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**Government  
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

**Developing National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan  
and Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Provincial Planning**

**REPORT OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION**

United Nations Development Programme

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Vietnam

**Eduardo Queblatin and Vu Thi Hoai Thu  
Final Report, Aug 8, 2016**

**Developing National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan  
and Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Provincial Planning**

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**Evaluation team members:** Eduardo Queblatin and Vu Thi Hoai Thu

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>1.0. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose of the evaluation .....	1
Scope and methodology and structure of report .....	1
Evaluation Team .....	2
<b>2.0. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.0. FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.1. PROJECT FORMULATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1.1. Analysis of Project results framework .....	4
3.1.2. Assumptions and Risks .....	5
3.1.3. Lessons from other relevant projects .....	5
3.1.4. Planned stakeholder participation .....	5
3.1.5. Replication approach .....	5
3.1.6. UNDP comparative advantage .....	6
3.1.7. Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector .....	6
3.1.8. Management arrangements .....	6
<b>3.2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.2.1. Adaptive management .....	6
3.2.2. Partnerships .....	8
3.2.3. M&E design and entry at implementation and use of M&E feedback for adaptive management .....	9
3.2.4. Finance .....	10
3.2.5. IA/EA Implementation .....	12
<b>3.3. RESULTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.3.1. Overall Outcome .....	14
3.3.2. Relevance of the Project .....	24
3.3.4. Efficiency of the Project .....	28
3.3.5. Country Ownership .....	28
3.3.6. Mainstreaming .....	29
3.3.7. Sustainability .....	29
3.3.8. Impact .....	32
<b>4.0. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LESSONS LEARNED .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>4.1. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>34</b>
4.2.1. Communicate the NBSAP and associated documents as one “Package” .....	34
4.2.2. Consolidate the Directions for Financing .....	34
4.2.3. Follow on Technical Guidance for Local Authorities through responsive programs .....	34
4.2.4. Fortify Protocols for Biodiversity in Land Use and Approaches for Enforcement .....	35
<b>4.3. LESSONS LEARNED .....</b>	<b>35</b>

## LIST OF ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. MISSION ITINERARY (DEC.04 – DEC.22, 2015)	37
ANNEX 2. LIST OF INTERVIEWED PERSONS	40
ANNEX 3. SUMMARY OF FIELD VISITS	43
ANNEX 4. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	45
ANNEX 5. EVALUATION QUESTION MATRIX	47
ANNEX 6. ACTUAL QUESTIONS USED	51
ANNEX 7. SUMMARY OF RATING FOR OUTCOMES AND OTHER KEY PARAMETERS	56
ANNEX 8. ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 3.1.1. PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK	59
ANNEX 9. ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 3.2.4. FINANCE	60
ANNEX 10. ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECT 3.3.1. a. REVIEW OF THE NBSAP ADHERENCE TO PRODOC	64
ANNEX 11. PROPOSED LIST OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS TO BE PART OF NBSAP PACKAGE THAT MAY BE COMMUNICATED TO PARTNERS	70
ANNEX 12. ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 3.3.1 B - OUTCOME 2.1-2.2. PROVINCIAL COMMITMENT AND CAPACITY	71
ANNEX 13. ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 4.2.3. RECOMMENDATIONS: FOLLOW ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES THROUGH RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS	73
ANNEX 14. EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT FORM	75

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the *Project “Developing National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Provincial Planning”* (PIMS #.4811) was conducted in December 2015 and January 2016. It aimed to assess the achievement of project results; draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project; and aid in enhancing UNDP programming. The TE used five main criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

The Project’s goal is to integrate CBD obligations into the national planning processes which is the GEF’s focal area objective for this project (Biodiversity 5). It has two components: **(1)** New NBSAP and 5th National Report prepared in compliance with Biodiversity Law and CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020; and **(2)** Provincial commitment and capacity strengthened to implement NBSAP. The project officially started in August 2012 and ended operations in Aug 2015. Under the HPPMG and NIM framework, MONRE served as the Executing Agency, while BCA served as National Implementing Partner. UNDP served as the International Implementing Partner.

**FINDINGS ON PROJECT FORMULATION.** The objective and overall concept revolves around enabling the supply of and demand for policy-oriented, actionable information as foundation for addressing the professed barriers to biodiversity conservation. These barriers include the absence of updated biodiversity priorities and lack of provincial capacity to address biodiversity. The project correctly focuses on a policy driven (i.e. NBSAP) process for building capacity at local levels since this is where day to day decisions on biodiversity is made.

There is however little guidance in the design document on specific interventions to generate a deep interest for biodiversity conservation on economic grounds, particularly in the provinces where economic growth is said to strongly drive most socio-economic decisions at the expense of environmental sustainability. The design does not however describe the actual nature of drivers in local decision making that affect biodiversity; as well as presence of good practices to consider in designing realistic interventions to influence local decisions. If the design did not require production of NBSAP in 2012, perhaps it may have been more logical to prepare the State of Environment or the Critical Biodiversity Issues Report or CBIR first before the NBSAP.

**FINDINGS ON IMPLEMENTATION.** The project practiced adaptive management to ensure delivery of knowledge products. M& E needs were largely met at design and implementation stages through the consistent use of the log frame, work plans and individual component plans. An inter-ministerial drafting committee also helped the Project steering committee in technical oversight. Partners from different sectors participated in direction setting through an open dialogue. Notwithstanding delays in year 1, the project achieved most planned outputs. A midterm audit indicated effective practice of sound financial management.

The adoption of NIM enabled the GoV through MONRE to exercise full direction, control and adaptive management in the implementation of agreed upon work plans. This included designing activities that were complementary to regular functions; and deployment of permanent BCA based senior officers and technical staff to lead operations. These ensured ownership of the process and results. Short term/on call local consultants worked with staff to address complex technical needs and develop solutions that could be assimilated by the government into its programs. It also provided for “hands-on” training of staff for sustainability. The perceived deep relationship

between MONRE/BCA and UNDP enhanced the assimilation of state of the art global knowledge on biodiversity conservation into the mandates of MONRE and BCA.

**FINDINGS ON RESULTS.** The attainment of outcome indicators is summarized in Annex 7.

**Relevance.** As envisioned in project design, the project contributed to the implementation of the CBD Aichi targets; the Biodiversity Law and the SEDP. It supported GEF Objective 5 and One UN Plan Outcome 1.4. National agencies actively led the dialogue and consensus building. Local technical leaders at the provinces believe the knowledge they gained from the project are contributing to the local appreciation of biodiversity issues and opportunities that need to be considered, in the conduct of socioeconomic planning and land use planning.

**Effectiveness.** The project mobilized science based information and facilitated a transparent, multi stakeholder process to generate an updated situation analysis (5 NR, CBIR) consensus on key issues and directions; framework plans and overall targets (NBSAP). Prioritized policy gaps were communicated to the NA. At least 5 policy instruments were produced to systematically integrate biodiversity concerns in development planning, sourcing funds from state financing and land use planning. National Targets and Institutional arrangements were further amplified by guiding key agencies to start their detailed sectoral planning. National level financial planning involving innovative sources is still a work in progress. There is also a need to better communicate the whole range of guidance documents that constitute the content of NBSAP as envisioned by the PRODOC. To support provincial commitment and capacity, the Project oriented targeted local authority staff on the updated perspective for CBD conservation. It produced a planning guide that outlined practical steps for localized NBSAP implementation, and reflecting the same in land use planning. Indicators for assessing local performance were adopted.

The Project enabled the appreciation of the rationale, process and good practices among 20 local authorities. This appreciation is reflected most especially in the two pilot provinces who were able to assess their on-going biodiversity planning using the NBSAP as basis. Focal points were able to facilitate local consensus building. Land use changes reflecting biodiversity were agreed upon based on studies supported by the project. In addition, in one province, project proposals on conservation were prepared based on the improved knowledge from the NBSAP.

A key lesson is the need to carefully plan at the start of implementation, how to balance the various suggestions by the global convention with national planning protocols. Both have usually similar objectives but sometimes vary in approach in presentation. Effective management of partners enables the generation and sharing of vital information important for a knowledge intensive project like this one. More “lessons learned” are indicated in a special section after conclusion.

**Efficiency.** The accounting and financial system was able to adequately support project management through timely work planning, and accurate and timely financial information. Fund flows were enabled on a regular basis due to timely work planning, progress reporting, accounting and financial spot check services. More frequent meetings of the steering committee would have been ideal given the fast pace of knowledge outputs. Notwithstanding first year delays, the project was able to catch up with most final outputs and had a disbursement rate of 95%. Co-financing reached 90% of targets. The financial performance is discussed further under the Finance section. Timely work planning and adherence to sound procurement systems (HPPMG) also helped assure cost effectiveness. The project supported arrangement of products including 58 workshops

attended by 3,000 participants that resulted into 3 major national policy oriented reports and plans; two local planning and monitoring guides and three land use planning policy instruments. It trained 377 staff from 36 local authorities; and produced a range of communication materials, scientific articles it made equipment available for the pilot provinces.

**Sustainability.** The heightened awareness and analysis of issues has led to an expeditious approval of the NBSAP by the top leadership almost immediately after its formulation; and the mobilization of available resources to support immediate action on the ground. Reflecting the prospect of *institutional sustainability* and political will, the inter-ministerial mechanism for dialogue and coordination is being sustained. It enabled assignment of agency focal points at both national and local levels. MONRE is guiding provincial governments on how to plan, deploy personnel and organize for implementation with support by new policy instruments. Personnel were deployed. The NA is now in the process of developing a legislative agenda to address bottlenecks. At the local levels, biodiversity conservation is being incorporated in land use plans of pilot provinces and their experience shared, stimulating dynamic interest by other provinces. At the operational level, sustainability of human resources capacity building may be affected by unclear plans for systematic post training follow up and communication campaigns.

Reflecting the state of *financial sustainability*, the provincial guide helps local authorities fully tap state resources, but at the national level, the development of a resource mobilization strategy is still a work in progress at project end. This means that implementation will, in the immediate term, still be largely dependent on state resources and unable to optimally tap innovative financing. There are no major impediments to *social and environmental sustainability*.

**Impact.** The current efforts of MONRE to proactively start guiding “provincialization” efforts of the NBSAP that rely on state resources may be regarded as a potential global good practice. The actual effect of capacity interventions on (human) resource capacity is difficult to discern as there are no baseline or end line information. However, the training participants in the 2 pilot provinces demonstrate a promising understanding of the key issues, and actual practice to facilitate a localized multi stakeholder process. Given the recent adoption of biodiversity friendly land use plans, and if follow up technical support is provided the project can directly contribute to the protection of several protected areas in Lang Son and Son La covering substantial land areas.

At least 5 policy instruments that have been generated enable local authorities to begin to strategically address biodiversity issues locally (i.e. provincial guide, tapping state financing at local levels, and 3 regulations on land use planning). The National Assembly is better equipped with science based, analytical information to help with the legislation, as a lasting solution to the current policy and institutional bottlenecks. Agencies also now clearly recognize MONRE and DONREs as the key biodiversity facilitators.

## CONCLUSIONS

The outcome indicators were achieved with varying degrees of *effectiveness*. When combined however, these outcome indicators positively contribute to addressing the two barriers to effective national biodiversity management (i.e. no agreed upon updated priorities on biodiversity conservation and lack of provincial capacity and commitment). By addressing these barriers,

achievement of project objective is facilitated (i.e. ‘*supply of policy relevant actionable information through NBSAP ...and increasing demand for information...*’).

Various *relevant*, actionable information (e.g. 3 working papers, 5 NR, CBIR) were generated, analyzed and vetted through a transparent and participatory process resulting into an updated NBSAP. This partly represents the “supply” side aspects of the Project Objective. At least 5 policy instruments have been formulated and priority legislative reforms were determined based on the supply of information. Through the enabling conditions provided by the project, the NBSAP was promulgated with dispatch reflecting timely political support by no less than the Prime Minister.

The information generated by the project also guided the formulation of a provincial NBSAP planning and monitoring guide, the raising of awareness and interest of focal points in 20 localities; and attainment of political commitments for land use plan revisions in two pilot areas. As new knowledge is being put to practice, more guidance is being sought, both from national agencies, and from pioneering peer local authorities. The NA on the other hand has increased interaction with the MONRE for scientific advice as input to legislation. These represent the progress in generating the “demand side” aspects of the Project objective.

It can be said that the main value added of Project to GoVs efforts was to ensure a quality analytical perspective in NBSAP formulation, grounded on lessons learned not only in Vietnam but worldwide; and an open and participatory process for stakeholder involvement particularly provincial governments. Also the process of localization has been launched with dispatch and with a practical orientation focusing on what can be done immediately on the ground using available state resources, notwithstanding current institutional constraints.

Throughout this process, the MONRE demonstrated leadership as well as *efficiency* in utilizing a wide spectrum of human and financial resources as well as partnerships, to produce outputs and outcomes, while ensuring that *sustainability* is considered. The exact degree or relevance effectiveness, efficiency sustainability and impacts are discussed in earlier sections and the actual ratings based on GEF, are summarized at the end of this executive summary.

Notwithstanding the above gains, there are concerns. First, there is lack of clear communication on what documents physically constitute the NBSAP’s implementation plan and financing plan. Because of this, the NBSAP may be potentially known only by its component documents. As such, partners and stakeholders may be unable to fully understand the NBSAP in its entirety and have a difficult time pinpointing in what aspects they can complement.

The second is financing. The project’s strength was the technical support to local authorities so that they can optimally use state budgets for biodiversity conservation. But at the national level, there is a need to translate the consensus reached so far to tap innovative funding sources, into systematic, and time-bound targets. Without this, NBSAP funding for projects may still largely depend on limited state financing during the NBSAP period. Third, notwithstanding the good range of communication products produced, the awareness building interventions during the project may be too short an exposure for planners and practitioners both at the national and local levels, to enable the development of relevant subsequent sector programs and local programs that reflect the intent of the NBSAP.

Fourth, for land use plans, the next challenge is how to make them enforceable. Based on the project’s experience, there is an opportunity to stimulate better stakeholder understanding and



ownership with optimum use of maps in the planning process. Also, as advocated by DARDs, there is a need to encourage co-management modalities for conservation in protected areas, to harness community contributions. A related challenge is how to put biodiversity corridors as well as buffer zone for protected areas under sustainable management.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As the project has already been completed, these are shared so that they may become part of the mainstreaming process during the NBSAP period.

- **Communicate the NBSAP and associated documents as one “Package.”** To promote better appreciation of the NBSAP’s compliance to CBD by those not familiar with the planning formats of GoV, communicate the current NBSAP as a “package” of documents. This would consist of the NBSAP itself plus other documents directly derived from it e.g. Guide for provincial implementation 7 thematic programs.
- **Consolidate the Directions for Financing.** Develop a collaborative work program to systematically develop guidance documents to broaden the sources financing.
- **Provide Follow on Technical Guidance for Local Authorities.** Strengthen the capacity of agencies to support Provincial governments through improved support programs by National Agencies derived from NBSAP principles and strategies. Institutionalize the peer to peer sharing process. Ensure that other key local governance processes for further NBSAP localization (i.e. actual land use enforcement) are also piloted to serve as models, building on what was implemented under the project.
- **Fortify Protocols for Biodiversity in Land Use and Approaches for Enforcement.** Consider optimum use of maps in the planning methodology to deepen local understanding and ownership by all key stakeholders. Support efforts to promote co management to enable communities to help enforce plans. Catalyze consensus that will incorporate biodiversity corridors and buffer zone in the land use planning protocols (only protocols for PAs and facilities have been developed so far).

The following is a summary of ratings for key parameters specified by the GEF and UNDP guidelines for terminal evaluation. A breakdown of ratings on a per indicator basis is also provided in Annex 7.

1. M&E		2. IA & EA EXECUTION	
ME design at entry	MS	Quality of UNDP Implementation ( IA )	S
ME plan implementation	MS	Quality of Execution ( EA )	S
Overall quality of ME	MS	Overall Quality of Implementation	S
3. ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES		4. SUSTAINABILITY	
Relevance	HS	Financial	ML
Effectiveness	S	Socio political	ML
Efficiency	S	Institutional framework & governance	ML
Overall Outcome Rating	S	Environmental	ML
		Overall Likelihood of sustainability	ML

**Rating Scale:** HU- Highly Unsatisfactory; U-Unsatisfactory, MU- Moderately Unsatisfactory; MS-Moderately Satisfactory; S-Satisfactory; HS-Highly Satisfactory.

**Rating Scale specific for sustainability:** HU- Highly Unlikely; MU-Moderately Unlikely, ML-Moderately Likely, L-Likely;

## ACRONYMS

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
AWP	Annual Work Program
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BCA	Biodiversity Conservation Agency
BD	Biodiversity
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBIR	Critical Biodiversity Issues Report
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism
CITES	The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CO	Country Office
CRES	Centre for Research and Environmental Sciences
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoV	Government of Viet Nam
GIZ	German International Cooperation
HPPMG	Vietnam UN Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guidelines
IA	Implementing Agency
IMSC	Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IW	Inception Workshop
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LA	Local Authorities
LS	Lang Son
LUP	Land Use Planning
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MASPAS	Management Strategy for a Protected Area System in Viet Nam
MB	Management Board
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOPS	Ministry of Public Security

MPA	Marine Protected Area
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NBDS	National Biodiversity Database System
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
PD	National Project Director
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PA	Protected Area
PC	Peoples Committee
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PM	Prime Minister
PMU	The Project Management Unit
PRODOC	Project Document
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SOE	State of Environment
SL	Son La
SPRB	State Pressure Response Benefit
SUF	Special-Use Forest
TE	Terminal Evaluation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
VEA	Viet Nam Environment Administration
VND	Viet Nam Dong (US\$1 = approx VND 22,000)
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose of the evaluation**

A Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the *Project “Developing National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Provincial Planning”* (PIMS #.4811) was conducted in December 2015 and January 2016. The purposes of the terminal evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in enhancing UNDP programming.

The TE was conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by the UNDP and GEF as reflected in the 2011 and 2012 GEF and UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects. This exercise involved an assessment of project performance based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework.

### **Scope and methodology and structure of report**

The TE used five main criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed Projects. To reach a conclusion on the performance against the set criteria, the TE asked a series of questions covering all aspects of project intervention, categorized under 3 main sections: a) project formulation; b) project implementation and c) project results. Each section would cover specific topics to study. The TE field mission covered the period from December 3 to December 22, 2015. Preliminary findings were presented last December 22, 2015. The TE developed guide questions that match the 5 key criteria and other special topics in the TOR. The evaluation largely relied on a qualitative research approach to generate evidence and findings that match the 5 key criteria. To execute this approach, the TE team reviewed key project related literature, conduct a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Key respondents included both the government and non-state actors as well as international partners (See also Annex 2).

Of the above topics, four aspects will be subjected to a rating scale. These include the four key criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability) plus two other parameters (M&E and Implementing Agency and Executing Agency). The TE Team understands that the way the outcome indicators are stated follows a GEF protocol for this type of project i.e. the level of statement is “a notch lower “ than what is usually the expected style of stating outcomes. This is particularly true to one of the indicators for outcome 2 – provincial commitment and capacity, which is measured only in terms of preparation of guidance documents for provinces and training.

Both the UNDP and MONRE provided sufficient “space” for the TE Team to ensure quality, integrity and independence. The TE Team was consulted on the profile of participants to be interviewed. The Team suggested key literature to be reviewed and persons to be met. The Team further observed measures that protect the rights and confidentiality of persons interviewed.

There were many interesting information products that the Project produced. Most were in Vietnamese, however and the TE Team had to focus on the most basic documents for translation to English synopsis. The broader political perspective (i.e. NA delegates or People’s Committees) was not obtained directly from NA or PC representatives who were unavailable during the TE

period. Interaction with non-state actors were largely limited to international NGOs and one national environmental NGO. There was limited opportunity to measure capacity levels of the 20 local authorities targeted for training, due to the absence of baseline while the limited evaluation period only allowed interaction with the 2 pilot provinces. The team married the requirements of the GEF /UNDP TE guidance and the TOR in preparing its report. Where the TOR was silent, the guide questions under the GEF/UNDP guidance were used. Due to space limitations, the TE team tried its best avoid redundant statements that could be unintentionally brought about due to the nature of the prescribed report outline i.e. having special themes to be addressed over and above the conventional parameters i.e. relevance, effectiveness etc.

The presentation on findings will start with an overview of design and implementation processes. Project results will then be presented following the log frame (with ratings), then it will be followed by a discussion of the 5 criteria, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned.

## **Evaluation Team**

***International Consultant/Team Leader – Eduardo Queblatin***, Philippines. Ed conducted midterm reviews and terminal evaluation for 16 national and regional programs/projects. This covered issues in natural resources management in the Asia Pacific region including those funded by UN agencies, ASEAN and INGOs. He also helped National Ministries in the design of NSBAPs, agro biodiversity, SLM, climate change adaptation and local governance. He studied agriculture (undergraduate) and Public Administration (graduate) in the Philippines and has been trained on land use planning, EIA and participatory local governance.

***National Consultant - Vu Thi Hoai Thu***. Thu works as a lecturer and researcher at the National Economics University in Hanoi, Vietnam since 2002. She specializes in environmental economics and management and climate change economics and policy. She conducted terminal evaluations for DANIDA and World Bank projects on livelihoods in marine protected areas and environmental protection in Vietnam. She studied banking and finance (undergraduate) and development economics (graduate) and did PhD thesis on sustainable livelihoods in the context of climate change in coastal area in Vietnam.

## **2.0. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

Vietnam is one of the 16 most biologically diverse countries in the world. Its biodiversity is under threat from overexploitation, habitat loss, pollution, invasive species and climate change. These threats are rooted on certain drivers such as accelerated globalization and industrialization, urbanization, and changing demographic patterns. The two key barriers being addressed by the project are: a) absence of updated biodiversity conservation priorities and targets agreed to by all relevant state and non-state stakeholders; and b) inadequate capacity and commitment to integrate biodiversity conservation into development and land use planning at provincial levels. The above barriers notwithstanding the country has over the past decade, also gained better knowledge about the nature of biodiversity threats and opportunities for policy reforms. It also experienced a surge of technical and institutional innovations for natural resources management.

The project officially started in August 2012 and ended operations in Aug 2015. The Project's goal is to *integrate CBD obligations into the national planning processes through enabling activities, which is the GEF's focal area objective for this project (Biodiversity 5)*. The Project objective (from

the log frame) is *to strengthen biodiversity conservation in Vietnam by increasing the supply of relevant actionable information through the preparation of the NBSAP that complies with the CBD guidelines and Biodiversity Law; and by increasing the demand for this information by building provincial level capacity to integrate NBSAP results into land use plans.*

The Project Results framework further elaborates the aim by providing technical assistance to the GoV to address the barriers on biodiversity management, fulfil its commitments to CBD, and implement national priorities for enhancing improved environment management and biodiversity conservation for sustainable development. It has two components: **(1)** New NBSAP and 5th National Report prepared in compliance with Biodiversity Law and CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020; and **(2)** Provincial commitment and capacity strengthened to implement NBSAP. The 4th National Report serves as the key baseline of the project. The report highlights the key milestones achieved so far in terms of BD conservation and sustainable use at the time of project design.

The main national project stakeholders are MONRE (main agency for biodiversity and key focal point) and MARD (terrestrial and marine protected areas and CITES focal point). The National Assembly or NA will be crucial in passing laws that will resolve the major institutional roadblocks to collaborative conservation. The Provincial Peoples Committees (PPCs) are responsible for development and land use planning. Selected State and Non-State organizations such as INGOs will help in the distillation of policy issues and identification of inclusive solutions to issues. INGO partners provide complementary research based information and technical expertise in analysis.

In Vietnam, responsibility for PA management is shared among national agencies (MARD and MONRE) and local authorities. Management of PAs are now mostly directly under local authorities and PA management boards (with technical guidance provided by MARD and MONRE). PA that cut across provinces are under the direct control of either MARD (for terrestrial, inland waters and marine ecosystems) or MONRE (for wetland ecosystems listed under RAMSAR). There is inadequate definition and subsequent overlapping of responsibilities among agencies. Under the project, updating the NBSAP with clearer, unified targets would be the first systematic step to better synchronize agency roles. The NBSAP would identify the priorities for policy and legislative reforms that would resolve chronic institutional issues in biodiversity state management.

Development decisions at local authorities' level are largely driven by economic growth objectives, with inadequate attention given to protecting landscapes that in fact often serve as the foundation for local economies (water from watersheds, raw material for industry and livelihoods, etc.). This in turn happens because of lack of local appreciation of value of biodiversity resources as well as capacity for biodiversity planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Rapid decentralization reforms have not been sufficiently accompanied by national guidance on priorities as well as capacity building. This explains the project focus to address the capacity gaps at the local authority levels particularly in land use planning.

The key expected project results include the following: a) NBSAP with clear implementation plan; b) National reports on biodiversity status and trends; c) GIS based maps; d) Provincial capacity and commitment for NBSAP implementation; e) Biodiversity reporting mechanism's; f) Provincial implementation of priorities; g) Spatial biodiversity assessment; and h) Experience and lessons learned from 2 provinces documented and shared nationally.

### **3.0. FINDINGS**

#### **3.1. PROJECT FORMULATION**

##### **3.1.1. Analysis of Project results framework**

The overall concept revolves around the supply of and demand for policy-oriented, actionable information (derived from project purpose as cited in Project Results Framework) as foundation for addressing the professed barriers to biodiversity conservation. These barriers include the absence of updated biodiversity priorities and lack of provincial capacity to address biodiversity. This section is also supported by an ANNEX 8 that further elaborates on the observations on selected subsections below.

Project outcome 1 (NBSAP and 5<sup>th</sup> NR prepared) addressed barrier 1 by assembling and vetting science-based information and converting them into policy-oriented recommendations for both national (executive and legislative) and international audience. Component 2 (Provincial commitment and capacity for NBSAP) addresses the 2<sup>nd</sup> barrier by providing “how to” guidance to local authorities and demonstrating actual implementation processes for biodiversity action.

The key approach is to develop a biodiversity conservation action plan but at the same time, start a timely pilot implementation at provincial levels. The project correctly focuses on building capacity at local levels since this is where day to day decisions on biodiversity is made. Project features support Aichi Target 17 (updating the NBSAP); COP 10 decision X/22 and the Nagoya Declaration in 2010 regarding the role of local authorities in NBSAPs (see also Annex 8).

**Generating deep local economic interest.** The PRODOC cites the strong economic orientation of local authorities. Biodiversity is also a relatively new and complex topic to most local authorities in developing countries. The design cites the need for proper valuation of biodiversity resources as part of NBSAP long-term plans. But there is little guidance in the design document on specific interventions that must be made to generate that deep interest for biodiversity conservation on economic grounds, particularly in the pilot provinces. An example would have been to package available good practices that demonstrate the economic value of biodiversity resources or to require biodiversity spatial analysis exercises to look into cases that demonstrate the local economic importance of biodiversity resources, as an input into the land use planning process.

The design does not adequately describe the actual nature of drivers in local socio-economic decision making that affect natural resources management biodiversity. It is rather silent on available good practices and positive trends in local environmental governance generated by local authorities. These type of information would have been useful to consider in designing realistic interventions that can stimulate interest for biodiversity-friendly local development planning.

If the design did not require production of NBSAP in 2012, perhaps it may have been more logical to prepare the State of Environment or the Critical Biodiversity Issues Report or CBIR first before the NBSAP. The advantage is there would be more in depth analysis of issues that provides better “grounding” for the development of plans, programs and targets. This would be in addition to the thematic working papers prepared during the NBSAP preparation proper. See also Annex 8.

### **3.1.2. Assumptions and Risks**

The assumptions are rather silent on the need for discrete advocacy interventions (e.g. communication of good practices) to generate economic interest on the part of local authorities in biodiversity as a condition for sustained commitments. Second, commitment and capacity building is a long-term process requiring a generous flow of information, technical guidance and incentives. The assumptions column is silent on the need for continuing technical guidance from national agencies to complement commitment from local authorities. Agency contributions to help local authorities need to go beyond the prescribed actions during the project (e.g. preparing the NBSAP, conducting the project sponsored trainings). Third, the project is also silent on the need for proper timing of project interventions with local planning cycles. This generates sufficient experience for piloting purposes within the project time frame. Addressing these would help ensure that outputs and outcomes have a higher chance to lead to impacts. See also Annex 8.

### **3.1.3. Lessons from other relevant projects**

The project design correctly builds on the experience from work in protected areas and natural resources management, in general. However, it is rather silent on the learning on what has worked (good practices) and has not worked in capacity building for local development planning and local governance. Related initiatives under the governance sector could have generated insights on how to effectively introduce innovations (on biodiversity) to local leaders and staff.

### **3.1.4. Planned stakeholder participation**

The project design lists the very core minimum stakeholders at national and local levels especially government agencies and scientific NGOs. The table of stakeholders in the PRODOC is, however, silent on other stakeholders that are not normally associated with the environment discourse but in reality are important for long-term mainstreaming of biodiversity in socio-economic development. These include Government agencies related to crime prevention and justice; education, culture and communication; and local governance and ethnic communities. There is also little reference to business associations, local civic organizations. The project design, however, advocates maximizing multi-sectoral participation during the NBSAP preparation process and land use planning process. During implementation, the project actually tried to reach out to as many sectors as possible.

### **3.1.5. Replication approach**

The project design advocated that the NBSAP would develop a communication and outreach strategy to convey its values and recommended practices. This is consistent with the CBD Program of Work for CEPA promulgated under Decision VI/19. Given the relatively small project size, short project duration, the project interventions are rightfully kept simple. Two sets of interventions stand out. First, the development of a planning and implementation guide for local authorities as well complementary regulations helps build the enabling environment for replication. Secondly, the conduct of sharing sessions among local authorities among local authorities provide further motivation for replication. It would have been preferable for the design to elaborate on how make the sharing sessions effective and sustainable given the current little information of actual knowledge needs of local authorities. They have only been recently considered as key target audience in biodiversity conservation. Please see also Annex 8 for further discussion.



### **3.1.6. UNDP comparative advantage**

UNDP has clear comparative advantage as GoV's partner in this undertaking. It has the institutional memory as partner in the preparation of earlier versions of the NBSAP as well as the conduct of National Capacity Self-Assessments (NCSA). The PRODOC cites other key UNDP initiatives recently completed and ongoing. Several initiatives that are not cited may also be added. First is the GEF Small Grants Program that UNDP administers has generated a range of model biodiversity conserving communities and knowledge products. Second, UNDP's experience in implementing Governance reform initiatives could also provide insights, and approaches on how to introduce innovations in biodiversity conservation in local governance.

### **3.1.7. Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector**

The AICHI targets are interested with both drivers and pressures on biodiversity. The Project design cites the importance of linkage with previous and ongoing initiatives that deal with the **pressures** on ecosystems, species and genetic levels. It also highlights the work on habitat management and corridor conservation. The project design could have possibly benefited from a study of initiatives that can indirectly help influence the **drivers** of biodiversity conservation. Such initiatives may include those working on improving local governance decision making including addressing harmful subsidies in the agriculture fishery and forestry sectors.

### **3.1.8. Management arrangements**

Under the NIM modality, the project management is oriented to produce knowledge that can stimulate policies and policy driven actions. The inter-ministerial drafting committee is an investment in the mainstreaming process. Through the project, MONRE, VEA and BCA are able to demonstrate leadership not only in project management but in long-term advocacy and knowledge management. At the same time, the UNDP provides technical support and quality assurance (through technical assistance, national expertise, research, international training, and global visibility) as well as co-financing and financial management support.

The deployment of permanent VEA/BCA based senior officers and staff as concurrent project officers provide opportunities for hands-on training and enables sustainability of good practices to be generated. Providing sufficient technical assistance resources (mostly national) under the supervision of BCA, contributes to knowledge stock development through hands-on knowledge sharing or technical expertise by consultants to regular organic MONRE/ BCA staff.

## **3.2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

### **3.2.1. Adaptive management**

A Project inception workshop was conducted within a few months from project approval i.e. last quarter of 2012. This was done to orient stakeholders, clarify project interventions, update manpower plans and budget configurations to adjust to the changes in the project working environment and provide guidance for the preparation of year 1 work plan. The PSC generally referred to the log frame as basis for preparation, review and approval of work plans and reports.

**Challenges.** The project encountered the following challenges that required some changes in the operational strategies to adapt to the situation.

- a. Procurement delays due to compliance to both UNDP and GoV procurement rules. The 2012 Annual Reports as well as the PIR indicate a perception of complex bidding procedures. Recommendations were made to promote inter office understanding of and support to the procedures in the context of the HPPMG. The adaptive management action eventually focused on improving PMU capacity to undertake immediate measures to comply with the procedures.
- b. Land use plans for Lang Son and Son La were already approved for the year 2011-2015 when the project started in late 2012. Thus, the opportunity to officially amend these plans have to wait for 2016. Nonetheless, Project Management continued to undertake an information assisted participatory process to agree on what should be changed and to commit to formally execute this during the formal re planning process in 2016.
- c. The MONRE decided to pursue another theme (urban pollution) in the conduct of its SOE that coincided with the project period. This was potentially, a “missed opportunity” to project a high quality awareness on biodiversity issues to an important audience who regularly follow the SOE. The project immediately adapted by producing a Critical Biodiversity Issues Report (CBIR) following the same preparation standards for the SOE and communicated the same to the SOE audience. This enabled higher awareness of biodiversity issues including by the NA.
- d. The first draft of the CBD-inspired NBSAP was revised in the early 2013 so that its structure would conform to the uniform format practiced by the GoV in the preparation of National Plans for CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC. Under the new format, it became a challenge on how to effectively communicate the NBSAP’s compliance to CBD (and more importantly to the PRODOC) in terms of clear national institutional design and other selected aspects cited in the PRODOC (human resources, communication plans, etc.). This has been addressed so far through an ad hoc combination of documents: sector specific, program implementation plans (4 of 7 planned programs) and development of a provincial biodiversity planning guide.
- e. In 2013, the NBSAP project heeded GoV regulation to all agencies who were preparing National Action Plans for Global agreements. Accordingly, financial needs should be first harmonized with sectoral/provincial plans. On that basis, detailed proposals would be prepared and budgets approved at the time of implementation. This meant that no long term financial plan could be placed in the NBSAP document although this would be expressed in other ways (e.g. budgets for full program /project proposals). MOFI and MOPI would manage the budget preparation in accordance to the Budget Law. Respecting the wisdom of the Regulation and upon advice of Project Management, preparers of the NBSAP adapted to the situation by preparing and attaching initial cost estimates to the main NBSAP document as supplement. Also, MONRE focused on provincial guidance on how to better tap state resources for biodiversity.

**Effect on results.** All the above changes were done with the PSC approval. The effect of administrative delays such as on procurement challenges were eventually addressed by the adjustments in implementation planning. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> challenges (timing of Land use planning and SOE) could have been planned well in advance in the design. However, the changes did not negatively affect the resulting end products. Substantive discourse and agreements were still achieved.

The 4<sup>th</sup> challenge (reformatting and trimming of the NBSAP) was due to an exogenous condition that should have been anticipated by the PRODOC during the project preparation as well as pre-implementation and start up/inception consultations with ministries who were also involved in the preparation of action plans. The reformatting and trimming down of the first draft may have slightly compromised the role of the NBSAP as a forceful and unified guiding document. There are some information gaps in the NBSAP and these are cited under the section on Outcomes and ANNEX 10. In some cases the information is actually there but there is little guidance as to where to find it.

The 5<sup>th</sup> challenge (official NBSAP budget projections) was also due an exogenous condition. It required a change in perspective in looking at financial plans. Instead of looking for it in one single document as one would usually do, one will have to look at this in different important documents i.e. supplemental information in the NBSAP; financial plans of each of the 7 implementation programs of the NBSAP and the financial plans for projects identified by Provincial Governments.

### **3.2.2. Partnerships**

The project had two key partners who also provided co-financing. The International Union for Conservation of Nature or IUCN regarding NBSAP preparation; and the Japan International Cooperation Agency or JICA on the development of the national biodiversity database system.

**IUCN on NBSAP.** This international resource institution provided expert, technical assistance, support in for the preparation of the NBSAP in line with CBD guidance. Specifically, it provided overall guidance on CBD standards, helped prepare TORs for national consultants, provided in-depth analytical support for drawing lessons from previous NBSAPs and providing state of the art information on status of biodiversity resource especially in relation to the RED list. The Project also provided financial support for the deployment of IUCN expertise in Hanoi.

BCA held the primary role for organizing the document. In this context, IUCN provided technical suggestions in the identification of biodiversity issues and priorities and in the identification of specific action items. From late 2012, IUCN assumed a more laid back role as commentator and the communication between BCA and IUCN on NBSAP matters became less frequent. In fact, it was only during the interview of IUCN experts during the TE that the latter realized that Decision No 1250/2013 on the NBSAP strategy actually had an attachment and this was the main NBSAP document. Based on this lack of adequate information (partly due to the time it took for NBSAP approval process), they were not able to properly comment on the main NBSAP “package” (Decision 1250 and main technical document). Their feedback to the information update (i.e. presence of main technical NBSAP document) could not be ascertained during the TE review period.

**JICA on NBDS.** JICA on the other hand, provided support in the preparation of biodiversity database. Specifically, it provided its ongoing work as counterpart for one of the Project targets which was the development of a “mechanism to report on biodiversity status and good practices from provincial to national levels”. JICA’s ongoing project on NBDS provided help in terms of overall design of a larger environment wide database (not just biodiversity). The NBDS containing the biodiversity database is now in the VEA website.

**Among Ministries and Agencies.** The project maintained partnerships with MARD and other key agencies to support the NBSAP preparation process. At the technical level, resident experts of MONRE, MARD, MOST and other agencies exchanged notes during the preparation of thematic discussions (and working papers) that was facilitated by the project. On top of the technical exchange, the Inter-Ministerial Drafting Committee reviewed technical outputs and proposals for inclusion in the NBSAP. As part of the NBSAP implementation, a GoV Decision created the NBSAP Inter-Ministerial Steering committee to oversee the program implementation at both national and local levels. This committee is composed of several key ministries. It provides guidance in the preparation of the 7 NBSAP programs as well as the provincial implementation.

### **3.2.3. M&E design and entry at implementation and use of M&E feedback for adaptive management**

Due to the limited scope (most products were essentially planning documents) and short timeframe, the project did not have a customized M&E plan to amplify the project results framework in the PRODOC. The project, however, mitigated this by regular reference to the log frame combined with the use of the detailed annual work plans as basis for monitoring. The various implementing units such as the NBSAP Technical Assistance Teams also had their own de facto monitoring plans, which the BCA based PMU likewise used to monitor progress.

The project result framework was discussed and clarified during the inception workshop last September 2012. Staffing was increased to inclusion of a full time Project assistant that would among others cover the M&E concerns. A budget was provided (USD 34, 000) for M& E. The inception report did not however refer to the development of an M&E Plan. There was no Mid-Term review conducted as this was not required given the size and timeframe of the project.

The project prepared annual work plan of activities that were clearly articulated together with the project level component and outcome indicators. These were also further linked to One UN indicators. Budgets and actors were clearly linked with the activities. The MONRE PMU submitted annual reports that were in turn based on quarterly reports. The PMU monitored outputs of the various consultants engaged by the Projects. Field monitoring visits were regularly done and some of these were timed with key project implementation activities.

The work plans and progress reports were generally submitted on time but the Terminal report cites that approval of the said work plans by both government agencies and UNDP were often delayed. The reports contained the following: progress, points of digression from original plans and reasons and lessons learned. There is limited reference to the management of risks identified in the designs.

Based on minutes of meetings, the PSC meetings addressed the key issues raised by project staff during the reporting periods that required adjustments in plans and programs. A more substantive discussion of issues in relation to the NBSAP was discussed at the Inter-Ministerial Drafting Committee of which some PSC member agencies were also members. How the PSC used the information reported by PMU are discussed in the section on *adaptive management*. The PSC met only annually (as gleaned in the reports submitted for the TE). This seemed to be too infrequent for a project that produced so many knowledge products over a very short period.

The identification of documented project management related lessons learned at the year-end tended to be oriented towards administrative issues. Proposed solutions tended to be too generic to be of substantial value for adaptive management. The discussion of learning from technical and institutional aspects was done more in the inter-ministerial drafting committee of which the BCA PMU served as key member/coordinator. The BCA PMU provided the de facto “institutional memory” for ensuring that the both the PSC and the Inter-Ministerial Drafting Committee were informed of the same issues and opportunities confronting the project.

Notwithstanding some noted gaps, the M&E at design and implementation stages were able to support project management to a degree that enabled the latter to guide project “catch up” and deliver core outputs that met reasonable quality standards, within the project timeframe. This is further subsequent sections i.e. project outcomes. **Rating for M&E: At design: Moderately Satisfactory; At implementation: Moderately Satisfactory. Overall: Moderately Satisfactory**

### 3.2.4. Finance

The Project is financed by GEF and co-financed by GoV, UNDP, IUCN, and JICA. The total budget is \$5,459,091, of which \$909,091 is from non-refundable aid (ODA) and \$4,550,000 is from enrolled co-financing of other projects.

**Table 1: Budget of NBSAP Project (USD)**

	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Total
<b>GEF (financing)</b>	286,845	426,146	196,100	909,091
<b>UNDP (through another award)</b>	50,000	200,000	50,000	300,000
<b>IUCN (co-financing)</b>	150,000	70,000	30,000	250,000
<b>JICA (co-financing)</b>	1,000,000	2,000,000	800,000	3,800,000
<b>Government (in kind and in cash)</b>	50,000	100,000	50,000	200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,536,845</b>	<b>2,796,146</b>	<b>1,126,100</b>	<b>5,459,091</b>

*Source: Project Implementation Report, 2015*

### Planned and actual costs

The direct financing by GEF has been planned as \$211,800 for component 1, \$614,646 for component 2 and \$82,645 for Project Management. The Annual Work Plan (AWP) and cumulative disbursement report (CDR) from August 2012 to September 2015 are presented in Annex 8. As of September 2015, the Project disbursed a total amount of \$863,898.31 with a disbursement rate of 95% compared with the total GEF budget. Annual disbursement rates compared to AWP are 44%, 86%, 85.7%, 74.5% in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 respectively. It is reported that there is a slight difference between planned budget and actual disbursement for all components for the period 2012-2015. This is a natural process of financial adjustment during the project implementation to meet the project outputs. Annex 8 provides further analysis.

The prolonged process for approving the project and establishing its PMU led to a shortened operating time of the project in 2012, thus, the low disbursement. Also, due to complex procedures, multi-stage bidding protocol for consultants' disbursements spilled over to 2013. Additional challenges in disbursements in the succeeding years included further delay in

procurement, changes in a planned output, and a slight delay in the selection of provinces. Nonetheless the overall disbursement rates remarkably improved the succeeding years.

### **The effectiveness of financial planning**

The flow of fund and budget transfer process indicated the transparency and quality assurance in financial management of the project. BCA as the National Implementing Partner of the project maintained overall accountability for the proper financial management of inputs assigned by MONRE. PMU formulated detailed annual and quarterly work plans and financial plans and submit to MONRE for approval. These plans were then submitted to UNDP for approval. UNDP transferred budget to BCA on quarterly basis and BCA reported back expenses through FACE forms. UNDP prepared CDR at the end of each quarter and at the end of the year. AWP and CDR by activity are approved by both UNDP and MONRE.

UNDP is accountable for the effective and efficient use of resources for the achievement of project results through provision of financial and audit services. Financial spot-check was conducted in November 2014 and indicated that VAT, fund flow, and reporting and monitoring were at low risk while accounting policies and procedures were at moderate risk. The spot-check team also proposed recommendations for improvement in FACE reports, disbursements, cash management, advance management, and VAT. In addition, a midterm audit (HACT audit) conducted by KPMG in December 2015 assessed the internal control system of expenditures related to the project for the period 1 January to 31 March 2015. The report stated that financial management of internal controls for payment management, budget estimation, financial reporting and accounting and records management have been applied to allow the project management to make informed decisions. The report also shared insights on some procedural aspects that could be improved. It may be noted that the project document specified the preparation of an M&E Plan with a budget of 34,000\$, but the TE team could not find both.

### **Cost-effectiveness**

The findings indicate that the project has been generally implemented in cost-effective manner. First, the project has completed all planned activities and largely met all expected outcomes. The combination of direct financial resource from GEF and human resources have produced a diversity of project outputs, including policy documents, legal documents, scientific reports, training documents, 58 workshops with the participation of more than 3,000 participants, 377 staffs trained from government agencies of 36 provinces and cities, communication materials, scientific articles and magazines, and equipment turnover to provinces. The collective knowledge and experience from government, non-government, and academic institutions on biodiversity conservation and the limited financial resources available have been generally well utilized.

Second, the Project's approach of combining GEF direct funding with co-funding from other sources such as GoV, UNDP, JICA, and IUCN is cost-effective to avoid overlapping costs. Third, the project cost has been reasonably allocated between items of expenditure. The NBSAP Project aims to help capacitate GoV to address barriers on the biodiversity management. This financial modality is considered the most appropriate means by which to strengthen the systemic planning and institutional capacities of the national system for biodiversity conservation. Actual disbursements have followed this financial modality. Being a knowledge intensive project most costs supported recruiting consultants (48.2%) and on workshops (27.8%) and on audio visual

and printed products (5.5%). Project management accounted for a reasonable share of 10.2%. Other expenditures occupied a small proportion of the total disbursement.

### **Contributions from co-financing**

The proposed budget of \$4,550,000 comes from enrolled co-financing of other projects (all in grant form) from GoV, UNDP, IUCN, and JICA. There is a slight difference in the level of proposed and actual co-financing from UNDP, GoV, and IUCN, indicating high commitment of these agencies. As the actual co-financing from JICA is not made available at the time of terminal evaluation, the total actual co-financing cannot be calculated as a result.

Co-financing from national and international sources was manifested through enabling activities that contributed to the project's ultimate objective. MONRE/VEA helped review the NBSAP 2007-2010 and assemble the scientific basis for the NBSAP as well as staff's technical inputs, managerial, coordination and office running costs. UNDP Vietnam on the other hand supported contributed technical assistance for policy development and performance indices primarily through its joint project with MONRE entitled "Strengthening Capacity for Natural Resources and Policy Development and Environmental Performance" (NRE Project).

IUCN provided co-financing from the UNDEF-funded Project "Promoting Active Participation of Civil Society in Environmental Governance." JICA shared technical assistance and information and field data and experience from the Technical Cooperation Project - Project for Development of the National Biodiversity Database System (NBDS) in Vietnam in 2011-2015. Further discussion on actual contributions of the above partners is embedded in the subsequent sections. The implementation of co-financing projects has generally significantly contributed to achievement of project outcomes.

### **3.2.5. IA/EA Implementation**

The PRODOC describes the MONRE as the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner. The BCA, on the other hand, as the operational manager is referred to as the Implementing Entity/responsible partner. In the context of the HPPMG, UNDP is referred to as the International Implementing Partner<sup>1</sup>. As the National Implementing Partner under the HPPMG, MONRE is accountable to the GoV and UNDP for ensuring substantive quality, effective use of resources, timeliness and proper coordination. BCA acted as lead organization in behalf of MONRE. MONRE through the VEA practiced regular supervision on the level of work of BCA while BCA provided guidance and monitoring to the project implementing agents including Provincial governments and consultant teams. In particular, the BCA was able to provide direction to at least 11 sets of consultants/consultant teams provide their technical deliverables, resulting to accomplishment of key project outputs generally within the project time frame.

Both the IA and EA were generally conscious on result management as reflected in the minutes of the PSC meeting and annual work plans and reports which consistently referred to the logical results framework. The PSC responded to key implementation problems but the timelines of advice may have been a challenge as the PSC only met once a year. The Project created the

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<sup>1</sup>In the international context of GEF however, UNDP is considered as lead Executing Agency for the GEF portfolio. MONRE in this instance is considered as the Implementing Agency.

Inter-Ministerial Drafting Committee (with BCA also acting as facilitator) which was an important venue for extended substantive discussion and decision on content related issues of the knowledge products generated by the project.

The BCA cites the deep partnership that they have with the UNDP and appreciated the consistency of overall technical support provided even though there was a high turnover of project officers during the project period. UNDP helped facilitate the orientation of the project team on CBD protocols and results based project management; sharing of international lessons learnt; synergy with other UNDP projects; preparation of TORs and attendance of GoV officers to international dialogue on biodiversity conservation innovations. Through both the PSC and BCA the UNDP shared its observations and advice to its government partners.

UNDP provided a thorough review of the draft NBSAP. The results of this review could not be communicated earlier as the interagency guidelines establishing the review guidelines was not available to UNDP until after NBSAP approval by GoV. Thus, several key recommendations could not be accommodated after NBSAP approval. Through UNDP's facilitation, the PSC reviewed the recommendations and provided suggestions on how to manage the substantive incorporation into the NBSAP. How this challenge was proactively addressed by the PMU is described under Section 3.2.1 (Adaptive management) and Section 3.3.1.A (Outcome Indicator 1.1).

The TE team noted the relatively high volume of written outputs at national and local levels produced by a skeletal BCA staff that worked with Project Technical Assistance (predominantly local consultants), implying productive teamwork. The BCA team also provides continuing secretariat support and monitoring of NBSAP progress even after the project.

In the PRODOC, three risks were cited. These were: a) low participation by state and non-state actors; b) rapidly changing context (biodiversity and climate change) will make long term planning and targeting obsolete; and c) local governments will continue to prioritize economic growth over biodiversity conservation. Management strategies were identified. Subsequent annual planning and reporting were generally silent on following up the status of these risks. Project results, however, indicate that those risks did not really surface during implementation. It is possible that they may manifest after the project when direct interventions are no longer there.

Overall, the NIM modality worked for this project based on the documents reviewed and overall feedback received from partners. MONRE, through BCA, demonstrated its conceptual leadership on biodiversity concerns while at the same time performing a "hands on" facilitative role among different stakeholder agencies at both national and local levels. The NIM also enabled the BCA to tap MONRE's human and financial resources to maximize project benefits. Within the NIM context the UNDP helped provide the enabling environment and technical support to MONRE to be able to perform under the NIM modality. Further discussion is provided under Section 3.3.5 (Country Ownership). **Rating for Implementation: Quality of UNDP implementation: S; Quality of MONRE Implementation: S; Overall: S.**

### 3.3. RESULTS

The following is a discussion of overall Outcomes, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability which will also be subjected to a GEF based rating. The single rating for Overall outcomes will in turn be based on ratings for each indicator (See citations under each relevant



section subjected to rating and Annex 7 for summary). In addition to the above GEF prescribed ratings, there is a discussion on Country ownership, Replication, Mainstreaming and Impact.

### **3.3.1. Overall Outcome**

The following is a discussion of the status of outcome indicators by end of the project. The description addresses the form and substance as implied by the indicator. Specific ratings are provided for each indicator and this is presented in Annex 7 (Summary of Ratings for Outcomes). A rating for overall Outcome is also provided. The significance of these outcomes in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impacts are subsequently discussed in 3.3.2 to 3.3.8. The section on Effectiveness (3.3.3) provides the most insights on how these outcomes can possibly lead to attainment of objectives.

## **A. Outcome 1.1-1.2: 10 Year NBSAP and 5 NR to CBD prepared in compliance with the Biodiversity Law and CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020**

### **INDICATOR 1.1: NBSAP WITH CLEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

END OF PROJECT INDICATOR (1.1.): New 10 year NBSAP with *clear institutional design and financing plan* approved by government by 12/2012 and thereafter submitted to the CBD to include (below in two categories for convenience of review):

- (Technical themes):
  - Prioritizing biodiversity through economic valuation of goods and services
  - Restoring/safeguarding ecosystems that provide essential services
  - Assessment of PA design and management effectiveness
  - Conservation status of selected species based on international criteria
  - Assessment of rules and procedures for species reintroductions
- (Capacity Development themes):
  - Technology needs assessment
  - Plan for capacity development for NBSAP implementation
  - Communication and outreach strategy for the NBSAP
  - Plan for resource mobilization for NBSAP implementation
  - Assessment of opportunities for mainstreaming in sectoral plans and
  - Clearing house mechanism

### **ACTUAL RESULTS (NBSAP)**

While keeping in mind the values espoused by the CBD and AICHI targets, the TE team used the PRODOC, not the CBD, as the main basis for reviewing the content of the NBSAP. The TE Team realized that features desired by the PRODOC could not be met by focusing only on the main NBSAP document. Rather, the NBSAP documents had to be reviewed side by side with other complementary and supplementary documents produced concurrent to or immediately after the NBSAP and supported by project resources. Thus, the TE team conducted an identification and analysis of actual provisions from these relevant documents Annex 10 describes the details. In addition, the findings of the UNDP using the interagency peer review template was also studied.

The NBSAP preparation process started with a discussion of strategic issues supported with information and recommendations along three important themes. A national team of consultants supported by an international partner (IUCN) worked under the leadership of the MONRE BCA to prepare the write-up. The team conducted extensive consultations among key stakeholders in different regions. Per GoV regulation, the final format for NBSAP write up was based on a standard template mandated for national actions plans for environmental programs that were linked to global commitments. Transforming the CBD format to government templates initially proved to be a challenge to the preparation team. This was, however, overcome to a certain extent by the preparation of supplementary information annexed to the main document and complementary documents (e.g. Guide to provinces to maximize state budgets for biodiversity).

PART I of the NBSAP(situation analysis) included a brief discussions on key technical concerns raised by the PRODOC and cited above. Based on the situation analysis, the NBSAP addressed most of AICHI requirements that were considered most relevant to the country. These were expressed as desired outcomes and numerical targets (numbering 23) within the program life and are summarized in the Annex 1 of the NBSAP. Policy recommendations from the working papers were defined in the thematic working papers and communicated to the NA through a series of for a. The policy issues (e.g. overlapping mandates of agencies, etc.) communicated to the NA obtained positive feedback from the NA representatives interviewed.

To address the need for a clear institutional design, the NBSAP preparation process did four things. First, institutional issues that needed legislation were taken up with the NA (see above). Second, the NBSAP mandated the development of individual national level programs for 7 priority themes. The 7 themes included: a) two by MONRE (Strengthening Institutional Systems and National Biodiversity Database\*); b) three by MARD (Wildlife Trade\*, Critical Ecosystems, and Natural Protected Areas\*); c) one by MOST (Genetic Resources\*) and d) one by MOPA (Crime Prevention). Each program defined the scope of work; set physical targets; specified the human resources requirements; communication strategy as well as resource mobilization priorities. Detailed discussions are also found in Annex 9.

A review of 4 of the 7 programs (see above items with asterisks) are providing direction on institutional actions that can be done while legislative reforms are on-going. However, the team was not able to obtain information on the program i.e. strengthening institutional systems; critical ecosystems and crime prevention. This was supposed to define the hierarchy, scope and timing of priority targets under said program.

Third, MONRE issued a step wise guide for planning and implementation of the NBSAP at the provincial level. The guide specified measures (and legal basis) to prepare local biodiversity plans; create enabling structures; launch communication plans and optimize access to national funds for local authorities. An assessment and positive feedback by local authorities to this guide is explained under section on component 2.

Fourth, an inter-ministerial oversight committee was created to provide programmatic guidance to the development and implementation of the 7 national programs as well as provincial implementation following the guide for provinces. The committee actively meets.

The actions on financial planning as prescribed by the PRODOC include: a) an NBSAP declaration to conduct economic valuation; b) a study on financing options; c) conduct of dialogue among

potential financing initiations; and d) guidance to provincial authorities on how to optimize access to national level resources. These are remarkable works in progress but the NBSAP lacks formal cost estimates and clear articulation of GoV priority funding sources including the strategy to mobilize those resources, based on recommendations from the various studies.

On items specified by the PRODOC such as human resources capacity building, communication strategy, there are limited “overarching statements” that describe the total scope of future actions that need to be done. Rather, PRODOC requirements have been essentially addressed by complementary literature. For instance, there is no overarching communication and outreach strategy. GoV prepared instead a guide for Provincial authorities on how to prepare their communication campaigns. This may be helpful considering the decentralized nature of biodiversity implementation. Each of the 7 programs also contain preliminary directions for communication planning. Readers of the NBSAP would also obviously benefit from a “road map” or written guide to enable them to refer to the right complementary or supplementary documents that match particular PRODOC requirements and CBD advocacies.

#### **INDICATOR 1.2: NATIONAL REPORTS ON BIODIVERSITY STATUS TRENDS, CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND ACTIONS**

- END OF PROJECT INDICATOR 1.2.1: 5<sup>th</sup> NR SUBMITTED TO CBD BY 2014
- END OF PROJECT INDICATOR 1.2.2: BY 2014 AT LEAST 2 SOE REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE NA TO REFLECT LATEST BIODIVERSITY DATA
- END OF PROJECT INDICATOR 1.2.3: GIS MAP THAT HAS KEY BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR WIDER USE AND DISSEMINATION

#### **ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS (REPORTING ON BIODIVERSITY STATUS)**

The project facilitated the production of the 5<sup>th</sup> National Report (5 NR). This was developed based on the guidance from CBD and inputs of the thematic papers as well as additional inputs from experts. It introduced the NBSAP, it tracked the progress of work up to 2015 including how biodiversity actions are being integrated into sectoral plans and programs. At least two major consultations were made, attended by 123 participants from 4 line ministries, 7 INGOS, and some DONRES and PAs. This was also submitted to the CBD on 2014.

The Project also developed the Critical Biodiversity Issues Report (CBIR) in lieu of the State of Environment Report because the latter was focusing on issue of pollution during the NBSAP period. The change in target was approved by the PSC. The CBIR presentation has also been widely attended by local and international agencies and organizations. The CBIR provides a comparatively candid, incisive analysis of major policy gridlock and institutional realities.

A follow up workshop entitled Biodiversity Conservation in Vietnam, Status and Solutions and attended by 120 national and intentional participants highlighted international models for biodiversity state management and stimulated common suggestions for strengthening biodiversity state management.

The 5 NR and CBIR were communicated to the NA through several workshops. At least 10 NA members and NA research officers attended the workshops and raised questions related to the intensity of the alarming situation; actual enforcement status of laws; personnel management,

relationship with the SEDP and adherence to global trends in policy formulation. The senior staff of the Science and Technology Committee of the NA reports that NA members have increasingly quoted parts of the NBSAP, the 5 NR and the CBIR regularly in their sessions. It is being used to guide the conduct of on-going survey to assess the actual enforcement of environmental laws, a report of which is expected to be available in mid-2016.

Overall, the interaction with MONRE and other stakeholders through the NBSAP, 5NR and CBIR processes accordingly helped the NAs to understand the gravity of the situation; and raised the level of attention on biodiversity where before only environmental pollution was given due attention. The process is helping the NA develop an integrated legislative agenda that is that would address inconsistencies and rationalize the sectoral laws and the biodiversity law itself.

GIS based maps were likewise generated under this project for MONRE and several have been used in the NBSAP. This was in collaboration with the JICA project for supporting the development of biodiversity database who provided the larger part of resources based on needs identified by the project. The project generated spatial information particularly show hot spots and ongoing project among others. A key map produced using the Project's direct resources is the updated map on Protected Areas. Overall, the maps addressed both national as well as provincial needs (2 pilot provinces). Local authorities highly appreciated the mapping support. The said maps have also been incorporated into the National Biodiversity Database (NBS), which is accessible to users via the MONRE/VEA website. The NBSAP, 5 NR and CBIR have also been published by the MONRE through the project.

## **B. Outcome 2.1-2.2: Provincial Commitment and Capacity Strengthened to implement the NBSAP**

### **INDICATOR 2.1: PROVINCIAL CAPACITY FOR NBSAP IMPLEMENTATION**

END OF PROJECT INDICATOR (2.1.1) PROVINCIAL CAPACITY FOR NBSAP IMPLEMENTATION INCLUDING BIODIVERSITY FINANCING ENHANCED FOR UP TO 20 PROVINCES THROUGH: A) GUIDELINES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT THE NBSAP REALIZATION AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL AND B) UP TO 150 PROVINCIAL STAFF TRAINED

### **ACTUAL RESULTS (PROVINCIAL CAPACITY)**

The MONRE through the project developed and communicated a technical guidance document for NBSAP implementation by provinces and cities. It is entitled "Guidance on the Implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, A Vision to 2030 at Provinces, Cities Under the Central Government". This was issued on 2014, right after the approval of the NBSAP.

### **NBSAP Guidance Document for Provinces and supportive regulations**

The guidance contains the following:

- a. Context – a brief description of issues, opportunities and the NBSAP
- b. Implementation Arrangements – arrangements at the national, sectoral and local levels
- c. Key Tasks – these echo the 5 major tasks under the NBSAP (about natural ecosystems, wildlife, ABS, regulation of pressures and climate change)

- d. Developing Action Plans – steps for developing the biodiversity action plans as well as start-up actions for implementation. The key topics include:
- e. Establishing the basic principles
- f. Actual steps for developing the biodiversity action plans
- g. Involvement of departments, social and professional associations to promote communication, education, capacity building and policy dialogue
- h. Training and resource mobilization – measures for enhancing capacity of staff at overall and protected area management levels
- i. Raising funds – steps for optimal tapping of the national budget
- j. Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of biodiversity conservation

This guidance document also clarified how this biodiversity action planning would relate to an earlier mandate for provinces to prepare their biodiversity conservation plans which focuses primarily on protected areas. This is important because in line with the spirit of the AICHI targets, the new move would cover area not covered by protected areas (e.g. buffer zones, corridors, production systems) but are important in overall biodiversity conservation.

The NBSAP guidance document was further reinforced by executive regulations such as the following:

- Decision 1250/2013 approving the NBSAP strategy
- Decision 45/2014 approving the Master Plan for Biodiversity
- MONRE and MOHA Inter ministerial Circular No 50/2014 on focal point structures
- MONRE and MOFI Inter ministerial No 160/2014 on tapping state budgets
- Circular on Information exchange

The guidance document above is clearly an effort to consolidate key information about the various existing and recent policies about biodiversity conservation at the local level. It tends to be comprehensive and covers long lists of inter related tasks relevant to the local authority. It can provide the overall framework to local authorities on what needs to be done and a “big” picture of how to do it. It can be the basis for more detailed discussion of techniques and tools. However, because of the very wide scope of coverage, the guidance may need to be complemented with sustained explanation and intermittent feed backing even after the project. This would be in addition to the formal orientation and training that was well provided under the project.

### **Workshop/Training sessions for NBSAP implementation**

The term “training” (used in the PRODOC) is interpreted liberally in this review. It refers to project sponsored, structured interactive, learning events that may combine the elements of a conference, meeting and training. To reflect this view the term “workshop/training” is used instead in this report. More than 5 workshop/trainings were fully supported by the project were organized to disseminate and elaborate on the above guidance. Other trainings provided included the following: development of biodiversity indicators and biodiversity in land use planning (for 2 pilot provinces only). The twenty provinces coming from the different regions which partook of the training on NBSAP localization include Lang Son, Son La, Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Thai Binh, Hoa Binh, Dien Bien, Quang Binh, Ha Noi, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Da Nang, Khanh Hoa, Lam Dong, Dak Lak, Gia Lai, Ho Chi Minh, Can Tho, Ca Mau, Tay Ninh.

Participants in each workshop consisted of representatives from provinces (PPC, DONRE, DARD, DPI, DCST, DOH, and DTI) as well as MONRE based national agencies (VEA and BCA).

Women represented between 40 to 50% of the participants. The workshop/training topics essentially followed the outline of the NBSAP guidance document issued in 2013. Each workshop consisted of presentation of information; sharing of experience by advanced local authorities and an open forum on issues and suggestions. In the 2 pilot provinces, additional post training technical assistance such as in mapping was provided.

### **Participants knowledge needs, and feedback**

There was no formal training needs analysis on the knowledge needs of target staff of local authorities. There is no evidence of knowledge needs assessment prior to the events. It may be noted though that project background papers as well as NSBAP thematic papers provide a broad indication of knowledge needs. No formal, post training assessment or feed backing was done to gauge participant perception on knowledge gained from the events. There is some information about how the knowledge gained were applied in the two pilot provinces but no similar information could be obtained from rest of the 20 provinces who attended.

Participants in these sessions did raise the following practical insights: a) harmonizing biodiversity and overall land use plan is quite complex because of competing demands for other land use; b) local authorities need very close technical follow up from MONRE; c) all activities are dependent on budgets that the PPC will provide; d) innovative sources of financing must be accelerated; and e) some of the performance indicators can be collected but several others require budget support.

Annex 12 describes the early effects of the training particularly in the two pilot sites where post training Technical Assistance was directly provided. It discusses how the knowledge gained is diffusing within the two Provinces as well as among the other non-pilot provinces.

### **Choice of pilot sites**

The project prioritized provinces that already had a head start as well as some track record in localized biodiversity planning. This was a good move. It enabled the Project to maximize the use of limited technical assistance resources to demonstrate during the project lifetime, good practices desired under the NBSAP, including that on incorporating biodiversity concerns in land use plans.

## **INDICATOR 2.2: BIODIVERSITY REPORTING MECHANISM**

### **END OF PROJECT TARGET INDICATOR 2.2.1. MECHANISM IN PLACE TO REPORT ON BIODIVERSITY STATUS AND GOOD PRACTICE FROM PROVINCIAL TO NATIONAL LEVELS**

The Project led the preparation of biodiversity indicators by commissioning an expert team and conducting consultation workshops to establish its feasibility. The system is only partially set in place at this time. Specific accomplishments include:

- Establishment of a vetted set of biodiversity indicators
- Guidelines provided for collecting information in PA and Provinces as part of the NBSAP implementation guidance document for local authorities
- Draft MONRE Circular on provision of exchange and management of biodiversity information submitted for approval. This circular is being prepared in collaboration with

other VEA initiatives. Biodiversity indicators will be part of the circular and for provincial performance assessment.

**Nature of indicators.** The indicators have been designed following the SPRB (State Pressure Response Benefit) model. Indicators for performance effectiveness in 3 levels of action have been developed:

- 36 indicators assessing performance of (NBSAP level) implementation
- 30 indicators for collecting information on PAs
- 31 indicators for performance at the provincial level

The indicators at the National, NBSAP level are incorporated (with slight modifications) as part of the supplementary section of the main NBSAP document.

**Extent of reporting for good practices.** The target indicators assume that good practices will be reported. Thus, information about the same has to be collected also. Some good practice indicators are included under the category of “Response”. Examples are the generation of PA management plans or the determination of economic value of biodiversity resources in a PA. Interestingly, the sharing of benefits of conservation to forest stakeholders is part of the list of indicators and may indicate the possibility of promoting co-management which has been advocated by DARD officers. This could have a potential positive impact on sustainable conservation and can be part of the performance indicators.

**Perceived feasibility.** The indicators set are perceived to be organized logically and the rationale is clear. Some of them are actually being collected as part of their regular functions. Accordingly, approximately two thirds of the indicators can be collected using local resources by MARD and DARD offices. New information related to the AICHI targets will be the responsibility of MONRE. DONRE staff are generally concerned that most data are in the hands of DARD and will require continuing dialogue and negotiation to ensure the smooth flow of this information to DONRE.

Initial steps have been undertaken to agree on data flow and exchange at this stage. The VEA and VFA recently inked an agreement to open the communication lines at least the national level, for policy formulation. A draft circular (due in 2016) intends to encourage and guide the process of information management and exchange among different local agencies (including PC, DONRE, and DARD) as basis for provincial reporting to national level among others.

Additional monitoring resources are needed to collect the information but the actual amounts needed has not been estimated. The role of non-state actors (e.g. NGO involved in grassroots conservation work) in data generation was not covered in the formulation process. The project partner JICA is glad that the set of indicators have been established. Accordingly, the greater challenge is how to encourage actors and partners to provide the data needed. This is an area where more proactive dialogue seem to be still needed.

**Provincial reporting to National level.** The indicators set has been officially adopted and cited in the MONRE NBSAP Guidance to Provincial and City Governments. DONRE will be the focal point in collaboration with other agencies notably the DARD. The BCA collaborates with other MONRE agencies to prepare a MONRE circular about environmental information to be collected. The MONRE will be using the agreed upon biodiversity indicators. The draft circular requires all state and non-state actors to submit information. Budgets will be provided for data collection.

Biodiversity indicators collected will become part of report to be made by Protected Area Boards every 3 years and by provincial governments every 5 years. The outline of reports by provincial authorities and PA managers are provided. Information will be part of the regular National Report on the Environment as inputs for policy making.

The above findings indicate that the building blocks of the reporting mechanism are in place, Foremost of these is the set of agreed upon biodiversity indicators and initial guidelines for information gathering and exchange. The initial guidance for information management contained in the NBSAP guidance document raised the level of awareness and interest among information holders on this topic. However, a more comprehensive instruction (actually forthcoming from MONRE) is needed however to set this into full motion.

### **INDICATOR 2.3: PROVINCIAL IMPEMENTATION OF NBSAP PRIORITIES**

PROJECT END INDICATOR 2.3: NBSAP PRIORITIES IMPLEMENTED IN 2 PROVINCES THROUGH (A) LANDUSE PLANS UPDATED TO INCORPORATE NBSAP AND (B) BIODIVERSITY CRITERIA TESTED AND PROPOSED FOR INCLUSION IN PROVINCIAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

### **ACTUAL RESULTS – BIODIVERSITY IN LANDUSE PLANING**

The project facilitated the piloting of a process that would mainstream biodiversity in land use planning in the provinces of Lang Son and Son La. This was done in the provinces of Lang Son and Son La in 2014. The main outputs are the following:

- Analysis of policies and processes to mainstreaming biodiversity in LUP
- Consensus among government based stakeholders for actual proposed land-use
- Proposed land-use change maps and supporting table of computations to support the above consensus and for consideration in the formal land-use revision process in 2016
- Method for mainstreaming biodiversity to land use planning
- At least 3 executive regulations to amend land use planning protocols

**Policy review and rationale for changes.** Amending the policies and protocols for land use planning to incorporate biodiversity concerns has long been an intention of MONRE BCA. Accordingly, the Project provided ample opportunity to make this a reality. To support the protocol changes, the Project provided resources for collaborative action research among the General Directorate for Lands the BCA and two pilot LGUs. The Project helped concerned technical staff analyze current laws and regulations revolving around biodiversity conservation and land management. The NBSAP was used as guiding perspective. This was complemented by a review of relevant global experience.

The articulated rational for land use change are primarily driven by environmental concerns. Many upland areas are watersheds for nearby rapidly growing urban – industrial centers. At the same time, high biodiversity mountainous areas are usually threatened by population increases and competing demands for alternative land uses (agriculture, tourism, urban growth). Both national and local environment staff look at the land use plan as concrete means to protect the integrity of protected areas from rapidly growing demand for other types of land use.



**Mainstreaming biodiversity in LUP – Methodology.** Based on the policy analysis and stakeholder consultation, a stepwise methodology was developed to embed biodiversity spatial planning in the existing protocols (including language) of the land use planning. This was applied in Lang Son and Son La in 2014. The process facilitated a consensus to reconcile the categories of protected area within the land use parlance/language of categories. Staff from the Land Department of the MONRE and BCA believe in legal and technical feasibility of the methodology.

**Actual land use consensus in the Pilot provinces.** Stakeholders in both provinces committed to the proposed land use changes using this methodology and these are capped by Provincial resolutions in both provinces representing the political commitment. These will be adopted formally during the mandatory 5 year land use revision process in 2016. Spatially, these meant an increase in the land area to be put under protected area status and at the same time defined various subcategories within each protected area identified in the land use plan.

**Policy support for replication.** Based on this collaborative experience between the pilot LGUS, the General Directorate for Lands and the BCA, at least three executive regulations amended operational policies and protocols as follows:

- Decree 43/2014 - providing relevant details to some articles of the land law
- Circular 28/2014 - amended regulations on land statistics and inventory
- Circular 29/2014 - establishment and adjustment of land use planning

The above findings indicate that much has been remarkably accomplished under the land use planning activities under this project. A methodology has been developed, specific increases in land for biodiversity are expected and the policy and procedural framework has been amended for widespread replication. As improvements are further made for sustainability and replication, at least three areas of concern may be noted:

- First, both policy analysis and methodology development, no decision was reached on how to incorporate “buffer zones and biodiversity corridors” into the land use planning protocol. This was because there are too many land uses in these areas and no dominant land use could be discerned thus making categorization difficult.
- Second, community stakeholders especially those using parts of PA as agriculture have not yet directly participated in the land use consultation exercise under the project (although they will be consulted directly by the agencies during the formal public hearing in 2016).
- Third, the international consultant commissioned to assist in the methodology development process raised a concern on seeming over reliance on statistical analysis in the methodology and conversely, the underutilization of maps (i.e. actual extensive use of maps in the discussion). The TE team tends to agree with this observation based on review of minutes of relevant meetings.
- Based on the international consultant’s observations of some actual land use workshop proceedings, there was more active and substantive interaction among stakeholders when in one portion of the process, maps were extensively used to support the dialogue. This observation was accordingly quite similar to the process in most European examples. In the global experience, maps tended to “have more informational value.” Accordingly, they not only showed the scale of areas under consideration (as current land use statistical systems in Vietnam would do) but also exact locations of various land use conflicts

problems and opportunities for coordinated land use. The optimal use of maps also makes it easier to facilitate discussions (among stakeholders).

## **ACTUAL RESULTS – BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS AND PROVINCIAL PERFORMANCE SYSTEM**

The Biodiversity Criteria has been developed and adopted (see also discussion on indicator 2.2). The criteria has been tested in two pilot site and found generally feasible. The NBSAP guidance document provides for reporting by provinces. The draft circular being developed covers the process of provincial reporting to the national government but there is no discussion about the same criteria being used to assess the performance of the province or of its staff. This comment is being made with the awareness that the project resources were limited only to the development and testing of biodiversity indicators and that the JICA assisted NBDS project would deal with the overall systems development.

### **INDICATOR 2.4: SPATIAL BIODIVERSITY ASESMENT**

END OF PROJECT INDICATOR: BIODIVERSITY SPATIAL ASSESSMNET FOR TWO PROVINCES PREPARED

#### **ACTUAL RESULTS**

The project supported the generation of a spatial analysis of biodiversity in the two provinces. The information generated included two sets of biodiversity maps. In addition, the project also provided technical support to the province complete their conservation master plans using these maps partly the NBSAP as framework. The results of the spatial biodiversity assessment were used in the completion of these land use plan revisions. The spatial analysis did not document existing local practices that would represent the trends in threats or opportunities to conservation.

### **INDICATOR 2.5: EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2 PILOT PROVINCES DOCUMENTED AND SHARED NATIONALLLY**

PROJECT END INDICATOR: RESULTS FROM PILOTED PROVINCES CONSIDRED FOR REPLICATION TO OTHER PROVINCES.

#### **ACTUAL RESULTS**

The Project conducted four workshops to promote the sharing of experience and lessons learned by the practitioners in the 2 pilot province. Participants representing PPCS, DONRE, MARD and other key agencies participated, notably from DOPI and DOFI. The sharing sessions generated the following insights and potential lessons from the participants:

- Focus limited resources on critical biodiversity issues
- Obtaining resources from state budgets is naturally limited because of the small base to being with; we must optimize opportunities from innovative financing
- Laws governing DONRE and DARD programs need to be revised as lasting solution
- Meantime DARD and DONRE need to work very closely to find ways to address differences in perspectives, concepts and terms. they can start with good data sharing

Most of the questions came from DONRE and DARD while there were few insights coming from PPC representatives.

Overall, the findings indicate that this activity sparked some very good curiosity and interest in some participants. This also provided positive feedback to and increased the confidence of sharers from the local authority of Lang Son and Son La who shared their experience. This however appeared to be a “one time, sharing activity.” A concern was briefly raised in the terminal report about the replicability of this experience in non-mountain areas. Overall, however, there is no clear evidence if a substantive level of assessment was made, to “consider” the extent of its replicability in other provinces; or to determine how to sustain a process of further learning through the pilots, as well as feedback to these learnings.

Officers from Lang Son reported that the province and adjacent provinces are actually meeting regularly to exchange information about environmental issues and innovations. This is an ongoing activity regardless of project. This reflects a potential mechanism for promoting knowledge exchange among biodiversity conservation practitioners with local authorities.

***Rating for Outcomes: S (Ratings for each indicator is presented in attachment 2)***

### **3.3.2. Relevance of the Project**

The Project has continued to be relevant to the international and national programs that it aimed to support in the Project design. The project features particularly the updating of the NBSAP and provincial capacity building) are inherently designed and were implemented with the following in mind: CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020; the Biodiversity Law and the national level Socio-economic Development Plan or SEDP. Project outcomes support the goals of the current SEDP, in particular “developing economies with fast growth and sustained on the basis of continued restructuring of the economy, improving the quality, efficiency competitiveness and active international integration.” The National Assembly appreciated the information generated as a basis for formulating its legislative agenda (see also discussion under outcome 1.1. 5 NR and CBIR).

Project objectives contribute to GEF Objective 5 of the Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy which aims to integrate CBD obligations into national planning. It also directly supports the following plans contemplated during project design. First is the UNDAF Outcome 1. Government economic policies support growth that is more equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The second is the UN One Plan Outcome 1.4 (specifically Output 1.4.2). This aims to enable, by 2016, key national and sub national agencies in partnership with the private sector and communities implement and monitor laws, policies and programs for more efficient use of natural resources and environmental management and implement commitments under international conventions.

At project termination, Project leaders believed it supported UN One Plan outputs 3.2 and 3.3. It helped strengthen the formulation of strategies and policies encouraging environmental protection. It helped improve and technical capacities improved in prioritized topical areas to support sustainable management; and it strengthened PA management and built local capacities. National agencies especially MONRE, MARD, MPI, MOSTE and others, were deeply involved.

Local leaders from the two provinces value the project interventions (i.e. guidance for preparing provincial biodiversity plans and land use planning factoring biodiversity) as a reminder of the

resources that they need to conserve in order to sustain local economic growth. In Lang Son, the protection of relatively intact forests can enhance the value of the tourism industry, which is a major income earner. In Son La, project interventions help planners achieve balance between protection and development and in the mitigation of and local adaptation to climate change. Related insights on the degree of relevance is made under Section 3.3.5 – Country Ownership.

***Rating for Relevance: Highly Satisfactory***

**3.3.3. Effectiveness of the Project**

The Project has been able to achieve in substance, the outcome indicators that will enable the GoV to meet the professed objective of the project. The project also generated lessons learned which is discussed separately under a separate section after the conclusion and recommendations.

**NBSAP, 5 NR and NBSAP Implementation Guidance**

The project effectively facilitated a science based and consultative process that produced the updated NBSAP. This is evidenced by the main NBSAP document itself and associated legal and technical instruments that enforce its intentions. This NBSAP and its associated implementing instruments will guide strategic interventions at the national and local levels (especially provincial). It contains an analysis of issues and specific quantifiable targets that the Government commits to. This commitment is contained in Decision 1250/2013 which proclaimed the NBSAP.

The NBSAP technical document is not very clear on the “institutional design” (per PRODOC). Rather, the NBSAP inspired the development of complementary documents to articulate the institutional design. These are a) MONRE’s NBSAP Implementation Guidance Document for Provinces and Cities; and b) the set of 7 thematic programs that are being developed by different ministries. The preparation of both sets of documents were supported by the Project. In addition, the institutional bottlenecks that needed legislative reforms were identified and discussed with the NA. The NA has responded by accelerating its own preparatory work for legislation.

The NBSAP implementation Guidance document issued by MONRE, enjoins local authorities to implement the NBSAP, building on the decentralized powers for environmental protection. This document disseminates the rationale for biodiversity conservation. It outlines the responsibilities of and organizational structures within local authorities; how to start the process, as well their sources of assistance and financial resources to do so. It also guides them on how to develop their communication campaigns. It also consolidates previous and new regulations that would provide the legal basis for local authorities to do the newly assigned tasks.

On the other hand, the 7 programs being developed by national line agencies define the implementing activities that would translate the various declarations of actions in the NBSAP into actionable tasks to achieve thematic physical targets set by the NBSAP. At least 4 programs are directly supportive of the NBSAP and about ready for implementation. Their early effects could not yet be discerned at this time.

Several “building blocks” of a financing plan for the NBSAP were established i.e. working papers identifying the gaps and range of sources of financing; and guidance to local authorities on how

to fully tap state resources. The issues and options identified at the national level have yet to be translated into decisions on time bound priorities for national level financing.

The combined knowledge produced by the NBSAP, 5NR and CBIR has started the education process for the NA on the fundamental policy and institutional issues that can only be resolved through legislation. At the same time and perhaps more urgently, it has become the basis for guiding local authorities on actions that can be done immediately even as long term measures such as legislation are being tackled.

Notwithstanding the above gains, there are “soft areas” in the NBSAP, from the perspective of the PRODOC that can benefit from further attention. These include the need to a) clearly communicate how the NBSAP and its complementary documents are compliant to the CBD Aichi Targets in terms of having a “clear institutional design”; b) the need for clearer indication of financial plans and decisions to broaden the sources of financing; and c) the need for a clearer follow on program (derived from the NBSAP implementation guidance) for more effective and sustainable capacity building of provincial authorities. A more detailed discussion of the NBSAP and its adherence to the PRODOC is presented in Annex 10 and 11.

### **Provincial Commitment and Capacity**

The NBSAP implementation guidance described above serves as the principal guiding point for local authorities to implement the NBSAP. At least 20 provinces benefited from the proactive information dissemination on the NBSAP done by MONRE through the project. It is not possible to adequately determine how effective has the guidance been to these provinces as no baseline and end line assessment was done on the knowledge and skills gained.

Because of the very wide scope of coverage, the provincial guidance could overwhelm the users at the local authority levels if there is no sufficient back up explanation (e.g. question and answer format) from the MONRE or from peer local authorities who are practicing it. The guidance may need to be complemented with sustained explanation and intermittent feed backing even after the project if it were to be an effective tool for provincial capacity building.

In terms of its immediate effects, representative participants in the various workshop trainings indicated the significance of the guidance document and workshop training events. These include building the theoretical foundation for something already being practiced; a realization of the nature of institutional gaps and the value of an integrated ecosystems approach. It also helped them with an expanded list of doable actions that local authorities can implement using local resources.

Selected personnel from 20 provinces trained by the project provide the initial set of catalysts who will help mobilize local stakeholders navigate the above tasks under imperfect and challenging institutional conditions. Sharing sessions conducted under the project provide the local technical staff from at least 20 Local authorities with an encouraging perspective of the “doability” of innovations espoused under the project and the areas to improve on.

Two pilot provinces (Lang Son and Son La) have demonstrated the feasibility of implementing key parts of this guidance. Specifically, these include preparation of biodiversity conservation plan, adoption of indicators for performance, and in the case of Lang Son, preparation of specific

proposals for PPC funding. Communication products produced by the project further support the initial learning process of technical personnel from the different local agencies. The effects of both the provincial guidance document and the training seminars are further elaborated in Annex 11.

The project catalyzed consensus on how stakeholders would measure their effectiveness through key performance indicators at the PA level, at the provincial level and the national levels using the NBSAP as the guiding document. Stakeholders are willing to work collaboratively to capture the said information but additional resources are needed. Also, they await for more formal instructions to manage information gathering exchange and reporting to the national level. Biodiversity performance indicators will allow local authorities to report their progress to the national level based on a common minimum core indicators, thus, contributing to regular updates of the state of biodiversity management in Vietnam.

In addition, under a separate guidance from MONRE, the project started a very important process of developing the methodology for ensuring that biodiversity, as a form of a land use, would be given fair consideration in the land use choices that local authorities must make as part of the local governance process. In each of the two pilot provinces, they reached a consensus to amend the land use plan (in the next planning cycle) and increase the area to be devoted to protected areas. Spatial analysis of biodiversity resources were conducted to aid in the process. The methodology enabled the inclusion of at least two categories of biodiversity resources (PAs and conservation facilities) into the land use revision process.

These methodologies will now be institutionalized through the recent promulgation of one decree and two circulars on land use planning considered as major policy breakthroughs. These recent promulgations are considered major breakthroughs because they provide biodiversity concerns with the appropriate legal status that it deserves in the local land use planning process in all provinces in Vietnam. Without such legal status as well as legal procedure, biodiversity concerns may continue to be glossed over in favor of predominantly growth oriented, land use decisions.

Two other important categories - buffer zone and corridors could not be addressed within the project timeframe and deserves action. Another important area of improvement is the need for optimum use of mapping as decision support tool that enhances participation, understanding and ownership of land use decisions.

### **MONRE/BCA Capacity**

MONRE's proactive role in NBSAP preparation projected its role as convener, coordinator and communication broker. BCA had the opportunity to listen to the very wide range of current concerns and opportunities in biodiversity conservation all over the country. This plus hands on exposure to the in-depth dialogue participated by community of experts provided BCA with a high level of awareness of the range of knowledge and information resource that can be tapped to coordinate a program such as the NBSAP. The project enabled BCA to "break new ground" in collaboration with other MONRE agencies such as the Lands Administration and though the VEA, with other agencies such as the VNFOREST. The guidance document for provincial governments also expands the reach of the MONRE/BCA.

The project has generated the building blocks to support the supply of policy relevant, actionable information to the national and local decision making process. Biodiversity Indicators and

Performance assessment systems will broaden the range of actors who will supply targeted biodiversity information. At the same time the project has started building the demand for the same information through the provision of guidance documents, training and demonstration of; and performance reporting tools by Provincial authorities.

***Rating for Effectiveness: Satisfactory***

**3.3.4. Efficiency of the Project**

The discussion on project efficiency largely takes off from the data and information provided under Section 3.2.4 Finance. The financial planning and accounting system in place was able to provide accurate and timely reporting to support project management decisions. Fund flows were enabled on a regular basis due to timely work planning, progress reporting accounting and financial spot check services (HACT audit). This sound system was vouched by the midterm audit of 2015. At least 90% of planned co-financing was achieved by three agencies who pledged to do so to avoid cost overlaps. At project end, actual costs approximated planned costs with a 95% disbursement rate project.

There were procurement delays in the first year as the Project had to familiarize itself with the new procurement system mandated by the HPPMG. Nonetheless, the project was able to quickly catch up with implementation and be able to work at the ground level (local authorities) with dispatch.

Given the small project cost and very slim project staff, the project was able to establish quite a substantial number of outputs and outcomes. This include 3,000 participants and 317 provincial and local personnel (from different government sectors) from 36 provinces that were exposed to the concept of AICHI targets through 58 workshops and training sessions. The project produced/co-produced a good number of knowledge products as well as important operational policy instruments and guidance documents. Cost effectiveness was partly made possible through timely work planning to reduce the difference between planned and actual costs. Also through adherence to the sound procurement systems (HPPMG and Procurement Law of Vietnam)

Through cooperation and collaboration, MONRE, through the Project was able to maintain good quality interaction with peer government agencies in brainstorming on the issues and agreement on strategies. This was equally true with the pilot Local Authorities. The relationship with one of two global identified partners was sub optimal in the sense that the level of technical interaction was not sustained as the preparation process matured. This led to major miscommunication on the nature of the resulting NBSAP. Section 3.2.2 on “Partnerships” also provides further insights on how project partnerships was encouraged and supported.

***Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory***

**3.3.5. Country Ownership**

GoV agencies particularly the MONRE provided active co-leadership in preparing the project design and ensuring the inputs of key stakeholders. This leadership has been actively sustained during project implementation. The NIM provides the platform for effective exercise of this

leadership on program directions (see also discussion in Sect 3.2.5. IA/EA Implementation). The GoV has converted the NBSAP format into one that follows the uniform format for national action Strategy. This allows easy comparison and cross reference with other national programs. The NBSAP's timely promulgation represents a political commitment to the international agenda.

GoV has created a coordinating mechanism for NBSAP implementation at both national and local levels and it maintains an ad hoc technical secretariat based at BCA with small regular funding based. A good number of ministries beyond MONRE have been mandated to contribute and are now preparing specific thematic programs of work. The NA utilized project generated information to begin formulation of relevant legislative agenda.

MONRE directly managed the actual design, implementation, utilization and accounting of resources to support activities. Thus, the nature and scope of intervention are usually made to be complementary to GoV's regular tasks. UNDP helps by providing targeted quality assurance. Staff become knowledgeable about CBD practices through learning by doing. There is perceived high ownership of and confidence in its outputs and outcomes. This attitude is partly reflected in the timely promulgation of selected policy instruments (i.e. on land use) coinciding with the project period and its productive engagement with the political leadership i.e. the NA, on recommended policy reforms, as well as PPCs. For further elaboration on the level of ownership of the outcomes of the, see also discussion under institutional aspects of sustainability under Sect 3.3.7.

### **3.3.6. Mainstreaming**

Through the start-up implementation of the NBSAP (made possibly by the MONRE guidelines for provincialization) biodiversity values and practices are being mainstreamed into local governance decision making processes at the provincial level. This would also contribute to UNDPs portfolio on improved public administration and governance. The project facilitated planning and advocacy to use biodiversity conservation as a major measure of the NBSAP to help in the mitigation and adaptation measure against climate change as well as resilience against disaster.

The project design requires that women would be part of stakeholder analysis but there are however, no discrete, sector specific investments to directly improve their role during project life or in proposals under long term plans (NBSAP etc.). The Project, however, being gender blind, provided equal opportunities for many women to lead in managing the project (including the PMU), participate in learning sessions (in project sponsored workshops (approximately 40% of participants) as well as be part of decision making processes to establish performance indicators and land use revisions. The guidelines for NBSAP provincial implementation do call for the creation of structures and programs that provide equal opportunities for women and men, either as professionals or community members, to contribute to the local governance of biodiversity resources.

### **3.3.7. Sustainability**

Following the GEF–UNDP guidance, four categories are discussed below. In addition, 4 special questions under the TOR (financial mobilization, personnel allocation, mainstreaming of land use planning and political risks) are embedded in the discussion of relevant categories.

***Institutional sustainability (including personnel, political risks and land use planning)***



The NBSAP has defined the major roles of line agencies and tasked that MONRE be the key coordinator for biodiversity concerns. The major agencies are now preparing 7 key priority programs that would link the high level actions cited in Part III of the NBAP to the physical targets summarized in the supplementary document. The GoV also set up an Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, chaired by MONRE, to coordinate NBSAP implementation. The INTER-MINISTERIAL STEERING COMMITTEE is supported by a small technical secretariat composed of seconded experts from the ministries with a backup part time staff and budget from BCA. At the same time, local authorities have been given guidance on how to implement NBSAP at the local level and how to tap technical personnel and financial resources for long term conservation actions. Biodiversity focal points (regular staff) have been designated in at least two pilot sites.

The NBSAP guidance document issued by MONRE in 2014 is a key investment to sustain guidance for stepwise actions by local authorities in various areas of concern such as planning, financing, communication and personnel management. This includes specific guidance and permission to establish office units and deploy personnel for biodiversity management.

MONRE and DONREs are now clearly recognized as focal points for biodiversity. MONRE through the VEA and BCA has so far exercised visible leadership in providing guidance to local authorities. On the other hand, given that much of the powers for biodiversity conservation are in the hands of other agencies (MARD, PPCs) it is developing the institutional communication channels with peer national agencies as foundation for long-term coordination. This is done now through the IMC mechanism and through special bilateral agreements such as the recent MOA between VEA and VFA.

The timely issuance of several decrees and circulars ensure that local authorities do not have legal obstacles to invest in biodiversity conservation especially in land use planning and enforcement. These recent policy instruments legally allow the Local Authorities to mainstream biodiversity in their land use plans. Also, the NA, through the NBSAP, 5 NR among others, is aware of the institutional issues. In collaboration with MONRE, NA is in the process of reviewing related laws (Biodiversity, Forestry, Fisheries, etc.). It expects to come up with a legislative agenda soon on how to address the overlaps through comprehensive legislation.

There are no perceived political risks at this stage. In other countries, the delineation of protected areas are sometimes in conflict with plans for hydropower generation, agricultural plantations, or mining. Decisions are often accompanied by the political risks of displeasing particular sectors in society. These however did not come out as a perceived real threat in the local discussions.

Notwithstanding the above, certain practical risks need attention. Provincial versions of NBSAP will require ample technical assistance support in the same manner that the NBSAP preparation at the national level required certain levels of expert inputs. How this technical support will be provided and by what agency and in what form is not yet very clear based on a review of the evolving plans for the 7 themes, nor from the BCA.

There are no clear plans yet if the successful workshop/training conducted for local authorities during the project will be proactively continued after the project and in what form. There is also no overarching cross sectoral communication plan yet that would guide the sustained generation and sustained dissemination of knowledge products on biodiversity science as well as good practices

to support local government actions. One feedback from an important partner agency (MARD) indicates the need for more frequent technical interactions of the inter-ministerial oversight committee of the NBSAP

The above concerns are not insurmountable, however. The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee can give this due attention and harness the resident technical experts in each of the major agencies (i.e. MONRE, MARD, MOST, MOHA, MOPS, etc.) that can sustain and expand technical assistance and training to local authorities. A communication program, when developed, can guide how existing knowledge and information (which are abundant) can be packaged, repackaged and disseminated to different key audience at the right time and in forms that match varying information needs of different stakeholders. A circular mandating the reporting scheme for indicator based information is due to be promulgated soon. More frequent interactions between MONRE and MARD can lead to more synergistic short to medium term actions at local levels, even as long term institutional overlaps are being addressed by forthcoming legislation. ***Given the above, institutional sustainability is “moderately likely.”***

### ***Financial Sustainability (including financial mobilization)***

The NBSAP has committed to institute the process of valuation of biodiversity resources and to introduce the system into the national accounts, although it is not very clear yet as to who exactly will do this and when. At the same time, MONRE, through the project, supported a study that unofficially determines the cost estimates of the NBSAP, provided a projection of state budgets for environment and biodiversity during the NBSAP period and identifies innovative source of financing. The results of the three workshops on resource mobilization that partly tackled the results of the study indicated the willingness of state and non-state actors to improve collaboration and meet the potential gaps in financing.

At the provincial level the NBSAP guidance document to provincial government guides the latter on what state budget resources and categories are available and prescribes the ways to tap these while ensuring accountability.

The business sector was not adequately consulted in the NBSAP preparations and specific expectations from them are not very clear in the NBSAP. The PRODOC highlights as risk, competing land use priorities (agribusiness, tourism, mining, residential, etc.) that local decision makers must often choose. Choosing biodiversity may not be financially rewarding in the short to medium term. The PRODOC design, perhaps due to its limited budget did not specify investments that would generate deep interest based on economic rationale. The NBSAP guidance document did not also sufficiently discuss much about the economic rationale for local authorities to invest in biodiversity conservation. The implication is that local authorities may readily agree to put more areas under PA, largely for compliance purposes. It may be difficult to sustain interest to provide long-term financing for to enforce land use if the economic benefits are not very clear compared to other land use options.

Given the above, it is expected that in the next several years, there can be steady increases in budgets that local authorities will allocate primarily from state budgets for biodiversity. However, allocations could still be very small given the limited funding base to begin with. Agencies on the other hand, are guided by the seven programs to be developed. They are expected to increase state budget allocations for the selected 7 programs identified by the NBSAP.

Given that a clear program of work for resource mobilization is still very much a work in progress, there may limited immediate major actions to systematically tap innovative financing resources (e.g. PES, CSR, etc.) within the NBSAP period. Thus, rising expectations from stakeholders who want to do more biodiversity conservation can be only partially met (largely by state budgets). ***Given the above, financial sustainability is only “moderately likely.”***

### ***Social sustainability***

The inputs of a wide range of stakeholders have been obtained. The NBSAP will produce public goods i.e. environmental integrity, reduced effects of environmental degradation. At the same time, the NBSAP promotes sharing of benefits of biodiversity resources among stakeholders especially among affected communities that are contributing either to its protection. However, benefits may not be obtained right away in the short-term. Some of the proposals for instance, call for resettling of hamlets from PAs to non-PA areas. This dislocation may cause disruptions in traditional sources of livelihoods as well as social systems and traditional knowledge especially if there are no sufficient resettlement plans.

The DARD in the provinces have expressed interest to promote the concept of “co-management”. If the local discourse around the preparation of biodiversity action plans as well as biodiversity friendly land use plans include this concept (co-management) they would enrich the menu of options for planners and decision makers to come up with doable measures that can be realistically more enforceable and sustainable. ***Social sustainability is “Moderately likely.”***

### ***Environmental sustainability***

There are no expected negative effects on the environment from the implementation of plans advocated by the project through the NBSAP. However, the PRODOC cited as a possible risk, the likelihood that the effects of climate change may supersede the gains man made in biodiversity conservation. The NBSAP includes interventions that increase resilience of ecosystems. The level of risks from climate change is beyond the purview of the TE but is probably safe to err on the side of caution as global trends point that the effects of climate change tend to be non-linear. ***Environmental sustainability is “Moderately likely.”***

**Overall rating for sustainability: Moderately likely sustainable**

### **3.3.8. Impact**

This section follows the GEF UNDP guide for describing impact. At the same time it embeds discussion on specific topics in the TOR (local capacity, provincial planning improvements and support to land use planning in the pilot provinces. Partly, through the sustained initiative of trained local staff, project support interventions to upgrade local capacity are leading to gradual improvements in provincial biodiversity planning process in the two pilot sites. Also through higher multi agency interaction, consensus has been reached on biodiversity friendly land use. When fully enforced these local decisions will directly protect several protected areas in Lang Son and Son La covering substantial land areas.

At least 7 policy instruments (decrees, circulars and guidance documents) were generated that have long term value to enable local authorities to effectively address biodiversity issues locally.

The National Assembly is now better equipped with science based, analytical information to help with the legislation as a lasting solution to the current policy and institutional bottlenecks.

#### **4.0. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LESSONS LEARNED**

##### **4.1. CONCLUSIONS**

The outcome indicators under two project components were achieved with varying degrees of **effectiveness**. The GEF rating scale for outcomes in ANNEX 7 may provide a glimpse. When combined however, these outcome indicators positively contribute to addressing the two barriers to effective national biodiversity management (i.e. no agreed upon updated priorities on biodiversity conservation and lack of provincial capacity and commitment). By addressing these barriers achievement of project objective is facilitated (i.e. *“the supply of policy relevant actionable information through NBSAP ...and increasing the demand for this information...”*).

Various **relevant**, actionable information (e.g. 3 major working papers on biodiversity situation, 5 NR, CBIR) were generated, analyzed and vetted through a transparent and participatory process resulting into an updated NBSAP. This partly represents the “supply” side aspects of the project objective. At least 5 policy instruments have been formulated and priority issues for legislative reforms were determined based on the supply of relevant information. Through the enabling conditions provided by the project, the NBSAP’s gestation period (time between plan approval and action) has been relatively short, also reflecting political support.

The information generated by the project also guided the formulation of a provincial NBSAP planning and monitoring guide, the raising of awareness and interest of focal points in 20 localities; and attainment of political commitments (in 2 pilot provinces) for land use plan revisions in two pilot areas. As new knowledge is being put to practice, more guidance is being sought, both from national agencies, and from pioneering peer local authorities. The NA on the other hand has increased interaction with the MONRE for scientific advice as input to legislation. These represent the progress in generating the “demand side” aspects of the project objective.

Throughout this process, the MONRE demonstrated leadership as well as **efficiency** in utilizing a wide spectrum of human and financial resources as well as partnerships, to produce the expected outputs and outcomes, while ensuring that **sustainability** is considered. The degree or relevance effectiveness, efficiency sustainability and impacts are discussed in earlier sections and actual ratings based on GEF, are summarized at the end of this executive summary.

**Areas of concern.** The review indicates several areas of concern that if addressed sufficiently can help ensure the sustainability. **First**, the PRODOC expects certain features that should be organic parts of the NSBAP. Many of these features have been addressed and are expressed in various documents prepared during and immediately after the NBSAP preparation process. There is lack of clear communication on what documents, when combined, physically constitute the totality of NBSAP’s strategies, actions and instruments for implementation and financing. Because of this, the NBSAP may be potentially known only by individual documents that were prepared (i.e. any of the following: Decision 1250/2013 governing the strategy; the main NBSAP document; the list of 7 programs; the content of the individual 7 programs ; and MONRE technical guidance to local authorities which includes local institutional design and financing). As such partners, and stakeholders (especially international partners and also the general public) may be unable to fully

understand the NBSAP in its entirety and may have a difficult time pinpointing where they can complement and support.

The **second** is financing. The project's strength was the technical and legal support (joint MONRE-MOFI circular) to local authorities so that they can optimally use state budgets for biodiversity conservation. But at the national level, there is a need to translate the consensus reached so far on innovative funding sources, into systematic, and time-bound targets. Without this, NBSAP funding for projects may still largely depend on limited state financing during the NBSAP period.

**Third**, notwithstanding the remarkable range of communication products produced, the awareness building interventions during the project may be too short an exposure for planners and practitioners at the national and local levels.

**Fourth**, for land use plans, the next challenge is how to make them enforceable. Based on the project's experience, there is an opportunity to stimulate better stakeholder understanding and ownership with optimum use of maps in the planning process. Also, as advocated by DARDs, there is a need to encourage co-management modalities for conservation in protected areas, to harness community contributions for enforcement. A related challenge is how to put biodiversity rich corridors as well as buffer zone for protected areas under sustainable management.

## **4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are directed MONRE, UNDP and the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) for consideration as part of organic priorities during the NBSAP period.

### **4.2.1. Communicate the NBSAP and associated documents as one “Package”**

To promote better appreciation of the NBSAP and prevent confusion among partners not familiar with the internal process within GoV and MONRE, clearly communicate the nature of the current NBSAP “package” to MONRE partners (national and international). IMSC to agree on a protocol on how to present the NBSAP and associated documents as a package. This package of documents project the interconnected information of NBSAP, its implementation instruments and available financing options for the plan (See also Annex 10 and ANNEX 11 for suggestions).

### **4.2.2. Consolidate the Directions for Financing**

Building on the recommendations and technical consensus so far on innovative financing options, MONRE, MOPI and MOFI to jointly develop a collaborative work program to systematically develop guidance documents on financial resource mobilization. This would complement recent moves to promote the optimal use of state budget, which has been the focus of the Guidance note to local government. The collaborative work plan program can build on the relevant working papers commissioned by the project and cover the following: a) valuation of biodiversity as part of national accounts; b) matching specific needs with targeted official development assistance action research corporate social responsibility or CSR, PES, REDD, BD offsets) that can be piloted during the NBSAP period.

### **4.2.3. Follow on Technical Guidance for Local Authorities through responsive programs**

Utilizing available national and local resources of GoV and potential contributions from partners, the MONRE in collaboration with other Ministries, may wish to catalyze a post project follow up support to the two pilot local authorities. The purpose is to ensure that other key local governance processes for NBSAP localization are also piloted, building on what was implemented under the project. Consider institutionalizing the sharing process started under the project by strengthening available sharing systems such as that being practice among local authorities in the Northern region. Further, to support the above initiative it is recommended that technical support be provided to the national technical agencies to be able to finalize the 7 thematic programs to be responsive to the needs of local authorities. Details are further discussed in ANNEX 13.

#### **4.2.4. Fortify Protocols for Biodiversity in Land Use and Approaches for Enforcement**

Study the feasibility of piloting the approach suggested by the International land use consultant that provides greater emphasis on the use of maps in the methodology for factoring biodiversity inland use planning. If found locally feasible, (as it has been in many countries), the practice may enhance a more energized and participatory process for land use changes. It can also enhance deeper understanding and ownership by non-technical planners who have a stake in the changes (e.g. political leaders, community leaders, urban and peri-urban residents etc.).

Most land use revisions involve the issue of communities residing in protected areas. The DARD offices are interested to expand the coverage of some successful pilots in co-management. Future updates of the Biodiversity indicators, may consider including the practice of co-management measures as one of the indicators of success. In addition, the practice of incorporating biodiversity in land use may also be considered as one of performance indicators. Also, based on the technical recommendations from a Project study, catalyze consensus that incorporate biodiversity corridors and buffer zone in the land use planning protocols. Support the dialogue with information experience on corridor development in other parts of Vietnam and other parts of the world.

### **4.3. LESSONS LEARNED**

The following is a combination of lessons shared by stakeholders and by the TE team:

**a. Balancing international and national standards.** The project is rich with experience on how focal points of intentional agreements like MONRE has to balance the standards of the international conventions (i.e. CBD) as well as the national priorities. There is a need to anticipate and plan as early as possible how to adopt to the unique government requirements and to reflect the same in TORs. It would be desirable if MONRE can catalyze consultation with other teams with experience in preparing other national action plans, together with pertinent national teams responsible for macro socio economic planning and technical staff of the CBD and its scientific committees.

**b. Quality assurance for a short paced knowledge intensive project.** The project produced many knowledge products one after the other, but the Project Steering Committee only met yearly. For better quality assurance, the PSC or a subcommittee, should have meet more frequently.

**c. Time frame for plan preparation and piloting.** The inherently short period for preparing the NBSAP and piloting NSBAP elements at local levels was further shortened by administrative

delays. Perhaps this type of endeavor should really need 4 years even with the same resources, because by experience, the first year is usually prone to delays.

**d. Partnership management.** The sharing of manpower, knowledge and financial resources of projects under MONRE, VEA and GLDA enhanced achievement of outcomes. Sustained communication even beyond formal partnership contracts is crucial for strategic collaboration.

**e. Capacity building measurement.** Simple baselines and end of line assessments about basic human resources capacities need to be established to have a more meaningful assessment of capacity interventions. There are tools to achieve this if budgets are limited.

**g. Financial planning.** The Project opted not to include an official estimate of NBSAP budget. An estimate was prepared instead for technical reference only. On hindsight, this development should not have prevented the Project from making a definitive statement about where to get the funds, "how and when." Such a statement if done, would guide NBSAP implementers a clear direction on short term and long term actions for fund generation.

ANNEX 1.  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
MISSION ITINERARY (Dec.04 – Dec.22, 2015)

Time	Activity	Location	Participants	Method
<b>Dec. 04</b> Friday Afternoon 14.00 – 17.00	Orientation meeting at UNDP Vietnam	UN Office 304 Kim Ma, Hanoi	- UNDP - PMU/NBSAP - TE consultants	FGD
<b>Mission in Hanoi (Dec.7 – Dec.9)</b>				
<b>Dec. 07</b> Monday Morning 09.00 – 12.00	Meeting with Project Management Unit	Project Office 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor DETECH TOWER (17 floor), No.8C Ton That Thuyet, Hanoi	- PMU/NBSAP - TE consultants	FGD
<b>Dec. 07</b> Monday Afternoon 14.00 – 16.30	Meeting with Project Management Unit	Project Office	- PMU/NBSAP - TE consultants	FGD
<b>Dec. 08</b> Tuesday, Morning 08.30 – 11.30	<b>08.30 – 10.00:</b> Interview Mr. Nguyen Tien Cuong, Deputy Director of Research Institute Land Administration, General Department of Land Administration (GDLA)  <b>10.00 – 11.30:</b> Interview Ass.Prof. Dang Ngoc Dinh (NGO-VUSTA)	Project Office	- TE consultants - PMU representative	KII
<b>Dec.08</b> Tuesday Afternoon 14.00 – 15.30	Interview Ass.Prof. Ho Thanh Hai (Biodiversity expert)	Project Office	- TE consultants - PMU representative	KII
<b>Dec.09</b> Wednesday Afternoon 13.45 – 16.00	<b>13.45 – 14.45:</b> Interview Ms Tran Thi Giang Huong, Land Planning Agency under GDLA/MONRE  <b>15.00 – 16.00:</b> Interview Mr. Pham Anh Cuong, Project Director	BCA Office, MONRE Building, 16 Ton That Thuyet, Hanoi	- TE consultants - PMU representative	KII
<b>Mission in Lang Son (Dec.10 - Dec.11)</b>				
<b>Dec.10</b> Thursday Morning 08.00 – 11.30	Travel from Ha Noi to Lang Son		- TE consultants - PMU representative	
<b>Dec. 10</b> Thursday Afternoon 13.30 – 17.00	Meeting with Lang Son DONRE and other related authorities	Lang Son DONRE	- TE consultants - PMU representative - DONRE representatives,	SGD, KII



Time	Activity	Location	Participants	Method
			including: DONRE leaders, Environmental Protection Division, Land Management Division - Officers of Provincial People's Committee Office - Leader and officers of DPI, DARD	
<b>Dec.11</b> Friday Morning 08.00 – 11.30	<b>08.00 – 09.30:</b> Interview Mr. Nguyen Dinh Duyet, Deputy Director of Lang Son DONRE  <b>09.30 – 10.30:</b> Interview Mr. Be Chi Bang, Deputy Head, Environmental Protection Division under Lang Son DONRE  <b>10.30 – 11.30:</b> Interview Mr. Nong Quoc Hung, Deputy Head, Land Management Division under Lang Son DONRE	Lang Son DONRE	- TE consultants - PMU representative - Interviewees	KII
<b>Dec.11</b> Friday Afternoon 13.00 – 18.00	Return to Ha Noi		- TE consultants - PMU representative	
<b>Mission in Son La (Dec.13 – Dec.15)</b>				
<b>Dec.13</b> Sunday Afternoon 13.00 – 21.00	Travel from Ha Noi to Son La		- TE consultants - PMU representative	
<b>Dec.14</b> Monday Morning 08.00 – 11.30	Meeting with Son La DONRE and other related authorities	Son La DONRE	- TE consultants - PMU representative - DONRE representatives, including DONRE leaders, Environmental Protection Division, Land Management Division - DARD, DPI, PCC	SGD, KII
<b>Dec.14</b> Monday Afternoon 14.00 – 17.00	<b>14.00 – 16.00:</b> Interview Mr. Nguyen Quang Thien, Head of Environmental Protection Division under Son La DONRE <b>16.00 – 17.00:</b> Interview Ms Nguyen Thi Thuy Hang, Head of Land Management Division under Son La DONRE	Son La DONRE	- TE consultants - PMU representative - Interviewees	KII

Time	Activity	Location	Participants	Method
<b>Dec.15</b> Tuesday Morning 8.00 – 10.00	Interview Mr. Vu Duc Thuan, Head of Forestry Division under Son La DARD	Son La DARD	- TE consultants - PMU representative - Interviewees	KII
<b>Dec.15</b> Tuesday Afternoon 11.00 – 20.00	Return to Ha Noi		- TE consultants - PMU representative	
<b>Working in Ha Noi (Dec 16 – Dec 22)</b>				
<b>Dec.16</b> Wednesday Morning 8.30 – 11.30	<b>08.30 – 09.30:</b> Interview Ass.Prof. Dang Huy Huynh (VACNE)  <b>10.00 – 11.30:</b> Interview Ms Tran Ngoc Hoa, Deputy Head of Environmental, Science and Technology Committee, National Assembly Office	Project Office  National Assembly Office	- TE consultants - PMU representative - Interviewees	KII
<b>Dec.16</b> Wednesday Afternoon 13.30 – 16.00	<b>13.30 – 14.30:</b> Interview Mr. Jake Brunner, IUCN Country Representative <b>15.00 – 16.00:</b> Interview Ms Hoang Thi Thanh Nhan, Deputy Project Director	IUCN Office  BCA Office	- TE consultants - PMU representative - Interviewees	KII
<b>Dec. 17</b> Thursday Morning 8.30 – 11.30	<b>08.30 – 10.00:</b> Interview Mr. Nguyen Xuan Dung, Chief of BCA Office  <b>10.30 – 11.30:</b> Interview Mr. Tran The Lien, Head of Department of Nature Conservation, Vietnam Administration of Forestry, MARD	BCA Office  MARD Office	- TE consultants - PMU representative - Interviewees	KII
<b>Dec.17</b> Thursday Afternoon 13.30 – 15.30	<b>13.30 – 14.30:</b> Interview Ms Nguyen Ngoc Linh, Head of Planning Division, BCA  <b>14.30 – 15.30:</b> Interview Ms Phung Thu Thuy, BCA technical staff	BCA Office	- TE consultants - PMU representative - Interviewees	KII
<b>Dec. 18</b> Friday Morning 11.00 – 12.00	Interview Mr. Dao Khanh Tung, UNDP Vietnam	UN Office	- TE consultants - Interviewee	KII
<b>Dec. 18</b> Friday Afternoon 15.00 – 16.00	Interview Mr. Hiro, JICA expert	JICA Office	- TE consultants - Interviewee	KII
<b>Dec. 19</b> Saturday	Preparation of initial findings		TE consultants	
<b>Dec. 20</b> Sunday	Preparation of initial findings		TE consultants	
<b>Dec. 21</b> Monday Morning 9.00 – 14.00	Meeting with PMU	BCA Office	- PMU/NBSAP - TE consultants	
<b>Dec. 22</b> Morning 9.00 – 12.00	Presentation of initial findings	UN Office	- UNDP - PMU/NBSAP - TE consultants	

ANNEX 2.  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
LIST OF INTERVIEWED PERSONS

No	Full name	Working institutions	Time	Method
<b>I</b>	<b>In Hanoi</b>			
1	Ms Hoang Thi Thanh Nhan	Project Deputy Director	Monday 7 Dec 2015 9.00 – 12.00 14.00 – 16.30	FGD
2	Ms Nguyen Dang Thu Cuc	Project Coordinator		
3	Mr. Nguyen Ba Tu	Project Manager		
4	Ms Nguyen Thi Minh Tham	Project Assistant		
5	Ms Ha Huong Giang	Project Accountant		
6	Mr. Nguyen Tien Cuong	Deputy Director of Research Institute Land Administration, General Department of Land Administration (GDLA)	Tuesday 8 Dec 2015 8.30 – 10.00	KII
7	Mr. Dang Ngoc Dinh	NGO – VUSTA	Tuesday 8 Dec 2015 10.00 – 11.30	KII
8	Mr. Ho Thanh Hai	Biodiversity expert	Tuesday 8 Dec 2015 14.00 – 15.30	KII
9	Ms Tran Thi Giang Huong	Land Planning Agency under GDLA/MONRE	Wednesday 9 Dec 2015 13.45 – 14.45	KII
10	Mr. Pham Anh Cuong	Project Director	Wednesday 9 Dec 2015 15.00 – 16.00	KII
11	Mr. Dang Huy Huynh	VACNE	Wednesday 16 Dec 2015 8.30 – 9.30	KII
12	Ms Tran Ngoc Hoa	Deputy Head of Environmental, Science and Technology Committee, National Assembly Office	Wednesday 16 Dec 2015 10.00 – 11.30	KII
13	Mr. Jake Brunner	IUCN Country Representative	Wednesday 16 Dec 2015 13.30 – 14.30	KII
14	Ms Hoang Thi Thanh Nhan	Project Deputy Director	Wednesday 16 Dec 2015 15.00 – 16.00	KII
15	Mr. Nguyen Xuan Dung	Chief of BCA Office	Thursday 17 Dec 2015 8.30 – 10.00	KII

16	Mr. Tran The Lien	Head of Department of Nature Conservation, Vietnam Administration of Forestry, MARD	Thursday 17 Dec 2015 10.30 – 11.30	KII
17	Ms Nguyen Ngoc Linh	Head of Planning Division, BCA	Thursday 17 Dec 2015 13.30 – 14.30	KII
18	Ms Phung Thu Thuy	BCA technical staff	Thursday 17 Dec 2015 14.30 – 15.30	KII
19	Mr. Dao Khanh Tung	UNDP Vietnam	Friday 18 Dec 2015 11.00 – 12.00	KII
20	Mr. Hiro	JICA	Friday 18 Dec 2015 15.00 – 16.00	KII
21	Mr. Dao Xuan Lai	UNDP Vietnam		KII, by email
22	Mr. Nguyen The Dong	Deputy General Director, Vietnam Environment Administration (VEA)		KII, by email
<b>II</b>	<b>In Lang Son</b>			
1	Mr. Nguyen Dinh Duyet	Deputy Director of Lang Son DONRE	Thursday 10 Dec 2015 13.30 – 17.00	FGD
2	Ms Le Thi Huong Mai	Head of Environmental Pollution Control Unit, Environmental Protection Division under Lang Son DONRE		
3	Mr. Chu Van Nam	Head of Environmental Protection Division under Lang Son DONRE		
4	Mr. Cao Xuan Cuong	Head of Forestry Protection, Forestry Division under Lang Son DARD		
5	Ms Hua Thi Giang	Deputy Head, Industry and Trade Division, Lang Son DPI		
6	Mr. Nguyen Phuc Dat	Deputy Director of Lang Son DARD		
7	Mr. Nguyen Dinh Duyet	Deputy Director of Lang Son DONRE	Friday 11 Dec 2015 8.00 – 9.30	KII
8	Mr. Be Chi Bang	Deputy Head, Environmental Protection Division under Lang Son DONRE	Friday 11 Dec 2015 9.30 – 10.30	KII

9	Mr. Nong Quoc Hung	Deputy Head, Land Management Division under Lang Son DONRE	Friday 11 Dec 2015 10.30 – 11.30	KII
<b>III</b>	<b>In Son La</b>			
1	Mr. Trieu Ngoc Hoan	Director, Son La DONRE	Monday 14 Dec 2015 8.00 – 11.30	FGD
2	Mr. Nguyen Quang Thien	Head of Environmental Protection Division under Son La DONRE		
3	Ms Nguyen Thi Mai Phuong	Staff, Environmental Protection Division under Son La DONRE		
4	Mr. Dang Minh Tuan	Staff, Son La Department of Foreign Affairs		
5	Ms Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao	Staff, Son La DPI		
6	Mr. Cam Tien Dung	Deputy Director, Son La DARD		
7	Mr. Cam Xuan Ngoc	Deputy Head, Forestry Division, Son La DARD		
8	Mr. Cam Huy Hieu	Staff, Son La PPC		
9	Mr. Nguyen Quang Thien	Head of Environmental Protection Division under Son La DONRE	Monday 14 Dec 2015 14.00 – 16.00	KII
10	Ms Nguyen Thi Thuy Hang	Head of Land Management Division under Son La DONRE	Monday 14 Dec 2015 16.00 – 17.00	KII
11	Mr. Vu Duc Thuan	Head of Forestry Division under Son La DARD	Tuesday 15 Dec 2015 8.00 – 10.00	KII

ANNEX 3.  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
SUMMARY OF FIELD VISITS

In addition to the various interviews conducted with stakeholders in Hanoi, The TE Team conducted two field visits as follows:

- Lang Son, December 10 and 11, 2015
- Son La, December 13 to 15, 2015

The purpose of the field visits was to obtain first hand perspective from key stakeholders at the provincial level in terms of actual experience with the project, results and early outcomes.

The participants of the field visit were the following:

- The 2 member TE Team and translator (for Lang Son only)
- Project Team: 1 Project Staff
- Lang Son: Deputy Head of DONRE, Head of Environmental Protection Office and staff; Head of Land Use Office, Deputy Head of DARD and staff; Staff of DPI. Total of nine participants.
- Son La: Deputy Head of DONRE, Head of Environmental Protection Office and staff; Head of Land Management Division, Deputy Head of DARD and staff; Staff of DPI; Staff of Department of Foreign affairs. Total of eleven participants.

The specific persons met and itinerary is indicated in ANNEX 1. The evaluation framework and key actual questions used are indicated in ANNEX 5 and 6 respectively. Unfortunately, PPC interviews backed out at the last minute in Lang Son while a meeting with the PPC in Son La did not materialize.

The interaction in each province started with a general meeting with all agencies notably DONRE, DARD and DOPI. Subsequent meetings were then made with each of the two key agencies – DONRE and DARD. The subsequent meetings focused on 2 to 3 participant per province who actually attended the workshop training sessions.

### **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

- Biodiversity planning
  - Those who attended the project sponsored seminars demonstrated reasonable understanding of the NBSAP and the MONRE guide for NBSAP provincial implementation. Those who did not, were generally dependent on those who attended to respond to the questions raised by the TE team.
  - Those who attended the project sponsored workshop trainings appreciated the value of the trainings. Among others, it strengthened the theoretical foundation of what most of them know about biodiversity. It also enlightened them on the need for a well-coordinated approach.
  - Offices other than the DONRE looked up to DONRE as the key implementer and coordinator of the various mandates for NBSAP.

- The Environment Office of the SON LA DONRE is skeptical about the creation of new inter agency committees and would like to try to maximize the use of existing coordination structures.
  - The workshop trainings and MONRE guidance for NBSAP helped the DONRE review and assess ongoing efforts to prepare local Biodiversity plans and to propose amendments (both sites) and prepare project proposals (Lang Son).
  - The local staff are comfortable with the overall set of biodiversity indicators at the Protected Area and Provincial levels; approximately 70% can be immediately implemented by agencies using current resources, the rest require new funding.
  - Participants do not yet see a clear active role of non-state actors in helping in the monitoring of biodiversity indicators. However, they will be consulted in the preparation of reports.
- Land Use planning
    - The workshop trainings on land use planning and post training, “hands-on” support enabled local staff to improve their mapping approaches and skills.
    - Spatial maps produced by the project helped in the land use review process
    - Land use planning consultations were limited to government agencies, other sectors will accordingly be consulted during the formal land use revision process.
    - Local officers did not encounter major opposition to the proposed land use changes.
    - The DARD in Son La, however, is particularly concerned about the presence of agricultural villages in the protected areas and are looking forward to expand its earlier pilots on community participation/co management.
- Prospects for mainstreaming and upscaling
    - Local staff indicated the value of PPC resolutions promulgated recently endorsing the preparation of the local NBSAP plans and approving the proposed changes for the land use to be affected during the formal land use planning process.
    - The Department of Planning in both provinces indicated that support for Biodiversity will not be easy as many other new demands (e.g. climate change adaptation) will compete for the attention of the PPC
    - The Department of Planning suggested specific ways on how the DONRE and DARD and other biodiversity advocates can enhance their chances of obtaining financial support. The advocacy work should be timed with the planning calendar.
    - The DONRE officers who shared their experience with other Provinces were glad to have received many queries from other Provinces during the sharing sessions
    - The Lang Son DONRE officer cited an existing mechanism (seemingly started by MONRE) among DONREs of adjacent provinces to regularly convene and exchange information and experience

ANNEX 4.  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

**1. PROJECT EVALUATION DOCUMENTS**

- a. UNDP (2011), UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects (Version for External Evaluators)
- b. UNDP (2012), Project-level Evaluation: Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed project.

**2. CORE PROJECT MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS**

- a. Project Document: Developing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan and Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Provincial Planning)
- b. Inception Report
- c. Annual Work plans - 2012, 2013, 2014
- d. Annual Reports - 2012, 2013, 2014
- e. Financial Reports
- f. Minutes of Project Board Meetings
- g. Memoranda of agreements between MONRE and Pilot Provincial Governments
- h. Project Implementation Report (PIR)

**3. COMPONENT 1**

- a. NBAP Thematic working papers
  - Report of Group I: Current issues on policies, institutions and management in biodiversity conservation and development in Vietnam
  - Report of Group II: Ecosystems and Protected areas
  - Report of Group III: Assessment on status and conservation management of species and genetic resources in Vietnam for the development of national biodiversity strategy
- b. Current Financing for Biodiversity, Accessing Financial Needs and Proposing Mobilization Plan for the Implementation of Prioritized Programs of NBSAP.
  - Review of current financing for biodiversity and accessing financial needs for the implementation of prioritized programs of NBSAP
  - Financial mobilization plan for the implementation of prioritized programs of
- c. Viet Nam National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2020, vision 2030 (VN,EN)
- d. Decision No.1250/QD-TTg dated July 31, 2013 approving National Biodiversity Strategy by 2020, vision to 2030
- e. Guidelines for implementing the National Biodiversity Strategy by 2020, vision to 2030 for provinces and centrally-run cities
- f. Fifth National Report to CBD
- a. Critical Biodiversity Issues Report
- b. PA Financing Project Document
- c. Project Summary of the BIOFIN project
- d. IUCN AND BCA communication
- e. Brief on Updates on NBSAP
- f. NBSAP Review framework responses



- g. Priority Programs of NBSAP (4 of 7 in various stages of completion)
  - Investigation and development of national database
  - Control of illegal exploitation, trade and consumption of endangered wildlife
  - Strengthening management systems for natural protected areas
  - Conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources

#### **4. COMPONENT 2**

##### **a. Land use planning**

- Assessment Of Mainstreaming Of Biodiversity Conservation Into Land-Use Planning In Vietnam And Lessons Learnt UNDP Vietnam RLA Contract 2013-11-13. Final Report December 2014
- Proposal For Integrating Biodiversity Conservation Into Lang Son Provincial Land Use Planning
- Proposal For Integrating Biodiversity Conservation Into Son La Provincial Land Use Planning
- An Overview Of Regulations On Using Land Related To Biodiversity Conservation And Proposed Solutions
- Guidelines For Mainstream Biodiversity Into Land Use Planning

##### **b. Biodiversity criteria and spatial planning**

- Biodiversity Indicator set for performance assessment
- The project for development of The National Biodiversity Database System In Vietnam: Project Completion Report
- Report On Testing Biodiversity Indicators (*Piloting In Lang Son And Son La provinces*)

##### **c. Training and sharing documents**

- List of Meetings and Workshops – Annex 2 of Project Implementation Report (PIR)
- Training reports including assessments made participants

#### **POLICIES, REGULATIONS LOCAL ORDINANCES (PROMULGATED OR IN DRAFT FORM)**

- a. Vietnam Biodiversity Law (2008)
- b. Vietnam Land Law (2013)
- c. Decision No.1250/QD-TTg dated July 31, 2013 approving National Biodiversity Strategy by 2020, vision to 2030
- d. Provincial resolution adopting recommendations for changes in land use in Lang Son
- e. Provincial resolution adopting recommendations for changes in land use in Son La
- f. Decree 43/2014 - providing relevant details to some articles of the land law
- g. Circular 28/2014 - amended regulations on land statistics and inventory
- h. Circular 29/2014 - establishment and adjustment of land use planning

**ANNEX 5.**  
**DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY**  
**CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING TERMINAL EVALUATION**  
**EVALUATION QUESTION MATRIX**

Evaluation criteria	Indicators	Sources	Method
RELEVANCE – How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal areas and the Environment and Development priorities at the local regional and national levels (from TOR)			
1. To what extent is the Project relevant to professed priorities of GEF focal areas and National priorities on environment and natural resources (ENR) as well as on Biodiversity conservation?	Consistency with specific GEF focal areas, UNDAF GoV thrusts	GEF focal areas; GoV Strategic Plans	Document analysis;  FGDs  Interviews
2. Are there sufficient logical links between expected project results and project components and activities	Project components and subcomponents reinforce each other	NBSAP PIR	
3. To what extent did the NBSAP and 5 NR preparation process take advantage of updated Biodiversity information including recent assessment of drivers and pressures, analysis of good practices and lessons learned in Biodiversity conservation?	Reference by NBSAP to updated scientific information as well as key independent analysis, good practice and lessons learned	Issues papers used by the NBSAP process. Scientific partners.	
4. To what extent has the NBSAP addressed the CBD Aichi Targets as well as guidelines for the preparation of NBSAPs	Consistency of NBSAP to specific AICHI Targets and as defined by the PRODOC	NBSAP; Aichi Targets & related guides Comments from international partners	
5. How is the project relevant with respect to other relevant donor-supported activities (JICA, IUCN, etc.?)	Consistency with specific JICA, IUCN focal areas	JICA, IUCN documents/website	
6. How has the NBSAP priorities been adapted to ensure practical relevance to issues and concerns defined by local governments?	Extent of discussion of local issues and opportunities that are complementary to NBSAP national analysis	Local Biodiversity assessment reports. Local officials	
7. To what extent have sectors outside of government (business, civil society etc.) been consulted in the national and local planning processes of NBSAP and 5 NR?	Level of participation and contributions of such sectors in NBSAP and 5 NR workshops	NBSAP & 5 NR proceedings National and local non state stakeholders.	
EFFECTIVENESS – To what extent been expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved (From TOR)			
1. How has the NBSAP and the 5NR articulated the issues and actions to address professed gaps in the earlier NBSAP, such as in economic valuation, institutional mechanisms, implementation planning financing, communication and mainstreaming?	Presence of short term and long term actions included in updated NBSAP to satisfy the indicators in the Project Results Framework Clear assessment of financing needs for biodiversity conservation and resource mobilization plan	NBSAP; 5 NR; SOE Thematic papers Financing needs for implementation of the NBSAP	Document analysis;  FGDs  Interviews

2. How adequate is the implementation and communication plan that has been developed to support NBSAP requirements and what is the current level of enforcement?	Level of implementation of planned targets	Overall NBSAP status reports; Reports of key participating agencies; PMU	
3. To what extent has the NBSAP, 5 NR and SOE (replaced by Critical Biodiversity Issues) been communicated to the national assembly and how has functional committees/offices of the latter used the NBSAP so far?	Nature and frequency of communication and dialogue with targeted members of the national assembly	Communication to the Assembly; Minutes of relevant committee meetings; Members or staff of Nat Assembly	
4. To what extent has the NBSAP and its associated studies (including) maps (national GIS based map and biodiversity maps of Lang Son and Son La) been communicated to targeted technical sectors in the National Government (e.g. MARD, MOPI, etc.) and are actually being referred by these agencies in their plans and programs	Citation of NBSAP priorities in regular programs /projects of other relevant technical line agencies outside of the government sector	Specific documented interactions with other sectors in the GoV. Planning Staff of other technical agencies.	
5. What gains have been made in knowledge and skills among targeted national and local government personnel (as well as non-government sector personnel) to support the NBSAP as well as local Biodiversity plans?	Level of knowledge and skills gains by targeted manpower	Training Needs Assessments; Training Plans; Training Reports; Training participants; Examples of performance outputs of personnel.	
6. What improvements in actual Biodiversity data/ information generation sharing and utilization have been achieved by both national and local governments as a result of capacity building efforts	Nature and number of good practices that have been documented/analyzed by MONRE and Local authorities. Extent that MONRE VEA /BCA websites are populated with updated information from NBSAP process. Nature and frequency of information exchange among selected national agencies and between national agencies and local governments on Biodiversity matters	Website Reports on CHM and related information management initiatives Technical and communication officers of agencies and non-state organizations	
7. To what extent have local land use plans in the two provinces incorporate priority concerns of Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and what are the prospects of its enforcement?	Presence of actual actions such as incentives and regulations to enable Biodiversity friendly land use plan enforcement	Local land use plans Local officials Local stakeholders	
8. How have substantive results/experience/lessons on local NBSAP from the two piloted provinces been shared and considered for replication to other provinces?	Printed materials on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into land use planning distributed to provinces	Project documents Workshops reports	

9. What overall management lessons have been learned from the project at both national and local levels regarding the process of delivering outputs and achievement of outcomes?	Data collected throughout the evaluation	Project reports Project stakeholders	
<b>EFFICIENCY- Was the project implemented efficiently in line with international and national norms and standards?</b>			
1. To what extent was adaptive management practiced in order to manage changes in the working environment as well as ongoing risks and ensure timely delivery of quality outputs		UNDP PMU GEF Focal person GoV focal person Non state partners	Document analysis;  FGDs  Interviews
2. What opportunities for resource sharing and partnerships with other relevant initiatives were tapped in order to better support project strategies; what synergies with other initiatives have been generated?	Planned and actual funds leveraged Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners Examples of supported partnerships Evidence that particular partnership/linkages will be sustained	Project documents of related initiatives	
3. What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements?	Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized		
4. Was the project monitoring, reporting and information systems able to adequately support adaptive management and learning?	Quality of results based management reporting (progress reporting, M&E)	M&E plans Minutes of Steering Committee Meetings	
5. Was the financial management system adequate for project management and produced accurate and timely information?	Availability, timeliness and quality of progress and financial reports	Financial reports Audit reports	
6. Was the procurement carried out in a manner making efficient use of project resources?		Audit reports	
7. Was the project as cost effective as planned and how efficient was the project with respect to incremental cost criteria?	Level of discrepancy between planned and actual cost effectiveness.	Project reports	
<b>SUSTAINABILITY – To what extent are there financial institutional socio economic and environmental risks to sustaining long term project results?</b>			
1. What incentives and support are being provided in the long term by the National Government to encourage and enable local governments to sustain efforts for incorporating Biodiversity in local plans /programs	Presence of discrete plans for long term support (and incentives) to Local Govts	NBSAP Relevant plans and programs from MONRE Min of Interior (?) and relevant agencies	Document analysis;
2. What institutional and program management arrangements as well are in place; and are they adequate to stimulate and guide public investments contemplated under the NBSAP?	Extent to which NBSAP needs are incorporated in the regular /permanent institutional and project management structure of MONRE and relevant agencies	NBSAP Implementation Plans; NBSAP reports	FGDs  Interviews

3. What are the perceived main challenges (including social political risks) that may hinder sustainability of project efforts at both national and local levels?	Challenges in terms of institutional & governance, social-political, environmental aspects Presence of long term budgeting; Presence of stakeholder “champions” for NBSAP and land use plans	Project documents Evaluation  Agency budgets;	
4. To what extent is manpower and financial resource mobilization plan under the NBSAP being followed and what is the current and potential extent of fund leveraging actions?	Progress of implementation of resource mobilization targets	Training reports NBSAP reports	
5. Is the NBSAP implementation plan regularly reviewed by the targeted stakeholders, and implementation plans updated to respond to implementation challenges?	Frequency of meetings and nature of issues addressed	Highlights of implementation meetings.	
6. At the provincial levels what measures are in place to ensure enforcement of the land use plans that have incorporated Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use		Current Provincial Plans and progress reports PMU	
7. To what extent have good practices and lessons learned been analyzed documented and shared among provincial and other local governments; and what are the prospects of being continued/replicated or scaled-up to other provinces?		Project Reports; Workshop highlights; Local officials PMU	
<b>IMPACT – Are there indications the project has contributed to or enabled progress toward reduced environmental stress and or improved ecological status?</b>			
1. Are there indications of major policy and programs changes being contemplated by the Cabinet as well as relevant committees in the National Assembly as result of the information and dialogue generated by the NBSAP?	Number and nature of executive policies and bills being developed as well as official statements	Draft policies Bills Policy papers reviewed by officials MONRE	
2. ARE there good “on the ground” level practices and physical accomplishments by local governments in partnership with communities that are directly reducing Biodiversity threats and challenges that build on guidance provided by Biodiversity friendly local land use plans?	Frequency of successful field cases in Biodiversity conservation made possible by Biodiversity friendly land use plans and associated programs	Progress reports of local projects Local officials Community stakeholders	

ANNEX 6.  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
ACTUAL QUESTIONS USED

**MONRE/VEA SENIOR EXECUTIVES**

- a. To what extent do you think has the NBSAP contributed to the strengthening of the role of MONRE in biodiversity state management (note: partly envisioned in the PRODOC)?
- b. Many of the actual enforcement powers for Biodiversity policies are with MARD and others agencies. Thus, the role of MONRE is slanted towards overall policy formulation as well as active facilitator of cross sectorial collaboration and learning. How do you think can VEA and BCA do this role effectively, given current institutional capacities of MONRE (optional question)?
- c. Given the many priorities of MONRE and VEA (green, brown and blue environment) what do you think may be an innovative resource mobilization strategy for NBSAP? Consider also the experience so far with state budgets and even innovations being piloted such as PEs etc.?

**BCA LEADERSHIP**

- a. What kind of challenge did the BCA encounter in terms of the simultaneous substantive requirements from CBD and GoV in terms of content and format for the NBSAP?
- b. How would you do the project again if we turned the clock backwards?
- c. There are good signs of implementation. What tangible evidence can be provided that these are part of an overall coordinated strategy represented by the 7 programs under the NBSAP? What is the status of program preparation and start up?
- d. How would you characterize the working relationship between MONRE and UNDP?
- e. What new platforms of collaboration with other agencies were catalyzed by the project?

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

- a. What do you recall as the most important points of the following documents of value to the NA? 5 NR; Critical Biodiversity Issues Report; NBSAP?
- b. How do you characterize the nature of participation of NA members in the consultation process?
- c. How have the information from the NBSAP and others been utilized by the NA?
- d. Does the relevant Committee in the NA have a policy agenda in mind to support Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use? (Short term and long term targeted legislation?) Please provide an overview of the major innovations you want to introduce
- e. What kind of support would the NA need from MONRE/BCA to support your policy agenda?

**LOCAL NGO - VACNE**

- a. What was the role of VACNE in NBSAP preparation?
- b. How do you assess the overall role of non-state actors (NGOs, community organizations, representation of the IPs, business) in general in NBSAP preparation?
- c. Do you see the concerns and suggestions raised in the NBSAP preparations reflected in substance in the NBSAP draft? What are the strong and weak points?

- d. How do you think has NA and concerned government agencies responded so far?
- e. If you had the chance to review the studies involved, please comment on the proposed BIODIVERSITY indicators set – what are areas for improvement?

#### **INGO PARTNER - IUCN**

- a. What lessons can be learned from the NBSAP preparation process in terms of issues definition, adherence to AICHI, preparation process including consultation/participation?
- b. What have been IUCNs outstanding concerns given the GoVs response so far to the recommendations made?
- c. Suggestions to accelerate NBSAP implementation at national and local levels given the available “window” provided by the official NBSAP?

#### **PARTNER – JICA**

- a. How would you assess the adequacy and feasibility of criteria agreed upon for biodiversity conservation?
- b. How do you assess your partnership with MONRE in the work towards the development of the national data base systems?
- c. What would you consider as the key strengths and key areas that require additional action?

#### **PROJECT FOCAL POINTS FOR BIODIVERSITY FINANCING**

- a. What is the project’s main thrusts and what recommendations has it made so far to the GoV that is being considered and adopted?
- b. Based on your experience, would you agree to the key findings and recommendations of the 3 finance studies (commissioned by the NBSAP Project) in terms of:
- c. Cost trends for the NBSAP programs
- d. Alternative sources of financing, and their viability
- e. What is the “value added” of the studies in the context of what the PA financing project is doing or have done? What could have been missed in the studies?
- f. What do you think is the advantage of the recent MONRE MOFI circular guiding the preparation of financing /budgets for NBSAP implementation?

#### **FOCAL POINT ON DATA BASE MANAGEMENT**

- a. What do you think are the key challenge in organizing a unified data base for biodiversity in terms of:
  - Generation of data information and knowledge
  - Processing and utilization of information
- b. How would the new Biodiversity performance indicators, prepared with support by the NBSAP project, help in the overall “database management system”? How would it interphase with the current system?
- c. To what extent can information on good practices for biodiversity be included in the data base?
- d. How does the current and proposed Data Based Management system feed effectively into policy formulation?

## **FOCAL POINTS FOR LAND MANAGEMENT**

- What is the overall strategy of the BCA - GDLA collaboration to mainstream biodiversity to the Land Use Planning and Enforcement system?
- What do you think are the major gains made so far and the gaps in terms of mainstreaming biodiversity in the land law use protocols?
- What do you think are the potential enforcement related concerns related to the new protocols?
- The Land use consultant suggested to do research to find ways to incorporate biodiversity corridors and buffer zones and marine biodiversity in the system of land categories of the land use planning protocol. Any ideas about the type of research topics that may be addressed in order to arrive at a procedure (for corridors and buffer zones)?
- How do you think can the role of maps be utilized more fully in the land use discussions?

## **PMU**

- Please describe the process flow for NBSAP preparation and the process for collaboration with the provincial governments
- What is the niche of the project in the Biodiversity effort of the entire MONRE?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses?
- What are the unfinished tasks?
- What were the key lessons learned?
- If you were to design the project interventions (involving you) again, how would you improve it?
- Residual questions on specific interventions
  - How did you manage without an ME plan?
  - How was the financial management system monitored?
  - Relevant to the NBSAP
    - How did you balance between government requirements and CBD protocols in the preparation of the NBSAP?
    - How did you address the suggestions of the UN review of the NBSAP?
    - Relevant to the NBSAP implementation what is the major role now of the BCA?
  - To what extent will the biodiversity indicators be finally adopted and support by both policy and budget in the next few years?
  - To what extent was training needs assessed prior to the development of workshop trainings for local governments?
  - What follow up plans to support post training needs and to sustain the sharing process are in place?
  - What is the communication plan for the NBSAP or its equivalent?
  - How do you assess the support obtained from PSC UNDP?

## **NATIONAL TA TEAM**

- Do you think the key issues have been adequately analyzed as input for the NBSAP?
- How do you recall the NBSAP preparation process, what were the high points and low points?



- Where are the key strengths of the NBSAP areas to work on?
- To what extent was participation and consultation achieved?
- How did you balance between government requirements and CBD protocols in the preparation of the NBSAP?

## **FOCAL POINT FOR MARD**

1. What do you think was the MARD's major contributions to the NBSAP process?
2. What do you think is the actual value of NBSAP to the national offices like MARD in performing their respective sectoral roles?
3. What is the current status of the two programs that MARD was asked to prepare under the NBSAP? How do you ensure synergy with the preparation of other programs by other agencies?
4. What institutional arrangements would you like to see in the short term, in the long term?

## **PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES**

### **GENERAL**

1. What are the key environmental issues in the province?
2. What are the major institutional challenges for effective implementation of environmental programs including for biodiversity conservation?
3. Why do you think Lang Son and SONLA was chosen as pilot site?

### **TRAINING**

4. What aspects of the workshop/trainings did you find most valuable for your role in the province (please also identify specific topics and tools etc.)
5. How would you assess the training style?
6. What kind of concerns were raised by your co participants?

### **BIODIVERSITY PLANNING AND INDICATORS**

7. What specific contribution did the trainings and guidance for Provincial implementation make to help you with the provincial biodiversity planning/action planning?
8. What changes are you considering for the current biodiversity action plan prepared earlier or under preparation (strategy, organization, manpower deployment, resource mobilization, projects to be developed etc.)
9. How would you convince the PPC on the value of the NBSAP, local biodiversity plan and investments in biodiversity? What strategies would you use to better reflect BIODIVERSITY in the SEDP?
10. Are the performance indicators you agreed on for the BIODIVERSITY adequate?
11. How feasible are the implementation of the indicators? To what extent can it be implemented? What constraints do you anticipate?
12. What do you think is the role of non-state actors?

### **LAND USE PLANNING**

13. What process did you follow in identifying the needed land use changes?
14. Why are the land use changes important to the province especially in economic terms?

15. To what extent were non state actors and directly affected stakeholders (including farmers, IPS) involved the land use planning discussions?
16. What key opposition do you anticipate to proposed changes in land use that puts more area under PA?
17. What innovative interventions are needed to enforce land use changes? To what extent can co management (encouraged by MARD in some areas) be adopted?

#### SHARING

18. When you were asked to share your experience with other provinces, what were the major aspects of your work did you share?
19. What aspects of what you shared elicited high interest from your peers in other provinces?
20. Were there follow up queries after the sharing session?
21. How do usually share experience and knowledge even without the project? What actions are needed to continue to sharing processes done under the project?
22. What follow up support from MONRE /BCA would you need after the project?

#### UNDP LEADERSHIP

- a. What do you think are the major contributions of the UNDP to the project in terms of quality assurance?
- b. What do you think could UNDP have done more, in terms of its role in the project?
- c. Do you think the project was able to synergize optimally with other UNDP projects? Would you have examples in mind?
- d. If we turn back the clock and the project were to be done all over again what improvements do you think should be made in the design?
- e. BCA believes a deep relationship exist between UNDP and MONRE. Building on this, in what arenas of action for biodiversity, do you think should the partnership focus in the next 5 years?

**ANNEX 7.**  
**DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY**  
**CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING TERMINAL EVALUATION**  
**SUMMARY OF RATING FOR OUTCOMES AND OTHER KEY PARAMETERS**

Outcomes 1.1-1.2: NBSAP and 5 <sup>th</sup> National Report to CBD prepared in Compliance with Biodiversity Law and CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020.					
Performance Indicator	2006 Baseline	End of Project Target	End of Project Status*	Terminal Evaluation Comment See also details under Sect 3.3.1	Rating
NBSAP with clear implementation plan	NBSAP prepared in 1995, with an addendum in 2007 is out of date and do not reflect changes in national and international context, such as new CBD guidelines and 2008 Biodiversity Law.	<p>New 10-year NBSAP with clear institutional design and financing plan approved by government by 12/2012 and thereafter submitted to the CBD. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizing biodiversity through economic valuation of goods and services.</li> <li>• Restoring and safeguarding ecosystems that provide essential services.</li> <li>• Assessment of protected area design and management effectiveness.</li> <li>• Conservation status of selected species (re)assessed based on international criteria, e.g. Red List.</li> <li>• Assessment of rules and procedures for species reintroductions.</li> <li>• Plan for capacity development for NBSAP implementation.</li> <li>• Technology needs assessment communication and outreach strategy for the NBSAP.</li> <li>• Plan for resource mobilization for NBSAP implementation assessment of opportunities mainstreaming into selected sectoral plan such as development, poverty reduction and climate change</li> </ul>	<p>NSBSAP approved and submitted to CBD in 2013. Implementation plans and financing plan are located in associated documents a) 1 Prime ministerial Decision; b) 7 national programs and one technical under varying levels of completion; c) guidance document for local Authorities for NBSAP implementation and financing from state budgets), guidance for personnel arrangement for BIODIVERSITY conservation</p> <p>A midstream GoV nationwide decision on financial estimates guided actions on financial estimates, the effect of which there are no official estimates. Financial estimates prepared unofficially and stakeholder initially agreed on overall directions for sourcing financing.</p> <p>No overarching capacity building plan and communication plan, though Individual thematic programs (specifically at least 4 of 7, that have been studied) contain human resources capacity and communication plan</p> <p>Policy and institutional issues actively communicated to NA who is in the process of formulating an approach for legislative action on overlapping policy &amp; institutional framework.</p> <p>At least 6 legal instruments produced to provide the legal basis for local level financing optimizing state budgets, and land use enforcement. This also includes a government circular on the deployment of local personnel to focus on biodiversity issues and planning</p> <p>Other technical issues addressed in the NBSAP main document</p>	<p>Major change/ difference from baseline and end of project situation. NBSAP represents political commitment. Implementation instruments in place, Financial estimates prepared unofficially and overall consensus on sources of financing initially agreed. Immediate focus is on state budget. Specific program of actions to broaden financing sources still an initial work in progress</p>	MS

Outcomes 1.1-1.2: NBSAP and 5 <sup>th</sup> National Report to CBD prepared in Compliance with Biodiversity Law and CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020.					
Performance Indicator	2006 Baseline	End of Project Target	End of Project Status*	Terminal Evaluation Comment See also details under Sect 3.3.1	Rating
		plans through sectoral consultations • Clearing House mechanism			
National reports on biodiversity status, trends, causes and consequence; and actions.	1st to 4 <sup>th</sup> National Reports submitted to CBD.	5th National Report submitted to CBD by 2014.	5 <sup>th</sup> NR developed and communicated in 2014 to NA , CBD and key stakeholders	Positive pattern of submission of previous communication was maintained. 5NR( together with NBSAP ) was quite well used by primary audience, the NA	S
	Annual SOE reports to national assembly do not contain up-to-date data on biodiversity status and trends.	By 2014, at least two SOE reports submitted to National Assembly to reflect latest biodiversity data.	One Critical Biodiversity issues report, in lieu of two SOES and communicated to NA and key stakeholders NA members actively join in discourse. Technical arm of NA is studying approach to revise at least 3 overlapping laws using the NBSAP, 5 NR and CBIR	One Critical Biodiversity issues report prepared and communicated and NA uptake is evident	S
National GIS based map of key biodiversity information	Comprehensive national database that is geo referenced on maps are not available	GIS map that has key biodiversity information (hotspots, PAs, ongoing projects etc.) available for wider use and dissemination	GIS maps as described produced between 2013 to 2015	GIS based Maps produced and used in national and local planning documents.	S

Outcomes 2.1-2.2: Provincial commitment and Capacity strengthened to implement NBSAP.					
Provincial capacity for NBSAP implementation	Provincial staffs have very limited capacity and skills to implement NBSAP and connect land use with ecosystem functions, and biodiversity.	Provincial capacity for NBSAP implementation including biodiversity financing, enhanced for up to 20 provinces through:  Guidelines developed to support to NBSAP realization at provincial level.  Up to 150 provincial staffs trained.	National Technical guidance produced and communicated to 20 + provinces. Orientation workshops conducted for personnel from these provinces plus other national and local state and non-state actors.  The Project assisted 2 Prov Govts implement selected aspects of the guidance	National guidance provides good integrated framework for short term and long term implementation on assumption that follow up technical assistance is provided. Provincial staff attended and provided feedback reflecting interest but overall Commitment and capacity levels cannot be measured for the 20 provinces. However initial behavioral indicators represented by several products are evident in 2 provinces.	S
Biodiversity reporting mechanism	No guidelines or legal requirements or procedures exist to support provinces to report to central government.	Mechanism in place to report on biodiversity status and good practice from provincial to national levels.	BIODIVERSITY indicators set and vetted with 2 pilot local authorities Interim technical guide provided to provincial governments on actual utilization. A draft circular on reporting still under review	The building blocks for such mechanism is in place (vetted indicators for biodiversity) but the mechanism for actually using them and reporting the same to national level awaits final promulgation of draft circular.	MS
Provincial implementation of NBSAP priorities.	Land use plans do not explicitly incorporate biodiversity conservation priorities.	NBSAP priorities implemented in 2 provinces through:  Land use plans updated to incorporate NBSAP priorities	Proposals were prepared, vetted and locally adopted as basis for formal revision of land use plans in 2 provinces in 2016, reflecting land demand for biodiversity conservation	These actually reflect contemplated change both on the ground (pilot scale) and at policy levels	S

			Based on experience, one decree and 2 circulars were formulated to institutionalize protocols		
		Biodiversity criteria tested and proposed for inclusion in provincial performance assessment systems	Criteria vetted and adopted for 3 levels (national, provincial and PA levels). Circular in draft form to include in provincial assessment system	Criteria in place and reflected in a final proposal for inclusion in provincial system	S
Spatial Biodiversity Assessment	Currently maps that highlight key biodiversity information at provincial levels do not exist	Biodiversity spatial assessment for two provinces prepared	Spatial assessments formulated and used partly as input in land use planning in two provinces	Change has been accomplished. Spatial analysis produced.	s
Experience and lessons learned from 2 pilot provinces documented and shared nationally.	Little cross provincial learning on biodiversity planning takes place.	Results from piloted provinces considered for replication to other provinces	Four national workshops enable the sharing by practitioners in the 2 pilot provinces. Awareness of experience and exploratory questions stimulated	Change has been partly accomplished. Experience has been shared and positive interest generated. Substantive assessment of nature and extent replicability still has to be done. The process for sustained replication is not yet clear	MS

ANNEX 8  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 3.1.1 PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The following notes elaborate on selected sub items under Section 3.1.1 Analysis of Project Results Framework

**Overall notes**

The results framework aim to support policies and policy instruments at national and local levels based on science based information. These interventions are first and foremost, responsive to the barriers stated in the PRODOC. In addition, the approaches and methodologies are consistent with those suggested by CBD such as Aichi Target 17 that enjoin countries to launch and update their NBSAPs as basis for wide scale multi sectoral action. It is also consistent with COP 10's Decision X /22 adopting the Plan of Action that promotes and supports the critical role of sub national governments and local authorities in the local implementation of the Aichi targets. They are also consistent with subsidiary global targets set by Local authorities themselves under the Nagoya Declaration in 2010 which espouses local mobilization to localize and implement NBSAPs.

**Generating deep local economic interest**

Article 10 of the CBD (Theme on Economics, Trade and Incentive Measures) enjoins countries to build awareness on the true value of biodiversity resources as basis for sustainable public investments. The Nagoya agreement among cities and local authorities further espouses the economic advantage of protecting ecosystems services. Various documentation exist to demonstrate how such knowledge have spurred local decisions to protect and expand. The CBD has suggested a range of approaches and methods for valuation.

While the project did not have sufficient resources to conduct full blown valuation studies, the design could have prescribed doable actions (e.g. though PRA tools) to describe the scope and scale of benefits from local livelihoods that depend on local biodiversity resources (water, raw materials, tourism etc.). The Project design could have also utilized documented information from other places in Vietnam that demonstrate (at least anecdotally) the possible gains and tradeoffs that result from local decisions that tend to either conserve or degrade biodiversity resources. Several of these information on good practices and lessons have been done by donor assisted action research in parts of Vietnam. It may be noted that during project implementation, information on BD offsets, economic valuation of ecosystems etc. were included in the NBSAP and its thematic papers. This however could not fully address the gap in the design as project resources had to be focused on other equally important subject matter.

The conduct of orientations and training under the project on a national plan such as the NBSAP would certainly build awareness among decision makers in local authorities of the national needs and directions. It would certainly be possible, under intense project attention, for pilot provinces to introduce major interventions in their land use plans. Enforcing these plans which would happen long after the Project will be the greater challenge (notwithstanding the proactive efforts of the MONRE-BCA to provide follow up guidance). Thus, understanding the economic incentive of

localized biodiversity conservation (e.g., through localized studies) would be of great value to strengthen the resolve of local decision leaders to sustain their commitment to biodiversity conservation.

### **Assumptions and risks**

Conceptually the “Assumptions column” indicate the necessary conditions that must be present for project interventions to translate to outputs and outcomes. Assumptions also imply conditions that should ideally be sustained beyond the project life e.g. commitments of agencies etc. so that outcomes can eventually lead to impacts. To further clarify our statements, that following will be added to the narrative:

The existing assumptions column reflect the needed contributions of local authorities, but the contributions of national agencies are not adequately reflected. It is true that the role of agencies are already organically part of project e.g. Preparation of guides for and training of local authorities by MONRE. However, these actions are largely “projectized” (done during the project period).

It is helpful that a wider range and longer term support from agencies beyond the projected interventions, and beyond MONRE) are also reflected in the assumptions column to ensure effective attainment and sustainability of outcomes. Examples of such actions could include for instance: national agencies such as MONRE and MARD to expand the scope and scale of their support services to local authorities in order for the latter to better absorb the added tasks implied by the newly promulgated NBSAP.

### **Replication Approach**

The proposed replication approach e.g. communication and outreach strategy and documentation and sharing are considered almost standard practice in the development community. They are consistent with the CBD Program of Work for CAPA promulgated under Decision VI/19. Given the relatively small project size, short project duration and resources available, the project driven interventions in the design are rightfully kept relatively simple. Two sets of interventions stand out. First, the development of a planning and implementation guide for local authorities helps build the enabling environment for replication. Secondly, the conduct of sharing sessions among local authorities among local authorities with varying experience in biodiversity conservation also provided further motivation for replication.

It might have helped if the project design provided further guidance on the sharing sessions was to be done for local authorities that have been seldom treated as priority target audience in previous biodiversity projects. To make this more impactful, the project design could have suggested that these sharing sessions are to be considered as an organic part of a bigger communication campaign to disseminate the values espoused by the NBSAP and of the complementary policies generated under the project.

In this way one can look at the sharing sessions as part of a continuing, multi-pronged, capacity building process and not just a one time (or two time) event. For instance, follow while sharing sessions create curiosity and interest, follow up, one on one technical support would be needed to help local authorities convert the interest into start up actions.

ANNEX 9.  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 3.2.4 FINANCE

The Project is financed by GEF and co-financed by Go, UNDP, *IUCN*, and *JICA*. *The total budget is \$5,459,091, of which \$909,091 is from non-refundable aid (ODA) and \$4,550,000 is from enrolled co-financing of other projects.*

### Disbursement rate

As of September 2015, the Project disbursed a total amount of \$863,898.31 with a disbursement rate of 95% compared with the total GEF budget (see table 1 below). Annual disbursement rates compared to AWP are 44%, 86%, 85.7%, 74.5% in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 respectively.

**Table 1: Project Disbursement from GEF funding, August 2012-September 2015**

Activity	Total amount (USD)	2012		2013		2014		2015		Total disbursement 2012-2015 (USD)
		AWP (USD)	CDR (USD)	AWP (USD)	CDR (USD)	AWP (USD)	CDR (USD)	AWP (USD)	CDR (USD)	
<b>Component 1</b>	<b>211,800</b>	145,000	62,649	50,200	111,068	69,600	73,368	10,847	10,039	<b>257,126</b>
<b>Component 2</b>	<b>614,646</b>	7,000	4,451	252,700	146,884	325,750	257,810	149,089	106,482	<b>515,628</b>
<b>Project Management</b>	<b>82,645</b>	16,700	7,219	35,200	32,131	32,400	33,525	17,619	15,113	<b>87,990</b>
<b>Other</b>			-83		534		1,974		727	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>909,091</b>	<b>168,700</b>	<b>74,237</b>	<b>338,100</b>	<b>290,619</b>	<b>427,750</b>	<b>366,679</b>	<b>177,555</b>	<b>132,362</b>	<b>863,898</b>
<b>Disbursement rate (%)</b>		<b>44</b>		<b>86</b>		<b>85.7</b>		<b>74.5</b>		<b>95</b>

*Source: Project Implementation Report, 2015*

It is reported that there is a slight difference between planned budget and actual disbursement for component 1, component 2, and project management for the period 2012-2015. This is a natural process of financial adjustment during the project implementation to meet the project outputs.

Variances between annual planned and actual expenditures occurred. The disbursement in 2012 reached 44% compared to the planned budget. There are two main reasons for a quite low rate of disbursement in this year. First, a prolonged process for approving the project and establishing its PMU led to a shortened operating time of the project in 2012. Second, complex procedure, multi-stage and multi-stakeholders of bidding protocol for national and international consultants made some activities not to be carried out in 2012 and moved to 2013.

In 2013, the disbursement reached 86%, but large variance between planned and actual costs happened for both component 1 and component 2. Two reasons explain the large difference. First, long-time procedures to revise bidding procurement and annual work plan and to select consultants (due to replacement of SOE by Biodiversity Critical Issues Report) made only a part of component 1's budget to be disbursed in 2013. Second, delayed selection process of the second pilot province caused the delay of some activities under component 2.



In 2014, activities were implemented relatively as planned, especially for component 1. In the component 2, quite large variance occurred between planned cost of \$325.750 and actual disbursement of \$257.810, because some of reports needed revision which made their expenditures move to 2015. In 2015, by the end of September, the disbursement was well planned for Component 1. The difference between planned cost of \$149,089 and disbursement of \$106,482 in component 2 derived from moving remaining activities under this component to the disbursement in final quarter of 2015.

### Mid-term audit results

A report was conducted by KPMG in December 2015 to assess the internal control system of and expenditures related to the NBSAP Project for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2015. The reported stated that financial management internal controls have been applied to allow the project management to make informed decisions.

These include: (i) payment management is placed in which expenditures are authorized and made in accordance with UN HPPMG and IP policies and procedures within the approved budget; (ii) budget estimation is made based on approved DPO/project document, work plans, and in accordance with UNDP policies and budget revisions are made in line with the prescribed procedures; (iii) financial reporting and management is in line with UN/UNDP CO's requirement; (iv) accounting and financial operations and reporting systems is adequate; and (v) accounting records are maintained and secured.

The report also gave some insights, including (i) some expenditures were recorded in the FACE forms submitted to UNDP before they were processed for payments by banks, (ii) the project submitted FACE forms for Quarter I and II, 2014 after the required deadline; (iii) the project did not claim VAT refund on a quarterly basis, and (iv) the project prepared declaration forms for aid certification a long time after receipt of cash from donor.

### Co-financing

#### Planned and actual co-financing commitments

A proposed budget of \$4,550,000 comes from enrolled co-financing of other projects from GoV, UNDP, IUCN, and JICA (Table 2). All contributions are in the form of grants.

**Table 2: Co-financing for NBSAP Project**

(Type /Source)	UNDP own financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		IUCN (mill US\$)		JICA (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)	
	Pro-posed	Ac-tual	Pro-posed	Ac-tual	Pro-posed	Ac-tual	Pro-posed	Ac-tual	Pro-posed	Ac-tual
Grants		290,785		175,000		225,000				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>290,785</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>175,000</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>225,000</b>	<b>3,800,000</b>	na	<b>4,550,000</b>	na

There is a slight difference in the level of proposed and actual co-financing from UNDP, GoV, and IUCN, indicating high commitment of these agencies for NBSAP implementation. As the actual co-financing from JICA is not made available at the time of terminal evaluation, the total actual co-financing cannot be calculated as a result.

## **Co-financing's contribution to the project's objective**

The NBSAP project has received co-financing from national and international sources through enabling activities which makes a significant contribution to the project's ultimate objective. MONRE/VEA confirmed full support for the whole project preparation and implementation from 2011-2014. Activities included (i) study on scientific and practical basis for development of new NBSAP, (ii) review and assessment of NBSAP in the period 2007-2010 in support to development of new NBSAP, and (iii) other related contributions such as staff's technical inputs, managerial, coordination and office running costs.

UNDP Vietnam fully supported the project through a number of activities over three years (2012-2014) which are part of UNDP project with MONRE entitled "Strengthening Capacity for Natural Resources and Policy Development and Environmental Performance"(NRE Project) through activities: (i) development of a policy on integrated management of natural resources and environment protection of seas and islands; (ii) provision of technical inputs for the Law on Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Seas and Islands adopted in 2015; and (iii) development and testing of a Provincial Environmental Performance Index (EPI).

IUCN provided co-financing from the UNDEF-funded Project "Promoting Active Participation of Civil Society in Environmental Governance" through an integrated package of activities that include: (i) raising high-level political awareness of the need to expand the participation of local NGOs in environmental reporting and monitoring; (ii) improving the quality and quantity of environmental reporting and analysis; and (iii) building the capacity of local environmental NGOs which is fully in line with IUCN's vision and strategy in Vietnam.

JICA made a commitment to provide co-financing through the Technical Cooperation Project - Project for Development of the National Biodiversity Database System (NBDS) in Vietnam in 2011-2015. Project outputs include (i) development of architecture of NBDS in VEA with the cooperation of MARD, MOST, VAST and other relevant agencies, institutes; (ii) recommendation of mechanism for collaboration with other agencies in sharing, managing, exploiting and utilizing data and information of NBDS; (iii) development of a database for Nam Dinh province as a part of NBDS; and (iv) strengthening capacity on management and awareness of utilization of NBDS.

Further discussion on actual contributions of the above partners is embedded in the subsequent sections. Generally, the implementation of co-financing projects has significantly contributed to address the barriers on the biodiversity management, and implement national priorities for enhancing improved environment management and biodiversity conservation for sustainable development in Vietnam in a way that maximizes benefits of resource mobilization (human and financial resources) from national and international agencies.

### **Additional Information**

The TE Team also obtained detailed ATLAS based information on planned annual budgets and actual disbursements. These are considered part of this ANNEX but in a different document (excel file)

#### **ANNEX 10.**

#### **DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING**

#### **TERMINAL EVALUATION**

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECT 3.3.1. a.**

## REVIEW OF THE NBSAP ADHERENCE TO PRODOC

**NSAP preparation process.** Appendix 1 of the NBSAP described the process for preparation. In addition to this description the TE team learned the following.

- a. With BCA as primary responsible organization, IUCN assisted the BCA facilitate awareness of protocols and development of TORS
- b. Three working papers were prepared by local expert team so assess key issues
- c. BCA conducted extensive consultation from the last quarter of 2012 to 2013
- d. A collaborative effort between the national TA team and IUCN (lead) produced a Draft NBSAP by early 2013
- e. The NBSAP format was prepared to conform to the practice of submitting a more concise policy /strategy document to GoV for its approval and supported by the expanded NBSAP documents.
- f. With BCA providing the overall leadership, In 2013, IUCN served as commentator and shared suggestions to strengthen the resultant draft; some were adopted
- g. Two documents for one NBSAP were produced – the Prime Ministers Decision promulgating the key policy and strategies; and the main technical document containing the entire NBSAP
- h. A combined UNDP, using a template developed jointly with UNEP and CBD, reviewed the approved draft using 60 point criteria
- i. The above review was done after official NBSAP approval, not all could be complied
- j. The project adapted to the situation by preparing a supplemental document which provide expanded information on objectives, targets, tasks an indictors for measuring progress.

**Key contents of main NBSAP document.** Following a unified format being used for all national action plan, the NBSAP provides the following with corresponding equivalent descriptions from AICHI guidance:

- Part I: Context - describes the situation analysis partly based on 3 thematic working papers. It includes the following: a) current issues on policies institutions and management, b) Ecosystems and PAS, and c) species and genetics
- Part II: View Points - Vision Goals – describes the vision and goals
- Part III: Major Tasks - These include the following:
  - Five Task Contents - under each Task Content are a list of one to three sentence descriptions of intent. Some indicate physical targets and location, some do not.
  - List of Seven priority programs- this is a list of seven programs and the agencies assigned to prepare them and the deadline (year) for submission (see next section)
  - Six Solutions - this refer to functional support themes such as communication, policy, science and technology, resource mobilization and international cooperation. A total of 21 actions are cited.
- Part IV: Implementation Arrangements – These are 1-2 sentence description of the roles of Line ministries, Peoples Committees, Business Community and Social political organizations
- Appendices. This include: a) Process of NBSAP development; b) Evaluation of NBSAP (1995 and 207); c) Relevance between the NBSAP and Aichi Biodiversity Targets; and d) Description of physical targets
- Supplementary Section (not in the table of contents but physically attached to the NBSAP). These include: a) Indicators for M&E of NBSAP and b) Assessment of funding

**NBSAP review by global partners.** Global partners specifically IUCN and UNDP, reviewed and shared their suggestions on the pre-final and approved drafts, respectively. UNDP used the 60 point framework of the NBSAP Peer Review framework. This framework was developed collaboratively by UNDP, UNEP-WCMC and the CBD. UNDP also used the PRODOC as framework.

The UNDP review indicated that there was sufficient evidence of information that fulfilled 17 of the 60 criteria. Partial evidence was found for 29 criteria while there was no clear evidence for 17 criteria. Among the comments that also closely relate to the requirements of the PRODOC are the following:

- There is ample multi-stakeholder and multi-locational consultation process for the NBSAP; but better documentation of the process is needed
- Good discussion of the situation analysis, backed up by most recent science information, but the presentation could benefit from better spatial (map) representation
- Some of the good high level actions (referred to as tasks) as well as the ACIHI inspired physical and spatial targets need to be linked through an elaboration of tasks into more actionable and measurable statements
- The work at the provincial level needs to be better reflected
- Communication strategy and resource mobilization strategy need to be articulated
- The conversion of the NBSAP into Vietnamese format maybe a good sign of strong government ownership

MONRE, through BCA addressed the comments raised by the global partners point by point, Additional information (including maps) was embedded in the draft NBSAP to better elaborate on the situation analysis. However, since the UNDP comments came after the approval of the NBSAP, a good number of the suggestions could no longer be accommodated. For those that could no longer be accommodated in the main body, a supplemental document was appended to the main NBSAP document. The supplemental document is considered at technical reference. The PMU further ensured that some suggestions that could still be accommodated were embedded in the main body (*italicized statements*)

**The TE Team's findings on the NBSAP.** The PRODOC called for an NBSAP with a *clear institutional design and financing plan*. The TE team realized that the so called design and plan are articulated not in one single presentation within the main body of the NBSAP. Rather, it is presented through an interrelated set of information found within and outside the main body of the NBSAP. These are the following:

- a. Decision 1250/2013 of the Prime Minister approving the NBSAP strategy, including the list of 7 priority programs (summarized)
- b. List of 7 priority programs to be prepared by assigned agencies (Part 111 of the NBSAP and also under Decision 1250/2013)
- c. Identification of roles of key Ministries and other agencies (Part 1V of NBSAP)
- d. Creating of Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee to provide oversight (separate)
- e. Guidance to Provinces and Cities to implement the NBSAP (separate)
- f. At least 3 Executive fiats (Circulars) that enforce the guidance
- g. A supplement to the NBSAP that provides a financial estimate of the NBSAP with reference to working paper describing the recommended cost of financing (it is part of NBSAP but considered only as technical reference)

The following observations elaborate on concrete measures within the NBSAP discourse that is leading to a clear “*institutional design and financial plan*”.

**a. TE Findings: NBSAP’s Core AICHI Targets.** The core targets are embedded in the statement of 5 Major Tasks; the targets are summarized in the Supplementary document attached to the NBSAP. Entitled “Indicators for M&E the implementation of the strategy”, it describes 23 physical targets under 5 Major Goals (corresponding to the Major Tasks in the main body).

**b. TE Findings: NBSAP Program management.** An Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee created to support NBSAP implementation and headed by the MONRE provides directions to the agencies concerned in preparing the respective programs. The IMSC meets every 6 months and is supported by a secretariat composed of seconded technical staff from ministries and seconded management and administrative staff based at the BCA. A modest budget has been provided for basic monitoring.

**c. TE Findings: Seven Key NBSAP Programs for implementation.** Of the above, the Section on Programs (part of Part 111) is a list of 7 programs corresponding to 7 priority themes that will be developed before the end of 2015. These are on the following with key responsible agency:

- Strengthening institutional systems, MONRE
- National biodiversity database, MONRE
- Wildlife trade, MARD
- Natural protected Areas, MARD
- Genetic resources, MOST
- Crime prevention, MOPA
- Critical Ecosystems, MARD

A review of 4 of the 7 programs indicate that each of them contain substantial reference to the NBSAP. They articulate actions with respect to the theme as well as support actions such as human resources capacity building and communication campaign. The thematic papers produced for the NBSAP as well as the 5NR and CBIR also articulate the fundamental institutional constraints and outline strategic options for addressing these the TE team, however, did not have access to information on Program 1 (Implementation) “Strengthening the institutional system” which is one of the more relevant intervention that could help address the PRODOC criteria requirement referred to as “clear institutional design.” Program 1 would have indicated the degree of GoVs actions on the recommendations set by the NBAP thematic working papers as well as those suggested by the 5 NR and CBIR.

**d. TE Findings: Legislative attention to clarify the policy and institutional overlaps.** Thematic working paper 1 (policies and institutions) which contributed to the development of the NBSAP, distilled six priority policy and institutional issues that need to be addressed very soon. It recommended 4 measures that can be the subject of plans for *strengthening the institutional systems* cited above. In addition to the NBSAP, the MONRE communicated the issues and recommendations defined by the 5 NR and Critical Biodiversity Issues Report (CBIR) to the National Assembly among others. At least 10 NA delegates actively participated in various workshops. Concurrently, the NA’s technical arm, the Department of Science and Technology and Environment, started preparation of a report on measures to be undertaken by the NA to resolve and systematize conflicting policies and institutional frameworks.

**e. TE Findings: NBSAP Implementation Guidance to Provinces with supporting policies.**

Right after the approval of the NBSAP, the MONRE, in its capacity as NBSAP coordinator, issued a comprehensive technical guidance to Provinces and Cities. This mandated the said local authorities to prepare and implement their respective local biodiversity action plans, following the overall framework of the NBSAP. Local organizational arrangements for NBSAP implementation are also provided.

The above guidance is complemented by several executive regulations such as Circulars and Decisions, signed by either the Prime Minister, several ministers or single ministers. This action is also described further under the discussion in Component 2.

**f. TE Findings: Financing the NBSAP.** The supplementary section to the NBSAP is a two page description of the financial cost estimates. This is not considered an official estimate, just a technical reference. The supplement also refers the reader to a set of working documents that present the results of a special financing study commissioned by the Project after the NBSAP approval.

- For the period 2015-2030 the 3 part study forecasted that the NBSAP will need 28,885 billion VND. Of this, the 7 priority programs cost 25,420 billion VND. NBSAP implementation in 63 provinces needs 3,465 billion VND. The maximum financial mobilization capacity for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation in the period 2015-2020 is 31,665 billion, of which the state budget is 21,310 billion VND and other sources is 10,356 billion VND.
- The financial gap for the NBSAP implementation period 2015-2020 from state budget source is 7,575 billion VND. There is a gap of 4,110 billion VND to implement the 7 priority programs and 3,465 billion VND to implement the Strategy in 63 provinces.
- The study suggested that the financial gap of 7,575 billion VND should be mobilized from other resources such as WB, GIZ, IUCN, PAN Nature, ADB, GEF, JICA, FFI, WWF, UNDP, SNV, CIDA, AUSAID, OXFAM, CARE, and FAO.

The two major moves of GoV relevant to financing are:

- Providing immediate guidance to local authorities on how to better tap and account for state budget resources. This guidance was in the form of a joint MONRE – MOFI Circular for state budget financing of biodiversity conservation. It is also part of the overall Technical Guidance to Province and Cities issued in mid-2013 immediately after NBSAP approval. At least two provinces (pilot provinces visited during the TE) are in the process of using this guidance for preparing their 2016 budgets. The guidance covers all provinces; thus an undetermined number of provinces not covered by the Project may also be expected to start doing this.
- Raising the level of awareness and initial multi – sectoral consensus on overall actions to be taken to finance the NBSAP. This was achieved through the conduct of 3 multi-stakeholder workshops presided by the MONRE Vice minister.

Three multi-stakeholders workshops in 2014 brought different actors that have a significant bearing on biodiversity financing (Ministries, international institutions, academe, and business). The gathering enabled participants to collaboratively agree on issues and range of priority solutions. It confirmed the presence of a range of resources that can be made available. The major agreements were to accelerate the economic valuation of biodiversity resources,

strengthen bio-finance statistics, strengthen platforms for information exchange among donor intuitions and optimize the utilization of innovative financing modalities. The workshops were not able to tackle how and when to specifically tap and mobilize these resources and other innovative funding resources identified. The BCA committed to address these suggestions.

**g. TE Findings: Addressing Bio Technical Aspects cited by PRODOC.** The TE team also noted that the NBSAP provides reasonable discussion of selected bio technical aspects cited in particular by the Project Results Framework (e.g. economic valuation, safeguarding ecosystems, PA effectiveness, conservation status of selected species, etc.).

**h. TE Findings: Addressing capacity development for NBSAP implementation.** There is no indication that a “systematic” Technology needs assessment was conducted that could be a basis for developing an overall “capacity development strategy.” What the NBSAP has are the following:

- Part 1 of the NBSAP cites ongoing programs for policy and institutional and human resources development. Part III of the NBSAP includes some general action statements for human resources development. There is no overarching program of action articulated.
- Each of 4 of the 7 programs that are being, however, are developing plans to include human resources capacity development
- An agreement for technical cooperation was signed in 2014 between the VEA and the VN Forest to facilitate information exchange and collaborative programs
- For the provincial level, in different sections of the MONRE technical guidance for NBSAP local, the following are provided:
  - A summary of 16 regular biodiversity related functions
  - Implementation arrangements – inter departmental steering committees and focal points; and definition of individual agency roles
  - Coordination arrangements – how local authorities can tap line agencies
  - Training and resources mobilization – creating focal point staff and training plans

**i. TE Findings: NBSAPs Communication Strategy and CHM.** There is no overall communication strategy articulated in one presentation in the NBSAP that would help link high level targets into specific physical targets. Rather, the NBSP has the following features:

- The NBSAP Part 111 outlines 5 solutions (functional strategies) to support attainment of physical targets. Of the 5 clusters of solutions, one cluster (5 sentences) declares general intentions to improve awareness building in public service and the general public, inclusion of biodiversity in formal education, recognition of outstanding achievers and optimum use of mass media.
- In at least 4 out of 7 priority programs, they are developing theme-specific communication programs.
- Guidance was provided to the Local authorities on how to launch their communication programs. There are a number of general suggestions on how to do this plus an indication of global good practices.
- The National Biodiversity Database System being developed through the collaborative effort with the JICA under the NBDS project. The NBDS has been set up in the MONRE VEA website.
- To help in NBSAP implementation, the project assisted MONRE produced at least 22 communication products for policy makers as well as local planners. These included

articles in the MONRE regular Magazine; Special Magazine and related products for special events (e.g. Biodiversity Day) and 3 radio shows in 2015.

The above information indicate that the range of efforts to establish the enabling environment for *clear implementation, institutional design and financing plan*. These efforts are premised on the reality that the fundamental solution to the ongoing institutional overlaps cannot be fully resolved by policy declarations under the NBSAP alone. Rather, the solution clearly requires legislation. The specific actions above enabled legislative *attention* based on a clearer definition of the institutional problems at hand.

Simultaneous to legislative action, implementation needs to start right away notwithstanding the institutional roadblocks. Thus, the NBSAP has become the basis for *proactively guiding provincial authorities* on how to cope with institutional constraints in the short term and start their implementation process on a step wise basis. The guidance includes practical steps on how existing manpower and financial resources can be further enhanced. This mechanism is supplemented by the creation and maintenance of the inter-ministerial coordination committee, and the creation of communication lines and communication products for biodiversity education.



ANNEX 11  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
PROPOSED LIST OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS TO BE PART OF NBSAP PACKAGE THAT  
MAY BE COMMUNICATED TO PARTNERS

The following are the suggested contents of “NBSAP package” that may be communicated to national and international partners.

- a. PM Decision (July 2013) – defines the targets and actions, mandates general roles to agencies and lists the priority programs to be developed by end of 2015
- b. NBSAP main technical document as of March 2013 – contains the context, vision priorities and supplemental documents
- c. Supplementary document to the NBSAP - summary of physical targets, performance indicators and estimated costs. It refers the reader to the working paper
- d. 7 thematic programs to be prepared by assigned agencies – These will link the information on major tasks/measures (level of actions) to information on targets. Also contains theme specific human resources plans and communication plans
- e. Guidance (unnumbered) from MONRE to Provincial and City Governments on how to implement the NBSAP at local levels. Contains information on how to generate funds and prepare communication campaign
- f. Working Papers - Four working papers prepared for NBSAP that identify and analyze issues and opportunities (the fourth one of which being the financing study)
- c. “Packaging” the above may be done in several forms. One way would be to develop a 3 page executive summary that would describe the documents and how they relate to each other. The documents may then be “attached” to the summary. Item a, b, c and d may be regarded as volume 1; item e as volume 2; and item f as volume 3. The above may be put in one CD for distribution or disseminated through the MONRE/VEA/BCA website.

ANNEX 12  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 3.3.1 B  
OUTCOME 2.1-2.2 PROVINCIAL COMMITMENT AND CAPACITY

**Actual effect and application of learnings the two pilot Provinces**

Selected Workshop Participants coming from the two pilots were interviewed about the training workshops conducted about the NBSAP. The information below was obtained from 5 representatives from DONRE, DARD, and DOPI etc. The actual participants interviewed from DONRE and MARD appreciated the workshop/training sessions conducted by the MONRE through the Project and expressed a range of views:

- a. Biodiversity is a very complex topic but it improved the theoretical foundation of what they think they have been practicing for nature conservation (e.g. forest)
- b. The orientations elevated the status of biodiversity in the eyes of attending PPC officials
- c. There is a strong need to better communicate the significance of biodiversity to decision makers given that biodiversity must compete with other PPC concerns
- d. The most important hands on skills learned is about mapping. Some also appreciated the process of organizing a multi sectoral discussion conducted by the Project
- e. It deepened the realization of the issue of overlapping mandates of DONRE and DARD
- f. The capacity of focal points in each of the agencies to foster interaction is very critical
- g. It is now very clear that DONRE is the overall coordinator of biodiversity
- h. Interventions “from the top” is important to promote synergy locally. The NBSAP guidance document from the MONRE as a good start
- i. The Biodiversity Action plan, as well as proposals for land use changes, can provide the legal platform upon which specific proposals can be subsequently submitted to PPC

**Lang Son.** The province was in the process of preparing the biodiversity conservation (spatial plan) since 2011 when the MONRE NBSAP Guidance was issued. They used this guidance to review their draft plans before this could be finalized. Based on this review, they believed the plan was in the right direction (NBSAP compliant). The Project helped the province with technical inputs such as mapping of improved and finalized Biodiversity Spatial Planning. Resolution No 132/2013/NQ-HĐND issued by Lang Son People's Council dated 12 December 2013 and Decision No 77/QĐ-UBND January 2014 approved the Biodiversity Planning.

The Lang Son DONRE also developed 2 specific project proposals for biodiversity conservation. Based on the NBSAP framework, the Lang Son DONRE has prepared and submitted to Lang Son PPC 2 projects for budget approval: (i) Project on developing captive and rescue zones for wildlife animals and (ii) Project on awareness raising on biodiversity conservation.

**Son La.** For Son La province, the DONRE attempted to combine the preparation of the biodiversity action plan and the biodiversity conservation (spatial) plan in 2012, but after doing intensive preparatory work, they realized it was a very complex self-imposed task. Thus, they have decided to focus first on the spatial plan with technical support from NBSAP project. As in Lang Son the Province also received direct hands on Project Technical Assistance. Local Resolution 79/2014 and subsequent Decision No 2125/QĐ-UBND issued by Son La PPC dated

13 August 2014 approved Biodiversity Planning. Son La PPC also approved the Environmental Protection Plan 2016 on 2 November 2015, in which, they will develop biodiversity action plan. Accordingly, a budget for this process has been allocated for 2016.

The DONRE leaders are not very keen in the creation of a new Steering committee to oversee the development and implementation of the biodiversity action plan. Accordingly, this is another layer of the many existing committees and task forces and a good number of which are no longer active. It was suggested that existing mechanisms for coordination be fully utilized first.

DARD leaders are very concerned about agricultural encroachment in protected areas. They are encouraged by initial success of piloting work in co management (started even before the project). They believe these should be given attention in the development of local plans.

**Knowledge diffusion within the pilot provinces.** It was noted that in both provinces, the information gathered from the workshops tended to remain largely with the DONRE participant(s) who attended. This is not surprising because the overall institutionalization of roles and communication flows on biodiversity at the local level is still in the early formative stage. The interviewed participants however reflect relatively good command of biodiversity issues and good practices that can enable them to catalyze immediate practical actions towards localized biodiversity management. However, they clearly need continuing back up technical and institutional support (including staff complement) for subsequent tasks.

Other participants from the two pilot provinces came from DARD, DOPI, PPC and other local offices. The DARD participants expressed readiness to provide attention to biodiversity but they expected that the initiative for the critical integration and synergy would best come from the DONRE. The DOPI representatives who joined in the discussions of the TE were not the same people who attended the training. They nonetheless expressed appreciation of biodiversity as a new concern. Accordingly, some aspects of biodiversity are already reflected in the SEDP under sectoral plans, forestry, fisheries etc. They confirmed that unlike climate change, biodiversity conservation is a low priority topic among decision makers and needs to be communicated more convincingly. They also suggested practical measures including observance of proper planning and budgeting schedules to ensure that biodiversity projects receive higher budgetary support.

**Knowledge diffusion among other provinces.** The BCA reports about 50% of provinces have prepared their biodiversity plan. It is not clear which of these were the result of project interventions and which were the result of much earlier efforts. Local plans prepared and approved after the NBSAP approval can be considered as having been influenced by the Provincial NBSAP Guidance document. The specific number was not available at the time of the review.

The above findings indicate that the provincial guidance document derived from the NBSAP has undoubtedly raised the level of awareness at least 20 provinces. In the two provinces, the guidance document and workshop trainings have directly capacitated the trained participants to catalyze favorable local decision making notwithstanding local institutional constraints.

ANNEX 13  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION  
ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SECTION 4.2.3.  
RECOMMENDATION: FOLLOW ON TECHNICAL GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES  
THROUGH RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

The following notes elaborate on Section on the Conclusion and Recommendations, specifically section 4.2.3. Recommendation 3 - Follow On Technical Guidance for Local Authorities through Responsive Programs.

The NBSAP Project introduced so many new innovations over a short period of time. Notwithstanding the remarkable range of communication products produced, the awareness building interventions during the 3 year project as designed may be too short an exposure for planners and practitioners on the new CBD directions on a sustained basis. Recognizing this, the MONRE – BCA has continued its own efforts to sustain guidance given available resources after the project.

#### **Follow on Actions at Local level**

Utilizing available national and local resources of GoV and potential contributions from partners, the MONRE in collaboration with other Ministries, may wish to catalyze a more systematic, multi-agency post project follow up support to the two pilot local authorities. The purpose is to ensure that other key local governance processes for NBSAP localization are also piloted, building on what was implemented under the project. Consider institutionalizing the sharing process started under the project by strengthening available sharing systems such as that being recently initiated among local authorities in the Northern region. Further, to support the above initiative it is recommended that technical support be provided to the national technical agencies to be able to finalize the 7 thematic programs to be responsive to the needs of local authorities.

The additional processes to be piloted may include the following:

- Preparation of the cross cutting biodiversity action plans to complement the “spatial plans” and embed formulation of human resources capacity and communication campaigns)
- Subjecting the land use consensus reached during the project into actual enforcement
- Actual use of the biodiversity indicators as part of the regular reporting, not only to national government but equally important to the local authority

As part of communication planning, consider institutionalizing the sharing process started under the project by strengthening available sharing systems such as the current system of knowledge sharing among local authorities in the Northern region. The support can be in form of providing facilitation services in the following aspects:

- Accelerated identification, documentation and dissemination of good practices in localized biodiversity conservation and sustainable management
- Improved design and conduct of sharing sessions to maximize the learning process
- Linking particular needs of local authorities with specific offices of national agencies and other technical institutions who can best respond to them. It may be noted that the MONRE

BCA has organized its workforce into thematic divisions and a network of experts who can contribute to follow on support efforts.

### **Support from the 7 Priority Programs of National Agencies**

There is need to support the national agencies so that they are better prepared to respond to the needs of local authorities as the latter begin to own provincial level actions for biodiversity. The NBSAP identified 7 programs that need to be developed to implement specific targets committed by the NBSAP. The success of localization of the NBSAP would depend a lot on how the 7 programs will be responsive to the needs of Local Authorities.

To do this, there is a need to assist the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) of the NBSAP provide more focused technical support to the agencies responsible for completing the 7 thematic programs for NBSAP implementation. This guidance will help ensure that the core values and priorities of Aichi Targets that cut across sectoral disciplines are fully addressed by the individual agencies preparing the programs. Sponsor dialogue to ensure that program formulation of each of the 7 programs are fully linked to the recommendations of the thematic working papers produced for the NBSAP as well as the actions identified in PART 111 of the NBSAP. Where possible, solicit increased inputs of the business sector and other key non state actors.

With the help of the Ministry of Information or equivalent institution, MONRE to organize a communication task force among different agencies as well as relevant organizations to assess knowledge and communication needs of implementing agencies and key stakeholder in relation to NBSAP requirements. Craft an overarching communication framework for the NBSAP that will provide backup guidance to the individual agencies in communication planning. Develop a pilot demonstration of how local level communication planning may be conducted.

Line agencies involved in developing the 7 implementation programs may have a continuing need for knowledge and information support to ensure sensitivity to the relatively new concepts and approaches advocated by the Aichi targets. The following are examples of action arenas that need continuing dialogue: a) true economic value of biodiversity b) addressing not only the “pressures” but also “drivers” of biodiversity loss e.g. populations, subsidies; c) enabling access and benefit sharing; and d) innovative communication modalities etc. It would be helpful if the IMSC with the support of the MONRE/BCA make available learning opportunities for the above topics to key focal points with the Ministries. There are several global and national sources of such knowledge. The CBD secretariat and the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity would be able to provide guidance on where to locate technical and financial assistance to support the knowledge needs.

Annex 14.  
DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND  
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO PROVINCIAL PLANNING  
TERMINAL EVALUATION

**EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT FORM**

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**Evaluators:**

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

**Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form<sup>2</sup>**

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

**Name of Consultant:** EDUARDO QUEBLATIN

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at *Manila, May 12, 2012*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form<sup>3</sup>**

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

**Name of Consultant:** Vu Thi Hoai Thu

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at Hanoi on 25 February, 2016

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



<sup>2</sup>[www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct](http://www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct)

<sup>3</sup>[www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct](http://www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct)