEF/UNOPS with GOV approval on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2001. Scott Wilson took over at Yok Don as well on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2001, with Mr. Potess becoming **Project Team Leader** and Mr. Colin McQuistan becoming **Site Task Manager** at Yok Don. National and international institutions such as the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources and BirdLife International were subcontracted to undertake biodiversity surveys, and other NGOs took part in the project implementation, including Fauna and Flora International and Environment Vietnam.

**Table 1 : List of activities carried out and technical assistance areas provided by IUCN-VN.**

	Sub-contract	Year	Status
1.	Planning support.	6/99-11/00 3-4/01	Monthly Planning support progress reports and the Final Report on Planning support – Dec. 2000
2.	Protected Area planning and Management.	2001 & 2003	PARC Project and protected areas management planning in Vietnam: 2 mission reports and a synthesis report – January 2003). A Policy brief.
3.	Regeneration of degraded habitats/forests.		Report on “ <i>The Forest Rehabilitation Needs of Yok Don National Park</i> ”
4.	Lessons learned documentation.	2001 & 2003	Mission 1 report in 11/01 and mission 2 report in 7/03)
5.	Biodiversity Assessment.	2001	Report on the evaluation of the proposal document : Na Hang- Ba Be Endangered Primates Conservation Plan – 10/01
6.	Supplementary EIA of the Na Hang Dam.	2002	Scoping report, Final Report and Appendices 9/02
7.	Financing Mechanism Study: A number of mission reports, a series of technical reports on various topics. Three sustainable financing strategies for Project protected areas – field sites: Ba Be, Yok Don and Na Hang.	2002	A synthesis report of the Phase II and A final synthesis and lessons learned report.  Policy Brief “ <i>Covering the costs of Vietnam Protected Areas</i> ”
8.	Development of project communication Strategy:	2002	Final report “ <i>PARC Project Communication Strategy and Action Plan</i> ” 1/03.
9.	Support the implementation of project communication plan.	2003	Production of different communication products and publications including a series of policy briefs.
10.	Development of a TOR for the Policy Analysis.	2004	Final draft TORs produced in 9/04.

<sup>25</sup> Scott Wilson worked in association with the Environment Development Group (EDG) and FRR Ltd. and GTZ worked in association with WWF.

At the time of the FPE, most of the international projects with which this project coordinated had terminated, hence it is difficult to determine first-hand the degree of collaboration and synergy effected. The FPE was informed that there had been information exchange between PARC and WWF Indochina's Strengthening Protected Area Management Project (SPAM) including TORs and recruitment of national and international consultants and personals, in-country and overseas training activities, participation of the PARC project staff in the draft SPAM Management Strategy of Protected Areas (MASPAS) which contains a number of conclusions and recommendations found also in PARC's documents and *vice versa*. At the northern sites, there was apparently close collaboration for three years with the Finland-Vietnam Forestry Management Project in the Cho Don and Ba Be area, a Helvetas (Swiss) community development project in the Ba Be area, a Danida health implementation project in Na Hang, and a French agriculture planning project in Bac Kan, while at Yok Don there was coordination with a Danida water management project. Additional coordination took place with the World Bank Kerinci Seblat project in Indonesia, and Fauna and Flora International's conservation projects in Cambodia. There was much coordination and collaboration with the Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey Conservation Project (TSMCP) based at Na Hang and funded by the Allwetterzoo Munster, including it receiving some management support and facilitation of its activities by PARC, but since PARC ended at this site (and perhaps in the absence of its support), relations between the TSMCP and the Na Hang Nature Reserve appear to have broken down completely.

## **Project Management**

The project commenced inception activities in July 1999 with different sub-contractors operating in the north (Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve) and in the Central Highlands (Yok Don National Park). Field activities commenced at both sites in January 2000. Progress was smooth in the north, but significant problems arose with the sub-contractor in Yok Don leading to serious disruptions and delays during the first year. In November 2001, Scott Wilson, the subcontractor in the north, was also appointed to implement activities in Yok Don. Project activities concluded at Ba Be in December 2003 and at Na Hang in May 2004<sup>26</sup>, but because of the disruptions at Yok Don an extension was granted to help offset the initial slow progress and activities ceased at the end of December 2004.

The Project has benefited enormously from having a NPM – Mr. Nguyen Huu Dzung – who is committed to biodiversity conservation and who has been able to wield considerable influence at the highest levels of government. His dedication and experience has gone a long way to achieving a great deal of success in this Project. Similarly, the FPE wishes to draw to GEF and UNDP's attention the generally high levels of professionalism and capability that Scott Wilson and it's two main project managers – Mr. Fernando Potess and Mr. Colin McQuistan – have displayed in dealing with this Project.

Apart from a misguided attempt by the initial sub-contractor at Yok Don to radically change the Project Design it has been followed in implementation at both sites. In practice, however, the approach has been improved by grouping Outputs under four Programme topics:

Programme 1: Conservation Management

Programme 2: Environmental Education and Ecotourism

Programme 3: Community Development

Programme 4: Land use Planning and Forestry

## ***Adaptive Management***

The project has had to adapt to significant changes during its lifetime, firstly as a result of the termination of GTZ/WWF's contract at Yok Don and secondly as a result of the somewhat unexpected

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<sup>26</sup> Na Hang received a four month extension because of disruptions during the production of the new logframe for implementation.



appearance of major infrastructure projects at the project sites – a 342MW hydropower dam at Na Hang, and a proposed stretch of the Ho Chi Minh Highway through Yok Don. In addition, the project has made minor changes and gone beyond its brief in a number of areas. This adaptive management has been very successful given the scale of the problems encountered.

At the macro level, a total of 10 months were lost from the project programme while Scott Wilson took over the implementation contract at Yok Don from GTZ without overlap, effectively having to start from scratch. An extension of seven and a half months to December 2004 has enabled most of the activities to be carried out successfully there. The major omission (and complaint of the District and Commune PCs) is that after the farmers were trained and the demonstration plots run, no extension programme was implemented. This is a pity, but wholly understandable in the circumstances and the project has done well to achieve what it has at this site in the reduced time available to it.

At Na Hang, construction of the dam meant changing the log-frame to re-direct the project to deal with the threats posed to the site. As a result, some activities were cancelled, e.g. construction and equipping of a Visitor Information Centre and the priority of tourism at that site has been down-graded accordingly. Instead, the project negotiated with the GOV to work with the team who had undertaken the original environmental impact assessment (EIA) to produce a supplementary EIA (SEIA) focussing on biodiversity issues and their mitigation. This is the first time that the GOV has agreed for an international institution to be involved in an EIA in Vietnam – a considerable achievement. An inter-ministerial task force working with IUCN (contracted under PARC through UNOPS) developed the terms of reference because of the sensitivity of the issues. A series of recommendations were then reported to the GOV. These have only been partially implemented – see *Regional Planning* below – but the exercise itself significantly raised the awareness of key issues within top levels of government, indirectly built capacity within the national partners, and increased government openness over the issues. Although it is easy to concentrate on the fact that recommendations were not fully implemented, it is important to recognise the importance of having conducted this process at all. The SEIA was submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and a series of recommendations in relation to both this and the proposed highway at Yok Don were made both informally and formally by letter to the Prime Minister's Office.

The SEIA process could have been improved since IUCN were given a mandate to undertake the just SEIA and send the report to the NPM. They have made the point that they would have liked to have taken the process further through wider dissemination of the results and would have leant their considerable influence to provide pressure to ensure that the recommendations were taken more seriously and implemented more fully by the GOV. This is one example of where greater synergy could have been achieved if the original TOR had been more visionary – see the section *The Broader Context* below for more details<sup>27</sup>.

Adaptive management at the micro level has also been good. For example, the project recognised the design weaknesses of an absence of dissemination and policy level activities and went beyond its original concept by developing a communication strategy and a suite of five policy papers aimed at senior planners and decision-makers in government covering the following:

- Biodiversity through Landscape Ecology
- Covering the costs of Vietnam's Protected Areas
- Integrating Conservation and Development Through Participatory Resource Use Planning
- Management Planning for Protected Areas in Vietnam
- Conservation and Development Modelling within the Landscape – the PARC Experience.

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<sup>27</sup> See UNDP comment #8 Appendix IX.

At Yok Don, local conditions required that ranger stations needed to be larger than originally proposed, so fewer were built. However, it was later found that the information centre could be housed in an existing building rather than requiring a purpose-built one, and the money thereby saved was used to build another ranger station for which permission from the border army had previously been unforthcoming.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

### *Internal Project M&E*

The Project activities have been monitored at three levels:

- i. progress monitoring
- ii. internal activity monitoring
- iii. impact monitoring.

Progress monitoring against the annual work plan has been undertaken and reported in quarterly and annual reports since the project inception. These have been submitted to the major stakeholders – UNOPS, UNDP and local government. The MTE correctly noted that *“Missing from these reports is any analysis of constraints, problems, failures or successes in implementation. Nor ... any discussion of capacity building issues ... nor the involvement and views of counterparts and stakeholders.”* This seems to have been improved partially through the inclusion of a section in the Quarterly Reports on Problems encountered and major variances from work plan. The MTE’s assertion that the *“focus gives the impression that the primary intention of these reports is to demonstrate progress to satisfy the sub-contractor’s contractual obligations to UNOPS”* appears a trifle harsh – they seem to be written to a predefined format that seems to have been set by UNDP or UNOPS. The MTE’s criticism that *“the project’s overall effectiveness and impact in relation to its objectives”* should be reported on also seems to be premature – such things are difficult enough to assess during a Final Evaluation, let alone during quarterly progress reports. The FPE team believes that the information provided in these reports has served its purpose well – it helped point out the problems incurred by GTZ at Yok Don; and the implementation of most of the project activities since Scott Wilson took over both sub-contracts has been largely successful.

Internal activity monitoring was introduced in Ba Be/Na Hang in 2001 to act as an aid solely for the Project Team Leader with onward transmission to the NPM. Two national **Internal Project Monitors** were tasked with making a quarterly assessment of progress, focussing on the effectiveness of implementation and particularly highlighting any problems or delays. This appears to have worked effectively with delivery having been on time and within budget. The system was not used at Yok Don by Scott Wilson’s Site Task Manager.

Impact monitoring was introduced considerably later in the project than envisaged. It was designed to examine the impact of project activities on biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods, and to this end 16 monitoring parameters divided into four categories (Economic, Social/Gender, Institutional, and Ecological/Environmental) plus two assumptions have been measured constantly since 2002, although some of these have been on inherently slower cycles than others (e.g. crop yields). The MTE was particularly critical of this system deeming it *“not sufficiently simple or sensitive to distinguish Project-derived improvements from background changes”* although their comment that *“It is unclear whether M&E is seen as driving the planning process, or vice versa”* casts doubt on their ability to fully understand the function of a monitoring system as part of an iterative cycle. However, as a result of this criticism, the system was partially revised to simplify some of the indicators. A verdict on its effectiveness will have to remain open at present, but its late introduction has certainly meant that it has been of little direct use to the project *per se*. However, its designers are confident enough of its success to be funding its continuation privately through a follow-up project in Ba Be/Na Hang. What is clear, however, is that great care has been taken to ensure that, as far as possible, indicators have

now been selected that strive to distinguish project-derived improvements from background changes, and where this has not been possible they are used to describe trends which have been reported carefully and conservatively to avoid making unsupportable claims of project success.

The general issue of impact monitoring and of evaluating projects against increasingly complex quantitative indicators introduced at American insistence by GEF Council raises questions of how a FPE team can verify independently a project's success against such quantitative indicators given that there is insufficient time in a normal FPE mission to collect this data. Either such evaluations cannot be truly independent, relying as they would have to on measurements made by the Project implementers, or a system of objective verification needs to be introduced by GEF into project designs.

### **Other Monitoring**

The project has also undertaken specific monitoring for conservation purposes. A biodiversity monitoring programme has been introduced whereby the rangers record their sightings and a GIS database has been developed to manipulate this for management purposes – see the section on Conservation Management below for more discussion.

A number of surveys were carried out to assess biodiversity hotspots (flora, mammals, birds, fishes) and a number of these will form the baseline for further monitoring, e.g. base-mapping of the alien invasive species *Mimosa pigra* and waterhole mapping, both at Yok Don.

## **PROJECT RESULTS**

Project results are reported in a similar fashion to the MTE report – a summary of the level of achievements made against project Outputs is given in Appendix IV, based on the success criteria listed in the Project Document. Immediately below is an evaluation of the Expected End of Project Situation as provided on pp. 15-16 of the Project Document. Results are then reported in more detail by programme and site after a brief note on integrating conservation and development.

### **Expected End of Project Situation**

**Table 2: Evaluation of the Expected End of Project Situation as per the Project Document**

	Evaluation*			
	HS	S	MS	U
Operations capacity for core protected area functions will have been enhanced and species and habitat protection within the target areas will have been improved. In particular:				
Hunting pressures will have been substantially reduced				
Livestock grazing within the protected areas will have ceased				
The incidence of fire will have been reduced at Yok Don				
Cultivation within the core areas will have been stopped				
Illegal logging will have ceased				
Illegal mining will have ceased at Ba Be/Na Hang				
Dynamite fishing will have ceased in Ba Be				
Minor forest production harvesting in core areas will have been reduced				
Conservation objectives will be integrated into regional policies and plans for attaining development				
Sustainable land-use practices will have been introduced and demonstrated in local villages, providing a long-term foundation for addressing the underlying threats to biodiversity				

	Evaluation*			
	HS	S	MS	U
Local people living inside the parks and along the buffer areas will have been involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of project activities, providing an excellent guiding example of the benefits and necessity of participatory approaches to conservation management.				
A participatory model for managing conservation and ecologically sustainable economic development activities in protected area buffer zones will have been established, tested and accepted.				
Environmental awareness and education campaigns will have been carried out to impart conservation values to local communities.				
A mechanism for coordination and management of protected areas which cross Provincial boundaries will be in place. This is a necessary step towards establishing a mechanism for managing protected areas which transcend international borders.				
The project will have developed a replicable model for integrating conservation and development that may be employed elsewhere in Indochina.				

Note: \* HS = Highly satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Marginally satisfactory; U = Unsatisfactory.

## Integration of Conservation and Development

As in all ICDPs, establishing the link between development benefits and conservation necessities has been difficult, and it is far from certain that in the minds of the beneficiaries that the link – between their own economic well-being and the well-being of the PA which they live close to – has been firmly established. Certainly in the case of some local leaders, this link remains missing. However, the PARC Project needs to be praised for trying to establish this link at all levels and with all activities. For example, a ranking system was devised to ensure that all development activities were targeted at those people and those conditions which would make the greatest difference to biodiversity conservation in a given area (see Annexes V and VI for examples covering a prototype rapid assessment tool to assist RUP planners identify and decide conservation status; and another for the provision of Village Assistance Funds which were targeted at the poorest villages, and then made available to those villages which had Village Development Plans, Action Plans, and conservation agreements according to increasing wealth of the village).

## Conservation Management

The key concept involved in PARC was to use Landscape Ecology to help create protected areas for resource conservation. In the strictest sense, this approach has failed<sup>28</sup>. In the north, the idea of a single cross-Provincial protected area was rejected by the Provinces concerned, a point that should have been picked up during the original design phase of the project. Furthermore, the actual topography of the land militated against such a corridor approach since a deep and intensively cultivated valley lay between Ba Be and Na Hang. The MTE recommended abandoning further effort in the corridor approach, noting that “*the process is not sufficiently advanced that a reasonable result could be achieved in the remaining Project period ... This does not imply abandoning the idea of extending protection into adjacent areas ... such as the forests of Xuan Lac. However, bearing in mind the fact that the Project has barely a year to completion, PARC is no longer in a position to support any but modest measures.*” However, the Project has actually done much better than the MTE had any right to expect, and has facilitated the establishment of two new protected areas which will be

<sup>28</sup> As indicated in footnote 2 on the first page of the Executive Summary (page iv), there is a difference of opinion here. Note that the FPE says “*in the strictest sense*”. However, we believe that the Project Team Leader’s interpretation’s has validity and should be recorded herewith: “*Entirely wrong, as stated above. The landscape ecology approach used by PARC, based on resource use planning, has defined an additional 17,000 hectares of protection and more than 10,000 hectares of buffer zones. Within this conservation complex, the approach has envisioned an approximate geographical scope of more than 300,000 hectares, when considering the protected forests to be created surrounding the Na Hang Dam impoundment and possible linkages with other protected areas in the Ha Giang Province, therefore three provinces and several districts holding protected sites within the largest conservation complex in Vietnam*”. For the FPE team’s view, please refer to footnote 2 on page iv.

administered as separate units – South Xuan Lac Species and Habitat Conservation Area (SHCA) (1,788ha) has been gazetted in Bac Kan Province primarily to protect three globally-threatened species<sup>29</sup>; and Francois’ Langur SHCA (15,350 ha) at Sing Long-Lung Nhoi is just a few weeks away from gazettelement.

In the Central Highlands, PARC facilitated two extensions to Yok Don National Park – an area of about 3,000 ha to the south and 57,000 ha to the north, thereby effectively doubling the size of the Park.

Operational Plans have been developed for all three original sites (Ba Be, Na Hang, and Yok Don). PARC has deliberately not attempted to produce classic international-style management plans because operations in Vietnam’s Protected Areas are directed by an Investment Plan which governs the available finances for a period of usually 10 years. As a result, emphasis has been placed upon providing guidance and assistance for the Management Boards to produce the plan themselves on an annual basis according to what the Board sees as relevant and what it will subsequently use to guide daily activities and improve the effectiveness of staff. PARC provided the necessary catalyst and technical assistance for the Boards to develop their own operational plans in order that the Boards take ownership of the plans promoting their future use and sustainability. The jury has to remain out on the success of this approach. On the one hand, the first annual revision of these plans has been completed at each of the three sites. On the other hand, there appeared to be little use being made of these plans – the only copy at Ba Be being locked in the office of the Deputy Director who spent half his time away in Hanoi; and the one at Na Hang being stored in a room away from the main activities of the Nature Reserve’s staff.

On a more encouraging note, designation of the two new protected areas – South Xuan Lac SHCA and Francois’ Langur SHCA – have led to two initiatives being piloted in Vietnam for the first time. The first of these is the inclusion of local community representation on a protected area Management Board, and the second is to develop a Management or Operational Plan which guides investment and not the other way around. The latter is also being piloted at Tam Dao National Park. The experiences and work undertaken by PARC at the three original sites has undoubtedly led to these policy experiments. They have five years to prove themselves, in which case they will become standard GOV strategy.

The institutional presence at the three sites has been strengthened by the construction of a number of ranger posts (brick and wood) and in Na Hang by three floating stations. All ranger stations, accommodating between three and twelve rangers, have been placed at strategic locations to provide a focus for ranger activities, maintain vigilance in and control access to key areas, and to coordinate community-based management activities. All ranger stations seen contained plastic wall maps of the whole park and of the jurisdictional area assigned to the ranger post, conservation regulations, and protocols for ranger patrols. Rangers’ chief tasks remain those of a policing nature – forest protection, checking on illegal activities, patrolling, assessing and giving licences to farmer’s forest gardens, and setting up forest protection action plan for communes. They have received training in, and been tasked with, monitoring biodiversity (see below), but there still seems to be an absence of actual conservation management activities and other activities such as guiding tourists. In addition, painted concrete boundary markers and various signs (e.g. engraved steel at Yok Don) have been placed in all three project sites – around the boundary of the core zone in Ba Be,

Increased numbers of rangers, increased efficiency and activity of rangers, and increased morale, all of which have resulted from new facilities, equipment and training<sup>30</sup>, have resulted in significantly reduced illegal activities in the protected areas. Table 3 shows the annual totals of illegal activities

<sup>29</sup> Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey (*Rhinopithecus avunculus*) – Critically Endangered; Francois’ Langur (*Semnopithecus francoisi*) – Vulnerable; and White-eared Night Heron (*Gorsachius magnificus*) – Endangered.

<sup>30</sup> Rangers have undergone training in role and objectives of rangers, patrolling, military discipline (group working), self-defence, first aid, forest and conservation law, map reading and compass work, GPS reading, biodiversity identification, and biodiversity monitoring.

reported by the Forest Protection Department from the three project sites. In general, at each site, the total number of violations shows the expected increase arising from a larger and more motivated ranger force, followed by a decrease as perpetrators come to realise that the chances of getting caught are rising significantly. Only at Ba Be have levels of illegal hunting stayed stubbornly high, and at Na Hang, the number of violations hit a second peak in 2003, almost certainly resulting from the influx of construction workers to the dam. Most violations are of minor severity and the relationship between rangers and local villagers has generally been expressed as very good. However, at least in Ba Be National Park villagers in the core zone still indulge in illegal activities, regularly working around the law which permits collecting of dead wood for fuel by ring-barking trees, waiting for them to die, and then collecting the dead wood. The danger of the rangers' task should also be underlined – a community ranger was shot dead by three poachers in Na Hang in September 2004.

**Table 3 : Violations reported by FPD from the three project sites by type and year**

<b>Ba Be National Park</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Illegal hunting	-	0	9	12	6	14
Illegal cutting	-	40	97	118	65	72
Illegal shifting cultivation	-	6	44	28	24	28
Illegal transportation	-	60	143	65	47	39
Other	-	13	10	10	28	8
<b>Total violations</b>	-	119	303	233	170	178
Total illegal intrusions (persons)	-	144	405	397	253	48
<b>Number of ranger patrols</b>	-	331	933	711	518	n/a.
<b>Na Hang Nature Reserve</b>						
Illegal hunting	20	6	8	13	11	7
Illegal cutting	23	66	29	12	14	12
Illegal shifting cultivation	21	13	3	1	19	3
Illegal transportation	7	5	37	27	21	27
Illegal transportation of animal	0	0	0	6	3	2
Forest Fire	7	1	1	0	0	0
Other	11	2	1	4	5	13
<b>Total violations</b>	89	93	80	88	103	100
<b>Yok Don National Park</b>						
Illegal cutting	3	4	9	20	9	1
Illegal shifting cultivation	0	0	0	0	9	5
Illegal transport of forest products	0	0	0	55	17	4
Illegal hunting	2	10	9	9	4	3
Other	0	0	0	0	3	0
<b>Total violations</b>	5	14	18	84	42	13

Numerous other initiatives have been undertaken. Shifting cultivation within the PAs has ceased as a result of the Community Development Programme activities although grazing within the forests has still not been fully curtailed – goats were encountered grazing in the forest at Ba Be and cattle at Yok Don. A Lake Management Cooperative has been established at Ba Be as a mechanism for cooperation between the national park authorities and the six communities living at the edge of Ba Be Lake. As a result, activities detrimental to conservation including dynamite and electric fishing have been eradicated from the Lake. A gun exchange programme was operated at the northern sites, with 450 guns at Ba Be and 750 guns at Na Hang being exchanged for domestic animals or improved crop seeds between 2000 and 2002. Bac Kan Provincial Police have been following this up by collecting guns from communes around Ba Be National Park under Decree N°. 47 (12/8/96) which outlaws all civilian guns in the country. Both Ba Be and Na Hang have continued to collect guns and Cho Don District

has also adopted the measure. Apparently, by the end of 2004, more than 2,000 guns have been collected. Notwithstanding this, several home-made guns were still in evidence in the villages around Ba Be and Na Hang, and hunting pressure is reportedly still very high in Yok Don – in no small part due to the military border guards<sup>31</sup>. Another excellent initiative was the signing up of restaurants in the main local towns (Cho Don and Na Hang) to a code not to use wild animals. In both cases, all restaurants in both towns had signed up to the agreement, but again its effectiveness was reportedly undermined by the demand for these products from senior local officials and authorities. Local wildlife (particularly snakes) was much in evidence as medicine and tonics in these and restaurants in other towns.

The project has also established a biodiversity monitoring programme. Rangers have been trained in the identification of key plants and animals and have been provided with high quality field guides, one of which was actually produced by PARC. In addition, the project has developed its own GIS database called PARCman<sup>32</sup> in which violations and species sightings are recorded and can be mapped. The database has been adopted by five protected areas and one major project (funded by GTZ), is continuing to revise it as necessary to support conservation management. In due course, it envisaged that this system will be exported to all PAs in Vietnam to assist in management decisions. The concept is sound in theory but the practice seems a little less so, there being three problems. First, the development of any computer software is fraught with problems, but the inability of successive revisions of PARCman to read the earlier version's data seems a little idiosyncratic and has led to staff no longer entering data until the final version is perfected. Consequently, the FPE was unable to assess just how effective the monitoring system is likely to be. Second, the level of biodiversity identification training of the rangers seems low. This is only to be expected since identification skills are honed by repeated exposure to species under field conditions over a long time – not something that can be picked up in the classroom in a few days. As a result, species recording seems to be confined to a few species of hardwood trees, and a small number of key species, particularly birds. While it is acknowledged that the system has been designed to monitor key indicator (biodiversity and habitat disturbance) species and not all species within the ecosystem, and that some birds are key indicators of habitat integrity, it is clear from the records examined and from interviews with rangers that the species being recorded, particularly birds, are those that the rangers know or can identify and not those that are actually key indicators. This in turn leads to the third and biggest problem – the majority of species are left outside of official records. Since the demand for Chinese medicine is booming, collecting wild species has increased and has led to depletion and even extinction of species in China with a spill over effect on bordering countries. During the mission, special attention was given to the orchids *Dendrobium* and *Dracaena*; both taxa seem to have been depleted to a very serious extent. It is suggested that biodiversity monitoring is considerably widened to secure the resources for future secondary forest product development.

## Environmental Education and Ecotourism

### *Environmental Education*

Training attempted to reach all parts of society at both formal and informal levels, and there is no doubt that an overall awareness of the need to protect natural resources more consciously has been achieved. A total of 20,746 persons<sup>33</sup>, one-third of them women, were reached during training in 42 technical subjects ranging from law enforcement through agricultural technologies to teacher training (see Appendix IV for a longer list). Results of this strong educational drive can be seen throughout the

<sup>31</sup> This is a contentious and sensitive issue. Local leaders gave the stock response that it was illegal for soldiers to hunt in the National Park and anyone caught would be severely punished. However, on-the-ground interviews with FPD rangers and other staff indicated that hunting by the military was rife and that the FPD had significant difficulties in exerting even minimal control – they were reluctant to confront soldiers.

<sup>32</sup> PARCman = Protected Areas and Resource Conservation Management

<sup>33</sup> It remains unclear as to whether “persons” represents individuals, or whether some individuals received training in more than one subject.

project area in regenerating shifting cultivation plots; trees planted in villages, on roadsides, in school yards, and in mixed, intensive farming systems; destructive fishing methods have largely been abandoned and hunting is greatly reduced; public hygiene has improved.

One notable success of the project was the development of nine environmental education courses for primary and secondary schools of the project areas. These were taught for one hour per month and have been accepted as a model for the GOV to mainstream environmental education into the national curriculum. All schools visited by the FPE were equipped with educational material, and had participated in tree planting activities, regular waste cleaning, and excursions to the protected areas. The boundaries of the PAs were made known to all stakeholders from farmers to school children.

### **Ecotourism**

Tourism development varies markedly between the three project sites. While Ba Be had about 30,000 tourists in 2003, 15% of them foreigners, Yok Don registered only 8,000 (450 foreigners), and Na Hang attracts none partly because it is the most remote of the three, and partly because of the dam construction. PARC provided information centres at Ba Be and Yok Don, the latter being considerably larger and more informative than Ba Be – an example of one site learning from another. The information centre proposed for Na Hang was not built according to the recommendations made by the MTE. Similarly, nature trails had been constructed at Ba Be and Yok Don but not at Na Hang. Information boards and signs were well designed and informative. The trails served as demonstrations on *“how to build tourism infrastructure that blends with the environment without spoiling it and therefore keeping nature natural”*. Unfortunately on the one path visited by the FPE, despite signs regarding litter, large quantities of litter were present.

Despite these advances, eco-tourists at Ba Be, for whom the conditions were best developed, remarked that there was little information about the goals or activities of the Park, and they would have wished to learn more about culture and nature of the places they visited. This may only serve as one example for a still wide-open field of educational communication material that can be developed and even sold for income generation at all sites.

There is one big problem still to be overcome at the project sites, and perhaps more widely across Vietnam and South-east Asia as a whole, and that is the major difference in the concept of eco-tourism as understood by GEF and developed countries and what is being developed. Ecotourism in Vietnam is seen as any tourism connected to a natural area – whether linked to biodiversity or not. This leads to singularly inappropriate development such as plans for big hotels/ restaurants; concrete lakes, road bridges rather than as small-scale naturally-based facilities. Only the home-stays in the villages within Ba Be National Park fall into the latter category, but even these local households seem to be in competition with the hotel operation of the Park Administration. In view of the shrinking budget of the Park Administration, conflict avoidance should be established as early as possible. However, at Yok Don, tourists were booked and guided by the local Communist Party’s Tourism Bureau, while the Park itself has contributed little to attract tourists nor to accommodate them professionally. In contrast to Ba Be, local families at Yok Don enjoy no right to house foreign tourists. Money spent on eco-tourism by the Park Administration seems to have been used for entirely irrelevant and facilities, leaving Yok Don’s eco-tourism concept, and its number of visitors, far below the level that could and should be achieved. Nowhere were visitor entrance fees being applied – see the section on Financial Sustainability.

### **Community Development**

Successful community development can be seen throughout the project areas. Special emphasis has been laid on straightforward technologies which improve farming techniques in all areas from vegetable growing through improved rice varieties to introducing improved breeds for livestock. Many farmers were visited and at all sites they expressed their gratitude and claim a two to three fold increase in their levels of income, even in those areas where they had to share land with relocated families. Nevertheless, the classification of farmers in the buffer zones and particularly in



communities at higher altitudes in the north, but also in the mixed ethnic villages of the Central Highlands (up to 10 ethnic groups per village) categorise poverty by the period of time per year when food is insufficient for the family. In a survey conducted in 2001 at a remote site in Ba Be, only four out of 80 households had food sufficiency throughout the year, with food scarcity ranging from one to six months per year. Under such situations, dependence on secondary forest products is obvious and becomes necessary for survival.

It is understandable, therefore, that the agricultural improvements introduced by the PARC project have been made largely through conventional ways of farm modernization such as the introduction of high-yielding rice varieties, improved livestock breeds, and intensified vegetable production. Excellent results have been achieved in individual cases at Ba Be/Na Hang by introducing bee-keeping and utilising the natural mountain stand of “shan tea” (*Camellia sinensis*) for tea production and improving its processing. Farmers claim to each make up to 5 million VND (US\$320) per year from honey, and 3 million VND (US\$190) from processed “shan” (mountain) tea.

One major area that deserves further attention is the under-utilised potential from the domestication of endangered secondary forest products. The forest gardens near the limestone hills of Ba Be/Na Hang form suitable habitats for the creation of such schemes, which should be scientifically established during future support. These products are agricultural, medicinal, and horticultural species, often fetching high prices in trade markets. It would seem feasible, particularly to a biodiversity protection project, to pay extra attention to these species and develop products and forest-farming systems adapted to specific sites. Likewise, the rich agro-ecological resources have not been taken into consideration either for protection or for improved production. Among these are the rare tuber crops and traditional livestock breeds, which deserve protection under the Convention on Biodiversity. For such agro-biodiversity protection, the farmers can be seen as service providers to society and should be rewarded accordingly.

At Yok Don, a small but suitable number of drought-adapted natural species with a good potential for the horticultural trade should be explored for commercial production during future interventions. It was noted during the FPE that species listed under CITES were for sale near the Park, and the fact that a market obviously does exist for these species, should lead to a more systematic approach to domestication under tissue culture. This would achieve both greater protection of the species in the wild while simultaneously creating more income for local families.

Migration and relocation are common phenomena in all sites. There are traditional, environmental, academic, and Government induced migrations. Many of them have in common that social conflicts could arise over perceived unfair treatment or inadequate resource allocation. Some traditionally migrating hill tribes have been termed “illegal migrants”, which does not give credit to their traditional forms of living that tends to be independent of Governmental area definitions. The project has stayed away from direct support to any migration but was prudent enough to provide the Government with relevant insight into the pros and cons of relocation, and the strong community development of the project surely had a laudable peace stabilizing influence.

Family planning should be considered a major topic in future projects. With 2-3 children of families in Ba be and Na Hang, and 3-4 children per family in Yok Don, conflicts over natural resources availability will soon be accentuated.

## **Land-use Planning and Forestry**

In all sites, land-use is characterised by complex patterns of crop and livestock farming, fish-keeping and fishing, and by collecting forest resources for daily consumption, medicine, and trade. The project has succeeded in the introduction of a trend away from forest utilisation practices toward controlled production under modernized schemes. A vital part of most production schemes is the integration of tree species, and the Project deserves particular credit for the fact that all species recommended and used were of local origin. A total of 81 local plant species under cultivation have been recorded

during the FPE field visits, 40 of which were trees used for construction and medicinal purposes, 11 were bamboo species for food and construction, and three palms for food (see Annex VII for a full list).

When no longer interrupted by shifting cultivation, the natural regeneration of forests is fast and can be observed at all sites. Natural early successional stages are composed of fast-growing, and often commercially low-value, trees. A conscious enrichment planting with slow-growing, climax species should be considered. In areas where the focus is on mammal protection, specific food trees can be planted as well.

Forest-farming systems should be developed at Ba Be and Na Hang to prevent depletion of secondary forest products, specifically the medicinal herbs. These systems should combine tree production with medicinal plant production under forest-like environmental conditions.

The fire-control system at Yok Don is wholly unsympathetic to biodiversity conservation and requires immediate changing. This was recognised by the PARC project and specialist forest ecologists were consulted in a bid to improve it. Unfortunately, the time lost at the beginning of the project, meant that this aspect was never completed. The problem is that the Dipterocarp forests of Yok Don are under severe pressure from grazing, resin collection, and occasional farming, all of which contribute indirectly to annual fires. Dry, windy conditions prevail in the open canopy promoting forest fires which wipe out most of the non-deciduous species. After fire, these forests are colonized quickly by a small, local bamboo species (*Arundinaria pusilla*), which also fuels fire and is foraged upon by the cattle of adjacent villagers. The villagers deliberately set fires to improve the growth of young bamboo shoots for their livestock. Consequently, the original mixed Dipterocarp forest is continuously forced to develop towards bamboo grassland. With the cessation of illegal logging and the conversion of the timber concession area into a protected area, the more fire-resistant Dipterocarps, notably *Dipterocarpus tuberculatus*, are slowly colonizing the monoculture-like stands. However, its large deciduous leaves are adding to the strength of fires and perpetuating the yearly destruction.

The Park Administration's response has been to lay fires early in the dry season in a conscious effort to reduce the amount of flammable leaf-litter available to the more dangerous fires of the late dry season. The resultant effect is that two fires per year are practically wiping out any evergreen plant species, hence preventing succession back to the original forest type. In addition, the fires are causing nutrient losses on the already naturally nutrient-deficient soils, preventing any build up of fertile horizons in the topsoil. While birds abound in these forests, the low abundance of reptiles and insects is striking, and prevents the formation of a rich ecosystem. Thus, there is an urgent need to develop a new fire control policy using methods sympathetic to biodiversity, e.g. fire-break plantations, along with education of villagers not to lay fires in the forest, and then to follow this by enrichment planting of the less fire-resistant species.

## Impact on Beneficiaries

The people living in and around the protected areas have seen a number of changes during the recent five years, all of them impacting on their lives in diverse ways. Initially there was some conflict between villagers and PA authorities as regulations on protection (particularly hunting, fishing, and tree-cutting) were strengthened and enforced (e.g. a boat station was burnt at Ba Be National Park in retaliation), but as the PARC project has helped to mitigate the losses from illegal activities by improving villagers' incomes through new farming technologies, the overall situation has largely become peaceful. Illegal activities have generally decreased, although villagers go to greater lengths now to hide such activities from the authorities, and the increased fear of being caught and punished for illegal hunting or tree-cutting may explain the recent shooting of a ranger who pursued a hunter.

Increased incomes for the villagers has led to an increase in modern goods – motorcycles, radios, TVs. The newly acquired TVs show modern life styles and fuel the dreams for a yet richer living style, a desire clearly evident from the many pictures of movie idols, modern cars, and models in fashionable

clothes which surround most houses' altar and its icons of political leaders. It is apparent that village people see a better life ahead for their children if they can get them a better education in distant towns and cities. Consequently, young people seek opportunities to leave the villages for "richer pastures" in the urban centres, leading to a drain of the better-educated youth away from the rural areas and a dearth of the innovative and creative elements needed for offering services or products to national and international tourists in and around the protected areas. Even the most basic requirements of tourists, e.g. information, transport, varied food, communications, local culture, and shopping for local handicrafts cannot be met, and the tourist and protected areas fall back on karaoke and alcohol as the major sources of entertainment instead. Inevitably this means that the protected areas are not viewed by tourists as highlights of attractive culture but rather are perceived as forgotten places, remote and difficult to visit, thereby again hindering mutually beneficial private development schemes between urban and rural people.

On the other hand, urban peoples' requirements for health products from food to medicine and recreation will, in the long-term, develop a trend for closer ties with protected areas and the people able to produce these products under natural conditions. This trend should be supported at its earliest stages since it will bring economic benefits to rural communities.

## Sustainability

### *Financial*

Financial sustainability is difficult to assess, but does not look strong – Table 4 provides the figures available for the nine National Parks still administered directly by MARD. There appears to be a genuine commitment to continue the recurrent costs of basic policing functions of the FPD rangers, but the investment figures include monies for inappropriate developments such as concrete lakes and bridges for Yok Don – see the section on ecotourism above. The adequacy of the funding is questionable, particularly for those Protected Areas passed from Central to Provincial Government under the decentralisation programme. There is a difference in the level of funding reported by politicians (high) and PA directors (low), e.g. the director of Ba Be National Park indicated that the change from central control to provincial control was accompanied by significant cuts in budgets – 7 billion VND (US\$ 448,700) to 1 billion VND (US\$ 64,100), but Bac Kan PPC reported that the latter figure was for 2004 only and that from 2005 this would be 4 billion VND (but that 2 billion VND of this was for resettlement packages). No attempt appears to be being made to collect entrance fees from visitors at either Ba Be or Yok Dong (Na Hang has no facilities to cater for visitors), in part because of disputes between Park, District and Provincial authorities over who would receive the fees<sup>34</sup>. The FPE team met with serious prevarication from interviewees every time the subject of finance was raised. However, it is clear that there is no interest (or politically approved opportunity) in promoting self-sustainability of PAs in financial terms and that they will remain funded directly through central or provincial governments for the foreseeable future. All questions relating to self-financing through novel means – e.g. orchid farming for the horticultural market – were not answered, and such initiatives are not looked upon favourably by the authorities. The only other sources of finance being sought is through further foreign funding, e.g. Ba Be National Park is seeking World Heritage status under UNESCO.

<sup>34</sup> In Ba Be, the community-based Lake Management Board, established by PARC, collects fees for tourism boat trips to sites of interest and ferry crossings. They operate two ticket stations and the income is divided 75% to the boatman, 15% to the Lake Management Board, 5% to the Commune, and 5% to the guide. The ticket collectors are paid by the Lake Management Board up to a collective total of 300,000 VND – any excess being used by the LMB to hire litter collectors for the lake.

**Table 4 : Funds provided by MARD to the nine National Parks under its control<sup>35</sup> (US\$)**

	1999			2000			2001		
	Recurrent	Investment	Total	Recurrent	Investment	Total	Recurrent	Investment	Total
Ba Be	63,269	169,295	232,564	83,590	446,795	530,385	109,103	373,141	482,244
Bach Ma	87,308	346,987	434,295	126,538	485,128	611,667	111,026	123,846	234,872
Ba Vi	80,256	314,359	394,615	92,244	332,308	424,551	100,000	255,449	355,449
Ben En	91,154	119,038	210,192	113,654	34,487	148,141	104,167	87,244	191,410
Cat Ba	103,333	243,590	346,923	107,051	153,590	260,641	125,769	49,615	175,385
Cat Tien	163,718	307,372	471,090	218,333	218,846	437,179	245,192	207,115	452,308
Cuc Phuong	121,218	89,103	210,321	159,423	153,205	312,628	188,846	101,667	290,513
Tam Dao	72,949	234,295	307,244	106,987	183,718	290,705	102,436	230,513	332,949
Yok Don	87,179	239,167	326,346	97,628	161,795	259,423	109,038	259,103	368,141
<b>Total</b>	<b>870,385</b>	<b>2,063,205</b>	<b>2,933,590</b>	<b>1,105,449</b>	<b>2,169,872</b>	<b>3,275,321</b>	<b>1,195,577</b>	<b>1,687,692</b>	<b>2,883,269</b>

Source : MARD.

The two new PAs (South Xuan Lac and Francois' Langur SHCAs) require funding for establishment and initial conservation actions. The FPE understands this to be 300 million VND (US\$ 19,230) per annum for South Xuan Lac, part of which is already being funded through PARC which provided US\$ 13,152 for the salaries of Village Ranger Patrols until mid 2006. This was done through an extensive MOU between FPD, Tuyen Quang PPC and PARC approved by the TPR. Figures for the Francois' Langur SHCA are more difficult to come by but it seems that 3 billion VND (US\$ 192,300) is needed for reserve establishment of which PARC has already provided 890 million VND (US\$ 57,000) for biodiversity surveys, zonation planning, and conservation needs assessment. Given that these reserves represent a significant success of the PARC project, and given their significance for seriously globally-threatened species, it seems important that money is found to get these reserves operational. The FPE strongly recommends that GEF finds a mechanism to provide this necessary funding – perhaps through the World Bank-GEF Forestry Sector Development Project<sup>36</sup> –but that it does so *only* after obtaining a high level agreement with the GOV over future infrastructure projects not impacting other protected areas in the way that the Na Hang Dam and Ho Chi Minh Highway have affected or may affect Na Hang Nature Reserve and Yok Don National Park respectively. Such a negotiated package would serve to impart to the GOV the importance that the international community attaches to such protected areas and raise the awareness of senior government members over the global context of the country's threatened biodiversity.

### **Social**

Increased income and improved livelihoods as supported by the PARC project have helped to mitigate the effects of social unrest that in other countries are known to arise from migration and relocation of local people and from the loss of opportunities from hunting, gathering, and shifting cultivation in forest land. Environmental education has contributed strongly to the peoples' acceptance of protection measures. The proverb "*it is better to share rice in times of hunger than to share gold in times of abundance*" was used by villagers to explain the present need of sharing land with newly re-located people in Na Hang.

There is a strong tendency to send children to the cities for further or higher education, where they may ultimately find jobs and be able to support their parents during their old age. From interviews, the percentage of young people leaving the traditional rural community in one-way or another is estimated to reach 20%, adding a stream of job-seeking young people to urban centres. As in other comparable societies, these young people may be able to support the livelihoods of their kin and make

<sup>35</sup> Excluding funding from National Programme 135.

<sup>36</sup> The Vietnam GEF focal point refused to provide the reference number and start date of this project despite repeated requests. We understand that the project was approved by GEF Council on 25/5/04 with US\$ 9.2 million of GEF funds.

contributions that lessen their needs to over-use natural resources in the future, provided that urban strategies are in place to guide the influx of young people.

In small rural communities such as Na Hang, where dam construction increases the population within short time by about 10,000 construction workers, social and health problems have already begun to arise as in other places with similar conditions. The fear of inadequate communal mechanisms and funds to cope with this dimension has been expressed by local leaders.

### ***Economic***

The project has contributed much to the betterment of living conditions and livelihood in all project sites. Among the technologies provided to rural families to increase their income are improved rice varieties (farmers claim an average increase of production of 2.5 tonnes per ha to a total of 5.5 to 7 tonnes per ha, twice a year, where before only one harvest was possible); intensified vegetable production and marketing (before vegetables were usually collected in the wild); new breeds of pigs and chicken which grow faster and bigger; caging of livestock to reduce loss in the wild and increase growth increment; and a number of fast-growing fruit and timber tree species which will provide yields in only a few years. Among the fast growing trees, *Melia azedarach* is preferred in the north and is sold for carpentry after eight years of growth. Notwithstanding this, farmers have not been enabled to research their own new crops and technologies from secondary forest products which were previously collected from the wild. Hence, future support may be needed in developing ecologically sound land-use systems for medicinal, horticultural, and food crops.

As a result of increased incomes, new goods have come within reach of many families and most spent this on items such as TVs, radios, and motorcycles. Children are sent to higher schools in major cities wherever possible, requiring additional income for their boarding.

In summary, the economic improvements triggered by the PARC project have more than offset the loss of opportunities caused by the stricter park protection and farmers are now much more busy with their new farming and livestock operations, reducing the possibilities and necessity to go hunting and collecting in the protected forests.

### ***Ecological***

With the hunting pressures reduced and the areas of former shifting cultivation now under natural regeneration or under tree plantation, ecological degradation has been slowed. Major threats, however, still arise from the direct and indirect effects of large-scale infrastructure projects such as dams and roads and their long-term impacts, from an unsympathetic fire control regime in Yok Don, and from low income of rangers and park administration staff which militates against the recruitment and maintenance of high quality staff.

As there is no encouragement to domesticate secondary forest products and to develop appropriate land-use systems, the pressure on the remaining wild resources will increase with the climbing prices for such products. This will ultimately make their defence and survival impossible. Thus, there is an urgent need to put more emphasis not only on the endangered flagship species but on an entire plant and animal community at risk from biodiversity erosion.

### ***Institutional***

The indicators for institutional sustainability of the Project are mixed. On the positive side, several of the changes introduced by PARC look set to be continued, further developed or replicated – local involvement in Protected Area Management Boards will be piloted at South Xuan Lac and Francois' Langur SHCAs; changes to operational plans to guide investment rather than vice versa will be tested at these sites and at Tam Dao and Cuc Phong National Parks; annual updates of operational plans at the three project sites now appear to be institutionalised; Ba Be Lake Management Board appears to be

a success; the idea of biodiversity monitoring in PAs for guiding management appears to be set for replication throughout the PA system.

However, the negative side is that environmentally sound and sustainable integrated planning has not come about from this project, as witnessed by the development of the Na Hang Dam and the proposed routing of the Ho Chi Minh Highway through Yok Don National Park. Even the FPD's tacit acceptance of the idea that Protected Areas are there to be protected until a greater national need arises indicates how far the GOV is from really embracing the ICD concept, and how far globally important biodiversity present within Vietnam remains vulnerable to national development imperatives.

## FINDINGS

### The Policy Context

The policy context for the Project remains very supportive. Legal, policy and institutional interventions aimed at addressing environmental issues have been made since the 1980s, including the National Biodiversity Action Plan 1995 which acted as the basis for the PARC project. Since the project has commenced, this positive framework has been strengthened further by Decision N°. 192 of the Prime Minister to approve the Management Strategy for a Protected Area System in Vietnam to 2010 which was developed under the auspices of WWF's Indochina Programme's *Strengthening Protected Area Management* (SPAM) Project. The strategy's objectives are fourfold:

1. *To establish, organize and manage effectively a protected area system located in different ecosystems (including terrestrial, wetland, and marine) in order to protect, within an ecologically sustainable development framework, the rich and unique biodiversity and landscape resources of Vietnam; closely link conservation and development activities; and full mobilise the roles and functions of the PA system to actively support the implementation of the Comprehensive Development and Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction Strategy in the course of national industrialisation and modernisation.*
2. *To improve general awareness of the importance and value of natural resources and biodiversity and to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of communities and to promote people's involvement in PA protection.*
3. *To reform policy for protection areas and institutions which manage them and strengthen state management function over the PA system; improve the capacity of local authorities and PA management boards to manage natural resources and biodiversity.*
4. *To increase international cooperation and identify sources of funding and their accessibility.*

Of the eight Immediate Priorities listed in Section 5 (p.54), five advance key initiatives undertaken by the project:

- *Institutional and administrative reforms, which are highly effective and which conform with current administrative reforms, to establish a single integrated national agency for nature conservation.*
- *Establishment of formal communication links between management boards and agencies responsible for buffer zone development to review decisions about development in both protected areas and the buffer zones.*
- *The development of management and zoning plans for protected areas that define permissible development activities so that management activities and integrated financial planning can be assessed and reviewed.*
- *An increase in community involvement in conservation and the education of local communities about conservation and the use of resources in protected areas.*

- *Increased scientific research, surveys and the monitoring of biodiversity consistent with the management plans for each PA.*

## The Planning Context

### *Project Planning*

The entire planning process appears to have been short on detail – two STAP reviewers were critical of the lack of detailed planning, and yet this was allowed to continue into the inception phase where a dreadful Inception Report was produced for Yok Don by GTZ which should have set the alarm bells ringing. From this, it is quite apparent that Yok Don was going to be a problem – so it is unclear why it took so long for the divergent approach insisted upon by GTZ to be remedied. The FPE has not been able to ascertain why such a lack of detailed planning was not picked up and dealt with at either of these two crucial stages, although it is understood that there was a clause in the subcontracts which stated that approval was required from the NPO and IUCN-Technical Assistant for all the work plans and activity proposals. However, UNOPS was directly responsible to pay the subcontractors for implementation, not the NPO, and it seems that this advisory function was by-passed leaving the NPO to become a reporting and documentation centre rather than an integral part of the project strategic decision-making process<sup>37, 38</sup>.

### *Regional Planning*

Perhaps the biggest single problem that the PARC project has had to face is that of infrastructure inappropriate to PAs being planned which significantly impacts them. In particular, the 342MW hydropower dam being built on the edge of the Na Hang Nature Reserve, the proposal for a major highway through Yok Don National Park, and even significant tourism development in or close to Ba Be National Park have all had serious repercussions for the project, but more importantly significant negative impacts for the globally-important species that the areas are protected for and which the PARC GEF project targeted money towards conserving.

Major economic development projects are always a sensitive issue in developing countries when they clash with environmental priorities. It is not within the mandate of this FPE to solve these arguments or to evaluate their relative merits. However, given that one of the success criteria for Output 1.1 of the project was “*Management Plans will be fully integrated with Regional Development Policies and Plans*” and that one of the express expected end of project situations was “*Conservation objectives will be integrated into regional policies and plans for attaining development*”, it is pertinent to comment upon this and to indicate that the project has demonstrably failed to achieve its ends with respect to this.

It is fully acknowledged by the FPE team that the GOV is genuinely committed to nature conservation. It has agreed as part of this project to establish two new protected areas containing known deposits of iron and lead and in so doing has agreed to forfeit the opportunity costs of exploiting these reserves which run into millions of dollars. The GOV has already designated some 2.5 million hectares of land (c.7% of its land area) as PAs in a country where land is very scarce and population density is high. It is busy strengthening its legislative and policy framework for nature

<sup>37</sup> The Project Team Leader comments: “*Perhaps on paper this is true, but in practice all project decisions were governed by a workplan, prepared jointly by the Sub-contractor and the Local Project Management Unit. In addition, monthly progress and upcoming implementation plans were discussed and deliberated on a monthly basis between the Sub-contractor and the Project Manager at the National Project Office. Implementation of all new project activities was first discussed with the Project Manager and the Head of the Local Project Management Unit, and then implemented*”. The FPE team does not dispute this but has no means of verification at this late stage.

<sup>38</sup> See UNDP comment #9 Appendix IX.

conservation<sup>39</sup>, increasing coordination between relevant agencies concerned with nature protection, and it is understood that for every proposal that is implemented, many more are cancelled chiefly on environmental grounds (e.g. the hydropower scheme proposed for Ba Be National Park), although this decision-making process is largely invisible to the outside world.

The point that the FPE team wish to stress to the GOV is that this genuine commitment to nature conservation is significantly undermined when infrastructure schemes of this scale and nature are allowed to progress in globally sensitive sites. It is true that the global nature of this project has not been fully recognised by those involved (a point discussed below), but the species that will be impacted most at Na Hang are considered globally threatened and, in the case of the Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey, critically so. Added to this that it is an endemic (occurs in Vietnam and nowhere else), the value of these sites to the international community is huge, hence the large-scale investment that GEF has made<sup>40</sup>. For the GOV to then propose not one, but two major infrastructure schemes (even though the route of the highway may now be revised away from Yok Don National Park), which will significantly degrade the sites and negatively impact the priority species<sup>41</sup> sends completely the wrong signals to the international donor community and seriously damages the credibility of the GOV in the eyes of the global conservation community<sup>42</sup>. Protected areas are designated because they are the best areas for biodiversity; they are designated to be protected for all time – not to be protected until it is expedient for them to be developed. The argument above that for every scheme put forward, many have been rejected<sup>43</sup>, shows a) just how much pressure protected areas are under by sectoral interests who do not understand or recognise the importance that the international community attaches to these sites, and b) the urgent need for projects such as this to raise cross-sectoral awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation<sup>44</sup>.

Even allowing for the positive moves of agreeing for the first time to an international team being involved in a supplementary EIA process, the recommendations of this have been only partially implemented, exacerbating the signals being sent. The level of commitment is further eroded by the fact that on a dam project costing 7,500 billion VND (US\$481 million), only 5 billion VND (US\$320,500) or 0.067% has been allocated to “environmental protection” but this comprises 3 billion VND for vegetation clearance within the inundation area and 2 billion VND for translocation of historical relicts, i.e. not a single Dong for nature conservation at a globally important site<sup>45</sup>. It is understood that the revision to the *Law on Forest Protection and Development* 1991 has just been approved by Parliament on 10/11/04 and now just requires ratification by the President. Within this is

<sup>39</sup> Policy Decision 245 on the management of resources; decree No. 8 is under revision, the Laws on Forest Protection were changed in 2004; the Management Strategy for a PA system in Vietnam to 2010 was approved by PM's Decision 192 in 2003.

<sup>40</sup> See UNDP comment #10 Appendix IX.

<sup>41</sup> In the opinion of the SEIA, “*unless adequate measures are in place to control demands of incoming people, it is unlikely that the Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey will survive in the Khu Tinh core zone [of Na Hang Nature Reserve] in 10 years time*”.

<sup>42</sup> See UNDP comment #11 Appendix IX.

<sup>43</sup> See UNDP comment #12 Appendix IX.

<sup>44</sup> See UNDP comment #13 Appendix IX.

<sup>45</sup> The NPM comments: “*Though it may be argued that efforts to reduce dam impact on local biodiversity are inadequate, it is not correct to assert that not a single Dong has been paid for nature conservation. Increased number of rangers, strengthened monitoring access to and from Na Hang Nature Reserve, restriction of fuel wood use at construction site, strengthened coordination between enforcement bodies such as forest rangers and the police, public awareness and strengthened law enforcement on wildlife poaching and ban on bush meat sale at local restaurants, inter alia, were some of the efforts made by the provincial authorities which should be commended. Na Hang Nature Reported, for example that until October 2003 Tuyen Quang Province had provided Na Hang District with additional 14 staff, including 5 permanent, 3 temporary, task-based and 6 juniors staff to strengthen forest protection and dam construction monitoring (Na Hang Nature Reserve's October Monitoring Report)*”. The NPM makes clear that a number of positive conservation efforts were undertaken in relation to the dam. However, the point that the FPE team is drawing attention to is that no money was allocated to conservation of a globally-important site within the budget of the dam project itself – all the conservation efforts listed here were paid for by the PARC project or as extra spending or reallocation of funds by the provincial government. In the absence of the international dimension provided by GEF, it remains arguable whether any such conservation efforts would have been applied.



the provision for a Conservation Trust Fund to be established as a percentage of the revenue from infrastructure projects – the actual amount still to be quantified by a Reward Environmental Study being conducted by Hue University. However, the GOV could re-establish significant credibility if it took a rapid decision to use 2% of the projected revenues<sup>46</sup> from the dam to fund urgently needed conservation actions at the construction site now (such as increasing the ranger force by 15 as recommended in the SEIA), rather than wait until the Hue University study reports.

## The Management Context

### *Country Driven-ness*

Unfortunately, despite the commendable aims of the Government's *Management Strategy for a Protected Area System in Vietnam to 2010*, there has been weak country buy-in to the Project and little ownership beyond FPD<sup>47</sup>. The reasons for this appear to be twofold.

Firstly, the project has been nationally executed only in name<sup>48</sup>. As a result of a national capacity assessment, GEF/UNDP appointed UNOPS to execute approximately 80% of the total US\$8 million project budget (US\$ 6 million GEF; US\$ 2 million UNDP; in-kind contributions from GOV) leaving the FPD to handle only about 20% through the NPO. Placing large scale contracts through UNOPS to big international consulting companies (Scott Wilson and GTZ) further weakened country involvement.

Secondly, the planned make-up of the National Steering Committee (NSC) by the project designers proved too innovative under Vietnamese Law (a point they should perhaps have researched more carefully) and a solely government-orientated NSC resulted. This committee failed to provide the strong leadership role that an ICDP needs, partly because the members have to sit on many such committees covering the numerous projects being implemented in the country at any one time<sup>49</sup>, partly because too many irrelevant ministries/agencies were included and hence most failed to turn up leaving it single-sector dominated, and partly because of lack of experience of the members of ICDPs – ironically the very factor that the project designers were trying to overcome by including wider, non-governmental involvement.

As a result, the NSC met only six times in the whole of the project with gaps of 14 and 16 months between meetings<sup>50</sup>, instead of the intended schedule (four times in the first year and twice yearly thereafter); papers were not circulated adequately; actions were not prioritised; and insufficient strategic direction was imparted to project managers and implementers. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the links to and from the political levels above, so necessary to an ICDP, were rendered largely ineffective. This latter weakness was recognised during the project and efforts have been made to address it – see Communication below<sup>51</sup>.

In addition, there appears to be little commitment to continue funding of the gains made by PARC even where these are in line with the Strategy – see the section on financial sustainability above.

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<sup>46</sup> This 2% figure is taken from the precedent made at the Hoa Binh Dam (Vietnam's largest) and used as an "environmental tax". It is understood that ENV is willing to pay such funds at Na Hang but have no legal provision to do so.

<sup>47</sup> A point reinforced by the fact that apart from a senior officer from the Foreign Economic Relations Dept., Ministry of Planning and Investment, no member of the Government outside of FPD and the GEF focal point met with the FPE team or attended the final briefing. Notably, that includes MARD.

<sup>48</sup> See UNDP comment #14 Appendix IX.

<sup>49</sup> A point reflected in that the Vice-minister of MARD was originally chair of the NSC but this position was later delegated to the Director-General of FPD.

<sup>50</sup> According to the NSC minutes, meetings were held on 13/7/99, 10/5/00, 17/10/00, 28/1/02, 16/12/02, and 14/4/04.

<sup>51</sup> See UNDP comment #15 Appendix IX.

## Coordination

Coordination within and between the agencies connected to the project seems to have been variable. Vertical coordination within the GOV has been good – horizontal coordination significantly less so.

UNDP took a hands-off approach unless there were external problems, hence they used their influence to try and resolve political conflicts over the proposed infrastructure projects. However, such a hands-off approach cannot be viewed as a complete success and closer involvement would undoubtedly have helped avoid the problems with GTZ contract<sup>52</sup>. It would also have improved the functioning of the Steering Committee and helped in pushing the conservation aims of the project at higher levels within the GOV – see below. UNDP made quarterly payments in advance to MARD based on satisfactory quarterly progress reports and accounts.

It appears that project management suffered from excessively convoluted and complex management chains which made communication and coordination difficult even when all parties were acting professionally and with good faith. The complexity of the institutional arrangements, the separate contracts between UNOPS and Scott Wilson for site implementation; between UNOPS and UNDP (Hanoi) for communications; between UNOPS and IUCN for prescribed technical support; not to mention between UNOPS and GTZ/WWF during the early stages of the project for site implementation in Yok Don, led to many stakeholders being unclear as to which group had authority and responsibility for what area of activity<sup>53</sup>. These difficulties were exacerbated by the distance over which communications were taking place, particularly with UNOPS being the core agency. Most players have identified the fact that the absence of UNOPS having an in-country presence was a major problem. A single focal point such as a project officer, based say in Hanoi, through whom face-to-face communication could have been made, would have helped significantly. The difficulties in these organisational arrangements reached as far down as the Districts who reported them to be “*very confusing with too many focal points*”. Na Hang DPC complained that “*lots of reports needed to be submitted – if only one focal point it would save much time to do productive work*”.

In UNOPS favour, it is fair to say that in the early stages of the project, the Portfolio Manager made regular trips to Vietnam and played a substantive part in the project which was welcomed by the Project Team Leader (but not so much by UNDP-GEF in Kuala Lumpur), but as the project wore on and the Portfolio Manager changed, such visits became rarer. In fact UNOPS' Portfolio Manager changed repeatedly to the point of excess, and while three Portfolio Managers covered the project between 1999 and October 2003, a further seven<sup>54</sup> covered it in the last 13 months of its lifetime. This lack of continuity caused much delay and extra work for all involved in implementing the project since it meant repeated requests for background information that had already been sent to previous managers. In one instance a lack of understanding of basic budget procedures by a portfolio manager who had held the post for just a few days resulted in a serious miscalculation of the remaining project budgets caused great embarrassment to the project and GOV, and incurred unnecessary extra costs and significant loss of trust.

On another occasion, long-distance was at the root of another series of miscommunications between project partners, this time damaging relations between the UNDP-GEF Portfolio Manager (based in Kuala Lumpur) and the Project Team Leader. As a result of a decision made at the TPR in December 2002, GEF requested revision the log-frame for Na Hang and this fell to SW. Because international telephone calls were deemed costly, miscommunication through e-mail resulted in four full revisions and numerous drafts being produced and exchanged before being settled ... through an international telephone call initiated by UNOPS<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> See UNDP comment #16 Appendix IX.

<sup>53</sup> See UNDP comment #17 Appendix IX.

<sup>54</sup> Including temporary cover.

<sup>55</sup> See UNDP comment #18 Appendix IX.

At the local level there were also complex arrangements to ensure that the project fully involved all the many stakeholders. However, these appear to have been successful, and most Provincial and District PCs report that cooperation between the project implementers (SW) and themselves was good and praised the involvement of lots of local people as one of the big successes of the Project. The Chairman of Ba Be DPC praised the Local Project Management Unit as a “*good method to involve all major administrative stakeholders*” but also commented that the Site Task Manager had not kept him informed as regularly as he would have liked.

### **Communication**

Notwithstanding what has been written about communication in the previous section, here we are concerned with dissemination of project results to wider audiences. This was omitted from the project’s design but a communication strategy was put together late in the project to produce various products and publications, and to develop a policy analysis which will report in 2005.

One important point raised has been that of reports<sup>56</sup>. The PARC project produced a huge number of documents, and all of these have been written in English to meet project requirements. However, for these reports to have value to the country, they have to be in Vietnamese, but no money was budgeted for this translation. Apparently, such a budget provision was requested through the TPR in 2003 and money was provided to IUCN-VN to take responsibility but it was reported to the FPE that the translated documents have failed to appear and the project is now completed. It is important that every document should be translated into the relevant languages of the host country at the same time that it is produced in English and future projects should allow for this in their design.

### **The Broader Context**

One factor linked to implementation through a purely project management agency such as UNOPS, or through commercial contractors such as Scott Wilson, is that they lack the impetus to push the project forward beyond the narrow limits set by their mandate or contract. For both sorts of agencies, factors other than nature conservation are their driving force – for UNOPS, the main task is to manage the contractual and financial parts of the project according to their legal mandate while for a commercial consultancy their main task is to carry out the technical activities for which they have been contracted within a cost that makes them a profit. In both cases, there is little or no incentive to provide an additional effort to ensure that nature conservation benefits in the long-term.

In the PARC project, UNOPS (with the exception of its excessive staff turnover) provided a professional service<sup>57</sup>, and Scott Wilson, in no small part because of the dedication of their staff, helped to provide a largely successful outcome. But neither were well positioned to deal with a number of shortcomings such as the fact that government ownership of the project was not well promoted; or that communication of the Project’s results was often ineffective<sup>58</sup>. In short, while the legal letter of contracts was being fulfilled, the spirit of the project was not entirely so, and opportunities to complete the whole picture, particularly the follow-up necessary to obtain government ownership and impart policy change, were lost. In cases when leadership was necessary, e.g. in providing adequate pressure to ensure the recommendations made in the Supplementary EIA were implemented more fully, there was a vacuum – such a role fell beyond UNOPS and the contractors, and should have been picked up by UNDP<sup>59</sup>. There appears to have been a tendency for UNDP to

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<sup>56</sup> The point was raised by the Project Executive Secretary Yok Don (apparently the Project Team Leader’s right-hand man towards the end of the project) but subsequently rejected by the Project Team Leader himself who comments on this paragraph were: “*All reports of significant value have been translated, provided to the project partners, and placed in the project website. Kindly examine the project website at [www.undp.org.vn/projects/parc](http://www.undp.org.vn/projects/parc)*”. This illustrates the conflicting information given to the FPE team on many occasions.

<sup>57</sup> See UNDP comment #19 Appendix IX.

<sup>58</sup> See UNDP comment #20 Appendix IX.

<sup>59</sup> See UNDP comment #21 Appendix IX.

have abdicated responsibility in these situations believing that such a role should have been filled by either the NPO (because it was a NEX nationally executed project<sup>60</sup>) or by UNOPS (because they were contracted to manage the project). Unfortunately this stance is inconsistent – the original capacity assessment undertaken by UNDP and GEF showed that the NPO could be expected to execute only about 20% of the project (and hence were given responsibility for only 20% of the budget) and UNOPS undertook their project management role fully, but such a role could not and should not be extended to influencing factors affecting the project from outside. It is important that improved use is made of the UN system, and through synergies with other organisations, to push the broader objectives and more effective functioning of GEF projects at the highest national levels to ensure post-project sustainability<sup>61</sup>.

In some instances, leadership could have been played by a reputable international NGO, attached to the project or even given the task of implementing it. Both IUCN and WWF were involved in the project at one stage or another – WWF initially in the design stage and later in collaboration for a short time with GTZ; IUCN as a major subcontractor throughout. Both organisations have an in-country presence, and nature conservation is their *raison d'être*, hence both might have been able (and probably willing) to have provided that extra impetus, influence, and long-term view that would have made this project more effective. It is not the FPE's place to second-guess whether such organisations would have been more successful as implementing agencies than UNOPS and Scott Wilson (although IUCN has a mandate from GEF to be one). Both these organisations performed well, as noted elsewhere, and implementation through IUCN may have failed in other areas<sup>62</sup>. The point is that technical agencies with a vested interest in a project's success beyond contractual obligations and with an in-country presence before, during, and after project implementation, should be considered for implementation wherever their capacity is deemed able to cope. Such arrangements provide added value through synergies which are beyond the capability of purely project management agencies and commercial consultancies, and such a route is also likely to generate significantly less overhead costs.

### **Training**

Training largely appears to have been carried out well. The approach to community development where people are trained, demonstration plots set up, and then extension work undertaken has worked extremely well. The ranger training courses where a variety of skills (discipline, team work, navigation, first aid, etc.) were taught under field conditions not only imparted these skills to the rangers but helped to build a wider camaraderie and *esprit d'corps*.

Only in one area could the FRE team identify weak training, and that concerned biodiversity identification by rangers. A couple of short, classroom-based training sessions seemed to have sufficed, but given that the entire biodiversity monitoring programme rests upon the rangers' ability to identify plants and animals, this seems a little shaky. Identification skills cannot be learned over a short period of time – they require repeating under varying seasonal and field conditions over a fairly long period. It is generally acknowledged that the best way of learning such identification skills is with an expert in the field. In future, it may be more cost-effective to hire botanical and zoological specialists to work with a project over its lifespan (maybe full-time) to train large numbers of rangers in small groups on a cyclical basis.

### **Gender Issues**

Gender has been considered thoroughly throughout the Project. The Project Document stated that:

*“The community development components of the project will be designed to be gender-neutral, to assure equal participation of women and men.”* and

<sup>60</sup> See UNDP comment #22 Appendix IX.

<sup>61</sup> See UNDP comment #23 Appendix IX.

<sup>62</sup> See UNDP comment #24 Appendix IX.

*“A farming systems approach to extension will be adopted with household needs becoming the centre of focus. Key elements of the proposed approach include ... focusing on the needs of women to improve uptake of new methods (this is especially important for ethnic communities where women bear a very heavy responsibility for household work). The project will recruit women contact farmers as informal extension agents”*

In the event, the project has come close to achieving this. Of the 20,746 persons trained by the Project, 7,104 were women and since these figures include all training including forest rangers, government officers, etc., the actual number of women trained under the community development components of the project was probably close to 50%. In Yok Don, Krong Na Commune report that 70% of trainees were women.

In addition, gender was an issue in targeting conservation actions. For example, in prioritising the recipients for Village Assistance Funds women were given priority over men in the two wealthiest ranked groups of villages (A and B – see Annex VI for a worked example at Ba Be).

## Replicability

It is recognised by the Forest Protection Department and by UNDP that this GEF intervention represents something of a pilot project in establishing integrated conservation and development which can be replicated in part or totality at other protected areas in Vietnam. Despite some concerns expressed above under Project Design that the project *could* have had a low success for replicability, the project partners have worked hard to ensure that key aspects of the project are replicable in other areas. Key amongst these are the wide range of agricultural improvements that have been piloted and embraced by villagers of diverse ethnicity and culture – the training-demonstration-extension cycle proving particularly successful – and fostered by the establishment of extension officers whose services are now widely sought and paid for by the farmers. This model should be replicated elsewhere, but its key to success is the raised awareness of environmental issues that accompanies the economic development and extensions workers in other areas must be trained and train others in this aspect.

With regard to conservation management, it is heartening to be able to report that several aspects of the project are already being replicated as pilots or tests elsewhere. In particular, the idea of using conservation Operational Plans to determine financial priorities for investment in PAs rather than vice versa is a huge step forward and much will depend on the success of this idea being introduced at the two new SHCAs at South Xuan Lac and Sing Long-Lung Nhoi and at the established Tam Dao and Cuc Phong National Parks. Similarly, the idea of community involvement in the Management Boards of PAs will be tested at the two new SHCAs with the aim of replication to other PAs. The development of the PARCman GIS database for biodiversity monitoring has also taken account the aim of introducing its use into all PAs in Vietnam. Finally, the environmental education package that has been developed by PARC is excellent and it appears that this will now form the core not of a curricula “add-on” but of a subject mainstreamed within primary and secondary education within Vietnam – a huge benefit to future generations.

## Global Dimension

The MTE devoted a long and significant section to the fact that GEF projects are special in that the international community is funding the incremental costs associated with the extra efforts needed to manage and conserve globally-important biodiversity. As with the MTE, this evaluation continued to find that the national project partners and beneficiaries showed no understanding of this global dimension of GEF<sup>63</sup> and viewed it as simply another international donor package. It is true that FPD has started to forge links with the Cambodian authorities for cross-border cooperation at Yok Don, but coming as it does in the final month of a five-year project, this can hardly be seen as prioritising the global dimension. Furthermore, if the concept had permeated wider and higher in the GOV, it is

<sup>63</sup> See UNDP comment #25 Appendix IX.

possible that the inappropriate infrastructure projects may not have been located in areas of critical global biodiversity interest – a point even now that does not appear to be understood by all parts of government.

At the local levels, PARC was seen as just part of the Government's general drive to alleviate poverty, and criteria for success were almost always viewed as being development-oriented although the commonly-voiced criterion of "*greatly raised awareness of the importance of biodiversity to children and villagers*" attests to the success of that programme as reviewed above. Otherwise, the biodiversity aspects of the project were not mentioned by local leaders, let alone any reference to their global importance. Each meeting with Provincial, District and Commune leaders almost invariably closed with requests for the project to be continued with more funding for development – the biodiversity connection with this also being absent. Buon Don DPC even opined that the balance between the conservation and development aspects of PARC was weighted too heavily in favour of conservation. This is worrying, particularly in light of the significant efforts made by the contractor to link all development work to biodiversity conservation, and reflects the difficulties experienced by many ICDPs in bridging the gap between the conservation and development aspects. Similarly, PA leaders still focussed on infrastructure, equipment and training, all with an emphasis on forest protection through a policing function. The global importance of the biodiversity that their PAs supported has got totally lost in the imperative to protect the trees. This has reached the point of absurdity in Yok Don where the regular setting of controlled fires as a pre-emptive move to suppress a major fire is actually suppressing the levels of biodiversity and particularly the globally-important biodiversity that the Park has been established to protect<sup>64</sup>.

GEF must do more, in marketing terms, to position itself better to differentiate itself from other donors or the important message it is bringing with its funds about global biodiversity is being lost in the flood of projects focused more sharply on poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. It is important that the site-based demonstration projects so beloved by GEF are not allowed to become parochial in outlook and that designers should take extra steps to ensure that the global message gets through to at least the main implementing agency of a project so that stronger links can be forged with others in the international arena with the same focus.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation carried out the following recommendations are made:

### Strategic<sup>65</sup>

- GEF site-orientated, activity-driven projects should include resources and time for actions directed at policy level change
- There should be improved use of the UN system in its accepted role as a non-interest organisation, and increased synergy with other interested organisations, to assist future projects more strategically in reaching beyond the conventional limits of single ministries and countries by promoting greater cross-sectoral support, particularly where conflicting interests are impacting a protected area, when trans-boundary issues become relevant, and when global changes are posing threats to nations.
- Project implementation of projects should be by the shortest chain of management feasible
- Project implementation by technical-orientated agencies should be promoted wherever feasible.
- Wherever possible, projects should have an in-country, single focal liaison point responsible for linking the NPM and any contractors with the donors and any sister agencies

<sup>64</sup> Fires set deliberately by the FPD burn most of the understorey and ground cover during the beginning of the dry season. In places, local topography, damp areas, and chance leave small areas of the dominant short bamboo that characterises this forest. As a result, wildlife congregates in these remaining areas of cover ... which provide excellent areas for hunting.

<sup>65</sup> See UNDP comment #26 Appendix IX.

- Both UNDP (or UNOPS where so contracted) and UNDP-GEF Portfolio Managers should sign off Project Inception Reports before the project may proceed. (This was done for Ba Be and Na Hang, and for the second inception report at Yok Don).

## Technical

- The GOV should take a decision rapidly to use 2% of the projected revenues from the Na Hang dam to fund urgently needed conservation actions at the construction site now, rather than wait until the Hue University study recommends a figure to be incorporated in the newly revised *Law on Forest Protection and Development*.
- GEF should fund the establishment costs of South Xuan Lac and Francois' Langur SHCAs but **only** subject to high level agreement with the GOV on future infrastructure projects not impacting any protected area.
- Fire management in Yok Don national Park needs urgent professional advice before irrevocable damage is done to an entire species community.
- Free grazing of livestock in protected areas needs to be stopped at all seasons as it puts selective pressure on regeneration of natural vegetation and encourages villagers to set fires to stimulate new growth.
- The country's media should be involved more actively in transporting messages for the protection of nature.
- The biodiversity monitoring programme requires widening to include more species.
- Training in biodiversity identification requires a full-time trainer to do field training on a repeat basis over a long time period.
- Ecotourism requires stronger technical guidance and less Government involvement to develop into a viable private business. Quality information material and guiding services, plus reasonable means of access and adequate accommodation and food are essential to attracting and sustaining ecotourism and these need to be developed professionally.
- Under the technical guidance of park administrations, tourism schemes should be encouraged, which allow professional companies in hotel, travel, and related business to invest and maintain their standards.
- A concept for the commercial use of selected secondary forest products needs to be developed and implemented for income generation of local households and for saving species from overexploitation in the wild ("*use it or lose it*").
- Forest-Farming Systems need to be developed on a scientific basis to combine the protection of forest biodiversity with the production of endangered crops.
- A number of selected horticultural, agricultural, and medicinal species have a good international market potential; guidelines and facilitating policies for companies investing in such products should be developed and published.
- Traditional agro-biodiversity requires assessment and novel marketing strategies.
- Branding and marketing of products grown under natural conditions will serve a market of increasingly conscious people; the groundwork for entering this market has to be started now.
- Family planning has to become a subject integrated into environmental education, recognizing the link between resource availability and population size.

## LESSONS LEARNED<sup>66</sup>

- Conflicts between national development interests and global conservation priorities still tend to leave globally important sites degraded and globally threatened species under increased

<sup>66</sup> See UNDP comment #27 Appendix IX.

pressure. Therefore, future projects need to be anchored not only within a single Ministry (or Provincial body) but require increased awareness and representation within higher advisory and decision-making bodies.

- GEF must do more, to ensure that its important about global biodiversity is not being lost in the flood of projects focused more sharply on poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. It is important that the site-based demonstration projects so beloved by GEF are not allowed to become parochial in outlook and that designers should take extra steps to ensure that the global message gets through to at least the main implementing agency of a project so that stronger links can be forged with others in the international arena with the same focus.
- Projects under pressure to reach pre-planned targets have little freedom to adjust to changing needs, to allow for outcomes of necessary research to be incorporated into the implementation activities, and to co-operate meaningfully with other international partner organisations towards joint goals. Designers, particularly of ICDPs, should allow sufficient time to allow for flexibility and “organic” growth and development within a project.
- Formal environmental education requires curricular acceptance for compulsory courses on a nationwide level to allow meaningful time allotment within the school year.
- Biodiversity protection and park management cannot be seen as independent from the country’s overall land-use and urban policies particularly in times of urban migration, climate change, and WTO-induced changes.
- Much care has been given to improve the situation of local farmers, recognizing the link between poverty and environmental dependence. Consequently, the project’s relationship with farmers is excellent, serving as a good basis for environmental education and technical innovations.
- Ecotourism is still at an early stage of its full potential. The hindrances for professional development seem to be institutional rather than technical, leading to an unfortunate loss of opportunities and revenue.
- Biodiversity protection has improved but still lacks concepts of utilisation for the majority of species with a market potential, resulting in continued gradual loss of selected wild species e.g. to the medicine trade.



## Annex I :Final Project Evaluation Terms of Reference

### 1. Project Summary

<b>Project Title</b>	“Creating Protected Areas for Resource Conservation using Landscape Ecology”
<b>Project Short Title:</b>	PARC
<b>Project Number:</b>	VIE/95/G31/B/1G/99 and VIE/95/031/B/01/99
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>Implementing Agents:</b>	Forest Protection Department
<b>Co-operating Agents:</b>	UN Office of Project Services
<b>Project Sites:</b>	Yok Don National Park (Dak Lak Province), Ba Be National Park (Bac Kan Province), Na Hang Nature Reserve (Tuyen Quang Province), and South Xuan Lac Species and Habitat Conservation Area (SHCA)
<b>Beneficiary Country:</b>	Vietnam
<b>Budget</b>	UNDP, TRAC (1 & 2) US\$ 2,315,609, GEF US\$ 5,806,273 Government of Vietnam US\$ 438,600

### 2. General Introduction to the UNDP/GEF Final Project Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives:

- i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts;
- ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements;
- iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and,
- iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators -, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all regular and medium-sized projects supported by the GEF should undergo a final evaluation upon completion of implementation.

Final evaluations are intended to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project. It looks at early signs of potential impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. It will also identify/document lessons learned and make recommendations that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects.

### 3. Introduction to the PARC Project

The UNDP GEF Project Document for PARC was signed in November 1998 following a four-year period of preparation. Project activities were launched in June 1999. The project has been implemented at Yok Don National Park in Dak Lak Province and Ba Be National Park/Na Hang Nature Reserve complex in Bac Kan and Tuyen Quang Provinces respectively. Field activities have been undertaken by international subcontractors. A national project office was established to coordinate/facilitate field activities and oversee the overall management of the project. A sub-contract was granted to IUCN to provide planning support and supplementary technical inputs to the project.

The project was designed to demonstrate an innovative approach to integrating conservation objectives into development planning. As a result of the fragmentation of core protected areas and critical habitats in Viet Nam it was decided that a landscape ecology approach would be the most appropriate Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) model. As explained in Annex VIII of the Project Document, this approach focuses on managing entire landscapes that include ecosystems experiencing varying intensities of human uses, rather than concentrating conservation efforts in small protected areas. The landscape approach requires the integration of biodiversity conservation objectives (specifically the sustainable management of Protected Areas) into the development planning process of the provinces, including agriculture policies, infrastructure investments, and migration policies. A participatory approach to the development and implementation of project activities is critical, and forms a central plank of the landscape ecology approach.

An outline of the project's logical framework follows:

#### PARC Development Objective

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To provide for effective biodiversity conservation in Vietnam's anthropogenically impacted and fragmented habitats, through application of a landscape ecology approach to protected area management at Yok Don National Park and the Ba Be National Park/ Na Hang Nature Reserve Conservation Complex.

#### PARC Immediate Objectives

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1. To improve the operational capacity at the three project sites (Ba Be, Na Hang, and Yok Don) in order to efficiently manage and maintain the respective protected areas.
2. To reduce external threats to biodiversity, through integrating conservation and development objectives and activities at the local level.

#### **PARC Outputs**

- 1.1 Revision of Management Plans and preparation of annual Operational Plans for the project sites with wide stakeholder participation.
- 1.2 Strengthening of core conservation management functions (to reduce threats to biodiversity).
- 1.3 Institutionalisation of a monitoring programme with outputs linked to operational planning.
- 1.4 Provision of necessary infrastructure and field/ office equipment to enhance operational capacity.
- 1.5 Training of park personnel and local leaders in techniques for integrating conservation and development.
- 1.6 Establishment of a mechanism to provide long-term funding for biodiversity conservation and community development in the target areas.
- 1.7 Achievement of a high standard of project management and enhanced capacity within implementing agencies to manage complex ICDP interventions.

- 2.1 Establishment of a conservation education programme aimed at imparting conservation values to local communities.
- 2.2 Improvement of the productivity of existing farming systems to address food insecurity and low agricultural yields.
- 2.3 Integration of forest rehabilitation and management efforts in forest blocks outside of the protected areas with wider biodiversity conservation objectives.
- 2.4 Introduction of diversified economic opportunities to local communities in the project areas that are environmentally compatible with natural resource management and biodiversity conservation, and culturally and economically feasible.

#### ***4. Objectives of the Final Evaluation for the PARC project***

The overall objective of the Final Evaluation is to:

1. assess degree of achievement of the project's objectives and outputs, taking into account the changing conditions during implementation and other constraints within the implementation environment;
2. analyze the project performance in meeting project objectives and examine the project results against anticipated outcomes;
3. assess the likelihood of the project achieving its intended impacts, given the degree of assimilation of project outputs and strategies and sustainability of project interventions; and,
4. provide any recommendation deemed necessary for the closure of the Project and for potential future support from GEF and UNDP.

In the particular case of the PARC project, various problems encountered by the project raised questions as to the ability of the project to achieve its objectives and deliver the intended results.

#### ***5. Key issues***

- Assess the project's achievement into attaining national and global environmental objectives;
- Describe the project's adaptive management strategy – how project implementation changed in response to new conditions, and have the changes been appropriate and effective;
- Review the clarity of roles and responsibilities of the various agencies and institutions and the level of coordination between relevant players during project implementation;
- Review any partnership arrangements with other donors and comment on their strengths and weaknesses;
- Assess the level of community involvement in the project and assess whether community involvement has been appropriate to the goals of the project;
- Describe and assess efforts of UNDP in support of the implementing agency and national institutions;
- Review and evaluate the extent to which project impacts have reached the intended beneficiaries, both within the target protected areas and the buffer zone areas;
- Assess the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes and benefits after completion of GEF funding;
- Describe key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects for sustainability of project outcomes;  
Assess whether the project employed an appropriate strategy for knowledge transfer, and describe the results of this strategy;

- Assess whether the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and performance indicators was used as a project management tool;
- Review the implementation of the project's monitoring and evaluation;
- Describe the main lessons that have emerged in terms of:
  - strengthening country ownership/drivenness;
  - strengthening stakeholder participation;
  - application of adaptive management strategies;
  - efforts to secure sustainability;
  - knowledge transfer; and
  - role of M&E in project implementation.
- In describing all lessons learned, an explicit distinction needs to be made between those lessons applicable only to this project, and lessons that may be of value more broadly, including to other, similar projects in the UNDP/GEF pipeline and portfolio.

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## 6. Special Issues

The evaluation should address the following:

- Efforts made by the government as following action after project completion in December 2003 and in May 2004 at Ba Be and Na Hang sites, respectively.
- Proposing mechanisms and action to ensure sustainability of the project outputs.

## 7. Methodology for the Evaluation

The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory fashion working on the basis that the primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess project implementation and impact likelihood and for this to happen all relevant stakeholders must fully understand and identify with the evaluation report, even if they might disagree with some of the contents.

The evaluation will start with a review of Project documentation including key reports and correspondence. It will include visits to national project office, interviews (by phone if necessary) with key individuals both within the project, the government, and independent observers of the project and its activities, as well as implementing and executing agency personnel. Field visits to project sites will also be conducted to view activities first hand and to meet with site contractors, local leaders, and local government officials.

### Project design and relevance

- Assess the relevance of the Project to its Development and Immediate Objectives and to the biodiversity conservation needs of Viet Nam, especially in term of maximising and sustaining the impact of the intervention
- Assess the design of the Project and the coherence of its strategies and activities, as well as the inter-linkages between components.
- Evaluate the relevance of the overall approach in relation to the Project's objectives. Assess if the Project Development and Immediate Objectives, the specific results and the activities carried out by the Project are in line with the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries.

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### **Progress of implementation, efficiency and effectiveness**

- Analyse the achievements of the Project against its stated targets, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as key challenges that have emerged in the course of implementation.
- Assess the adequacy and appropriateness of the Project implementation modalities that have been put in place.
- Assess the role of the funding and executing agencies, implementing bodies (UNOPS, Sub-Contractors, Local Project Management Units, Steering Committee), and their effectiveness in carrying out their respective tasks.
- Analyse the adequacy of the monitoring approach/methodology and the results of monitoring activities that have been conducted.
- Assess the effectiveness of Project's approaches and strategies in relation to the stated Immediate Objectives.
- Assess the effectiveness of the Project in co-ordinating its work, and in exchanging information, with other initiatives in Viet Nam and with co-operation projects supported by other donors.

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### **Impacts**

- Assess the Project's long-term impact on institution building.
- Analyse the overall effects of the Project per component, be they positive or negative, in a broader context: against the Project's Objectives but also in a general development sense.

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### **Sustainability**

- Assess if the policies, strategies adopted by the Project are sustainable in the long term.
- Assess how the local institutional capacity and structures have been prepared for the post project situation.
- Comment on cross-cutting issues: appropriate technology, gender issues, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- Analyse the current trends in policy and legislative development in sectors related to the Project and describe the current and expected legal and other bottlenecks that may stall the assimilation of key project results.

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## **8. Evaluation Team**

The team will consist of two international consultants who will participate for the entire duration of the evaluation (approx. 30 days). One international consultant will be designated as team leader and will carry overall responsibility for organizing and achieving the evaluation and delivery of a final report. The team will be supported by two national consultants. In addition, a member of the National Project Office (NPO) will accompany the mission to gather basic data, set up meetings, identify key individuals, assist with planning and logistics, and generally ensure that the evaluation is carried out in a smooth manner.

## **9. Implementation Arrangements**

- UNOPS will be responsible for the recruitment of the mission members (international and national consultants), and will finalize the mission schedule in close collaboration with the NPO, UNDP CO and GEF RCU.
- The NPO will be responsible for facilitating visas for international consultants and for in-country logistic arrangements (hotel bookings, g domestic travel, schedule of meetings with concerned parties in Ha Noi and the provinces, and other support as needed;

- For visa application and access permission to Dak Lak and Tuyen Quang provinces, passport details of international members of the mission must be provided at least two weeks prior to the arrival date.

## Annex 1: Project Sites Issues

### **Yok Don**

- A proposal has been made to upgrade the existing 14C road through YDNP; an EIA has been prepared but not approved by the relevant agency in charge of EIA reviews;
- Yok Don national Park and MARD have recommended an alternative route to the east of the YDNP's border;
- MARD have submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Transport and copied to the Government Office to consider an alternative route to the south of YDNP, by upgrading existing route T15.
- No final decision has been made yet. It should be noted that decisions have already been made to construct the highway through 5-6 other Protected Areas, some funded by EU and DANIDA.
- International consultants and project staff have faced difficulty in obtaining long-term clearance to work at project site. This has been linked to restrictions in movement of foreigners in the Central Highlands after incidents of public disturbances;
- Previous difficulties include the failure of the original GTZ sub-contract, and questions regarding the impact of in-migration on the project area (YDNP, extension and buffer zone).

### **Ba Be**

- The responsibility for National Park has been recently passed to the Bac Kan Province Peoples' Committee (PPC), as part of GoV's decentralisation policy.

### **Na Hang**

- A decision to go ahead with the construction of the dam was made on 19 April 2002.
- The dam construction will involve the resettlement of 17,000. Inundation will involve translocation within the Tuyen Quang Province (including the Nature Reserve's buffer zone), although it is hoped there will be no resettlement within project villages<sup>67</sup>.
- The dam impoundment is expected to inundate a portion of the nature reserve core area, but the most significant impacts are expected to include:

- ☞ Fragmentation of remaining forest areas
- ☞ Construction of new roads to replace those inundated
- ☞ Impact of some 10,000 workers and service providers descending on the project area during dam construction
- ☞ Exploitation of rock quarries within and adjacent to the nature reserve

### **South Xuan Lac SHCA**

- The project provided limited technical assistance, during the first semester of 2004 to a new proposal towards this conservation area, South Xuan Lac Commune in Bac Kan Province.

<sup>67</sup> Meaning not in or around buffer zone villages that have been specifically selected for project activities.

## Annex II : Itinerary of activities of the Final Project Evaluation Mission

Date		Activities
Tues	16 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Evaluation team leader (PJE) arrives Bangkok; pm: Meets with other international evaluation team member (JM). pm: Both meet with UNOPS.
Wed	17 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Initial review of documents pm: Interview with UNDP-GEF former project officer (by telephone). Medicals and logistics.
Thurs	18 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Meeting with UNDP Project Officer. pm: Review of project documentation.
Fri	19 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Flight to Hanoi. Meeting with UNDP. Introduction to National Consultants. pm: Initial meeting with NPO staff. Review of documents.
Sat	20 <sup>th</sup> Nov	All day: Travel to Ba Be National Park. Evening: Meeting with Director of BBNP.
Sun	21 <sup>st</sup> Nov	All day: Field orientation – visits to villages, ranger stations, Lake Management Unit.
Mon	22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	Group 1 (PJE & TQB) - am: Ba Be FPD. pm: meeting with Ba Be District PC; meeting with Ba Be FPD. Group 2 (JM & VVD) – all day: field visits and meetings with stakeholders.
Tues	23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	am: Group 1 – Meeting with Cho Don District FPD/Director of South Xuan Lac SHCA. Group 2 – field visits and meetings with stakeholders of buffer zone of SXL SHCA. pm: Gps. 1 & 2 field visit to buffer zone of SXL SHCA.
Wed	24 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Travel to Bak Kan. Meeting with Bak Kan Province PC. pm: Travel to Tuyen Quang. Meeting with Tuyen Quang FPD (meeting with TQPPC cancelled at last minute).
Thurs	25 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Travel to Na Hang. pm: Group 1 – Meeting with Acting Head of Na Hang Nature Reserve. Meeting with Na Hang District PC. Meeting with Project Manager of Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey Project. Group 2 – all day: field visits and meetings with stakeholders.
Fri	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Group 1 – am: Meeting with Project Assistant Directors of Na Hang Dam. Field visit to the Dam. pm: Meeting with Acting Head of Na Hang Nature Reserve. Group 2 – all day: field visits and meetings with stakeholders.
Sat	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Gps. 1 & 2 field visit to buffer zone of NHNR. pm: Travel to Hanoi.
Sun	28 <sup>th</sup> Nov	All day: Discussions and report writing.
Mon	29 <sup>th</sup> Nov	am: Flight to Buon Ma Thuot. pm: Travel to Yok Don NP. Meeting with PARC Team Leader.
Tues	30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Group 1 – am: Meeting with Director Yok Don NP. Meeting with Krong Na Commune PC. pm: Second meeting with Director Yok Don NP and PARC Team Leader. Group 2 – all day: field visits and meetings with stakeholders.

Wed	1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	Group 1 – am: Meeting with Dak Lak Province PC. Report writing. pm: Meeting with Buon Don District PC. Logistic arrangements. Group 2 – all day: field visits and meetings with stakeholders.
Thurs	2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	Group 1 – am: Report writing. pm: Meeting with PARC National Project Manager and Team Leader. Group 2 – all day: field visits and meetings with stakeholders.
Fri	3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	PJE : field visit to botanic garden, ranger and monitoring stations, and forest habitats. Rest of team flight to Hanoi.
Sat	4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	PJE: am – meeting with PARC Yok Don Exec. Secretary. pm : report writing Rest of team: all day - report writing.
Sun	5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Day off.
Mon	6 <sup>th</sup> Dec	PJE flight to Hanoi. Rest of team: report writing.
Tues	7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	am: Report writing. pm: Meeting with GEF-VN.
Wed	8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	am: PJE meeting with IUCN-VN. Report writing. pm: Meeting with Deputy Res. Rep. UNDP.
Thurs	9 <sup>th</sup> Dec	am: Meeting with Director of FPD. pm: Report writing.
Fri	10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	PJE: am – telephone call to Colin McQuistan in Bangkok; pm – meeting with MPI. Rest of team internal meetings/report writing/presentation preparation.
Sat	11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Report writing
Sun	12 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Report writing/presentation preparation
Mon	13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	am: Report writing/logistics arrangements pm: Report writing/presentation preparation
Tues	14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	am: Meeting with UNOPS. pm: Debriefing presentation.
Wed	15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	am: Departure.



### Annex III : Persons Interviewed

#### Project staff

Ha Cong Tuan	Director-General of National Forest Protection Department ( <i>in lieu</i> of the National Project Director (his deputy)).
Mr. Nguyen Huu Dung	National Project Manager (and Chief of Conservation Division National Forest Protection Department)
Mr. Fernando Potess	Project Team Leader (Scott Wilson)
Mr Colin McQuistan <sup>68</sup>	Technical Support Officer (IUCN) and Site Task Manager – Yok Don (Scott Wilson)
Tran Trung Dzung	Executive Secretary, PARC Yok Don
Mark Bezuijen	Conservation Management Advisor, PARC Yok Don
Paul Insua-Cao	UNV, Communications Officer PARC
Mrs. Ha Thi Linh	Technical Assistant

#### Ba Be National Park

Mr. Bui Van Dinh	Director of Ba Be National Park
Mr. Nong Dinh Khue	Chief of Ba Be National Park Forest Protection Department
Mr. Nguyen Van Nam	Staff of Science & Technique Division
Mr. Le Hung Manh.	Staff of Science & Technique Division (and PARC Project officer)
Mr. Hoang Manh Thang	Chief of Ba Be Lake Management Board
Mr. Tran Van Tu	Head of Dau Dang Ranger Post
Mr. Doan Van Minh	Staff of Pac Slai Range Post
Mr. Da Binh Nguyen	Head of household implementing ecotourist programme Po Lu Village
Mr. Gia Dinh Nguyen	Farmer, Pac Ngoi Village
Mr. Trieu van Hung	Villager of Pac Ngoi village, Nam Mau commune, Ba be district
MR. Cuong	Head of Primary School of Khang Ninh commune, participating in education programme of PARC Project
Mrs. Nong Thi Doi	Villager, participating in tree and fruit tree plantation, Na Kieng Village, Khang Ninh province.
Mr. Duong van Dieu	Villager, Na Kieng Village, participating in tree and fruit tree plantation, Na Kieng Village Khang Ninh province
Mr. Khanh	Villager, Na Kieng Village, participating in bee keeping programme, Na Kieng Village Khang Ninh province

#### Bac Kan Province

Mr. Hoang Ngoc Duong	Vice Chairman of Bac Kan Province PCs
Mr. Tran Duc Tu	Head of Bac Kan Province FPD
Mr. Do Van Phong	Staff of Bac Kan PC

#### Ba Be District

Mr. Nong Quoc	Chairman of Ba Be District People's Committee
Mr. Trieu Duc Thach	Chief of Ba Be District Forest Protection Department

#### Cho Don District

Mr. Hoang Van Hai	Chief of Cho Don District FPD and Director of South Xuan Lac SHCA
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<sup>68</sup> By telephone

Mr. Nong Van Mac	Chairman of Xuan Lac Commune
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#### **Na Hang Nature Reserve**

Mr. Le Hong Binh	Chief of Na Hang FPD Special-use Forest (Acting Director of Na Hang Nature Reserve)
Mr. Pham Hoang Linh	Staff
Mr. Nguyen Van Bong	Head of Son Phu Protection Station.
Mr. Be Van Khai	Chairman of Son Phu Commune
Mr. Phung Dung Quyen	Vice Chairman of Son Phu Commune
Mr. Hoang Bao	Chairman of Thanh Tuong Commune
Mr. Nguyen Duc Nhap	Chairman of Thanh Tuong Commune
Mr. Phung Dung Phung	Villager of Na La Village, participating in Shan Tea plantation Programme
Mr. Phung Thanh Tien	Head of Na La Village, participating in Shan Tea plantation and bee Keeping Programme
Mr. Ma Thanh Khiet	Head of Thanh Tuong Commune Bureau
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Dung	Vice Director of Thanh Tuong Primary School.
Mrs. Ma Thi Lam	Teacher of School
Mr. Nguyen Van Kien	Villager, Pa Lang Village, participating extension Programme of PARC Project
Mr. Phung Van Ti	Head of Pa Lang Village
Mrs. Ban Kim Minh	Villager of Dan Tau Village, gathering medicinal plants
Mr. Trieu van Phay	Villager of Dan Tau Village, gathering medicinal plants

#### **Tuyen Quang Province**

Mr. Do Van Toan	Head of FPD Tuyen Quang Province
Mr. Nguyen Duc Tung	Deputy Director of FPD Tuyen Quang
Mr. Pham Hoang Luu	Chief of Forest Protection Division
Mr. Tran Quang Khoi	Staff of Forest Protection Division

#### **Na Hang District**

Mr. Nguyen Cu That	Vice-chairman of Na Hang District People's Committee
Mr. Nguyen Van Khoi	Staff of Na Hang DPC

#### **Na Hang Dam**

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tung	Project Assistant Director, Hydro Power Project Management Unit N°. 1
Mr. Vuong Huu Tao	Vice Head of Material Technology Department

#### **Yok Don National Park**

Mr. Ngo Tien Dzung	Director of Yok Don National Park
Mr. Le Hung	Staff of Tourism Division
Mr. Truong van Ngoc	Head of Protection Station N°6 of National Park
Mr. Y Nhom	Vice Chairman of Krong Na People's Committee
Mr. Le Tien Quang	Deputy Secretary of Communist Party Krong Na Commune
Mr. Le Tien Dzung	Head of Farmer's Association Krong Na Commune
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Co	Head of Women's Association Krong Na Commune
Ms. Quynh Nga	Krong Na Commune Radio
Mr. Cho Rim	Head of Buon Dang Phooc village
Mr. I Te	Villager, assistant of PARC Project
Ngo van Du	Villager of Ea Rong, member of grass cultivation for cattle program
Nguyen Thi Trong	Villager of Ea Rong, member of model "feeding cow in the cases"

Le Xuan Truong	Villager of Ea Rong, member of Fishing model.
Ma Mang	Villager of Buon Chi Village, member of model “ Bamboo growing for bamboo shoot”
Mss. Hang	Head of Buon don Tourist Centre
Ma An	Villager of Buon Chi Village, assistant of Buon Don Tourist Centre
Nguyen Huu Bang	Vice Director of Ho Tung Mau Primary School
Nguyen Duy Chau	Director of I Jut Primary School
Bun Minh Lao	Director of Vo Thi Sau Primary School
Tham Phuong	Vice Director of Vo Thi Sau Primary School

#### **Dak Lak Province**

Mrs. Tran Thu Ha	Vice Director of Dak Lak People’s Committee
Mr. Le Duc Thinh	Deputy Director of DARD
Mr. Nguyen Van Nam	Staff

#### **Buon Don District**

Mr. Nguyen Nhu But	Vice President of Buon Don District People’s Committee
Mr. Nguyen Minh Tam	Secretary of Communist Party of Buon Don District
Mr. Mr. Do Ky	Head of Agriculture Division
Mr. Tran Manh Khoa	Head of Education Division
Mr. Nguyen Minh Kha	Head of FPD Buon Don District
Mr. Duong	Buon Don District Radio

#### **Central Government**

Mr. Nguyen Hoang Duc	Senior technical officer GEF-Vietnam (Ministry of Environment and Natural resources)
Ms. Nguyen Thuy Duong	Staff GEF-VN & MoENR
Ms. Dang Kim Thoa	Senior officer, Foreign Economic Relations Dept., Ministry of Planning and Investment

#### **UN Agencies**

Subinay Nandy	Deputy resident Representative, UNDP Hanoi
Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Ly	Senior Sustainable Development Advisor, UNDP Hanoi
Dao Xuan Lai	Project Officer, UNDP Hanoi
Tim Clairs	UNDP-GEF Programme Manager <sup>69,70</sup>
Mrs. Barbara Lemoine	UNOPS Portfolio Manager

#### **Others**

Ms. Sonja Wolters	Project Manager, Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey Project, Na Hang.
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<sup>69</sup> By telephone

<sup>70</sup> Now GEF Regional Manager Arab States; Beirut.

## Annex IV : Summary Evaluation of Project Achievements by Outputs

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>1</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
1.1	<u>Management &amp; Operational Planning:</u> The revision of Management Plans and preparation of annual Operational Plans for the Project sites with wide stakeholder participation.	Updated Management Plans will be guiding conservation activities.	Operational plans prepared for all three sites and approved by responsible provinces and MARD as a basis for PA management.	International-style management plans are not relevant to the situation in Vietnam where management is guided by Government Investment Plans. PARC has instead opted to develop Operational Plans. Although produced, it is unclear to the evaluation team that these plans are actually guiding conservation activities in Ba Be and Na Hang.
		Management Plans will be fully integrated with Regional Development Policies and Plans.	There has been no integration with regional development policies and plans.	The project design has not addressed this issue adequately and the success criteria are simplistic and unachievable in the current context of Vietnam. It underestimated Central Government's influence on regional plans, and did not address the central planners' lack of understanding of the real significance of biodiversity and of its management needs, nor the difficulty and/or reticence of planners to take biodiversity conservation seriously. A stark example is on the dam at Na Hang (of which Tuyen Quang PPC knew nothing until the decision to build had already been taken) where on a US\$481 million project, only US\$321,000 (0.067%) have been allocated to "environmental management" – \$US214,000 for clearing vegetation from the inundation zone, and US\$107,000 for moving historical relicts.
		The respective protected areas will be zoned for strict protection, multiple use and forest rehabilitation.	All project sites have been zoned according to the legal system of <i>Core Zone, Strict Protection Zone, Ecosystem Rehabilitation Zone and Administrative Zone</i> plus a <i>Buffer Zone</i> around the outside.	In addition, management compartments have been designated and jurisdiction zones for ranger posts defined.

<sup>1</sup> from Section D of the Project Document

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
		The Ba Be/Na Hang cross-Provincial protected area will be administered as a single management unit.	The idea of a single cross-Provincial protected area was rejected by the Provinces concerned. Instead two new protected areas have been established in the same area, but these will be administered as separate units.	Provincial interest in the idea of a common management regime for Ba Be and Na Hang PAs seems not to have been assessed during the Project design. However, PARC has facilitated two new PAs – South Xuan Lac Species and Habitat Conservation Area (SHCA) (1,788ha) has been gazetted in Bac Kan Province primarily to protect 3 globally-threatened species; and Francois' Langur SHCA (15,350 ha) at Sing Long-Lung Nhoi is just a few weeks away from gazettelement.
		There will be improved co-ordination of conservation management activities at Yok Don with neighbouring forest concessions and protected areas in Cambodia.	MARD has established a Task Force to formulate "Forest Protection Cooperation Programme" in April 2003 and agreement was made between MARD and the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries in December 2003 to strengthen their cooperation in forest protection in border areas and in promoting trans-boundary cooperation.	As part of this programme, PARC is financing a 5-day study tour in December 2004 for 13 senior staff concerned with trans-boundary conservation to Cambodia to visit two protected areas in Mondulkiri Province to study forest protection and fire control, and biodiversity conservation projects.
		Protected area management authorities will be preparing and executing annual Operational Plans based on the framework provided by the Management Plan.	PA management authorities have prepared one update of their annual Operational Plans based on the framework introduced by PARC.	
1.2	<u>Protected Area Operations Support:</u> Strengthening of core conservation management functions to reduce threats to biodiversity.	Management Boards will be effectively functioning with regular meetings taking place, wide consultation with local stakeholders, and the implementation of management decisions.	Management Boards are reportedly in place at all three PARC sites but the effectiveness of their functioning could not be assessed by since no minutes were offered to confirm regular meetings.	Before PARC, no protected area management board in Vietnam had local representation. The two SHCAs facilitated by PARC at South Xuan Lac and Sing Long-Lung Nhoi are the first functioning boards to include membership of villagers. These are pilot schemes whose effectiveness will be evaluated by FPD after 5 years.
		Staff capacity to perform traditional protected area functions will have been enhanced, and protected area regulations will be better enforced.	Staff capacity to perform traditional protected area functions has been significantly increased in all three PARC sites.	There has been a heavy emphasis on ranger training, particularly with regard to the policing/protection functions. There appears to have been little or no training of park staff in visitor management or guiding at BB and NH.

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
		Core conservation areas at each site will have been demarcated with permanent markers.	Core areas have not been marked in Ba Be.  In Na Hang, those areas where strictly protected areas directly abut to agricultural areas of those villages within the Nature Reserve, the boundaries have been marked with painted concrete posts and engraved steel signs.  In Yok Don, concrete posts and painted signs have been marked along all the boundaries of the core zone.	
		The authority of park staff will be clearly identified and respected by the local villagers, and Provincial and National authorities (including the border police at Yok Don).	Protected area staff are easily identified through their FPD uniforms. Their position is demonstrably recognised by local people.  In Yok Don, a conservation agreement has been negotiated between the border army and the park rangers.	
		Interpretation facilities for visitors will have been developed and park staff will have received training in visitor management.	A small interpretation centre has been established at Ba Be and another at Yok Don. Construction of an interpretation centre at Na Hang was revoked by GEF after the MTE.	At YD, an old building was refurbished and the budget for a new building was used to construct an additional ranger post.
		Forested areas in Cho Don District, Bac Can Province will have been included as an extension to Ba Be National Park and the area of the Yok Don National Park will have been increased to include portions of forest concessions to the north and south.	At Yok Don, the Park was extended to the north by 57,000ha and to the south by 3,000ha in 2002.  In Ba Be, the Park was not extended. Instead, the target areas in Cho Don District was established as a separate protected area – South Xuam Lac SHCA.	

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
1.3	<u>Monitoring:</u> Institutionalisation of a monitoring programme with outputs linked to operational planning.	Monitoring will have been institutionalised as part of protected area management functions with threats to biodiversity, social and economic welfare amongst target communities and conservation/development linkages being assessed on an on-going basis and results being used for management purposes.	A biodiversity monitoring system has been developed which will allow targeted management and protection functions to be focussed on key areas in all three project sites. This system will be introduced to the two newly-established SHCAs in due course.  Impact monitoring has been developed for Ba Be and Na Hang to assess community development activities. These are to be extended through a follow-up project using separate donor finance.	The biodiversity monitoring system has developed a bespoke database system called PARCman. Despite teething problems, this GIS system appears to have reporting and mapping functions to identify violations and species sightings. It is being planned to establish this system in all protected areas in Vietnam.
		Internal capacity for monitoring and evaluation will have been enhanced.	Internal capacity for M&E appears to be most developed at Ba Be/Na Hang where extensive monitoring systems were employed to measure project progress. At Yok Don, only the biodiversity monitoring component appears to have received attention.	
		Lessons will have been learned regarding ways and means of achieving conservation and sustainable community development with the results distributed widely to decision makers in the Indochina region.	Lessons learned have not been widely disseminated. A communications strategy has been developed and some policy papers produced.	It is understood that a study is to be carried out using PARC funds but after the official close of the project, to draw together all the lessons learned and develop policy recommendations for a wider audience of decision-makers in Vietnam.
1.4	<u>Infrastructure and Equipment:</u> Provision of infrastructure and field/office equipment to enhance operational	An information centre for visitors and local communities will have been constructed at each site, guard posts will have been built and visitor trails improved and maintained.	An information centre under construction at Ba Be. MTE recommends that a centre at Na Hang is premature in view of the dam project.	Some good progress made but Project infrastructure objectives are being threatened by demands from Park and District authorities for infrastructure that does not fit Project criteria. The MTE team recommends upgrading of existing suitable infrastructure be given priority over new construction.

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
	capacity.	Field/office equipment and vehicles will have been purchased and well maintained.	A complete inventory of equipment has been kept. This includes 5 Hilux pick-ups, 2 cars, 31 motorcycles (8 BB, 14 NH, 7 YD, 2 XL), and 36 computers (8 BB, 13 NH, 13 YD, 2 XL). All these have been well-maintained and are still working. Other equipment includes TVs, printers, faxes, brush cutters, binoculars, compasses.	All equipment over US\$1,000 received UNOPS approval. All equipment will be allocated to the various FPDs by UNDP at the end of the project.
1.5	<u>Training</u> : Training of park personnel and local leaders in techniques for integrating conservation and development.	<p>25 park staff/local leaders will have received formal training in new methods for integrating conservation and development and administering protected areas with approaches and techniques being applied in the field.</p> <p>20 Area Managers and other stakeholders will have been sensitised to conservation problems and achievements at other protected areas in the Asia region.</p> <p>Project staff, local communities and other critical stakeholders will have received training in conservation and community development methods.</p>	Training schedule shows a total of 20,746 persons (13,642 male, 7,104 female) have received training from the project. This includes senior NPO staff, FPD rangers, local administrative staff, and villagers. Methods include fellowships, international and national study tours, workshops, and in-country extension training. Topics covered range from management of protected areas to rabbit husbandry. Others include eco-tourism training, technical farming training (e.g. vegetable oplanting, grafting, disease protection, fish-breeding, mushroom growing, bee-keeping, cattle raising, bamboo shoot production, tea production), veterinary science, biogas production and use, environmental education methods, gun and trap control, reforestation methods, forest fire protection, lake management, ICDP policy tour for Provincial decision-makers, sustainable financing of PAs, impact monitoring to name but some.	Training in many cases seems to have been successful, particularly that applied to the local villagers through the agricultural extension workers. The FPE had no time to make a systematic survey of training effectiveness and undoubtedly this varies between subjects and between people. In certain cases, repeat training would have helped, but most of the people interviewed who had had training (at all levels) expressed that this had been beneficial. Most Local politicians highlighted the training programme as one of PARC's main successes.



Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
1.6	<u>Long-term funding:</u> Establishment of a mechanism to provide long-term funding for biodiversity conservation and community development in the target areas.	A long-term Financial Mechanism to cover costs at the project areas will have been established	No long-term mechanisms have been established. Finance has been promised for Ba Be by Bac Kan PPC for at least two years into the future, but finance for Na Hang remains planned only one year ahead by Tuyen Quang PPC. Yok Don is financed directly by Central Govt. and is based upon a 10-year investment plan (ending 2010). Xuan Lac is not yet financed adequately – the position of Francois' Langur SHCA awaits formal designation.	Much more could be done by Park administrations to collect revenue through visitor entry fees. Nowhere was this seen to be done. Profits made by PAs through accommodation, food, etc. (or at Ba Be from conference facilities) should not be passed to the Provinces (as currently occurs) but should be re-invested in the PAs.  Na Hang currently receives no visitors and is funded entirely by Tuyen Quang Province. The new hydro-dam would be ideally placed to contribute to the Reserve's long-term funding by giving a small proportion of its annual operating profits as compensation for the negative impacts it has caused and will continue to cause.
		Funds will have been leveraged to ensure the sustainability of operations.	No funding has been leveraged to ensure sustainability of operations.	All three participating Provinces state that they are continuing to look for international donor support beyond PARC but none have been successful to date.
1.7	<u>Project Management Support:</u> Achievement of a high standard of Project management and enhanced capacity within implementing agencies to manage complex ICDP interventions.	Efficient and timely execution of the project with high levels of accountability for financial and operational administration and strong co-ordination of project components.	Efficient and timely execution of the Project was achieved at Ba Be and Na Hang.  Significant difficulties with the initial subcontractor (GTZ) at Yok Don led to its replacement, but only this still incurred significant losses of time and money. The replacement subcontractor (Scott Wilson) has made exceptionally good progress.	There has been significant capacity enhancement among FPD staff in the NPO and at the project sites, especially those working part-time with PARC, to manage complex ICDP interventions.  Separate accounting ledgers were kept for the BB/NH sites and Yok Don. These were submitted to Scott Wilson offices in Kuala Lumpur and onwards to UNOPS. KPMG audits of these accounts were seen at the NPO.
		Annual Project Reviews are guiding the project implementation process.	Contrary to the MTE, it appears that annual project reviews have been guiding the Project implementation process.	Annual work plans have been made according to the inception report. Annual reviews of successes and failures have been made and used to make new plans. These updated annual work plans have been agreed amongst stakeholders, and endorsed by the relevant Province and the NPO. More detailed operational plans were in evidence on whiteboards in the project office at Yok Don.

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
2.1	<u>Conservation Education:</u> Establishment of a conservation education programme aimed at imparting conservation values to local communities.	Conservation values imparted to teachers and community leaders with these stakeholders conducting outreach programmes to sensitise the wider community to conservation issues.	All teachers and village heads interviewed showed appreciation of project efforts and demonstrated increased knowledge on common aspects of environmental education and on relevant park issues.	In general, environmental education has become an integral part of both the formal (primary and secondary schools) and the informal (training for park staff, farmers, youth) levels.  Most schools have adopted tree planting measures, have allowed their classes to visit the protected areas under educational guidance, and have generally tried to improve the environmental health situation of their campus (although exceptions of littering and water contamination with waste material have been observed in one case in BaBe).  Books and printed information material have been distributed and were in use.
		Greater understanding at the local level of the importance of conservation, and of linkages between development and conservation.	Randomly selected villagers knew about the importance of the PAs' biodiversity protection and realized that training, libraries, seed material, micro-credits, improved livestock breeders, etc. were part of a trade-off between conservation and development.	For future improvements, the printed material needs to take local conditions into consideration much more and the design of the material requires more illustration of actual field situations.
		Improved understanding amongst local communities of alternative development strategies and of sustainable livelihood options.	Most people expressed their interest in receiving more and advanced technologies for increased production.	Presently environment is treated as an "added extra" subject with only one hour of teaching per month, but it was stated that from next year environmental education will be made a compulsory course for all schools. The educational material needed on a nationwide basis would merit technical support, and efforts should also be made to integrate environmental awareness into other subjects.  The PA administrations need to strengthen their relations with local schools and upgrade their information centres; PAs should also be viewed as "natural laboratories" for school classes to learn about local biodiversity and conservation.
2.2	<u>Agricultural Services Support:</u> Improving the productivity of existing farming systems to address food insecurity	The <u>basis</u> for a reduction of agricultural encroachment pressures into protected areas will have been established.	A solid basis for increased agricultural activities outside the protected areas has been established and is well suited to local farmers' immediate needs.	The introduction of new agricultural technologies is distinctly more successful in the North where the climatic and soil conditions are much better than in the Central Highlands.

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
	and low agricultural yields.	Improved farming system methods will have been field-tested at demonstration plots and techniques modified based on results.	The project has gone beyond demonstration plots and all farmers visited had adopted new technologies very successfully.	It is suggested that for agricultural improvements under the much more difficult conditions in the Central Highlands, that indigenous high-value non-timber forest products are added to the conventional improvements of agricultural crops and livestock.  The marketing of such non-timber forest products requires more attention.
		Existing extension services will be better tuned to the special needs and circumstances of poorer households and ethnic communities and will be more responsive to farmer needs and to achieving conservation objectives.	Village extension workers have become successful change managers for technical improvements of intensified farming practices and their services are requested and compensated by the farmers.	
		The productivity of existing farming systems will have increased with the application of improved soil and crop management techniques.	According to interviewed farmers' own judgement, productivity and related household income have increased two to three fold.	
2.3	<u>Forest Management and Rehabilitation</u> : Integrating forest rehabilitation and management efforts in forest blocks outside of the protected areas with wider biodiversity conservation objectives.	Existing forest regeneration activities in areas surrounding the two protected areas will be targeted at achieving conservation objectives, with indigenous species planted, natural regeneration methods used where possible, and a focus on rehabilitating wildlife migration corridors.	Forest natural regeneration is rapid where shifting cultivation has been halted by the project, particularly in the North. Tree planting activities have been very successful in Ba Be and Na Hang, and the trees planted in the buffer zones and in former shifting cultivation areas are all local species, and as such contribute to local biodiversity management.	While the forests in the North regenerate fast due to favourable climate and seed dispersal mechanisms, the Dipterocarp forests in the Central Highlands are subjected to a fire management regime which keeps the entire ecosystem at a reduced stage of early succession and impoverished biodiversity.
		Forest corridors will have been established between Na Hang Nature Reserve and Ba Be National park to enable the movement of wildlife between the areas.	New protected areas at South Xuan Lac (1,788 ha) and Sing Long-Lung Nhoi (15,350 ha) have been established which perform the functions of corridors between Ba Be National Park and Na Hang Nature Reserve.	Fishing with explosives and toxic chemicals has been drastically reduced, and guns have been traded against food or money.

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>a</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
		Logging operations in forest concessions abutting the Yok Don National Park will be applying reduced-impact methods aimed at safeguarding vital habitats for biodiversity.	Logging operations in the concessions around Yok Don seem to have come to an end, and natural regeneration of Dipterocarps is visible.	
		Critical habitats within forest concessions abutting Yok Don National Park will have been closed to logging.	Critical habitats within Yok Don seem well protected and there are no signs of logging operations.	Future interventions need to improve the fire management regime of Yok Don toward prevention of fires. Both controlled and uncontrolled fires should be stopped in favour of planting fire breaks and enrichment planting. This implies that free grazing, the collection of resin, and using open areas for farming need to be stopped.
2.4	<u>Alternative Incomes:</u> Introduction of diversified economic opportunities to local communities in the Project areas that are environmentally compatible with natural resource management and biodiversity conservation, and culturally and economically feasible.	Successful demonstration ventures for alternative income generating options will have been established.	Rather than “alternative”, the conventional income of farmer households has been improved successfully.	There is growing potential for alternatives in utilizing new forest-farming systems for income that derives from secondary forest products which are under threat of extinction. Such species, which in most cases are shade-demanding and grow under tree canopies, are medicinal and horticultural species. The scientific design of such biodiversity management systems should be taken into consideration for future support. Marketing links for such high-value non-timber forest products need to be part of the scheme, as well as modern propagation techniques such as tissue culture.
		Linkages will have been made with government, NGO and private sector agents to improve the operating environment for small businesses.	Marketing outlets have been established for selected products such as “shan tea”, and tourism operators are reaching villages at the lake in Ba Be National Park.	Many opportunities for private sector operations are still untapped particularly in the areas of improved tourism and hotel operation, production of indigenous horticultural crops, and medicinal plant production. The enabling and facilitating environment for small business investment and operation is not established or not functional.
		Eco-tourism services will have been strengthened with an improvement of facilities, training of guides and increased understanding amongst park staff and community entrepreneurs of the determinants of eco-tourism and of the special needs of tourists.	Eco-tourism has been established best at Ba Be where there has been a history of “ordinary” tourism. There appear to be no tourist facilities at Na Hang, and those at Yok Don (with the exception of the Information Centre) are poor.	There requires further development of the concept eco-tourism (as opposed to mass tourism) and stronger involvement of local people, particularly in Yok Don. In Na Hang, tourism has been compromised by the dam construction.

Code	Output description	Success Criteria <sup>1</sup>	Status at project completion	Comments
		A micro-credit facility will be operating with a high rate of loan recovery, enhanced credit discipline amongst borrowers and the graduation of some clients from micro-credit to formal credit schemes.	Micro-credits have been given deliberately to relatively risk free operations on small scale, hence, credit discipline has improved.	It remains doubtful if credits to the poorest of society and within an international funding scheme that defines all other interventions at higher levels as "services" is practically and ethically justifiable.

**Annex V : Example of Development-Conservation Link – Prototype Tool to Decide Conservation Status**

## PARC Criterion...

A matrix of factors, a prototype rapid assessment tool to assist the RUP planners identify and decide conservation status.....

<u>Social</u>	1	2	3
Gender	>Female	Balance	>Male
Ethnicity	>Ethnic	>Migrant	>Kinh

<u>Economic</u>	1	2	3
Wealth	Poor	Middle	Wealthy
Cultivation inside	>Income	<Income	None
Grazing inside	SPZ - ERZ	SA-Z	None
NTFP usage	>100,000	<100,000	None
Hunting	>1,000,000	<1,000,000	None

<u>Ecological</u>	1	2	3
Location	CZ	Boundary	BZ
PA zone	SPZ	ERZ	S-AZ
Proximity to water	<100m	500-100m	>500m
Altitude/slope	Slope	Base of hill	>500m
Forest cover	Closed	Mixed	Tree <5m

## Annex VI : Example of Development-Conservation Link – Village Assistance Funds

Wealth Ranking in All Villages in Ba Be Site Wealth Levels for Village Assistance Funds (VAFs)																																								
VIII. Wealth Ranking* VIII. Wealth value (>) Village ID No  * Richest '1' (Value 40) Poorest '40' (Value 0)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
	1	5	9	13	17	21	25	29	33	2	37	6	34	14	18	22	26	30	34	3	7	11	38	15	14	23	27	31	35	34	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40
	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	C	C	C	C	B	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
	Pac Le	Pac Nghe	Bo Lu	Pac Ngoi	Coc Toc	Ban Cam	Na Kiang	Na Mam	Ta Ken	Pac Le	Na Mo	Pac Nghe	Bo Lu	Pac Ngoi	Coc Toc	Ban Cam	Na Kiang	Na Mam	Ta Ken	Pac Le	Pac Nghe	Bo Lu	Na Mo	Pac Ngoi	Coc Toc	Ban Cam	Na Kiang	Na Mam	Ta Ken	Na Mo	Pac Le	Pac Nghe	Bo Lu	Pac Ngoi	Coc Toc	Ban Cam	Na Kiang	Na Mam	Ta Ken	Na Mo
Criteria for VAFs Allocation as per Ranking Levels																																								
"A Level"											"B Level"										"C Level"									"D Level"										
Corrected "A Level"											Corrected "B Level"										Corrected "C Level"									Corrected "D Level"										
- Only women with clear conservation agreement											- All women										- All women									- All women										
- Action Plan Activity											- Only men with clear conservation agreement										- All men									- All men										
- VDP											- Action Plan Activity										- Action Plan Activity									- Village Development Plan activity										
- Maximum VND 500,000											- Village Devel. Plan activity										- Village Development Plan activity									- Village Development Plan activity										
											- Maximum VND 500,000										- Maximum VND 500,000									- Maximum VND 500,000										

## Annex VII : Biodiversity managed by local farmers

Scientific name	Ba Be	Na hang	Yok Don	Uses
<i>Acacia mangium</i>	+	+	+	Timber tree
<i>A. auriculiformis</i>	+	+	+	Timber tree
<i>Aleurites fordii</i>	+			Oil tree
<i>A. montana</i>	+	+		Oil tree
<i>A. moluccana</i>	+	+		Oil tree
<i>Alpinia officinarum</i> Hance	+	+	+	Spices, Medicinal plant
<i>A. zerumbet</i>	+	+	+	Spices, Medicinal plant
<i>Amorphophallus konjac</i>	+	+		Edible rhizome
<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>			+	Fruit tree
<i>Bambusa bambos</i>			+	House construction, bamboo shoot
<i>B. blumeana</i>	+	+	+	House construction, bamboo shoot
<i>B. dungii</i>	+	+		House construction, handicraft material
<i>B. sinospinosa</i>	+	+		House construction, bamboo shoot
<i>B. vulgaris</i> cv <i>striata</i>	+	+	+	Ornamental plant
<i>Bixa orellana</i>			+	Food dyes
<i>Bombax anceps</i>	+	+		Ornamental tree, cotton
<i>Caesalpinia sappan</i>			+	Brown dyes (trunk)
<i>Caryota mitis</i>	+	+		Fibre exploitation, ornamental tree
<i>Caryota urens</i>	+	+		Fibre exploitation, ornamental tree
<i>Calamus tetradactylus</i>	+	+		Handicraft material
<i>Calamus platyacanthus</i>	+	+		Handicraft material
<i>Camellia oleosa</i>	+			Oil tree
<i>Canna edulis</i>	+	+		Food plant
<i>Canarium album</i>				Fruit tree
<i>C. pimela</i>				Fruit tree
<i>Cassia siamea</i>			+	Timber tree
<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>			+	Cotton
<i>Chrysophyllum cainito</i>			+	Fruit tree
<i>Cinnamomum cassia</i>	+	+		Medicinal tree (bark), Spice
<i>Citrus grandis</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>Citrus medica</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>C. nobilis</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>C. sinensis</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>Clausena indica</i>	+	+		Spice (fruit and leaf)
<i>C. lansium</i>				Fruit tree
<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>Crescentia cujete</i>			+	Fruit tree
<i>Crotalaria striata</i>				Green fertilizer
<i>Curcuma longa</i>				Spice



<i>C. zedoarea</i>	+			Medicinal plant
<i>Dendrocalamus asper</i>	+	+		House construction, bamboo shoot
<i>D. latiflorus</i>	+	+	+	Bamboo shoot
<i>Diospyros kaki</i>	+			Fruit tree
<i>Dipterocarpus alatus</i>			+	Oleo-Resine exploitation
<i>Dracaena cambodiana</i>	+	+		Medicinal plant
<i>Dracontomelum duperreanum</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>Euphoria longan</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>Erythrolalum scandens</i>	+	+		Vegetable (leaf)
<i>Fibraurea tinctoria</i>		+		Medicinal plant
<i>Ficus auriculala</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>F. racemosa</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>Gossypium arboreum</i>			+	Cotton
<i>G. herbaceum</i>	+	+	+	Cotton
<i>Gigantochloa nigro-ciliata</i>			+	Bamboo shoot, fence
<i>Gleidistia australis</i>	+			Sampoo (fruit)
<i>Hopea odorata</i>			+	Oleo-Resine exploitation
<i>Hylocereus undatus</i>			+	Fruit tree
<i>Litchi chinensis</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>Luffa cylindrica</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>Manglietia fordiana</i>	+	+		Timber tree
<i>Manilkara achras</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	+	+	+	Food
<i>Michelia tonkinensis</i>		+		Timber tree, Spice (seed)
<i>Melientha suavis</i>	+	+		Vegetable (leaf)
<i>Momordica cochinchinensis</i>	+	+		Fruit tree
<i>M. charantia</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>Musa acuminata</i>	+	+		Edible inflorescence
<i>M. paradisiaca</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>M. paracoccinea</i>	+	+		Ornamental plant
<i>Pennisetum purpureum</i>			+	Fodder
<i>Piper betle</i>	+	+		Edible leaf
<i>P. lolot</i>	+	+		Spice
<i>P. nigrum</i>			+	Edible fruit
<i>Phrynium placentarium</i>	+	+	+	Cake wrapping
<i>Solanum mammosum</i>			+	Ornamental and medicinal plant
<i>Solanum melongena</i>	+	+	+	Fruit tree
<i>Shorea siamensis</i>			+	Oleo –resine exploitation
<i>Smilax glabra</i>	+	+		Medicinal plant
<i>Strychnos nux- blanda</i>			+	Medicinal tree
<i>Tamarindus indica</i>			+	Fruit tree
<i>Vietnamosasa pusilla</i>			+	Bamboo shoot

## **Annex VIII : List of participants at debriefing meeting, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2004**

1. Mr. Ha Cong Tuan, Director of Forest protection Department/ MARD
2. Mr. Nguyen Huu Dzung, Chief of Conservation Division of FPD/MARD and NPM of PARC project
3. Mrs. Ha Thi Linh, Technical Assistant of PARC
4. Ms. Doan Mai Huong, Project Secretary of PARC
5. Mrs. Dang Kim Thoa, MPI
6. Mr. Dao Xuan Lai, Programme officer, UNDP Ha Noi
7. Ms. Barbara Lemoine, Portfolio Manager, UNOPs
8. Dr. Phillip John Edwards, Head of FE Team
9. Dr. Josef Margraf, Participants of FE Team
10. Mr. Tran Quoc Bao, Participants of FE Team
11. Mr. Vu Van Dzung, Participants of FE Team
12. Mr. Tran Trung Dzung, PARC Yokdon site Secretary
13. Mr. Le Thai Ha, Head of Personnel Division of FPD/MRD
14. Mr. Nguyen Dinh Vong, Head of Administration Division of FPD/MARD
15. Mr. Doan Minh Tuan, Head of Inspection Division of FPD/MARD
16. Mr. Nguyen Hong Quang, Head of Information and Database Division of FPD/MARD
17. Mr. Doan Hoai Nam, Vice Director of Forest Protection and forest fire prevent Division of FPD/MARD
18. Mr. Nong The Dzien, Vice Director of Ba Be National Park.
19. Mr. Do Van Toan, Head of Tuyen Quang Province FPD.

## Annex IX : Comments received from UNDP on Final Evaluation Report

The FPE team was not particularly surprised to receive the following comments from the UNDP Country Office. Difficulties were evident during a brief meeting on the first day of the mission with the Head of the Sustainable Development Cluster who seemed to believe that the FPE team had arrived with the preconception that the project was a failure and were seeking ways to justify that judgement. From that point on, no further contact was made with the FPE team, even at the final debriefing – liaison throughout being made by another officer. Many of the following comments below reflect this initial viewpoint and provide almost unquestioning support for the Government – a situation which the FPE team finds both unhelpful and unhealthy. For the most part, the FPE team makes no response to these comments since the main body of the report gives their viewpoint, but the comments are reproduced in full and unedited below to ensure a fair hearing to all parties.

All numbers are cross-referenced from footnotes made in the text.

1. The assessment is not in line with NEX modality.  
The NEX modality allows to make a balance between direct implementation of project activities by the Implementing Agency/PMU and oversight/management of contractors for implementing project activities. In latter case, the Implementing Agency provides oversight and uses the results as experimented approaches/ knowledge/ experiences that will be integrated/incorporated in preparation and implementation of government policies, now and then.  
It is essential to note that applying NEX modality to a project is not limited to the amount/ proportion of funds. In PARC project, two missing implications need to be documented are: (i) the executing agency MARD/FPD is client and UNOPS is the service provider; and (ii) the NEX modality provides MARD/FPD with a position/authority and accountability in resolving problems/conflicts with other government authorities/institution. If PARC was not executed under NEX, MARD/FPD would have not in the position/ would have not been able to take initiative to resolve problem over the proposed highway through Yok Don National Park and the EIA issue over the Tuyen Quang dam. In comparison with most previous project executed either by DEX or NGO modality. NEX proved great success.
2. It is important to note that as part of project adaptation strategy/adjustment, PARC project planed to under take a Policy Analysis to cover this weaknesses. The SEIA for Tuyen Quang Dam was prepared and officially launched in Tuyen Quang province and discussed at a National Meeting. 05 policy briefs were prepared and officially launched at the end of the project. They have also been circulated widely.
3. The assessment is too general, it fails to reflect great efforts done by the government, especially those who were authorised/designated to be in charge of the PARC project. The executing agency MARD/FPD, together with UNDP, worked so hard with relevant authorities to have EIA for the proposed highway through Yok Don, to have a comprehensive EIA and a supplementary EIA with main focus on biodiversity for the Tuyen Quang Dam. In addition, with strong commitment and support by Tuyen Quang People's Committee (PPC), most of the mitigation measures have been implemented during construction of Tuyen Quang Dam, not "partial implementation" as noted. Please see more detailed information about this effort extracted from Nov-2003 TPR Minutes below:

*“... General achievements: The People Committee of Tuyen Quang took proactive approach to raise awareness on conservation and apply strict rules to prevent damage to the forest and biodiversity; A collaboration mechanism has been established among many forces (FPD, Project LMB, the Police, Market Administration to monitor, report on, and jointly resolve any incidents incurred; The Tuyen Quang PPC issued decree QD441/TQ defining worker camping sites which has been follow strictly; NH district worked with Song Da Company to plan for suitable dumping sites and gasoline stations, away from inhabitant and conservation sites; FPD has been working with Song Da Company to ensure limited use of dynamite in rock exploitation at all quarries, especially quarry No. 4; The NH district has asked the Song Da company to do a better collection of waste, including industrial waste, to water all the roads in the construction areas to reduce dust pollutions, 4 times a day; FPD, in collaboration with youth union and PARC project, increased environmental awareness activities, including introduction of Government decree No. 12/CP, Tuyen Quang instruction 06/TQ and Na Hang district decree 03/NH on forest protection and implementation; Implementation of these three decrees have also been reinforced.*

- *FPD monitors and ensures that all worker camps are constructed in the sites approved by Tuyen Quang PPC/Na Hang district, not use wood or any forest products for camp construction; FPD worked with Song Da Company to ensure workers use gas or stoves for cooking. Regular checks discover that there has been a lot of fire woods used for cooking and most of firewood were provided by local people, these wood have been collected from the flooding sites – There is a need to strengthen the monitoring mechanism to find out the origin of the firewood to ensure no extraction from forests; FPD regularly checks to ensure no intrusion into forest for hunting and collecting forest products; the exchange-for-gun-initiative collected more than 1,000 hunting guns, only one hunting intrusion with 2 hunting guns and 13 homemade bullets caught so far, regular check are maintained; Enforcement of no bush meat trading in NH and no bush meat serving in restaurants – 24 of total 35 restaurants have signed agreement to serve no bush meat, the remaining are very small restaurants serving only simple breakfast in the morning – no violations has been discovered so far.*
  - *FPD and Project worked closely with Dong Da Construction Company, land management department and transportation department identified suitable sites for new roads from NH town to Ban Da – Son Phu to reduce impacts on the forest. The same work/efforts have been done for the road of 1,074.74 m from NH town to Trai Ngua (Vinh Yen), including plantation of native tree species along this newly constructed road.*
  - *FPD ensures a good control on assess to NH NR through: (i) strengthening the forest regulations – agreements on forest protection have been signed with 138 households, information boards have been installed in visible places; (ii) collaboration with police force & department of Commerce to monitor transport crossing Phong Ma guard station to ensure no illegal transportation of forest products; (iii) additional patrol force in place for forest protection, establishment of 61 village forest protection groups at 64 villages of 5 communes with a total of 471 members. ...”*
4. As stated in the comments above, it is not correct to state that the NEX modality is applied only by “name”: (i) The Provincial People Committee (PPC) is the local Government, their involvement and contribution seemed to be left out in the assessment. For example, the PPC of Tuyen Quang took many steps and initiatives in addressing negative impacts from construction of the Tuyen Quang Dam, the PPC of Dak Lak provided great assistance/full cooperation in rerouting the proposed highway; (ii) Though the NSC did not work well as expected, it provided sufficient direction to the project planning/ implementation, including approval of PARC project annual work-plan. Strong coordination and synergies were promoted among projects under MARD, through weekly and monthly meetings of all National Project Directors.
  5. It is an unreasonable observation. GTZ (in partnership with WWF) is professional organizations has direct contract with UNOPS, the withdrawal from consulting services to PARC can not be influenced by UNDP and others. Maximal efforts was made in resolving this problem, including a number of meetings and consultations among all involved parties. GTZ

was given a certain period of time to replace personnel and improve their services, but they failed to do so. As a result, contract was terminated. The establishment of the NSC is not an innovative in this project, it is the government policies/practices that all National project has own inter-agency national steering committee, however, how far outsider/ international body could push this mechanism work effectively remains in question. We can not conclude that the NSC could have work more effectively without basing on clear criteria and/or a comparison with practices of other projects or in other countries.

6. It is necessary to note that the engagement of UNOPS was decided even during project formulation based on a capacity assessment for the FPD/MARD.
7. This is not correct information. The NPM was working full time from the start implementation. He worked on part-time basis only from July 2002, after his promotion to be the Head of Conservation Division of FPD/MARD).
8. The SEIA report was prepared and officially launched in Tuyen Quang province and widely circulated. A national consultation meeting on this SEIA was held with participation from all concerned ministries – Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Industry (Viet Nam Energy Cooperation is under this ministry) and MARD and other concerned agencies. In addition, as pressure from the Project, a comprehensive EIA for Tuyen Quang Dam was prepared.  
See comments/ information provided in the Summary part. The local government – Tuyen Quang PPC did so much to implement mitigation measures, which was highly appreciated by all parties, including the GEF Regional Coordinator.  
How IUCN could take this process of the SEIA further. The assessment shows a lack of understanding about the local context and insights into country specific system and about what can and can not happen in a developing country. There must be a need to assess, to what extend IUCN could take this further, before making such conclusion.
9. The whole planning process needs to be assessed in the context of the GEF project formulation and implementation regulation at that time. It was long process involve many parties with different responsibilities which lead to many pitfalls during implementation. Whether those will be addressed and handled appropriately in the development context in Viet Nam depends first on the professionalism of individuals involved, in this case entrusted by GEF/UNDP and Government of Viet Nam to UNOPS and GTZ.

In this part of assessment, there is a lack of focus and in depth analytical justification. Superficial level of listing problems with quick conclusion blaming on NPO is not justified. Actually, not only NPO, but MARD has spent endless meetings with these both two big international entities to solve the problem. It was expected that these two able to help the government to carry out this program, but in the end MARD and UNDP have to help them to solve problems, leads to huge damages in fund and human resources. The FPE team failed to make assessment in holistic process and failed to give a critical look at the reason why UNOPS has to change personnel in this project lead to unprofessional conclusion on NPO and undermined the efforts of the government of Viet Nam to support this project.

**The FPE team comments:** *The degree of paranoia evident in much of UNDP's overall response is perhaps most evident here. If they had read and understood the paragraph on which this comment is based, it is clear that the FPE team is questioning the role of UNOPS rather than criticising the work of the NPO. But then paranoia tends to produce knee-jerk reactions ...*

10. It is an unfortunate, but it seems that a predetermined conclusion has been made before evaluating a project in developing countries, this undoubtedly lead to many subjective comments and conclusion/assessments. It is of great to the readers.
11. It is why there is a need for FPE team to be in the field to bring the reality to the world. Failing to do so, this argument is remote insensitive to the poor communities who are lack of foods and who suffer the flood every year. The FPE team, while correctly to be critical on the infrastructure issues, failed to ask simple question on why and failed to make objective assessment taking into consideration of efforts made by people of Viet Nam in trying best to commit to conservation and at the same time to help the country in fighting with natural disaster attacks and poverty alleviation goal, which are also global priority.
12. Again, the FPE team should further ask question why and what are better and what are worse before generally and unconstructively commented.
13. It is expectation of FPE team to be in the field to be able to evaluate results against the targets set at the beginning and on the basis of reality in the country but FPE team failed to do so. This leads to superficial narrow conclusion without fair understanding on development.
14. This information indicates a lack of familiarity and understanding about national execution modality (NEX) in definition and in implementation. Please refer to “*National Execution as a Broad Technical Cooperation Framework, page 1, national execution manual for Viet Nam*”. This leads to the near to depleted appreciation of the involvement of the government (MARD) in overall leadership position by MARD itself to guide this project. For country specific, with such big scale of TA, the implementation arrangement has been designed during the formulation period and engagement of UNOPS was determined at the time of project formulation.
15. This weakness has been compensated with strong involvement of MARD in every stage, particularly in critical stage. [see comments provided in the part: Executive Summary/ Findings/ Country Driven-ness..]
16. This naïve statement would undermine GTZ professional role, the UNOPS as direct owner of the subcontract and particularly the role of the government. Not sure that the implication of this for GTZ!!!

**The FPE team comments:** *Is this the type of naivety where one is not even aware of the problems, or the other type in which one has knocked on all the doors of knowledge and knows that one can explain little but is still willing to follow one’s convictions into the unknown?*

17. There was no contract between UNDP and UNOPS for communications.  
Though the implementation arrangement was complex, all parties knew clearly their roles/responsibilities. They adopted short-cut communication chain to improve project implementation. Both SW and IUCN send reports to NPO and UNDP on quarterly. Quarterly meeting was conducted by NPO with participation from all implementing parties: IUCN, SW, UNDP, Local PMB.

Given the scale of the project, the large geographical coverage, the ambitions of the project, the implementation arrangement set up is complicated. Without timely involvement of MARD and

UNDP at local level complex problems between UNOPS and others would impede the implementation of the project even much longer.

18. This is not correct. The decision of the TPR on reviewing the log frame is made collectively by all involved (TPR members) on the basis of the need to improve the implementation of the project in Na Hang.

How one can assume that project partners made trade-offs between the benefits of conservation in Viet Nam for the long expensive international calls?

The log-frame issue was settled at an ad-hoc meeting in Ha Noi with participation from all relevant stakeholders, UNDP-GEF, UNDO CO, NPO and Na Hang LMB.

**The FPE team comments:** *Comments such as this show how “hands-off” UNDP really were at certain critical times of the project. The information given in the text was provided by the Project Team Leader and corroborated by UNDP-GEF Portfolio Manager of the time.*

19. In many cases, the service is far from professional and is far from expectation of the Government of Viet Nam, UNDP and GEF, mainly due to the reasons FPE identified earlier
20. It seems that the FPE team came with predetermined assumption on the effort of the government of Viet Nam in particular and of the developing countries in general, here again, the FPE team tried so hard to prove that the both external services agencies (UNOPS and Scot Wilson) in the end provide professional support, while shortcoming came from the government. This became obsessive and difficult to read in realm of development. The whole point of the project is to help with capacity building but FPE team failed to assess project implementation, achievement and shortcomings, instead hastily conclude on the predetermined assumption.
21. In reality, MARD together with UNDP picked this up and as a result, SEIA was prepared, GoV had comprehensive EIA for Tuyen Quang Dam and Proposed highway. The EIA for proposed highway was discussed nationally by the National inter-agency Committee. The proposed highway was eventually detoured to other direction. There is never involvement and contribution from UNOPS in this efforts.

**The FPE team comments:** *as with Comment #18, UNDP seems to have a different view as to what is happening on the ground than others and takes the stance that shows the GOV in the best light. The NPM (and others) are of the opinion that the route of the proposed highway is still pending (see NPM comment quoted in footnote #13 on page ix of the main text) rather than a definite decision having been made to re-route it outside of Yok Don National Park.*

22. Note, not by NPO but by MARD, MOI, MPI, MONRE and EVN. UNDP insisted in MARD taking a lead on this and involve other stakeholders. UNDP used all advocacy efforts to work closely with MARD to get the inter-ministerial working group set up. This is exactly the advisory role UNDP would play.
23. Again, it is clear that lack of deep understanding of what is NEX modality, even less understanding of the political complex development and conservation in Viet Nam, the FPE failed to look at the substantive aspects of the whole process, failed to assess what is good for VN and global environmental values, failed to recognize the unique opportunity to build capacity for MARD and Viet Nam to have experience in solving very complicated problems that concern benefits of many stakeholders, failed to capture the good lessons that Viet Nam can share with other partners in the world. Unfortunately, staying only at the level of

calculation of percentage of NEX vs. UNOPS, the FPE team is shielded from seeing larger impacts of the project on the conservation management in Viet Nam.

**The FPE team comments:** *mmm ... something of a diatribe and not a particularly professional nor accurate assessment. It should be stated, for the record, that where an independent assessment of what is good for Vietnam (or any country) and what is good for global environmental values diverges in relation to a GEF project, the very nature of GEF which is focussed on global values will inevitably mean that a government will be criticised in relation to that divergence, as is the case in this report. The key point of this response to this comment is to highlight the fact that right at the heart of the project, there has been a failure to understand that “GEF projects are special in that the international community is funding the incremental costs associated with the extra efforts needed to manage and conserve globally-important biodiversity” not for the good of Vietnam, and that as a result it is unsurprising that “the national project partners and beneficiaries showed no understanding of this global dimension of GEF and viewed it as simply another international donor package”. See the section on page 28 entitled Global Dimension.*

24. Both WWF and IUCN were involved, even during the formulation stage. It is pity that late on WWF could not continue. The FPE team may want to find some answers why on the very country specific situation of both these famous organizations, especially to what extend they can act and can be more effective than other organizations, before conclude in anything.
25. Yes or no, there is a need to have a standard indicator for measuring this understanding and able to compare this to other countries, otherwise it would be too superficial to come to this conclusion.
26. Please add one more point: GEF will need to focus on simplification of the project management and should need to look at combined impacts on both global values and local concerns.
27. It is important to document three positive lesson learns:
  - i) NEX modality has, to a certain extend, proved success in improving ownership and accountability/responsibilities of the government. Without applying NEX modality to PARC project, conflicts on proposed highway through Yok Don NP and EIA/ mitigation measures for Tuyen Quang Dam, would have not possible.
  - ii) Promotion of Ms. Nguyen Huu Dzung, the PARC PM, to be the Head of Conservation Division of FPD/MARD ensures sustainability of the project results. Mr. Dzung becomes one of key persons in MARD in drafting/preparing impotent policy frameworks. Lai, should it be at more conceptual level like, some of the governmental capacity built during project implementation when promoted to higher level will ensure better sustainability beyond the end of the project.
  - iii) Lessons/experiences from PARC project have been promoted by MARD to use effectively in development/preparation of the Larger conservation projects in Viet Nam