

Mid-Term Review of the Project, “Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes” (Viet Nam)



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The Wetland PA Project is a national project implemented by the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA) of the Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment (MONRE). It is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant financing.

Cover photography (top to bottom): 1. mangroves in Tam Giang lagoon (Le Van Minh, photographer); 2. World Wetland Day participants from Thuy Xuan commune, Thai Thuy wetland (MONRE website); 3. Dugout boat at sunset in Thua Thien Hue province (Vu Bao Ngoc, photographer); 4. harvesting clams in clam-growing area of Thai Binh province (Nguyen Viet Cuong, photographer)

INFORMATION PAGE

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MTR time frame; and date of MTR report

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Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and other
project partners

MTR team members

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- Mr James T. Berdach—International Consultant
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APR	Annual Performance Review
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BCA	Biodiversity Conservation Agency (MONRE)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CPUE	Catch per unit effort (fisheries)
CRES	Centre for Natural Resources and Environment Studies (Hanoi National University)
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DIM	Direct implementation modality (UNDP project implementation procedure)
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HPPMG	Harmonized Project and Programme Management Guidelines
ISPONRE	Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MTR	Midterm Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National implementation modality (UNDP project implementation procedure)
PA	Protected Area
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project management unit
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (GEF)
TB	Thai Binh (Province)
TG-CH WCA	Tam Giang-Cau Hai Wetland Conservation Area
TOR	Terms of Reference
TT WCA	Thai Thuy Wetland Conservation Area
TTH	Thua Thien Hue (Province)
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VEA	Vietnam Environment Administration
WCA	Wetlands Conservation Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Description

1. The UNDP-supported and GEF-financed full-sized project entitled “Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes” (also referred to herein as the “Wetland PA Project”) is being implemented by the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) and the Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA), both agencies under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), Vietnam. The project was designed to effect a shift to more robust management of wetland PA sites and activities in the immediate landscapes, to address both direct threats to biodiversity at the wetland sites, and those emanating from the landscape.
2. The **objective** of the project is *“to establish new wetland protected areas and to create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes.”* Interventions to achieve this objective are structured within two outcomes, as follows:
 - **Outcome 1:** *New wetland PAs and relevant systemic capacities for their effective management established*
 - **Outcome 2:** *Integrity of wetland PAs are secured within the wider wetland connected landscapes*

Project Progress Summary

3. The project began on 09 June 2015, and is in its fourth year of implementation according to the project documents. The project is scheduled to conclude by 09 June 2019.
4. Progress toward results has not been uniformly achieved across the project objective and the two project outcomes—while some areas have progressed well, obstacles have been encountered in other areas, which have hampered progress. All these factors, including areas of success and areas where constraints continue to exist, are discussed in detail in Section III of this report. In particular, Table 5 in this report presents a detailed analysis of project progress towards achieving desired results and targets.
5. The main areas where the project has shown significant progress in achieving its stated objective and outcomes, and the areas where difficulties have been encountered which have impeded progress, are briefly summarized below:

Objective: To establish new wetland protected areas and to create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes

- Significant steps have been completed in laying the groundwork for establishment of 2 wetland conservation areas; however, long delays have shortened the time available to accomplish this critical target before the time and funds remaining are used up—the objective as presented in the results framework is redundant of the statement for Outcome 1 (see following) and may be overly ambitious, given the available timeframe
- An Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) baseline has been established, against which progress toward achieving successful conservation of important wetland areas can be measured.

Outcome 1: New wetland PAs and relevant systemic capacities for their effective management established

- Changes to wetlands-related policies, laws and plans are underway.
- Wetlands inventory has been developed, including characterization of important wetland area based on a standardized wetlands classification system (officially adopted under Decision 1093 by the Vietnam Environment Administration (VEA) guiding the classification of wetlands)
- New decree on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands to replace Decree 109 has been drafted and in process of submission for approval
- Draft national action plan for wetlands has been developed
- Steps have been carried out to build capacity through a range of training activities; however, no measurements of any improvement have been undertaken by means of the Capacity Development Scorecard
- Profiles have been prepared for 2 proposed WCAs, in Thai Thuy (TT), Thai Binh (TB) province and Tam Giang-Cau Hai (TG-CH), Thua Thien Hue (TTH) province. However, formal proclamation of the two WCAs has not yet been accomplished
- National and local wetland working groups have been organized and have begun to meet to discuss issues concerning the management of wetlands; however, there are questions concerning the sustainable operation of these groups
- Capacity needs assessment has been completed for two provinces. Training materials on wetland conservation have been developed and used for pilot training.
- Midterm METT tracking tool has not been completed as required

Outcome 2: Integrity of wetland PAs are secured within the wider wetland connected landscapes

- Valuation studies of ecosystem services have been conducted to facilitate strengthening of conservation of wetland biodiversity
- Steps are being taken to integrate wetland conservation into overall development planning at the provincial level. Entry points for mainstreaming wetland biodiversity considerations in provincial and district planning in TB and TTH were completed. Wetland conservation has been mainstreamed in key planning processes in TTH (i.e. land use planning at district level and river basin regulation)
- Studies on threats to biodiversity from local livelihoods were completed in Thua Thien Hue and Thai Binh which identified the main direct/indirect pressures and strategy for livelihood options. Pilot income generation options have been implemented in 5 districts surrounding the WCA in Thua Thien Hue to reduce pressure on resources in the lagoon. .
- Studies on human and financial resources for operation of the 2 WCAs have been carried out, and project personnel report that operational budget for start-up of the 2 WCAs has been secured.

MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

6. The principal purpose of this midterm review (MTR) is to evaluate project progress to-date, and to provide critical recommendations which can help to ensure that project performance is optimized during the time remaining until project closure, so that ultimately, the intended project objective and outcomes are more likely to be realized.
7. Table 1, below, presents a summary of the ratings which have been assigned by the MTR team for the project objective and the two project outcomes.¹ These ratings reflect the degree to which, in

¹ As per UNDP/GEF guidelines, the project strategy is not subject to a rating or evaluation of achievement.

the judgement of the MTR consultants, progress has been made that can ultimately support the achievement of the project objective and outcomes. In addition, a rating is presented to reflect the degree to which the project has been successful in its implementation and adaptive management aspects. Finally, a rating is also provided to give an indication of the degree to which it is considered that the project results can be sustained, over a timeframe which extends beyond the life of the project itself. The descriptive section of the table includes not only a presentation of the project achievements, but also of continuing risks, as well.

8. This MTR forms a key element of the mechanism by which adaptive management of the project can be achieved: it is part of the "feedback loop" by which information is gathered which can guide decision-making, both to build upon and expand successful project initiatives, and by implementing recommended actions as "mid-course corrections" where weaknesses are identified. Such measures will ensure that the project is kept on a trajectory that will lead ultimately to more successful outcomes.

Table 1. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy¹	N/A	N/A
Progress Towards Results	<p><i>Objective: "to establish new wetland protected areas and to create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes"</i></p> <p>Achievement Rating: No rating</p>	<p>In the project Strategic Results Framework, the statement of the project objective is essentially a composite of the two outcome statements, and is practically identical to them in its content and meaning. This weakness in the SRF is noted and discussed in the main report, and a recommendation that the statement of the project objective be reviewed and revised is included.</p> <p>Due to the redundancy in the objective and outcome statements, no rating is given for the objective.</p>
	<p><i>Outcome 1: New wetland PAs and relevant systemic capacities for their effective management established</i></p> <p>Achievement Rating: 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p>	<p>The project has successfully put in place some of the enabling conditions which will be required for the establishment of two new WCAs, and for building relevant capacities for their effective management. Achievements include: drafting of a decree on conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, action plan on conservation and sustainable use; decision on wetland classification; inventory of national wetlands and listing important wetland areas, drafting of circular to guide implementation of the decree, conducting baseline surveys (biological, socioeconomic), assessing training needs, developing training program and conducting pilot training at national and provincial levels, establishment of national and local wetland working groups. Profiles of two WCA have been developed and consulted with different stakeholders to identify the key zones for WCA.</p> <p><u>Continuing risks:</u> Because of changes in the government approval process for legislation promulgation, it is anticipated that the proposed wetland decree will not be submitted for government approval until November 2018. Also, establishment of an economic zone in Thai Binh province overlaps with the identified WCA zone. Thus, more time is needed to clarify the boundary of the WCA and the economic zone, before establishment of the Thai Thuy WCA can be approved.. In addition, many other critical activities which are prerequisite to establishing and operationalizing the WCAs are behind schedule, either still in process or not yet initiated. Still awaiting completion are approval of proposals for the establishment</p>

		<p>of the WCAs by provincial inter-sectoral appraisal committees; establishment of WCA management boards; and formulation of detailed plans for the establishment, operation, and management of the WCAs, including financial management)</p> <p>Because of the concerns mentioned, it is expected that the project may achieve its end-of-project targets for this outcome, but these may not be delivered until after the project closure date.</p>
	<p>Outcome 2: Integrity of wetland PAs are secured within the wider wetland connected landscapes</p> <p>Achievement Rating: 5: Satisfactory (S)</p>	<p>Several specific activities for this outcome are on-track or have already been completed. This applies primarily to Output 2.1: <i>increased understanding and knowledge about wetland values, sustainable use and management across the wider landscape</i>. Accomplishments as part of this output are the preparation of a report on the ecosystem services assessment for the two wetland sites, and completion of a communications strategy.</p> <p><u>Continuing risks:</u> For several of the component elements of this outcome, some risks are present, due to a combination of internal (project-based) and external factors. One of these relates to mainstreaming of wetlands conservation and sustainable use (Output 2.2), especially at Thai Thuy wetland. This risk is a result of planned development for an economic zone, which has not yet been fully harmonized with wetlands conservation area planning. During consultations in the field, it emerged that there is some interest among provincial personnel to ensure that efforts continue for integration of wetlands conservation planning within overall provincial development planning processes. Further progress in this area would help to reduce the risk. Another aspect where some risk exists, relates to livelihood: although some sustainable livelihood activities have been initiated with project support (e.g., aquaculture and grow-out of crabs and fish in Thua Thien Hue lagoon), these have been somewhat limited and of small scale; they need to be diversified and expanded.</p> <p>For the reasons mentioned, it is considered that risks are manageable, and for this outcome, most of the end-of-project targets will be achieved, with only minor shortcomings.</p>
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	<p>Achievement Rating: 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p>	<p>Some, but not all, aspects of project implementation by ISPONRE and BCA have been acceptable. Delays in implementing some activities were experienced; these have been due to a variety of factors including delays in contracting and procurement; time for agreement on workplan among different stakeholders; time for development and approval of TORs; delays in submission of reports from consultants, etc. t;). It appears that the National Implementation Modality (NIM) which is being applied for this project has successfully resulted in conferring a strong sense of ownership for the project, for collaboration with local authorities and for capacity strengthening of ISPONRE and BCA. However, in some instances a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) might have been more effective, especially in circumventing some procedural delays.</p> <p><u>Continuing risks:</u> Some weaknesses were observed with a number of the implementation components (which include management arrangements, work planning, finance and cofinance, project-level monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications). As a result, adaptive management has been</p>

		<p>difficult when challenges have occurred. The NIM approach intentionally promotes national stakeholder ownership and independence from UNDP, by limiting UNDP involvement in project management. While UNDP has played an effective role in regular administrative functions in conformance with the Harmonized Project and Programme Management Guidelines (HPPMG) (e.g., review and approval of Annual Workplan, quarterly workplan and specific TORs for each activity), further intervention, in instances when significant issues arose, might have helped to improve project performance. Also, opportunities might be missed for addressing inefficiencies that could be overcome if the project were operated under the DIM. One of the MTR recommendations is to apply a hybrid NIM/DIM approach, which could help to reduce some of this risk.</p> <p>The rating which has been applied reflects the fact that some of the implementation components are leading to efficient and effective implementation, but others require remedial action.</p>
Sustainability	<p>Achievement Rating: 3: Moderately Likely (ML)</p>	<p>Sustainability has been reviewed from a financial, socioeconomic, institutional/governance, and ecological/environmental perspective. The degree of risk observed for the project was variable from one category to another. Some project actions have resulted in substantive improvements and it is expected that these actions may lead to a greater likelihood that benefits will be sustained over the long-term. This includes some gains which have been made in awareness of communities about the importance of wetland preservation, and some initial progress in laying the groundwork for establishment of the 2 new WCAs, such as the amendment/development of legal documents on wetland management (i.e., decree and circular drafted) as well as the completion of baseline surveys and profiles for the two WCAs</p> <p><u>Continuing risks:</u> While the project has demonstrated some accomplishments which can promote sustainability, there are significant weaknesses which pose risks in this respect. The main risks to sustainability are of an institutional and financial nature. Because of delays and conflicting planning actions, legal declaration of the WCAs has not yet been completed—this throws into question whether it will be possible to formally establish the WCAs before the project ends. Even if the WCAs are set up, no clear funding mechanisms have been identified as yet for their long-term support.</p> <p>For the reasons cited, it is considered that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review. The "ML" rating is based in part on the assumption that efforts which have already been started to identify reliable sources of funding for the operation of the WCAs, will be continued until the required funding is secured.</p>

Concise Summary of Conclusions

- According to the requirements defined in the TOR, this midterm review has followed a rigorous process to gather and analyze extensive data, in order to obtain fact-based evidence that is credible, reliable and useful for the purposes of the review. The evidence has been gathered in a number of ways and takes a number of forms (i.e., data reported in project documents, site visits, and stakeholder consultations being the main ones). Through this process, an objective view of the

project progress to-date has been obtained.

10. In its overall conclusion, the MTR finds that a range of actions have been successfully undertaken which have incrementally advanced the cause of wetland conservation at the two project sites, and more broadly on a national policy level. The main strengths of the project have been observed in the following areas:
 - Laying the groundwork for policy/legal framework reform aimed at mainstreaming wetland conservation into national- and provincial-level planning processes; and
 - Successfully conducting activities designed to build capacity for wetlands conservation and WCA management.
 - Development of profiles for establishment of 2 WCAs in TT and TG-CH and consultation with different stakeholders at the provincial level. The profiles have identified different zones within the proposed WCA sites, including the core zone, the ecological zone and the administration zone.
11. However, it is noted that a number of significant issues and challenges have impeded more efficient and effective project implementation, or, weaken prospects for achieving desired project results. Among the main concerns are the following:
 - Delays in procurement approval, finalization of Terms of Reference (TORs) for consultants, contracting and securing necessary government approvals and endorsements. These delays have in turn caused a number of project activities to not be completed or advanced according to schedule (most significant among these is the fact that, at the midterm, the two WCAs have not yet been formally established);
 - Continued isolation or “siloing” of project actions and flow of information—where there should have been closer coordination and cooperation between government agencies that have shared mandated responsibilities for actions and information-sharing relating to wetland conservation;
 - Weaknesses in performance monitoring and reporting; and
 - Concerns regarding securing long-term financing to support sustained wetland conservation efforts.
12. One other weakness, inherent in this review itself (and relating to the delays mentioned above), is the fact that the MTR comes at a point which is well beyond the mid-point of the project—in fact, the project is scheduled to conclude in less than one year from the current date (technically, the review should have been conducted about one year ago). As a result, there is less time to effectively make midterm course corrections, based on the findings and recommendations of this review, than what would be hoped for. This consideration is part of the reason why a recommendation is being made to extend the project timeframe (presented further under “Recommendations,” below).
13. In conclusion, through the midterm review process, it has been determined that there have been some important successes, but also, some critical weaknesses observed in the progress made towards achieving the intended project results. However, even with the constraints detailed here, there may still be time and opportunity to make adjustments that could strengthen the performance of the project and help in achieving the targets expressed in the results framework. It is hoped that by applying the recommendations which are included here, significant improvements can be realized, and some of the risks which have been identified can be reduced.

Recommendations

14. A summary of the recommendations which have emerged as a result of this MTR is presented in Table 2. The recommendations are discussed in much greater detail in section IV., A. of this report. It is expected that, if these recommendations are put into practice during the remaining project timeframe, significant improvements in the implementation of the project may be achieved, leading in turn to more positive project outcomes over the long-term.

Table 2. Recommendation Summary

	Recommendation	Concerned Parties
1	Extend the project timeframe	UNDP; ISPONRE/BCA
2	Strengthen communications and awareness activities	PMU; ISPONRE/BCA; UNDP
3	Ensure greater interagency cooperation and interaction	PMU, ISPONRE/BCA; MARD/DARD
4	Strengthen the harmonization of wetlands conservation within provincial plans and policies	ISPONRE, BCA, DONRE, DARD, provincial Construction Department, DPI
5	Ensure that business planning is a key feature of Wetland Conservation Area planning	ISPONRE/BCA; MOF, MPI, DPI; consultants
6	Promote gender-sensitive development	ISPONRE/BCA; DONRE/ project site coordinators; women and women's groups
7	Expand range of options for livelihood enhancement (e.g., value chains, certification and branding, etc.)	ISPONRE/BCA; PMU; consultant (individual or team); Local communities (e.g., through fishers' associations); DONRE/project coordinators
8	Review project management modality: NIM vs. DIM	UNDP, PMU
9	Ensure sustainability of NWWG/LWWGs in guiding future wetland conservation efforts	ISPONRE, PMU, DONREs
10	Review project strategic results framework and revise as needed	ISPONRE, BCA, UNDP, relevant stakeholders

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the MTR and Objectives

1. A Midterm Review (MTR) has been conducted to assess progress towards the achievement of the targeted objectives and outcomes of the UNDP-GEF full-sized project, “Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes” (also referred to herein as the “Wetland PA Project”). The MTR has been carried out in line with the UNDP/GEF *“Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects”* (2012).

2. The assessment carried out in this review is based upon factual evidence which is credible, reliable and useful. Most importantly, the MTR identifies and recommends changes that may need to be made during the final implementation phase, in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results.

B. Methodology

3. UNDP contracted the services of two consultants² to conduct the MTR in May 2018. The consultant TORs are included in Annex A.

4. The MTR has been conducted according to the methodology prescribed in the UNDP/GEF *Guidance* document. The main components of the methodology are described below.

Development of Evaluative Matrix

5. As per Annex 3 (ToR Annex C) of the UNDP/GEF *Guidance*, an evaluative matrix has been prepared by the MTR team, and is presented here in Annex B. The evaluative matrix presents the key questions that are answered during the course of the MTR. These questions relate to the following main subject areas:

- i) Project strategy;
- ii) Progress towards results;
- iii) Project implementation and adaptive management; and
- iv) Project sustainability.

6. The matrix also identifies:

- the various indicators which reflect whether or not specific conditions or targets are being met;
- the sources of data and information utilized to support the analysis; and
- the methodology employed in gathering the data.

7. Taking all these features into account, the evaluative matrix provides a clear and logical guide for how the MTR is conducted.

Document Review

8. The MTR team has undertaken a review of the documents which have been produced over the course of the project, and which have been made accessible by staff of the PMU. Project documents were made available to the team electronically through Google drive. Other information sources including documents external to the project itself, websites, etc., have also been utilized as data sources. Annex C includes a list of the information resources and reference materials that have been reviewed by the MTR team.

²² Mr. James T. Berdach—International Consultant, and Mr Pham Duc Chien—National Consultant.

Review Mission: Stakeholder Consultations and Other Mission Activities

9. The MTR team conducted a review mission from 2 to 13 July 2018. The mission enabled the team to visit the two project sites and make first-hand observations, and to conduct interviews and consultations with a range of key stakeholders. Annex D presents the schedule of activities that were conducted during the mission. Annex E contains representative questions that were used during the stakeholder interview and consultation process. These activities allowed for cross-checking of the “desk studies” of project documents. Annex F presents a list of the stakeholders contacted and interviewed during the course of this MTR.

Mission Follow-Up

10. Following the field mission, additional actions were undertaken to continue information gathering, verification and validation functions, and preparation of deliverables. These included continuing review of project documents; additional interviews and discussions with selected informants; “pre-submission” of MTR recommendations for review by UNDP, and PMU; and development of the draft and final MTR reports.

Preparation and Structure of the MTR Report

11. The preparation of this MTR report has entailed a thorough processing and analysis of the data which were collected during the course of the review team’s activities. The report follows the structure prescribed in the *UNDP/GEF Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews*.

12. Figure 1 presents in a schematic format, the four key areas of inquiry of the MTR, and how they relate to the methods which have been utilized to evaluate what the project has accomplished to-date, vis-à-vis its stated intended outputs and outcomes.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

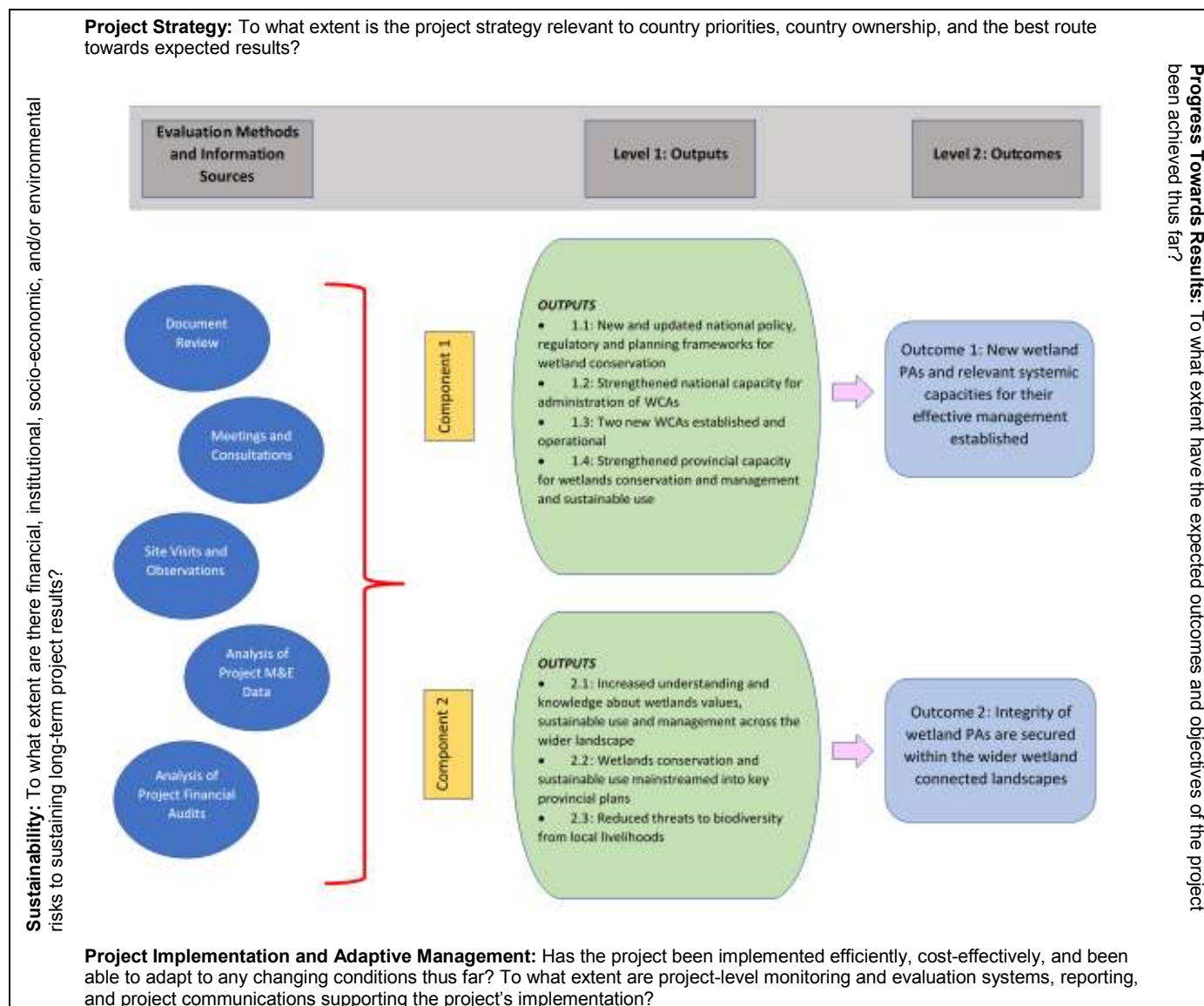
A. Development Context

13. Vietnam is richly endowed with wetlands, which are among the most productive ecosystems found on Earth. Vietnam’s wetlands are extraordinarily rich in biodiversity, and also provide essential ecological goods and services that support local livelihoods, and contribute to national economic development. Thirty percent of the nation’s land area is wetland, and at least 39 of 42 different wetland types, as defined by the Ramsar Convention,³ are found here.

14. Vietnam has established an extensive national system of protected areas (PAs) to conserve its biodiversity assets, but wetlands are under-represented in the PA system. This project will strengthen the national PA system by addressing specific biogeographic gaps in wetland coverage and will overcome deficiencies in wetland PA management. It will strengthen the PA system by tailoring policy and regulatory frameworks for the specific characteristics of wetlands and by putting in place a sub-system administration for wetland PAs.

³ The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands.

Figure 1. Schematic Illustrating Elements of Evaluation Process



B. Problems That the Project Seeks to Address

15. In the global context, wetlands are among the most important ecosystems in terms of the biodiversity which they support, and the ecological goods and services which they provide—but at the same time, they are also among the most vulnerable. The wetlands of Viet Nam are no exception. The major direct drivers of wetland degradation and loss in Viet Nam are habitat loss and ecosystem degradation due to land use change, including outright conversion and fragmentation of wetlands; ecological changes due to invasive alien species; pollution of wetland waters and soil; overexploitation of economically important species (overharvesting of wetland plants, over-fishing, and illegal hunting of birds and other species); and improper management of water resources (e.g., excessive abstraction of groundwater). Climate change impacts are also growing, and are likely to have increasing effects on wetland biodiversity in the medium to long-term.

16. The Government recognizes that one way of addressing the continuing degradation and loss of wetland biodiversity in Viet Nam is to ensure greater biogeographic representation of wetlands within the national PA system and to create adequate national and local systemic capacity for their effective management, including the capacity to address threats that emanate from the wider landscape. This latter consideration is particularly crucial in the case of wetlands given their vulnerability to changes in landscape-level connectivity and upstream developments. According to the ProDoc, the two major obstacles which currently prevent the achievement of this solution are that (i) critical wetland sites across the country remain outside legal protection and are under rapidly growing threat from other economic sectors that compete for land and water resources; and (ii) there are limited government and stakeholder capacities to ensure that site level conservation of critical wetlands is supported through wider landscape management for biodiversity. A range of systemic weaknesses contribute to these barriers, among the most important being: gaps in the National PA System; lack of clarity over mandates, roles, responsibilities and priorities for wetlands conservation; weak institutional capacity for wetlands conservation and PA management within MONRE; weak national and subnational coordination and cooperation on wetlands planning, management and conservation within and between sectors; insufficient understanding of the full value of wetlands or their vulnerability to threats arising from wider landscape; and lack of capacity to reduce threats to biodiversity from local livelihoods.

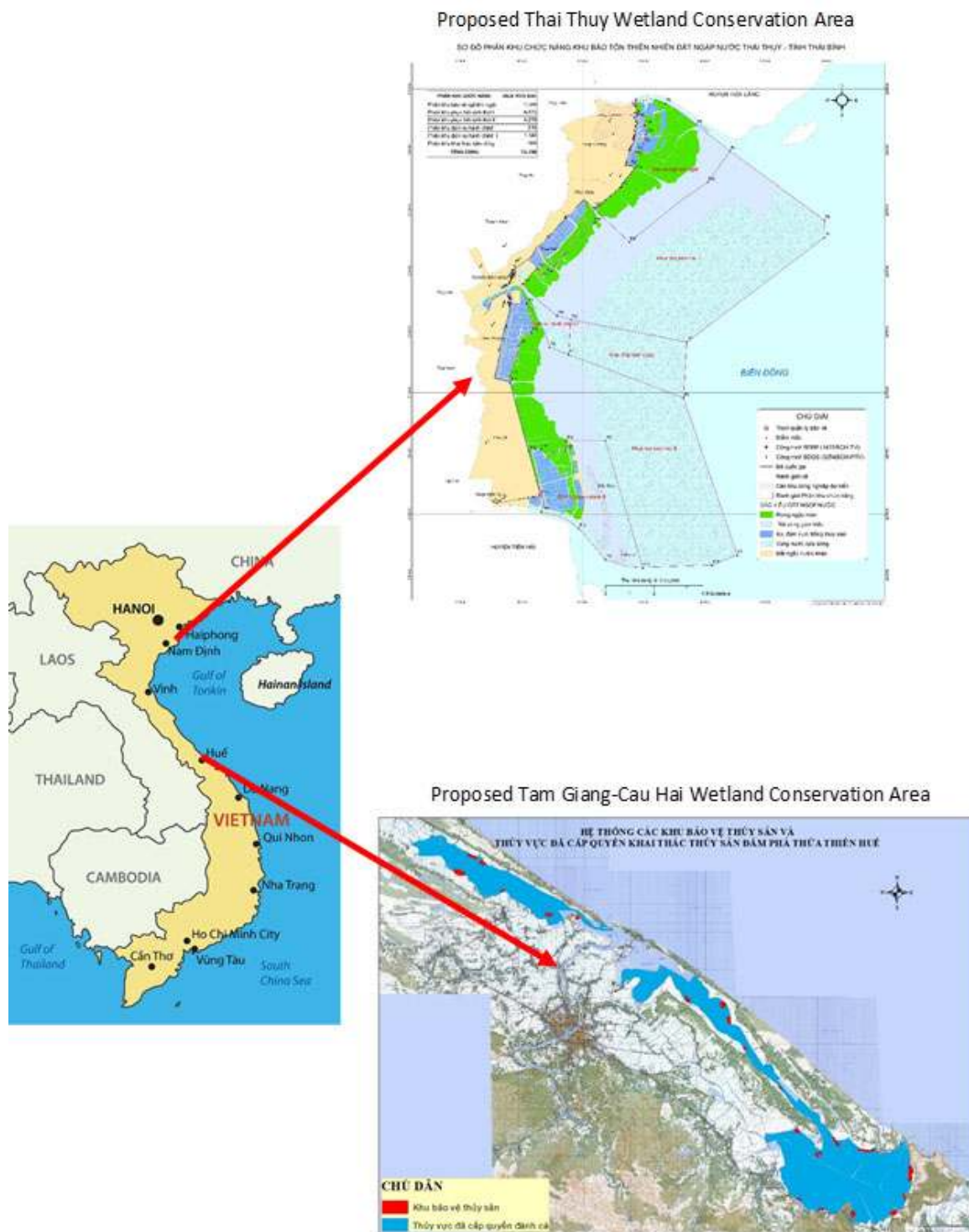
17. In an effort to address the barriers and weaknesses mentioned above, the Wetland PA Project has been designed to engineer a paradigm shift to manage wetland PA sites and activities in the immediate landscapes, to address both direct threats to biodiversity at the wetland sites, and those emanating from the landscape. This is because wetland PAs, as compared to other terrestrial PAs, are highly vulnerable to impacts from activities outside their borders (e.g., through water abstraction and pollution), which can undermine vital ecosystem functions within the PAs. To begin to address the problem of under-representation among PA sites, the project also aims to establish two new PAs covering two globally-important wetland areas: (i) the proposed Tam Giang-Cau Hai Wetlands Conservation Area (WCA) covering 21,620 ha in Thua Thien Hue Province in central Viet Nam; and (ii) the proposed Thai Thuy WCA covering 13,696 ha in Thai Binh Province in northern Viet Nam (Figure 2). Furthermore, the project is intended to ensure that management of the WCAs is effectively embedded into systems for sustainable management of linked landscapes.

C. Project Description and Strategy

18. The Strategic Results Framework (SRF) for the project is presented in Annex G.⁴ The SRF has as its main features the project objective, outcomes, and outputs. The SRF also presents indicators which can be used to gauge the degree to which the targets are accomplished.

⁴ Other than the annexes which have already been referenced in the text of the report, the following additional required

Figure 2. Location Map, Two Proposed Wetland Conservation Areas



annexes are included: Annex H: Ratings Scales; Annex I: Code of Conduct for Evaluators (signed statements of consultants); Annex J: Audit Trail (presented as a separate file); and Annex K: Signed MTR Final Report Clearance Form (to be completed).

19. The project has the following **Objective**:

“To establish new wetland protected areas and to create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes.”

20. This will be achieved by removing barriers that currently prevent the effective conservation and sustainable use of Viet Nam’s wetlands. Project interventions to overcome these barriers have been organized into two inter-related components that reflect the GEF’s focus on system-level solutions and on influencing behavioral change at different levels.

21. The two project components are as follows:

22. **Component 1** focuses on overcoming the existing gap in Viet Nam’s otherwise impressive national PA system, namely the inadequate representation of wetland ecosystems, which are being increasingly threatened by other economic sectors. In order to do so, activities under Component 1 are centered on developing systemic capacity at national and subnational levels for the establishment and effective administration and management of a subsystem of wetland PAs in Viet Nam, which is currently lacking. MONRE is the agency with state responsibility for biodiversity conservation and wetlands management. At the provincial level, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) has responsibility for wetland management. However, capacity within the wider provincial governments for planning and managing wetlands management, specifically to maintain and strengthen biodiversity values, has been limited. DONRE’s role in this regard is of critical importance since PAs within a single province’s boundaries are established and managed by the concerned Provincial People’s Committee (PPC). Therefore, under Component 1, the project will develop capacity for effective wetlands conservation planning, administration and management both within MONRE and DONRE as well as within other key sections of provincial and district level-government, through the following inter-related strategies:

- formal training on selected aspects of wetlands biodiversity planning and management as well as ‘learning-by-doing’, i.e., through the actual process of establishing two new WCAs; and
- by improving coordination and collaboration and thus synergies between the work of different government departments and agencies both at national and provincial levels.

23. **Component 2** addresses the lack of capacity among key stakeholders from government to local communities to effectively identify and manage threats to wetlands arising from activities and interventions within the wider landscape, particularly upstream in the catchments of their water sources, but also in terms of key breeding and feeding sites for migratory species. Effective wetlands management requires an approach that explicitly takes into account ecological and economic connections within the wider landscape. However, these critical linkages and the implications of wetlands degradation and loss are often poorly understood. There is also often limited knowledge of the potential tools available for managing and mitigating threats to wetlands biodiversity and promoting sustainable use and conservation. Component 2 seeks to address this particular barrier through a combination of:

- increasing understanding of the economic benefits of wetlands and the landscape-level linkages critical to their long-term sustainability;
- developing capacity to apply a range of mechanisms and tools for mainstreaming wetlands conservation and sustainable use principles into broader land use governance and development planning frameworks; and

- developing the capacity of local agriculturists and fishers to adopt practices and techniques that are more wetlands biodiversity-friendly with a particular focus on threats arising from rice cultivation, aquaculture, and fishing.

24. The project will work along two parallel lines: (i) at the national level; and (ii) by undertaking pilot work at two sites—Thai Thuy coast and surrounding landscape in Thai Binh Province, and Tam Giang-Cau Hai coastal lagoon and surrounding landscape in Thua Thien Hue Province. These two sites were selected through a process of applying objective criteria validated through national and local stakeholder consultations and field visits.

25. The delivery of these two components will result in the following two outcomes:

26. **Outcome 1:** *New wetland PAs and relevant systemic capacities for their effective management established* (total cost: US\$ 11.1 million; GEF US\$2.0 million; Co-financing US\$ 9.1 million).

27. **Outcome 2:** *Integrity of wetland PAs are secured within the wider wetland connected landscapes* (Total cost: US\$6.05 million; GEF US\$1 million; Co-financing US\$ 5.05 million)

28. Activities under these two outcomes will be focused at three levels of intervention:

29. working with national public institutions and agencies, particularly within MONRE, to develop systemic, institutional, and individual capacity for establishing and administering a subsystem of wetland PAs, which will be known as Wetland Conservation Areas (WCAs);

30. working with provincial- and district-level public institutions and agencies to develop institutional and individual capacity for site-based and landscape-level wetland planning, conservation and management; and

31. site-level engagement with local stakeholders, including local communities, to implement measures for the conservation and sustainable use of two demonstration WCAs.

32. Under **Outcome 1**, the following **outputs** are identified:

- 1.1: New and updated national policy, regulatory and planning frameworks for wetland conservation;
- 1.2: Strengthened national capacity for administration of WCAs;
- 1.3: Two new WCAs established and operational; and
- 1.4: Strengthened provincial capacity for wetlands conservation and management and sustainable use.

33. Under **Outcome 2**, the following **outputs** are identified:

- 2.1 Increased understanding and knowledge about wetlands values, sustainable use and management across the wider landscape;
- 2.2 Wetlands conservation and sustainable use mainstreamed into key provincial plans; and
- 2.3 Reduced threats to biodiversity from local livelihoods.

34. In pursuing the stated objective, outcomes, and outputs, the project is consistent with GEF Biodiversity focal area Objective BD1: Improve Sustainability of PA Systems; and Outcome 1.1: Improved management effectiveness of (existing and) new protected areas. The project will also institute mechanisms for sustainable financing of these protected areas, thereby directly contributing to Outcome 1.2: Increased revenue for protected area systems to meet total expenditures required for management

and Output 3: Sustainable financing plans. Component 2 of the project also contributes to Objective BD2: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors, as the project is supporting the integration of biodiversity considerations into land use management in critical landscapes linked to wetland protected areas. Especially relevant under BD2 are Outcome 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation and Output 2: National and sub-national land-use plans that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation.

D. Consistency with Government Plans, Policies and Programs, and International Agreements

35. The Project is consistent with the current plans, policies and programs of the Government of Viet Nam, and with several key multilateral international agreements to which Viet Nam is a party.

36. The Project is consistent with the Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) for Viet Nam 2011-2020 and Vision to 2030, and the Viet Nam Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) 2011 - 2020. The two strategies highlight the importance of achieving Viet Nam’s overriding national goal of attaining industrialized nation status by 2020 in an environmentally sustainable fashion and by moving towards a green economy. The SDS includes specific environmental objectives and targets relating to ensuring reduction in per capita consumption of ground and surface water, reduction in water pollution, mandatory use of environmental standards by selected businesses and production processes to reduce pollution, conservation of biodiversity and restoration of heavily polluted environments. The SDS also emphasizes the harmonization of social and economic development and environmental protection.

37. The Project is consistent with the National Strategy for Environmental Protection until 2020 and vision toward 2030 as the strategy sets the agenda for sustainable environmental management in Viet Nam. The strategy includes among its objectives the reduction of biodiversity loss and degradation of artificial and natural wetlands, as well as sustainable use and improved management of water resources and quality. It also proposes a number of specific measures for promoting improved management and conservation of natural wetlands, including proper survey and inventory, planning for establishing wetlands protected areas, identifying and addressing underlying drivers of degradation and mobilizing investment to conserve wetlands of international, national and local significance.

38. The Project is consistent with the Biodiversity Law 2008,⁵ Law on Forest Protection and Development (LFPD) 1991, the Law on Environmental Protection (LEP) 1994, and the Law on Fisheries (LF) 2003. All these laws, along with their associated decrees, decisions and latest revisions, have general provisions relevant to the management and conservation of wetlands and biodiversity.

39. The Project is consistent with Decree 109/2003/ND-CP “The Conservation and Sustainable Development of Wetlands”, which provides legal definition of wetlands in Viet Nam together with guidance on their management and use; one of the targets of the project is to promote the adoption of a revised, strengthened, and updated Decree and accompanying circular. The project is also consistent with the Action Plan on Conservation and Sustainable Development of Wetlands for 2004-2010, which includes specific objectives and prioritized programs and projects for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands to meet multiple policy objectives relating to socio-economic development, poverty reduction, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

⁵ The Law on Biodiversity (No. 20/2008/QH12), is essentially an umbrella law that is in the process of being clarified through a series of decrees, circulars and guidelines.

40. The Project is consistent with Prime Ministerial Decision No. 1479/2008/QĐ-TTg (Decision 1479) on “Approving the planning on the system of inland water conservation areas up to 2020,” issued on 13 October 2008. The Decision identifies 45 priority water conservation areas, 17 of which support significant biodiversity and rare aquatic resources of scientific and economic significance. These sites include most typical inland wetland types of Viet Nam, such as rivers, rivers in limestone areas, reservoirs, natural lakes, lagoons, swamps and estuaries. However, some of the identified ‘inland water conservation areas’ are in fact in coastal areas. Furthermore, four of the proposed areas, Ba Be, U Minh Thuong, Bau Sau and Ca Mau coastal areas, are existing Special Use Forests (SUFs) with management boards, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

41. The Project is consistent with Prime Ministerial Decision No.742/QĐ-TTg which approves the planning process for establishing a system of 16 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Viet Nam in the period up to 2020. It is also consistent with Decree 99/2010/ND-CP on Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services. This is the first national legal framework supporting payments for ecosystem services in the Indo-Burma hotspot and marks a significant addition in potential approaches to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Viet Nam.

42. The project is also well-aligned with several international multilateral agreements. In compliance with the requirements of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Government has adopted the National Action Plan on Biodiversity (NBSAP) up to 2010 with orientations up to 2020. The Project is consistent with the NBSAP, which contains specific targets for the protection and restoration of wetlands including mangroves, as well as for the sustainable use of biodiversity generally.

43. The project also supports achievement of a number of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, especially those under Strategic Goal B, “To reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use” and Strategic Goal C, “To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity, particularly.”⁶

44. The Project builds upon work carried out in support of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. In 2007, a new national wetlands classification system was developed by VEA⁷ jointly with experts from academic institutions. This system identified 38 wetland types in Viet Nam consistent with the Ramsar Classification of Wetlands. The classification facilitates comparison of the wetlands in Viet Nam with other international wetlands. As part of the project, MONRE will decide whether to continue using this classification for the development of a subsystem of wetlands conservation areas or whether this needs further revision and refinement, particularly to identify and classify those wetlands in Viet Nam of greatest global significance.

45. Finally, the Project is consistent with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals promulgated under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs represent an ambitious agenda to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development globally by 2030. Seventeen goals, each with a number of concrete targets, translate this program into action. The multiple benefits and services

⁶ In brief, the principal Aichi targets supported under Strategic Goal B are as follows: Target 5 (rate of loss of all natural habitats is at least halved; degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced); Target 6 (fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants managed and harvested sustainably; impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits); Target 7 (areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably); and Target 8 (pollution brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity). Under Strategic Goal C, the project will also help deliver the following targets: Target 11 (terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services are conserved through systems of protected areas, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes; and Target 12 (extinction of threatened species prevented and their conservation status improved and sustained).

⁷ At the time known by its previous name, the Viet Nam Environment Protection Agency.

provided by wetlands are essential in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, SDGs Number 6, 13, 14, and 15—respectively relating to ensuring clean water; developing resiliency to climate change; sustaining life under water; and sustaining life on land—are especially supported through wetlands conservation efforts such as those being promoted by the Wetlands PA Project.

E. Project Implementation Arrangements

46. The project is being implemented using the National Implementation Modality (NIM) in accordance with the rules and guidelines laid out in the Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guidelines (HPPMG) and Programme and Operations Policy and Procedures (POPP) of UNDP Country Office in Viet Nam.

47. MONRE is the **National Executing Agency (NEA)**, and is accountable to the Government of Viet Nam and UNDP for ensuring:

- (i) effective use of both international and national resources allocated to the project;
- (ii) production of the results expected from it as well as their substantive quality;
- (iii) availability and timeliness of national contribution to support project implementation; and
- (iv) proper coordination among all project stakeholders, particularly national parties.

48. Within MONRE, ISPONRE is the **national implementing partner (NIP)**, represented by the Project Management Unit (PMU), and responsible for day-to-day implementation of project activities. ISPONRE also oversees the implementation of activities by the BCA, and in the two project provinces. ISPONRE is responsible for mobilizing all national and international inputs and collaborating with other MONRE agencies to support project implementation, and organizing project activities in accordance with the agreed work plan.

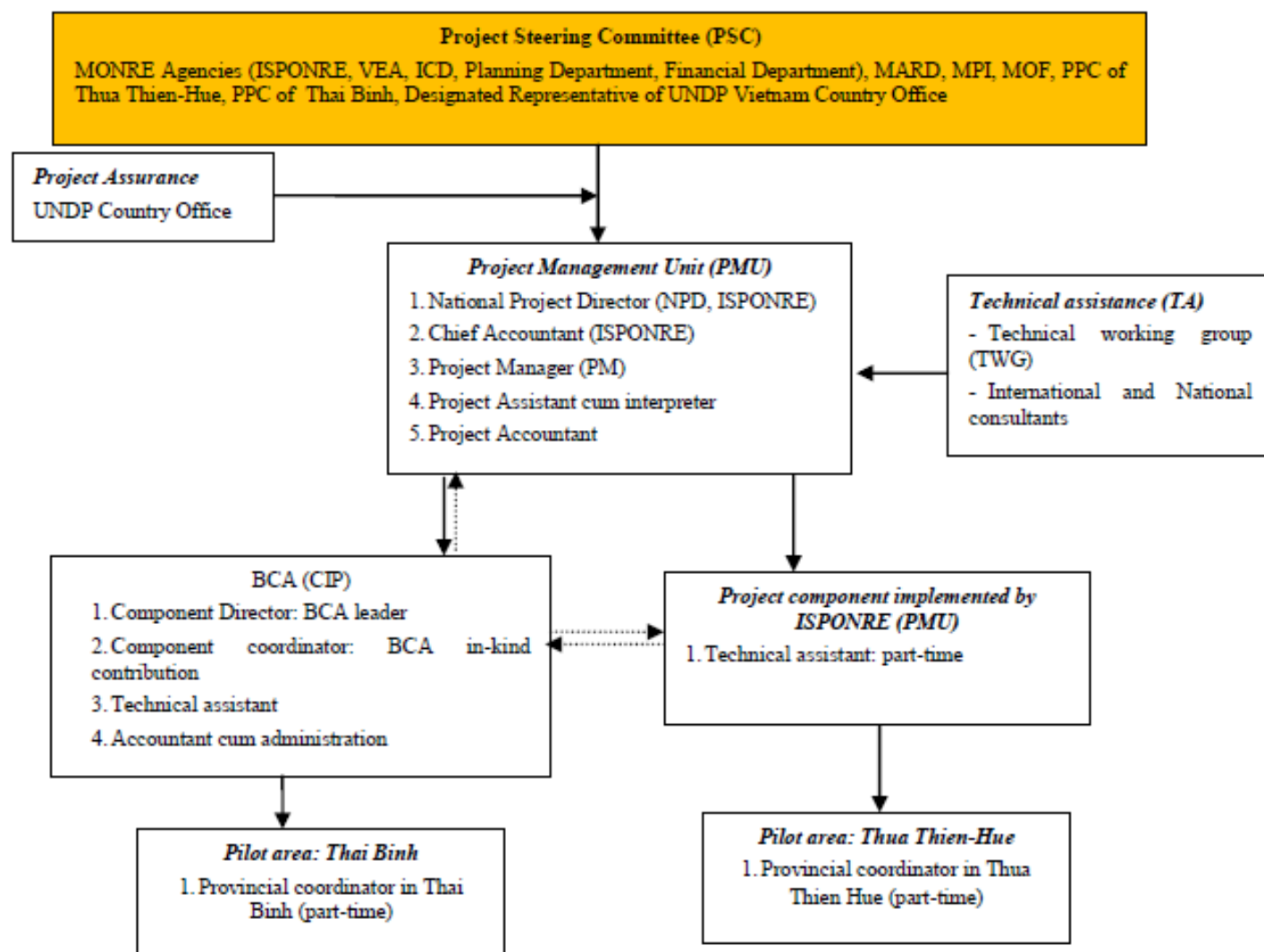
49. The BCA, an agency of the Vietnam Environment Administration (VEA) under MONRE, is **co-implementing partner (CIP)** for the project. The CIP is accountable to the NIP and MONRE for the successful implementation of its assigned activities, ensuring that the implementation of the Project activities contributes to the achievement of the Outcomes and Objective in a coordinated, efficient and coherent manner with the other parties. In particular, the primary responsibilities of the CIP are wetland policy formulation (Output 1.1), national level capacity building (Output 1.2), and support to Thai Binh province for the successful establishment and operation of Thai Thuy WCA, including activities related to wetland conservation and reducing threats from linked landscapes.

50. The two provinces of Thua Thien – Hue and Thai Binh are **cooperating parties** in the project, in which two DONREs are focal points for project implementation, with Thua Thien Hue province accountable to the NIP and Thai Binh province accountable to the CIP for their project-related activities.

51. The management arrangements for the project include the following key organizational entities or parties: a **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** to oversee the operation of the project; the **National Project Director**, who is responsible for achieving project objectives and ensuring accountability; and the **Project Management Unit (PMU)** to undertake day-to-day project management and technical assistance. These entities are in addition to ISPONRE as NIP and BCA as CIP. A sub-PMU has been established to carry out the activities of the CIP. UNDP Viet Nam is the designated GEF Agency.

52. The diagram in Figure 3 presents the project management arrangements in a schematic format.

Figure 3. Project Management Arrangements



Source: ProDoc

F. Project Timing and Milestones

53. Key project milestones are listed in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Key Project Milestones

Milestones	Expected Date	Actual or Revised Date
GEF CEO Endorsement		03 Dec 2013
Project implementation start date (ProDoc signature)		09 Oct 2015
Project implementation completion date	09 June 2019	

G. Key Stakeholders

54. Participation of project beneficiaries and key stakeholders in all stages of the project cycle is a prerequisite in the project design and implementation. Throughout its implementation, the project has engaged with stakeholders at various levels, from high-level government officials, to provincial personnel, as well as individuals at district and commune level. Engagement has also taken place with NGOs, academia, and other civil society organizations. A summary list of stakeholders, as identified during project preparation, is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary List of Stakeholders

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)
<i>Within MONRE:</i>
• Institute of Policy on Natural Resources & Environment (ISPONRE)
• Viet Nam Environment Administration (VEA)
<i>Within VEA:</i>
• Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA)
• Pollution Control Department (PCD)
• Department of Waste Management and Environment Promotion (DWMEP)
<i>Other MONRE Agencies:</i>
• Viet Nam Administration of Seas & Islands (VASI)
• Department of Water Resource Management (DWRM)
• The Viet Nam Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment (IMHEN)
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
<i>Within MARD:</i>
• Directorate of Fisheries (DOF)
• Department for Capture Fisheries and Resources Protection (DCFRP)
• Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST)
• Research Institute for Forest Ecology and Environment (RIFEE)
• UNESCO Man & Biosphere National Committee (MAB Viet Nam)
Local Government
• Provincial People’s Committees (PPCs)
• District and Commune People’s Committees (DPCs / CPCs)
<i>Provincial Departments:</i>
• Department of Natural Resources & Environment (DONRE)
• Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)
Local communities & Community-based Organizations (e.g., Fisheries Associations (FA), Farmers’ Unions, Women’s Unions and Youth Unions)
Government & Academic Research Institutions (e.g., Viet Nam Academy of Science & Technology (VAST), including Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) and Institute of Marine Environment and Resources (IMER))
Local & International NGOs supporting Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation in Viet Nam (e.g., IUCN; WWF; Marine Life Conservation & Community Development (MCD); Viet Nam Wetlands Association (VNWA); Viet Nature Conservation Centre (Viet Nature))

Source: adapted from ProDoc, Table 2.

55. During the MTR mission in July 2018, the review team met with numerous key stakeholders, with the aim of getting their feedback and comments in regard to project achievements and effectiveness, as well as issues and concerns which have been encountered, how they are being addressed, and whether or not problems persist. The names of the key persons consulted during the MTR, are listed in Annex F.

III. FINDINGS

A. Project Design and Strategy

56. Two key elements of the project design process, which are requisite for all GEF-supported projects, and which can help to ensure project relevance and strong support among stakeholders, are (i) building on lessons learned from other relevant projects, and (ii) taking the views, perspectives, and knowledge of stakeholders into account as part of the project design process. The Project Document (ProDoc) presents the general methodology employed during the process of designing the project. In Section 2.3.1 of the ProDoc (“Coordination and Related Initiatives”), similar or related projects are discussed, and it is mentioned that lessons have been drawn from these projects, to inform the design of the Wetland PA project. However, no specific lessons are presented or cited, so it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which such lessons may have contributed to project design. In the case of stakeholder engagement, the Stakeholder Involvement Plan (Annex 3 of the ProDoc) describes the stakeholders who were involved in project conceptualization and design, and the mechanisms through which they were engaged during the preparation of the project (e.g., series of workshop/consultations, field visits, meetings with stakeholders and communities) are presented. Thus there is reasonable evidence that stakeholders were adequately consulted during the design of the project.

57. During our review, it was noted that only very minor changes in the SRF were made, from the original version presented in the ProDoc, to the revision presented in the Project Inception Report—this suggests that the assessment of the framework and the feedback on the SRF may have been somewhat limited during the Inception phase.

58. While the MTR team found the overall design of the project as presented in the SRF to be logical, some weaknesses in the framework were identified. Among the key weaknesses were the following:

- **Gender:** Although promotion of equitable gender opportunities and empowerment of women is an important theme presented in the ProDoc, this is not captured in the SRF—there is no specific mention made of gender, no outputs or outcomes are explicitly aimed at promoting gender benefits, and no indicators contain any gender-dependent targets (e.g., targets for a certain percentage of beneficiaries of project activities to be women).
- **Indicators:** In some cases, baseline values for indicators which could be used to measure progress, have apparently not been established. For example, under Outcome 1, the SRF calls for the updating of the Capacity Development Scorecard for MONRE, to be done within the first year. For Outcome 2, also within the first year, baselines are to be established for water pollution levels in both provinces, quantified extent of coverage of clam culture activities at Thai Thuy, and catch per unit effort (CPUE) of rabbitfish (*Siganus*) in TGCH. According to information which the MTR team has been able to gather, it appears that some of the required baselines have not been established; in some cases the review team has learned that the indicators have proven difficult to measure.

In addition, according to UNDP/GEF guidelines, indicators in the SRF should be “SMART”, i.e., **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound, and the MTR team is tasked to evaluate how well the project indicators adhere to this guideline. A review has determined that adherence to the SMART paradigm is inconsistent for the group of indicators which have been established: while some indicators are **specific**, others are not, while some are **measurable**, others are not, etc. In general, the most consistent element among the SMART parameters is **relevance**—most of the indicators are considered to be relevant. Perhaps the most serious weakness is in the area of **attainability**—the fact that the design of the project was perhaps overly ambitious with respect to the key objective and output of establishing two new WCAs, leads to the inevitable result that the associated indicators will also likely not be attained within the timeframe of the project. This weakness is discussed at several points throughout this MTR report.

- **Risks:** Generally, risks are due to external conditions which are outside the control of the project. However, some of the risks described in the SRF do not conform to this concept, and should not be considered as risks. For example, the SRF describes the following as a risk: “NWWG and LWWGs are not effective due to insufficient interest and participation of key members...” However, the interest and participation of Working Group members is directly influenced by, and is a response to, the project, and in fact the effective operation of the NWWG and LWWGs is a target to be accomplished with the support of the project. Thus this should not be considered as a risk.

59. The issues mentioned above illustrate the fact that the SRF contains a number of weaknesses, which should have been addressed during the inception period. Further discussion of the weaknesses of the SRF, and how to address them, is presented as a recommendation in Section IV., A.

B. Progress Towards Results

60. The MTR team is tasked to provide an assessment of the project’s progress towards its objective and each outcome. The assessment of progress is based on data provided in the PIRs, supplemented by the findings of the MTR mission, and interviews with the project stakeholders.

61. To facilitate this assessment, and following UNDP/GEF guidance, the MTR team has prepared an analytical matrix to assess progress made by the project towards achieving the intended results (Table 5). The matrix summarizes the progress towards the end-of-project targets for the project objective, and for each of the two project outcomes. The information which has been entered into the matrix enables an assessment of the level of achievement, at the midterm, for each indicator that applies to the project objective and the project outcomes. Based on the assessment of the level of achievement, a rating has been assigned for each indicator. The ratings use a color-coded “traffic light” system to highlight the relevant cells of the matrix. The system is structured as follows:

- a) **GREEN**: target has already been achieved;
- b) **YELLOW**: target is partially achieved or on-track to be achieved by the end of the project; or
- c) **RED**: target is at high risk of not being achieved by the end of the project and needs attention.

62. In order to adequately interpret the findings reflected in the “progress towards results” matrix, additional explanation is provided in the paragraphs below.

1. Analysis of Project Objective

63. An analysis of progress was based on measurement against the project objective indicators which are presented in the SRF. The project has made significant progress in laying the groundwork for establishment of 2 WCAs. This has included the drafting of a new decree and circular for wetland conservation; reported development of an Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) tool to be used for monitoring wetland ecosystem health; completion of profiles for the 2 proposed WCA sites; and steps taken to ensure that wetland conservation planning is integrated into overall provincial development planning processes. However, accomplishment of the objective is wholly dependent upon the successful establishment of the 2 WCAs in Thai Thuy and TGCH wetlands, and while progress toward this goal has been made, the time and funds remaining to accomplish this are limited.

64. According to this analysis, it is felt that the project objective as presented in the SRF is overly ambitious given (i) the relatively short available timeframe, and (ii) the fact that virtually no enabling preconditions for setting up the WCAs were in place before the project began. Each of the various component elements of the enabling conditions—adoption of various policies at both national and provincial level; the integration of wetland conservation planning within general development goals, plans, and objectives; and the building of capacity to ensure effective management of wetland PAs—are individually and collectively major undertakings, and all are prerequisite to successfully establishing the PAs.

65. On top of these daunting tasks, the delays which have occurred in implementing project interventions have exacerbated the challenge of achieving the desired targets on schedule. With significant delays having occurred in a range of actions, especially procurement and contracting, as well as obtaining necessary government approvals and agreements, the time available for accomplishment of the project objective has been much reduced from the time originally allocated.

66. In addition, the statement of objective in the SRF is basically a repetition of the combined statements for the project’s Outcome 1 and Outcome 2. There is no hierarchical differentiation in the SRF between the objective and the outcome statements—as a result, in the SRF, there is no clear higher-level statement of a project objective. It is for this reason that the reviewers felt forced to give “no rating” for the project objective in the Rating and Achievement Summary Table (Table 1), although the objective indicators have been evaluated in the “progress towards results” matrix. Mechanisms for rectifying this weakness in the SRF are further discussed in the Recommendations section (Section IV., A.).

2. Analysis of Outcome 1

67. The main intended purpose of Outcome 1 activities is to establish two new WPAs and ensure that the managers and stewards of the WPAs have adequate capacity to manage them effectively. Given the fact that the statement for Outcome 1 repeats part of the project objective statement, it is not surprising that the analysis of progress for this outcome mirrors the findings for the objective. Progress made towards accomplishing this outcome has included:

- success in advancing changes to major wetlands-related policies, laws and plans;
- conducting a range of training programs and related activities aimed at strengthening stakeholder capacity for more effective management and protection of wetlands; and
- completing profiles for each of the two WCAs, including details about capacity needs for effectively managing them.

Table 5. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of Outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Indicator Assessment Key:

Target already achieved	Target is partially achieved or on-track to be achieved by the end of the project	target is at high risk of not being achieved by the end of the project and needs attention
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Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in most recent PIR (self- reported) (Based on PIR 2018 for 2017 unless otherwise noted)	End-of-project Target	Rating /Assessment	Justification for Rating
<u>Objective: To establish new wetland protected areas and to create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes</u>					
<u>Objective Indicator 1:</u> Coverage of natural wetlands within the Wetlands Conservation Area-subsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flooded grasslands and savannas - 0 ha Mangrove – 0 ha Estuaries – 0 ha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process of establishing 2 WCAs in Thua Thien Hue and Thai Binh is ongoing. In 2017 and Quarter I/2018, the Project has conducted consultative, thematic meetings with provincial/district authorities, LWWG and related stakeholders (approximately 16% are women, mostly from Women Union, Youth Union) to consult on multiple issues regarding finalization of profile, operational plan, monitoring networks for monitoring 2 WCAs biodiversity to be established for 2 WCAs. For TTH province, the profile for establishing the TGCH WCA has been sent to different line Departments at TTH provinces /districts for comments/inputs. In addition, the profile has been sent to MONRE to get feedback for finalization. For TB province, in the profile for TT WCA establishment, a total area of 13,100 ha has been proposed including 1,609 ha of mangroves, 6,280ha of estuaries, 4,700ha of tidal flats, and the rest 511ha of agriculture ponds and other land The profile has been submitted to Thai Binh People's Committee (PC) by Thai Binh DONRE via Report No. 16/BC-STNMT dated 19 Jan 2018 for consideration and further direction on the establishment of TT WCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flooded grasslands and savannas– 14,474 ha Mangrove – 3,024 ha Estuaries – 17,816 ha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has made significant progress in laying the groundwork for establishment of 2 WCAs. However, the "on track" rating is given with the cautionary note that, accomplishment of the objective is wholly dependent upon the successful establishment of the 2 WCAs in Thai Thuy and TGCH wetlands. With significant delays having occurred in a range of actions, especially procurement and contracting, as well as obtaining necessary government approvals and agreements, the timeframe now available for accomplishment of this objective is much abbreviated from its original allocation. It is felt that the objective as presented in the results framework was overly ambitious given the available timeframe. This aspect is discussed further in the section of the MTR report which addresses project design.
<u>Objective Indicator 2:</u> Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) monitoring systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TT wetland: 32 TG-CH wetland: 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EHI scores on monitoring wetland health have been assessed, with the 2016 baseline for TT WCA being 32; and for TG-CH WCA being 14. Monitoring indicators were selected to be used after WCA establishment in monitoring management responses to reduce threat to wetland biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of EHI and adoption at the sub-system WCA level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At inception, no baseline EHI scores were in place The consultant team could not find the documentation of the basis for the

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in most recent PIR (self- reported) (Based on PIR 2018 for 2017 unless otherwise noted)	End-of-project Target	Rating /Assessment	Justification for Rating
for monitoring wetland health developed and in place for WCA sub-system with a focus to reduce threats					numerical scores shown here, among the project documents that were provided. Furthermore, The EHI system has not yet been applied to reassess ecosystem health, since the establishment of the baseline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite the deficiencies mentioned, from available reporting it appears that this target has been accomplished. However, more precise documentation for the EHI scoring, upon which further verification can be based, is required
<u>Objective Indicator 3:</u> Hectares of landscape where impacts on wetland biodiversity are avoided, mitigated or offset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No planning provisions for the protection of wetland biodiversity outside formal PAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For TTH province, the project has finalized study on entry points for mainstreaming wetland conservation into provincial development plan. The study has identified and reviewed potential and suitable entry points for mainstreaming wetland conservation into provincial and/or district development plans and sectoral plans, and presented specific opportunities for mainstreaming in development plans selected for revision in TTH Province during the period of 2017-2020 such as: (i) Adjusted provincial land use planning of TTH Province to 2020; (ii) Biodiversity conservation planning in TTH Province to 2020, vision to 2030; (iii) Plan on Developing and conducting integrated coastal zones management in TTH Province in the period of 2016-2020; (iv) Implementation plan of development of Tam Giang – Cau Hai lagoon in the period of 2017-2020; (v) Tourism development planning of TTH Province, etc. Based on proposed entry points, the Project has initiated the following assignment to support Department of Investment and Planning (DPI), TTH province to identify the function zones and propose relevant effective instruments for mainstreaming economic development and conservation as an input to formulate the "Master plan for development of Tam Giang - Cau Hai lagoon in TTH province to 2020, vision to 2030" ("Master Plan"). For TB province, the project is in finalization process of identifying entry points for improved wetland conservation in socio-economic development and guidelines for mainstreaming wetland into sectoral/provincial plans. With the project support, the total area of 25,600ha of wetlands (including 12,500 ha of Tien Hai NR and 13,100ha of Thai Thuy proposed WCA) has been added to the amended provincial land use planning of Thai Binh to be the land for protected areas of nature and biodiversity (Government Resolution 34/NQ-CP dated 07 May 2018 on amendment of Land Use planning to 2020 and land use plan of the last period (2016-2020) of Thai Binh province); The project also provides inputs to the Cooperation Regulation on the management, exploitation and use of tidal mudflat in Thai Binh province 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 310,300 hectares covered by provincial development plans/provincial sector development plans where standards and guidelines supporting wetland values integrate effectively preventing impact on wetland biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As reported in the PIRs, significant steps have been taken to ensure that measures for conservation of wetlands are integrated into government plans and policies, beyond establishment of WCAs. Evidence gathered through personal consultations during the MTR mission appear to lend further credence to this conclusion

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in most recent PIR (self-reported) (Based on PIR 2018 for 2017 unless otherwise noted)	End-of-project Target	Rating /Assessment	Justification for Rating
		<p>with regard to sustainable use of wetlands....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also a plan is in the process for submitting PC for promulgation to provide targeted support to the implementation of the management regulation for the Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve in Thai Thuy District, in which TT WCA is located. Total area of the RRDBR is 105,557ha and the area to be covered in the plan in Thai Binh is 48,149ha including the 7,067ha of Tien Hai NR 			
<p>Outcome 1: <u>New wetland PAs and relevant systemic capacities for their effective management established</u> Outputs: 1.1-New and updated national policy, regulatory and planning frameworks for wetland conservation; 1.2-Strengthened national capacity for administration of wetland conservation areas (WCAs); 1.3-Two new wetland conservation areas (WCAs) established and operational; 1.4-Strengthened provincial capacity for wetlands conservation and management and sustainable use</p>					
Indicator 1: Changes to major wetlands-related policies, laws & plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of wetlands inventories and classification systems exist, which need to be consolidated, rationalised and updated. Decree 109 on the Conservation & Sustainable Development of Wetlands (2003) needs better alignment with Biodiversity Law (2008); the first Wetlands Action Plan period has come to an end in 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised wetland inventory using a unified classification system has been completed by the end of 2016. The project is currently working in the final report for publication. The draft decree has been finalized following comments from technical meetings and two stakeholder consultations in the South (Can Tho City) and the Central (Nha Trang City). The project has finalized the dossier for the development of a new Decree replacing Decree 109/2003/ND-CP in accordance with the Law on the Promulgation of Legal Documents in 2015 and submitted to the Government a proposal for developing the new Decree on management and sustainable use of wetlands in Report No. 116/TTr-BTNMT dated 22 December 2017. On May 04, 2018 the Government has the Official Letter No. 4050/VPCP-BNN to officially agree on the development of the new Decree and direct MONRE to work with relevant ministries to submit the Decree for issuance by quarter IV/2018. MONRE has set up the Composing Panel and Edition Team of the new Decree at Decision 1022/QĐ-BTNMT dated 28 Mar 2018. The Edition Team has met early June, 2018 to discuss on the new Decree contents. Currently, BCA has submitted the Draft Decree to VEA/MONRE Leaders for publishing the draft Decree on Government website to get inputs from the public and also other ministries and sectors. National action plan on wetland: The project is now in the process of developing the national wetlands action plan. So far, the draft action plan has been completed and being revised upon comments and inputs from consultancy meetings. The plan shall be submitted to MONRE for approval and promulgation by the end of 2018. The project has initiated the development of a Circular guiding the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A revised wetlands inventory and database using a unified classification system A new decree (& associated legal guidance) to replace Decree 109 that supports an ecosystem-based approach to wetlands management & emphasises importance of wetlands-related ecosystem services A new 5-year Wetlands Action Plan in accordance with the new Decree and Circular and replace the Wetland Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant steps have been accomplished toward reaching the target, and it is anticipated that the target will be fully achieved before conclusion of the project

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in most recent PIR (self- reported) (Based on PIR 2018 for 2017 unless otherwise noted)	End-of-project Target	Rating /Assessment	Justification for Rating
		implementation of the new proposed Decree on wetlands management and sustainable use. So far, we have organized meetings to discuss on the key contents of the Circular and shall sign the consultant contract to help develop the Circular	Plan 2004-2010		
Indicator 2: Capacity of MONRE to implement wetlands-related policies, legislation, strategies and programmes as measured by the Capacity Development Scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21% (To be updated in the 1st year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No updated Capacity Development Scores for MONRE were prepared during the reporting year. The project has completed capacity and training needs assessment (CTNA) for the national level. Training materials are in finalization process to be prepared for pilot training in Quarter II/2018. To maximize integration and common understanding for decision making along vertical command lines, training materials as feasible are being harmonized between national and provincial levels. At national level, upon the completion of training materials, one training course has been organized to the government officers at central level. Feedbacks from trainees have been collected and shall be a basis for adjusting the training design, contents, and materials for improvement to the next training tentatively conducted in quarter 4/2018. Thereafter, training materials shall be finalized for printing and distribution to all wetland-related government officers at central level in support of their daily work and capacity building <p>(from 2017 PIR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Development Scores for MONRE (overall 42%; systemic 38%; institutional 51%; individual 33%), for TTH province (overall 58%; systemic 60%; institutional 54%; individual 54%) and TB province (overall 42%; systemic 41%; institutional 41%; individual 40%) were reported in the 2017 PIR, however no further documentation to support this was provided to the MTR consultants The project completed capacity and training needs assessment (CTNA) for the national level as well as for two pilot provinces TTH and TB. Training materials are being drafted in line with priority thematic training courses and target audiences identified. To maximize integration and common understanding for decision making along vertical command lines, training materials as feasible are being harmonized between national and provincial levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 45% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While significant efforts have been undertaken to build capacity through a range of training activities, no measurements of any improvement have been undertaken by means of the Capacity Development Scorecard; more precise documentation of the application of the CDS is needed
Indicator 3: Extent (ha) of the two areas formally proclaimed and managed as the Tam-Giang Cau Hai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 ha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process of establishing 2 WCAs in Thua Thien Hue and Thai Binh is ongoing. In 2017 and Quarter I/2018, the Project has conducted consultative, thematic meetings with provincial/district authorities, LWWG and related stakeholders to consult on multiple issues regarding finalization of profile, operational plan, monitoring networks for monitoring 2 WCAs biodiversity to be established for 2 WCAs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21, 620 ha as the TGCH WCA 13,696 ha as the TT WCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At midterm WCAs are not yet established (see comments under Objective Indicator 1, above), however Provincial Governments are considering to soon approve the new PAs

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in most recent PIR (self-reported) (Based on PIR 2018 for 2017 unless otherwise noted)	End-of-project Target	Rating /Assessment	Justification for Rating
WCA and Thai Thay WCA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For TTH province, the profile for establishing the TGCH WCA has been sent to MONRE to get feedback for finalization. For TB province, after completing the Profile for TT WCA establishment, by the first quarter of 2018, the project worked with DONRE of Thai Binh to submit to the PC the Report No. 16 / BC-STNMT dated 19/01/2018 on the profile for establishment of Thai Thuy WCA, which was then followed up with the the Report No. 46/BC-STNMT dated 29 Mar 2018 and the Report No. 119/BC-STNMT dated 18 June, 2018 to urge for the direction from Thai Binh PC on the establishment of TT WCA and TT WCA management board In parallel, MONRE has issued the Officer Letter 1540/BTNMT-TCMT dated March, 2018 guiding the piloting of procedures and process of appraising the profile for establishment of provincial WCA. MONRE has also issued the Official Letter 2175/BTNMT-TCMT dated April 27, 2018 and 2755/BTNMT-TCMT dated May 29, 2018 to urge Thai Binh PC on the establishment of TT WCA. Thai Binh is working on the detailed zoning for the provincial economic zone in coastal areas (upon the Prime Minister Decision 36/2017/QD-TTg dated 29 July 2017 on the establishment of Thai Binh economic zone), therefore, the PC delay the establishment for TT WCA until the issuance of detailed zoning of the economic zone to avoid any overlaps in the zonings of two areas. Recently, DONRE of Thai Binh has prepared the Official Letter as directed by the PC of Thai Binh in response to MONRE Letter 1540/BTNMT-TCMT, which shall direct DONRE to work with the management board of provincial economic and industrial zones to clarify any overlaps in the areas of proposed TT WCA and the economic zone. One positive point during this time, however, is that the area for planned protected area has been specified in the Government Resolution 34/NQ-CP on amendment of land use planning to 2020 and land use plan for the last period (2016-2020) of Thai Binh province, with 25,600ha of both Tien Hai NR (12,500ha) and Thai Thuy WCA (13,100ha) as recommended in the profile for TT WCA establishment. The area of TT WCA is 13,100ha instead of 13,696ha followed the Decision 45/QD-TTg dated 08 Jan 2014 on master plan of nation-wide biodiversity conservation by 2020, with a vision to 2030, in which TT is planned to be a NR of 13,100ha.0 ha 			
Indicator 4: Income from various sources for the management of the WCA PA Subsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two studies on identifying threats/pressures to two proposed WCAs and income generation options have been completed which clearly identify the main pressures and propose specific income options to overcome pressures at two sites. For TTH province, the project is coordinating with Provincial Extension Center of Thua Thien Hue Province, DONRE TTH to implement the livelihood interventions for the communes around TG-CH lagoon. Specific models for income generation for the community around the core zones has 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from various sources covers at least the recurrent costs of TGCH WCA and TT WCA as defined by the business plans developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the accomplishments cited in the PIR relate to generation of revenue related to livelihood, not for covering the costs of managing, operating, and maintaining the WCAs During consultations, some stakeholders had indicated that steps taken towards identifying mechanisms

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		<p>been prioritized including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The model applied in the northern part of the lagoon: The interspersed cage culture of Grass Carp – Tilapia in Quang Thai commune (Quang Dien district) and Dien Hoa commune (Phong Dien district) ; (2) The model applied in the central part of the lagoon: Rabbitfish (Siganus) – Shrimp - Seaweed culture in Phu Thuan, Vinh Phu communes (Phu Vang district) and Vinh Giang, Loc Binh communes (Phu Loc district); (3) Replicated model of Shrimp - Crab - Mugilidae culture in Ru Cha mangrove of Huong Phong commune, Huong Tra district, to support ecotourism in the area. For TT WCA, the management plan for TT WCA management board has been drafted and being discussed with local agencies in Thai Binh for finalization in quarter 3, 2018. The plan will also discuss about the financing for the operation of the WCA and management board. The project is recruiting the consultant firm to support Thai Thuy district in designing and implementing the pilot model of sustainable clam culture. This model shall help not just to improve the livelihood of local community in the TT WCA area, but to mitigate negative impact from clam culture to the TT wetland. 	for each		for financing the sustained management, operation, and maintenance of the WCAs were quite limited, However PMU has contested this and asserts that the project has allocated sufficient funding for operation of the WCAs in the first year. Also, in the profiles for the WCAs, funding from different sources has been identified and agreements are in the process of being submitted to the PPCs for approval.
Indicator 5: METT scores in each of TGCH WCA and TT WCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TGCH WCA: 0% TT WCA: 0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As none of the 2 WCAs envisioned to be established with support of the project has been gazetted, the METT scores for both WCAs have not yet been updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TGCH WCA: > 40% TT WCA: > 40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a GEF requirement that METT scores be updated by the midterm of the project, and this requirement has not been met. As presented, the failure to complete this requirement relates directly to the fact that the 2 WCAs have not yet been established. This situation is problematic, and points to an increased risk that the target may not be achieved by the end of the project
<p>Outcome 2: <u>Integrity of wetland PAs are secured within the wider wetland connected landscapes</u></p> <p>Outputs: 2.1-Increased understanding and knowledge about wetlands values, sustainable use and management across the wider landscape; 2.2-Wetlands conservation and sustainable use mainstreamed into key provincial plans; 2.3-Reduced threats to biodiversity from local livelihoods</p>					
Indicator 1: Biodiversity conservation strengthened through monetary and non- monetary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comprehensive (evidence-based) valuation of the ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth studies on assessment and valuation of ES in the proposed TH-CH WCA and TT WCA have been completed. The valuation has assessed the value of TG-CH and TT. Two scenarios, with WCA and without WCA were proposed and compared to prove the value of establishment of WCA versus without WCA. The valuation has been used for demonstration for decision makers on the need of WCA establishment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EIAs of any major development activity in Thua Thien-Hue and Thai Binh Provinces include 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target already achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target for including economic valuation within future EIAs is actually outside the control of the project (this is further discussed in relation to the review of the strategic results framework); more realistically, the

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valuation of ecosystem services	services exists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the receipt of comments, the two valuation studies have currently been finalized for publication and wide dissemination 	sections referring to impacts on environmental services as a result of widely communicated assessment of the value of Tam Giang-Cau Hai and Thai Thuy wetlands' ecosystem services		completion of the valuation studies already represents accomplishment of the target and is so indicated here
<u>Indicator 2:</u> Threats reduced by mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and the PA system within the sectoral and development planning frameworks, indicated by effective intersectoral coordination and plans incorporating BD conservation measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No provincial inter- sectoral coordination mechanism for BD conservation and PAs at Landscape Level Provincial sectoral plans do not include adequate measures for BD conservation District Development Plans do not currently include any reference to wetlands values of TGCH or TT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For TTH province, the project has supported to conducting meetings of LWWG in 2017 and Quarter I/2018 (13% of LWWG members are women, in most meetings 15% are women) to consult on issues regarding the profile, LWWG mechanism, output of ecosystem services valuation. For TB province, the project is in finalization process of identifying entry points for improved wetland conservation in socio-economic development. A review on current sectoral plans/document at provincial and Thai Thuy district level have been conducted to identify gaps/issues related to wetland and also recommendations for wetland conservation mainstreaming points. Guidelines on roadmap for the province in mainstreaming wetland into provincial plans/document have also been provided. Provincial Sector Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amended provincial land use planning (Government Resolution 34/NQ-CP on amendment of land use planning to 2020 and land use plan for the last period (2016-2020) of Thai Binh province) has specified the total area of 25,600ha for protected areas of nature and biodiversity A plan is being finalized to submit for approval to support the implementation of the management regulation for the Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve in Thai Thuy District, in which TT WCA is located. For TTH province, all districts and cities, including five districts around TG-CH lagoon, will adjust their land use master plans for the period of 2017-2020 and their annual land use plans, based on the adjusted provincial land use planning supposed to be approved by beginning of next year. The District LU Plans for 2017-2020 are supposed to be submitted to TTH PPC for approval by June 2018. These are opportunities to mainstream wetland conservation and sustainable use into the plans. The district-level land use planning process will identify different land use options and will serve as the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Local Wetlands Working Groups with good representation from key stakeholders and experts established and supporting WCA Management Boards & PPCs more generally in TTH Province and TB Province to strengthen application of key standards & regulations that support wetlands conservation and sustainable use Four Provincial Sector Plans (Thai Binh Province: Agriculture and Aquaculture sectors; Thua Thien Hue Province: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target already achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TTH LWWG held 5 meetings in 2016 and 1 meeting in Quarter II/2017 to further discuss issues regarding the establishment of TG-CH WCA including baseline survey results, working mechanism of LWWG, overall work planning for development of Profile for establishment and operation of TG-CH WCA, and detailed elaboration of the Profile for establishing and managing the TG-CH WCA. The TTH LWWG serves as the collaborative stakeholder platform supporting consultations on establishing the TG-CH WCA and appropriate management regime as well as integration of wetland biodiversity consideration into provincial plans, programs, strategies and legislation as appropriate. The TTH LWWG was instrumental in enhancing the collaboration among provincial stakeholders, ensuring the consensus among line agencies and supporting the establishment of TG-CH WCA, including the WCA Management Board.

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in most recent PIR (self- reported) (Based on PIR 2018 for 2017 unless otherwise noted)	End-of-project Target	Rating /Assessment	Justification for Rating
		framework for all subsequent sector planning in the province and districts. The project is now supporting the assignment to mainstream wetland conservation into land use plans at district level in TTH and also supporting the TTH DONRE to develop a Multi-sector Regulation for integrated management of Huong river basin to enhance collaboration of relevant sectors and local authorities for sustainable management of Huong river basin.	<p>Agriculture and Fishing sectors) incorporate wetland biodiversity friendly standards for application in relation to activities under that sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 District Development Plans zone the different land use types within the WCAs and remaining areas within district boundaries. Zoning includes prescriptions for strict protection areas, among others, seagrass beds, mangrove and mudflat protection zones 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultations during the MTR mission, it was confirmed that steps are being taken to integrate wetlands protection within provincial development planning processes Although the LWWGs were active, during the MTR complaints were voiced that financial support was not sufficient to ensure the sustainable continued functioning of these entities—this matter should be given further attention during the concluding phase of the project, as it poses some risk if not resolved
<u>Indicator 3:</u> Level of water pollution levels around O Lau in TGCH & Thuy Truong in TT as a result of improved agricultural & aquacultural practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baselines to be established in Year 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of water pollution levels around O Lau in TGCH and Thuy Truong in TT has not been updated since the baseline survey in 2016. Statistics on water quality in Thai Thuy has been updated after the pilot monitoring of biodiversity indicators in the dry season. We shall update the statistics in the rainy season in 2018 for comparison. Basically, water quality in Thai Thuy is still within the regulated standard of Vietnam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in pollution level against the baseline levels. Targets to be agreed in Year 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While data may be presented in original research reports, to facilitate evaluation, data should also be clearly and comprehensively incorporated into PIRs; Reporting in the PIRs does not present the numerical baseline values nor the targets for specific water quality parameters; this shortcoming should be corrected before project completion After baseline measurements, only partial monitoring has been done; this shortcoming should be corrected before project completion

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in most recent PIR (self- reported) (Based on PIR 2018 for 2017 unless otherwise noted)	End-of-project Target	Rating /Assessment	Justification for Rating
<u>Indicator 4:</u> Extent of coverage of clam culture on the intertidal mudflats in Thai Thuy WCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline to be established in Year 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Decision 2602/QD-UBND dated 04 Oct 2017 approving the master plan for aquaculture development of Thai Binh in period 2017-2020, vision to 2030 , the total area for clam culture in the tidal flat of Thai Thuy district shall be increased to 2,312ha by 2020 and remain the same until 2030. However, the PC of Thai Binh issued Official Letter 4437/UBND-NNTNMT asking to stop the lease of tidal mudflats in Thuy Xuan, Thuy Hai for the project of adjusting dyke line #8. The lease of mudflat for aquaculture is also ceased to wait until the detailed zoning of the economic and industrial zone. The project shall continue its efforts to work with the relevant agencies in the province and TT district to determine the area allowed for aquaculture activities to ensure the sustainable use of TT wetlands, which shall be based on the profile for TT WCA establishment <p>(From 2017 PIR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The baseline value for mudflat area in use for clam culture in 2016 was established at 1,114 ha, mainly in Thuy Truong and Thai Do communes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No increase in clam culture on the intertidal mudflat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target partially achieved / on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress has been made in assessing the existing baseline, and in addressing conflicting “perverse incentives” existing in prior policy directions Further effort will be required to ensure that wetland conservation objectives are fully reflected in future policy regarding the extent to which clam culture will be permitted in TT wetland
<u>Indicator 5:</u> Catch per Effort of <i>Siganus</i> in TGCH WCA as a result of further establishment of aquatic reserves and Fishery Associations, ensuring use of appropriate gear and enforcing existing regulations on destructive gear and fishing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline to be established in Year 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Catch per Effort was assessed while conducting the study on identifying of threats to TG-CH WCA, however data has not been updated since 2016 <p>(From 2017 PIR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline value for the Catch per Effort was assessed as part of the legally stipulated inventory work for developing the Profile for establishing the TTH WCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in Catch per Effort of <i>Siganus</i> against the baseline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While data may be presented in original research reports, to facilitate evaluation, data should also be incorporated into PIRs; reporting in the PIRs does not present the numerical baseline values nor the targets for catch data Project personnel report that this indicator is difficult to assess; possible that re-evaluation of indicator (and replacement with an alternative indicator which is easier to measure) may be required (problems in gathering reliable data and difficulty to evaluate the data; reported failure to reliably observe <i>Siganus</i> recently may indicate that this species has already disappeared from the area) It seems unlikely that this target will be met

68. While these aspects of progress for Outcome 1 are significant, there are also areas where weaknesses have emerged, including the delay to yet establish the two WCAs; setting up feasible mechanisms for sustainable financing for the operation of the WCAs (though some preliminary identification of financing mechanisms has been accomplished); and completing the required METT tracking tools.⁸

3. Analysis of Outcome 2

69. Outcome 2 aims to ensure that conditions favorable for preserving wetlands biodiversity will be maintained, not only within the WCAs themselves, but also, within the broader surrounding connected landscape. As was the case for Outcome 1, while indicators are somewhat different, the accomplishments for this outcome generally support the achievement of the project objective. The project reports that valuation of ecosystem goods and services has been completed—the valuation studies are a tool which can be used to provide justification for provincial governments to investment more in preserving wetlands and surrounding connected landscapes, to protect the important goods and services which they provide. Principal accomplishments to-date include:

- steps taken to harmonize and integrate wetland conservation planning within broader provincial development planning, which can reduce threats to wetlands that emanate from within the broader production landscape; and
- Measurement of the extent of clam harvesting areas on intertidal mudflats of Thai Thuy wetland to enable monitoring of changes in the area used for harvesting.

70. Where the project has not been as successful has been in presenting monitoring data for (i) water quality in the two WCA sites (though it is reported that the data have been gathered), and (ii) obtaining data for catch of *Siganus* (rabbitfish) in TG-CH wetland. In the first instance, such data are important as a potential indicator of water quality improvements that may be attributed to improved agricultural practices on lands surrounding the wetlands. The data may actually have been gathered during the course of project implementation, but are not clearly and factually reported in project documents. In the second instance, difficulties in measuring catch per unit effort (CPUE) as an indicator of increased catch rates for rabbitfish have been reported by project personnel.

C. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

1. Management Arrangements

a. Management Structure

71. As already mentioned, and as presented in Figure 3, the project is being implemented jointly by two government agencies within MONRE, ISPONRE and BCA (which is a sub-agency of VEA). ISPONRE is the designated NIP, while BCA is the CIP, with ISPONRE responsible for oversight of all project activities, including the implementation of activities by the BCA, and activities in the two project provinces. ISPONRE is responsible for mobilizing all national and international inputs and collaborating with other MONRE agencies to support project implementation, and organizing project activities in accordance with the agreed work plan. As the CIP, the BCA is accountable to the NIP and MONRE for the successful implementation of its assigned activities in NIP-CIP contract and ProDoc was approved

⁸ The *Guidance for Conducting MTRs of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* explicitly states that “**The GEF will not accept an MTR report without the corresponding completed GEF Tracking Tool**” (page 3). Thus the fact that the midterm METT has not been completed for the Wetland PA Project may automatically cause non-acceptance of this MTR Report, until such time as the METT is completed.

by MONRE. While the PMU is the project’s operational arm within ISPONRE, the operations center with BCA is designated as a sub-PMU.

72. While these organizational arrangements are set forth in the ProDoc, it was reported that both the PMU and the sub-PMU have had problems in claiming VAT refund from the government as only project owner (NIP) can claim for tax refund. Up to now, the PMU has got VAT refund in October 2018, subPMU has got VAT refund for period from Oct 2015 to Sept 2016 but now the sub-PMU is working with tax authorities to claim for tax refund for Oct 2016 to Sept 2018.

b. Adaptive Management

73. The MTR team could not find many clear examples of how the project has practiced adaptive management. Certainly on the broader scale of overall project design and planning, very little adaptive management has taken place—for example, it has already been mentioned that the SRF has been little changed since the ProDoc, with the result that some of its significant weaknesses are still retained within the framework.

74. On a smaller scale, it has been reported that some adaptive management has taken place. For example, the MTR consultants learned that in Thua Thien Hue, local stakeholders were told of planned zonation within the proposed WCA, including the proposed boundaries for the core zone. The local stakeholders made suggestions to adjust the core zone, and their comments led to still some adaptive modifications within the planning for the WCA. For one of the national-level training courses, it has been reported that feedback from trainees will be used to adjust the design and content for future training events.

75. To be fair, in order for adaptive management to be put into practice, an effective feedback mechanism must be in place, whereby project managers can monitor project actions, receive information that will enable them to identify problems, and take corrective actions accordingly. A number of the intended monitoring tools for the project (e.g., METT, financial sustainability scorecard, capacity development scorecard) have either not been completed (usually these are required at prescribed intervals) or they have not been utilized effectively. These shortcomings are further discussed in the section on Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems.

2. Work Planning

a. Project start-up

76. The project officially started on 9 June 2015, and an inception workshop was held on 9 September 2015.⁹ The first PSC meeting was held on 9 March 2016.

b. Project Implementation Plan and Annual Work Plans

77. To the best knowledge of the consultants, no Project Implementation Plan (PIP) was prepared for the project; however an overall workplan is presented in the Inception Report. Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports were prepared for 2016, 2017 (draft), and 2018. Annual Work Plans (AWPs) were produced for 2016 and 2017. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) has met three times—in 2016, 2017, and 2018—and minutes of the three meetings (in Vietnamese) have been prepared.

⁹ According to the ProDoc, “A Project Inception Workshop will be held within the first 2 months of project start with those with assigned roles in the project organization structure, UNDP country office and where appropriate/feasible regional technical policy and programme advisors as well as other stakeholders. The Inception Workshop is crucial to building ownership for the project results and to plan the first year annual work plan.”

c. Issues and Concerns

78. One of the fundamental problems encountered in the Wetland PA Project, and one which continues to have significant adverse effects on project results, has been long and continuing delays encountered in a range of different functions. Among the various delays which have been reported to the MTR consultants are the following:

- Delays in finding, hiring and contracting qualified consultants (especially due to lengthy process for TOR development)
- Delays due to time required to get agreement among different related stakeholders
- Long processing time for procurement
- Delays due to the need to resolve conflicting policies and plans, especially at the provincial level
- Delays in preparing and submitting reports of the required quality
- Delays in various financial processes, including bidding procedures, payment of VAT, and disbursement of funds

79. To be clear, the fundamental underlying cause for delays in progress towards establishing the two WCAs, has been the need to undertake a time-consuming process for harmonization of conservation and development objectives, especially in Thai Binh province. The management issues described here, while secondary to the harmonization issue, have added to the time needed to implement key project activities, including the establishment of the two proposed WCAs. The failure of the project to take an adaptive approach, in order to solve the management problems, has led to a continuation of the delays. A number of measures are proposed within the Recommendations section, that could help to alleviate some of these difficulties.

3. Finance and Co-Finance

80. Various reports were referred to in gathering data on the financial management of the project. These included Annual Progress Report, Annual Financial Report, and “micro-assessment report.”^{10,11}

81. The project financing and cofinancing commitments, and performance to-date, are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Project Financing and Co-Financing

Agencies / Organisations	Fund type	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement (USD)	Actual amount contributed at midterm review (US\$)	Actual % of expected amount	Explanation
GEF	Cash	3,180,287	2,003,000	62.98%	
MONRE					
Cash:	Cash	20,000	20,000	100.00%	
In-kind:					

¹⁰ Moore Stephens LLP. 2013. UN Micro Assessment Under the Programme Cycle of One Plan 2012-2016, Vietnam. The micro-assessment provides an overall assessment of ISPONRE's financial management capacity.

¹¹ In consultations, reference was made to quarterly implementation reports as a source of information for financial management, however these reports were not accessed for the review.

Agencies / Organisations	Fund type	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement (USD)	Actual amount contributed at midterm review (US\$)	Actual % of expected amount	Explanation
ISPONRE	<i>In-kind</i>	442,000	1,564,854	354.04%	
Vietnam Environment Administration (VEA)	<i>In-kind</i>	3,063,600	6,171,022	201.43%	
Sub-subtotal, in-kind	<i>In-kind</i>	3,485,600	7,735,876	221.94%	
Subtotal, MONRE		3,505,600	7,755,876	221.24%	
Thua Thien Hue Province's People Committee	<i>In-kind</i>	2,924,000	2,005,406	68.58%	
Thai Binh Province's People Committee					Low rate since the project "Restoration and development of coastal wetland forest in Viet Nam - phase I" (2014 - 2022) was not implemented.
The World Wetland Day 2017	<i>Cash</i>	0	130,787		
	<i>In-kind</i>	6,442,000	470,878		
Subtotal, TB-PPC		6,442,000	601,665	7.31%	
United Nations Development Programme	<i>In-kind</i>	1,000,000	950,000	95.00%	
Research Institute for Forest Ecology and Environment	<i>In-kind</i>	100,000	35,000	35.00%	
IUCN	<i>In-kind</i>	400,000	10,000	2.50%	
WWF	<i>In-kind</i>	70,000	130,000	185.71%	
Hue University	<i>In-kind</i>	450,000	350,000	77.78%	
TOTAL		18,071,887	13,840,947	76.59%	

Source: ISPONRE/PMU

82. Information gathered during consultations was helpful in understanding financial management processes for the project. As stipulated in contractual documents, budget flow for project expenses goes from UNDP to ISPONRE to BCA. ISPONRE and BCA have their PMU and sub-PMU, respectively, and each of these has an accountant, who monitors financial issues. ISPONRE and BCA have entered into contracts with coordinators in each of the two provinces (one person per province), who are paid directly. All activities implemented in the two provinces are managed by ISPONRE or BCA; contracts are executed with partners in each of the two provinces by the two agencies.

83. Several partners are named as cofinanciers for the project. However, these partners rarely met with project financial personnel to discuss their commitments to the project. This is because their contributions are for the most part in-kind. For example, they may contribute to the project by attending workshops or meetings, or commenting on documents and project reports. They may also send experts to implement or participate in other activities of the project.

84. The PMU submits quarterly implementation reports to UNDP, and these are the basis of budget transfers to ISPONRE and BCA. The budget transfers sometimes are delayed because of delays in preparing and submitting the implementation reports. Other problems may arise with budget disbursements, due to:

- Bidding procedure: Due to some recently enacted new policies and laws, the processing for bidding packages, even small ones, can be a lengthy process. The PMU needs to get an annual

bidding plan approved by MONRE. This too, requires time, and if not properly planned ahead of time, will cause delays.

- VAT: Assessment and payment of VAT can cause problems and may delay project activities.

85. One other area of financial planning, not directly related to project financial management, has to do with planning for the sustainable financing of the WCAs. This subject is discussed further in the section on financial risks.

86. In conclusion, it is clear that a number of challenges have arisen with respect to project financial management. These in turn have had a tangible impact on the implementation of project activities.

4. Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

87. The ProDoc presents a detailed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) implementation plan with a total indicative cost of USD102,000. The M&E plan details actions which are required at various stages throughout the project cycle—at inception, quarterly and annual monitoring, at the midterm, and at the completion of the project. M&E functions which are listed in the ProDoc, and which are to have been conducted up through the time of the MTR, are to consist of the following: Inception Workshop and Inception Report; Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Purpose Indicators (with indicators to be finalized in Inception Phase and Workshop, and evaluated annually prior to ARR/PIR and as input to annual work plans); Quarterly progress reports; Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs); Risks Log; and Lessons Learned Log. Another specific M&E tool, required for updating by GEF at the time of the MTR, is the METT (tracking tool). A number of the documents listed have not been made available to the MTR consultants. Furthermore, where the required information is presented, it is not detailed and does not allow careful evaluation (e.g., lessons learned and risk "logs" are incorporated into the PIRs to a very limited degree). These findings lead to a conclusion that many M&E functions may have lacked adequate attention and may not have been completed to the desired degree of rigor.

88. It was not possible to ascertain how much of the indicated M&E budget of USD 102,000 has been utilized, and whether or not this budget is sufficient to fully cover all M&E activities. Anecdotally, the MTR consultants have expressed their opinion that the resources allocated for their engagement to conduct the MTR are not adequate to cover the full scope of services required under the TORs. It was also noted that funds for the METT are not included in the M&E budget, though METT must certainly be regarded as an M&E function.

89. No formal system for participatory monitoring has been established for the project. However, through various project-supported functions (e.g., training events, workshops, etc.), feedback is obtained from participants which could contribute to the M&E database.

90. One area where there is potential to integrate M&E functions within a national system, is through the wetland and biodiversity website set up and maintained by MONRE. Any M&E data generated through the project can be effectively and efficiently stored and disseminated through the website.

5. Stakeholder Engagement

91. The project has engaged with stakeholders across various sectors and strata, both within and outside government. This includes efforts made to engage with community members, especially in carrying out livelihood activities. Due to very limited time and resources, the opportunities for the MTR consultants to interview community members in detail were limited. What emerged from discussions with representatives of local communities is that they are aware of the importance of wetlands for maintaining ecological goods and services (e.g., providing important food resources, and preserving biodiversity, as well as serving as physical barriers for storm protection, hydrological regulators for flood

control). As a result, local communities are supportive of proposed actions (implemented by the project or through other mechanisms) which would preserve the wetlands.

92. The near-absence of gender issues within the project SRF has already been referenced in this report. Despite this shortcoming, at least some engagement with women and women’s groups has been noted—in at least one MTR consultation meeting (a meeting with members of Huong Phong commune in TTH) representatives of a women’s organization were present. It was also periodically reported to the MTR consultants that women have an important role in various livelihood activities within the wetland areas. However, no organized mechanisms have been set up to accurately measure the extent of women’s participation in the project (e.g., in livelihood training or other community-oriented activities), nor the extent to which they might derive benefit from project activities.

6. Reporting

93. Basic project reporting documents which have been provided to the MTR consultants included PIRs, annual reports, and several audit reports. The MTR team did not review quarterly progress reports but PMU personnel have indicated that without submitting these to UNDP, funds would not have been released to the project for advance disbursement, thus it is concluded that these were also prepared. Internal reporting functions such as those mentioned here are regarded to have been carried out to an acceptable level.

7. Communications

94. Effective communications are one of the most important aspects of successful project implementation—without clear channels of freely-flowing information, it is not possible to efficiently coordinate and implement project activities. Also, without effective communications, some key targets of the project cannot be achieved.

95. In evaluating the communications performance of the project, there are two components to consider—internal and external communications. Internal communications refer to communications among project managers. These may include personnel within several different agencies or departments. For the Wetlands PA project, internal communications occur between UNDP, ISPONRE, BCA, PMU, project steering committee, provincial project coordinators, and consultants to the project. External communications refer to communications from the project to other stakeholders. Usually this would include any transfer of information that promotes public awareness of the project, or contributes to knowledge about the subject, namely, the sustainable management of wetlands.

Internal Communications

96. Internal communications may occur through face-to-face interactions; written communications; and various electronic media (file-sharing, internet, teleconferencing, etc.). Direct evidence that can serve to inform an evaluation about internal communications is mainly limited to meeting minutes and reports. A review of such documents which have been provided to the MTR consultants suggests that the internal communications have proceeded according to expectations. For example, PSC meetings have been held periodically, and minutes of those meetings have been prepared. It has been reported that other types of internal coordination meetings have been conducted as needed. The internal communication functioning of the project is considered to be satisfactory.

External Communications

97. External communications can be effected across a range of media, including films and print media, videos, TV and radio, public service announcements, websites, and internet. External communications also are closely tied to a variety of human interactions including one-on-one or group meetings and discussions, workshops, training, seminars, and special events.

98. The performance of the project with respect to external communications has not been consistent—in some cases the project has undertaken effective external communications and in other cases it has fallen short. Among the points (positive or negative) that were highlighted to the MTR consultants during the course of the review:

- A “Wetlands Conservation Communications Strategy” was prepared for the project in 2017. While it was pointed out by stakeholders that a required communications action plan has not been prepared, the communications strategy has identified specific communications activities and budget for those activities, through which the strategy could be put into effect in an organized and integrated manner.
- While leaflets and brochures were prepared to raise awareness about wetlands conservation, apparently, the distribution of these materials must have been somewhat limited. A number of people who were interviewed expressed a desire to have access to such materials, but were not aware that such materials had been produced.
- Other important stakeholders (including key NGOs and government agencies such as MARD) were not kept fully informed about project activities, and sometimes confused the Wetlands PA project with other initiatives of ISPONRE and BCA.
- The project was instrumental in supporting “World Wetlands Day” events that were hosted in Thai Binh. These events were considered to be very successful, with over 1,000 people participating.

99. From the above accounting of the project’s communications actions, it can be concluded that the project had mixed effectiveness in this regard. Further discussion regarding communications is included in the recommendations.

D. Sustainability

100. There is a direct, inverse relationship between project risks and sustainability: fewer risks, or risks of lesser severity, translate to a higher probability of project success and sustainability. The risks, and how these affect the prospects for sustainability, were taken into account during the design of the project. The project risks were presented in Table 6 of the ProDoc (along with a rating of their level, and possible mitigation measures). The identified risks included:

- i) Mainstreaming wetland biodiversity conservation into landscape-level development plans and other existing frameworks hindered by competing interests/lack of incentives (medium risk)
- ii) The effects of climate change degrade the conservation value of wetlands and the new WCAs (low to medium risk)
- iii) Government institutions are unable to agree on their respective roles & responsibilities with regard to WCA establishment and management (low risk)
- iv) NWWG and LWWGs are not effective due to insufficient interest and participation of key members and are thus unable to take wetlands agenda forward in a coordinated and strategic manner (medium to low risk)
- v) Local communities will not participate in wetland conservation because they fear this will lead to reduced access to use of natural resources (medium to low risk)
- vi) The benefits of competing landuses are perceived by planners and decision-makers to outweigh their costs in terms of wetlands degradation and loss (medium to high risk)

- vii) Local community engagement in wetlands planning, management and sustainable use is hindered by lack of capacity among key government stakeholders within the People's Committees and government departments at subnational level to effectively promote and strengthen such engagement (medium to low risk)
- viii) Increased and uncontrolled water transport and fishing vessels (ships and boats) (medium to low risk)
- ix) Unforeseen larger developments outside the control of project and the Government cause major wetlands degradation and loss at site-level or within wider landscape with knock-on effects on the new WCAs (e.g., a major oil spill at sea) (low risk)

101. Some of the persistent risks which were identified during the MTR are further discussed here, in the context of their impact upon the sustainability of the project.

Financial Risks

102. It was reported to the MTR consultants that under current conditions, there will likely be only limited budgetary resources available for the operation of the two WCAs, once they have been established. Support from the project will only cover some of the initial costs for planning, but once the WCAs are set up, the operational, maintenance, and management costs must be borne by the provinces.

103. Some financial planning has been integrated into the overall management planning process for the WCAs. There are a number of options for generating or sourcing funds which could help to cover the costs of operating the WCAs, including user fees, national government budgetary allocations, taxes, payment for ecosystem services (PES), and environmental trust funds, among others. These options need to be studied carefully and decisions made as to which of these mechanisms would be the most suitable one(s) to employ. It may also be necessary to enact new regulations in order to support and operationalize such mechanisms (e.g., through taxation, establishment of fees, etc.).

104. While it is true that under the project, economic valuation studies have been completed for the wetland areas, this is only an initial step that can serve as a basis for further financial planning. For this reason, it is considered that there is not sufficient financial preparedness, which potentially can put the fate of the WCAs at risk.

105. The financial issues described here are considered to pose a **medium to high risk** to project sustainability.

Socio-Economic Risks

106. From the information that could be gathered during the MTR, it appears that the project worked well at the local, grass-roots level. Activities that were focused in the area of livelihood development were implemented within the communes at the two project sites. In general, community members expressed satisfaction with the project, and appeared to be knowledgeable about the linkage between maintaining the ecological health of wetlands, and preserving their own opportunities to practice sustainable livelihoods. Because of this sound foundation at the grass-roots level, socioeconomic risks have been minimized.

107. However, one area within the social dimension which was judged to be weak, and which has already been mentioned, is the area of gender. The attention given to women's issues and concerns has been quite limited. This weakness poses some risk that women as a group could feel disenfranchised and marginalized, and as a result, might not lend their full support or participation to activities designed to support improved management of the wetlands.

108. The socioeconomic weakness in adequately addressing gender concerns, is considered to pose a **low risk** to project sustainability.

Institutional and Governance Risks

109. Institutional and governance issues pose some of the more persistent risks which threaten the ability of the project to achieve its intended results, and to ensure that those results, if realized, will be sustainable. This applies both at the central and provincial level.

110. At the central level, the “siloeing” of functions between different government agencies—most notably, MONRE and MARD—weakens the beneficial impact of actions that either agency takes on its own. The mandates of the two agencies are quite closely related, and they should be complementary. If cooperation and coordination between the two agencies were closer, greater synergies would result, and this in turn would lead to actions having much greater impact on the ground. While some efforts have been made that have been within the scope of the project’s activities to encourage cooperation (e.g., through the participation of MARD in the PSC), they have not been sufficient to overcome the tendency for the two agencies to function quite autonomously.

111. At the provincial level, the inconsistencies between various government planning processes have been noted. This is exemplified, in particular, by the conflict which exists between wetland conservation planning and overall economic development planning (especially as concerns development of the proposed industrial estate, juxtaposed against the establishment of the Thai Thuy WCA in Thai Binh province). In this instance, though, there is some cause for optimism: definite steps have been taken by provincial agencies, to try to make sure that wetland conservation planning is integrated within broader provincial economic development planning processes. While it has taken considerable time and effort to address the disparities between these two planning processes, it seems quite possible that ultimately, they can be reconciled. This would avert the risk, and could even serve as an example of best practice for local-level conservation planning efforts. This issue will be resolved when the provincial government harmonizes the economic zone and protected area boundaries.

112. Finally, for improved sustainability, PAs must be institutionalized and appropriately positioned in the institutional landscape, in such a way that they can conserve biodiversity even when the political context changes. The legal framework, policies, and governance processes must support the sustenance of the project benefits. The difficulties of accomplishing this objective are exemplified by the project—it has taken considerable time and effort, just to lay the groundwork for the creation of the two proposed WCAs. At the project midterm, there is still considerable work to be done until the two WCAs are formally established and institutionalized. Only when this is accomplished, with adequate provisions for their continued financial support and effective management in place, will their sustainability be more assured.

113. The institutional and governance issues presented here are considered to pose a **medium risk** to project sustainability.

Ecological and Environmental Risks

114. The MTR team studied the environmental risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes. The most immediate threat comes from continuing incompatible land uses and development thrusts within and adjacent to the areas intended for designation as WCAs. As already described, some steps supported through the project are being taken to prevent such conflicting land uses. These include:

- Conducting economic valuation studies to demonstrate the high economic value of the wetlands, in terms of the ecological goods and services which they provide. In many cases, such studies can demonstrate that the economic benefits of protecting intact wetland ecosystems outweigh the perceived benefits of converting wetlands for other uses (e.g., residential/ commercial/

industrial). This knowledge can profoundly influence decision-makers to invest in the protection of valuable wetland areas, where they may not have without having such insights.

- Promoting cooperation among various departments at the provincial level, to ensure that wetland conservation is integrated within broader economic development planning for the provinces.

115. Despite such efforts, there is still strong pressure to develop areas within and adjacent to wetlands in ways which may be detrimental to preserving their rich biodiversity resources and their ecological functionality. Thus it is likely that continued effort will be needed to ensure that damaging conflicting land uses in and around the wetlands are minimized. For this reason, the ecological and environmental factors described here are rated as **medium to high risk**.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

A. Recommendations

116. Emerging from this MTR are a series of 10 recommendations which are intended to respond to challenges or to provide mechanisms to correct weaknesses that could ultimately lead to improved results. A listing of the recommendations has been presented in Table 2 of the Executive Summary. In the paragraphs that follow, more detailed descriptions of the recommendations are provided.

1. Extend the project timeframe

117. The principal outcome that is targeted by the project is the establishment of two new Wetland Conservation Areas (WCAs). While there has been definite progress made in laying the groundwork for this outcome (e.g., conducting baseline surveys and profiles, drafting of new government decree on establishment and management of WCAs and circular for guiding the new decree), some delays have occurred for a variety of reasons (e.g., contracting delays, unresolved conflicts between disparate government plans [especially, wetland conservation planning vs. economic zone development in Thai Binh Province]). In order to achieve this critical project outcome, more time is needed to complete the project activities that support it. Therefore, it is recommended that the project timeframe be extended for an additional year, at no additional cost. During the remaining period of project implementation, it is essential that all efforts for the processing and final adoption of the new Decree will be accelerated, and that all other enabling actions required to establish the new WCAs will be undertaken in a timely manner.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

118. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:

- In consultation with ISPONRE/BCA, UNDP Viet Nam prepare request for extension to be submitted to UNDP-GEF
- ISPONRE/BCA conduct advocacy activities for resolving outstanding issues for establishment of WCAs (especially in Thai Thuy wetland)
- ISPONRE/BCA conduct internal procedures to get endorsement for extension from government
- UNDP-GEF Executive Coordinator grant extension request

2. Strengthen communications and awareness activities

119. To date, although some mechanisms have been established for sharing information about the project among relevant stakeholders, both at national and local levels, this effort has not been as

successful as would have been hoped or expected. By and large, only stakeholders who have been directly involved in project activities (e.g., through the PSC and WWGs, workshops, training, meetings, surveys, etc.) have any significant awareness of the project, its objectives, and activities. Quite a number of relevant stakeholders in Ha Noi, with whom the review team met (and who have responsibilities closely related to wetlands management), were not aware of it. Others at the provincial, district and commune level did not know much about the project, either.

120. During interviews with provincial personnel (DONRE) at the two project sites, the midterm review consultants inquired whether some of the standard activities which are used to facilitate better communications with stakeholders in the local communities had been conducted, e.g., through distribution of brochures, showing of films or videos, hosting of special events, etc. The respondents indicated that they would like to carry out such activities, but did not have the resources to do so. This highlights a gap, between the willingness to conduct essential activities for promoting improved communications about conservation of wetlands, and the ability to do so. This gap in turn suggests that further support from the project is needed to promote more effective communications.

121. The Project has implemented some communications and awareness activities, such as information-sharing through meetings, workshops, and public broadcasts at communes. Through collaboration with Thai Binh PPC and DONRE, a World Wetland Day activity was organized in 2016 which brought together more than 1000 participants, including representatives from PPC, relevant Ministries, Departments, international organizations, institutes, the press, and community people. Policy briefs on economic valuation of ecosystem services in two pilot areas have been produced. Factsheets on wetland functions and project brochures have been printed. The project website has been developed and operated. However, the website is not easily located through use of the Google online search engine. The project has also prepared a communications strategy. While it was pointed out by stakeholders that a required communications action plan has not been prepared, the communications strategy has identified specific communications activities and budget for those activities.

122. It is recommended that efforts be undertaken to strengthen project communications and awareness-raising. To accomplish this, the first step will be to complete the required communications action plan, with main actions following the recommendations made in the communications strategy. This will help to ensure that measures taken to enhance communications are carried out in a coordinated manner. Among the priority steps to be undertaken, which should be incorporated into the action plan, are the following:

- For sustainability, the project website should be embedded in the MONRE website, and linked to the UNDP website. The website should be formatted so as to ensure that it is recognized as a priority site for Vietnam wetlands, through keyword searches on Google or other standard search engines.
- Conduct more outreach activities, including, for example, films/videos, advertisements, and TV public service announcements. Other activities, such as activities linked to World Wetland Day (which the project supported on a one-time basis, through mangrove planting at Thai Thuy wetland), to be organized and institutionalized for regular implementation.
- Produce and disseminate a range of informational multimedia products (e.g., brochures, posters, videos, CDs, etc.).
- Explore and develop mechanisms for increasing public familiarity with the project. This could include the development of a logo to represent the project, or to represent Vietnam's wetlands. Other similar mechanisms for 'branding' of the project should be explored.

- Develop messaging about the importance of wetlands. The messages should be scripted and recorded; broadcasting of relevant messaging at communes in the two project areas (and in other communes nationwide, which are adjacent to wetland sites) should be continued.
- Explore possibilities to tie project activities to educational programs (e.g., through primary/secondary schools, and colleges/universities). This could involve inclusion of wetlands information and knowledge products in school curricula; production of educational materials specifically targeted at students; and sponsorship of special educational events.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

123. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:

- PMU to coordinate with UNDP’s Media and Communications Analyst to prepare the Communications Action Plan.
- PMU to ensure that adequate budgetary resources are allocated to fund priority requirements for improved communications.
- PMU to contract services of a communications specialist to undertake the development of appropriate communications multimedia materials, as well as special programs, as mentioned above.
- ISPONRE/BCA to engage with the other potential partners (e.g., Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) to explore opportunities for developing and sharing knowledge products to promote greater awareness about wetlands ecology and conservation.

3. Ensure greater interagency cooperation and interaction

124. Some significant overlaps exist in the mandates and areas of responsibility of MONRE and MARD, with respect to management and preservation of wetlands, marine resources, and biodiversity.

125. MARD has a long history of protected area management: its first National Park (Cuc Phuong National Park) was established in 1962. Currently, MARD manages the system of special use forests (protected areas), including marine protected areas. As a result, MARD manages forests, fishery and some of the water areas where high biodiversity occurs.

126. On the other hand, according to the Biodiversity Law (2008), biodiversity management is the mandated responsibility assigned to MONRE. MONRE also manages state lands where forests and water areas occur and biodiversity in PAs. According to mandate (Decree 36/2017/ND-CP and Decree 65/2010/ND-CP), MONRE manages directly the wetland protected areas.

127. This creates a situation where the actions of the two agencies are fragmented—with management functions having become isolated in “silos;”¹² such a division makes it difficult for MONRE to effectively manage biodiversity conservation without strong collaboration with MARD.

128. To deal with the above issue, there is a need to harmonize the responsibilities and mandates of these two ministries in relation to the system of protected areas and biodiversity management. In the long term, there should be an organization/agency, including representation of both MONRE and MARD, to manage the protected area system and biodiversity conservation. Policies and regulations are also needed to support this long term strategy.

¹²“Silos” occur when a group or agency within a government or company does not freely share information or knowledge other agencies or offices that have closely-related interests or mandates. A silo mentality reduces efficiency.

129. Such a harmonization initiative would be a major undertaking that would need to be implemented over the long term, and such an initiative is likely beyond the scope of the project. However, measures could be undertaken, on a smaller scale, to minimize conflicts, promote/foster greater cooperation, and facilitate more interagency interaction between MONRE and MARD at the national level, and DONRE and DARD at the provincial level. It is recommended that the PMU support more frequent activities to promote greater coordination between the two agencies. These could include meetings, seminars, exchange programs and expert forums. Although a MARD representative sits on the PSC, and MARD has been invited to participate in project activities, it is apparent that stronger engagement is still needed. The possibility of more closely linking project activities with ongoing MARD/DARD initiatives and strengthening the synergies between them, should also be explored.¹³

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

130. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:

- PMU, ISPONRE/BCA to organize activities to promote more frequent engagement and interaction between MONRE/MARD and DONRE/DARD
- MARD/DARD to agree to participate in coordination activities, and to internally disseminate information about MONRE/DONRE activities more widely, so that MARD/DARD personnel who have responsibilities relevant to wetlands conservation and management are aware of such activities.

4. Strengthen the harmonization of wetlands conservation within provincial plans and policies
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131. According to the targets in the project framework, 2 WCAs are to be established by 2019: one in Thai Thuy, Thai Binh province and the second in Tam Giang-Cau Hai, Thua Thien Hue. The profiles to establish the two WCAs have been completed, but are still subject to further review and revision, and other steps still need to be undertaken to ensure that the 2 WCAs can be established.

132. For Thai Thuy wetland, a barrier exists which may hinder the realization of the WCA. In Thai Binh province, the Prime Minister has endorsed the plan to establish an economic zone that includes the proposed site for the WCA. The management board for the economic zone has already been established, and the master plan for the zone is being prepared. A revised provincial Land Use Plan dated May 7, 2018 specifies land for biodiversity conservation and nature reserve (total area of 25,600 ha, including tentatively 13,100 ha for the Thai Thuy WCA). The provincial authority has requested support from the project in harmonizing the planning for WCA establishment, with economic zone planning. However, a danger still exists that the establishment of the economic zone will not adequately take into consideration the plan for establishing the WCA, with the danger that incompatible land uses could be authorized within the proposed WCA site.

133. In Thua Thien Hue, provincial authorities envision to establish the WCA in two phases. During Phase 1, from 2018-2020, the province will establish the WCA over an area covering 2,090.35 ha, including a strict protection zone, ecological rehabilitation zone, and administrative zone. For Phase 2, during the period from 2021-2015, the project will extend the WCA to cover 3,128.8 ha (occupying about

¹³A possible example of a situation where project activities could be more closely linked to ongoing MARD/DARD activities, was observed by the MTR team at Tam Giang-Cau Hai wetland, Thua Thien Hue province. There, with support from the project, the restocking of fish and shellfish is being conducted in an area where mangroves are being rehabilitated and replanted by DARD. Greater coordination between the agencies in carrying out these activities could improve the performance of each, increase benefits to local residents, and foster greater cooperation between DARD and DONRE for future initiatives.

16% of the lagoon area). It is projected that by the scheduled end of project in 2019, a WCA covering some 20,000 ha total area (including core and buffer zones) will be established.

134. During field consultations in Thua Thien Hue, the MTR consultants were informed about several ongoing actions, which have significant implications for the establishment of the WCA at Tam Giang-Cau Hai lagoon:

- The provincial Construction Department is currently conducting master planning for the province. They are interested to reconcile the WCA planning within the provincial master plan;
- According to the provincial Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), the new Planning Law, which will become effective in 2019, contains provisions for both national- and provincial-level planning. At the provincial level, this includes requirements for the preparation of socioeconomic master plans; and
- According to DARD, there are 23 aquaculture protection areas in the lagoon. The Department has been working for many years with the lagoon fishers' association to promote co-management in the lagoon, which includes community involvement in determining core zones for protection of fisheries resources.

135. For both Thai Binh and Thua Thien Hue provinces, further harmonization between provincial planning processes and planning for WCA establishment is needed. In Thua Thien Hue province, there seems to be a willingness to engage and consult among the various responsible agencies, so that WCA planning is adequately taken into consideration within the larger context of provincial planning (being carried out by provincial Construction Department and provincial DPI) and to harmonize and integrate this process with ongoing on-site activities (e.g., to ensure that WCA zonation planning takes into account and is harmonized with the fisheries protection areas which have already been established under DARD). This creates an excellent opportunity for wetlands conservation initiatives to be mainstreamed within provincial planning processes. For Thai Binh province, potentially conflicting plans (WCA planning and economic zone planning) are already underway and running on parallel tracks. In this case, more strenuous efforts may be required in order to reconcile these two paths. This will require harmonization of biodiversity conservation objectives with provincial development goals—the overall objective should be to secure environmental, biodiversity, and ecosystem values, while at the same time enhancing economic benefits for local people.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

136. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:

- ISPONRE to coordinate with DONRE, DARD, provincial Construction Department, DPI in Thua Thien Hue province, for mainstreaming of wetland conservation planning within provincial planning processes
- BCA to coordinate with DONRE and other relevant provincial government agencies to harmonize wetland conservation planning with economic zone and economic development planning processes in Thai Binh province
- UNDP should discuss with PPC in Thai Binh and Thua Thien Hue to promote the establishment of WCAs in their provinces as they committed.

5. Ensure that business planning is a key feature of Wetland Conservation Area planning
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137. The formal establishment of the 2 WCAs is the key outcome targeted by the project. However, establishing the WCAs is only a beginning step towards promoting more effective management and conservation of natural ecosystems and important associated wetlands biodiversity and other resources, over the long-term. To ensure sustainability and effective management, careful formulation of a well-designed management plan is required.

138. Accompanying the management planning process for each WCA, and integrated with it, should also be a process of budgetary and business planning. The need for undertaking such planning was further spotlighted through the findings of the MTR consultant team. During interviews, informants mentioned that there has been little provision made to ensure that adequate financial resources will be allocated for the effective operation of the WCAs (once established). In addition, it was also indicated that the provinces have very little financial capability to support the WCAs. Thus, the question of where funding will come from for this purpose, has not been fully answered; while PMU has indicated that there will be sufficient funds to support the first year of operations of the WCAs, and some additional options for funding have been identified, efforts need to continue for securing adequate financing to cover operations and management (O&M) costs for the long-term.

139. In order to begin to address this concern, it is therefore recommended that detailed business plans be prepared for both conservation areas. (It is the understanding of the MTR consultants that such plans are currently being prepared, but these were not available for review). It is recommended that the business plans should incorporate the following elements:

- Annual budgets and costs for the WCA need to be estimated. This should include costs for both capital expenditures (e.g., for facilities, equipment, supplies, etc.) and operations. Operational expenses should include costs associated with staffing, continuing management functions (e.g., administration, monitoring, patrolling, etc.), and maintenance.
- Funding sources to support the operation and management of the two WCAs should be confirmed. This could be accomplished through the issuance of letters of commitment, memoranda of agreement, or similar instruments by the proposed funding authorities.
- Even if the primary sources of funding are secured, preparations should be made to secure additional funds from other sources, to cover any shortfalls and/or to allow expansion of programs and activities. This could come from one or more of the following sources: user fees, establishment of conservation trust funds, voluntary donations, taxes, corporate social responsibility (CSR) arrangements, payment for ecosystem services (PES), and licensing and certification schemes (among others). Opportunities to link with ongoing UN-affiliated programmes for sustainable financing, including the UNDP Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) and UN Environment's The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) TEEB programme, should be explored. Information that has been produced by those efforts could help to identify other mechanisms for securing biodiversity conservation funding.

140. Accompanying the formulation of business plans, capacity-building of appropriate government agency personnel (those who will be tasked for management of the WCAs) should also be carried out. This will consist largely of training in such areas as accounting, human resources management, and general business management. This is needed to ensure that the responsible personnel will have the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively manage the financial requirements for the establishment and long-term operation of the WCAs.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

141. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:

- ISPONRE/BCA to develop TOR for consultants to prepare detailed business plans for the WCAs (to be integrated within WCA management plans), to include identification of source of funds
- Consultants contracted for this assignment to prepare comprehensive business plans
- MOF, MPI, DPI personnel to cooperate in providing necessary inputs into the business planning process

6. Promote gender-sensitive development

142. According to the Project Document (ProDoc):

"Conservation efforts that fail to take into account gender differences in resource use and management are likely to be unsustainable in the long term and could even contribute to increased poverty, inequality, and resource degradation."

143. To address this potential risk, the ProDoc goes on to detail how women and gender considerations will be well-integrated into the project:

"Recognizing the disadvantages faced by women, the project will make a concerted effort to ensure that women are able to participate effectively in project activities that are most relevant to them, including having access to training and being able to engage in the establishment of the WCAs, and the development and implementation of the WCA management plan. The Project will fully integrate both men and women in the operation of the establishment of Wetland CA, and the planning and implementation of the activities at commune and village level. In particular the training for sustainable livelihood will incorporate a gender perspective, to ensure that the needs of women, who frequently form a marginalized group in the fishery and aquaculture sector, are taken into account and that implementation the project could promote gender equality. Thus, benefits made to households and communities should include safeguards to ensure gender equality."

The project will work with both groups to enhance their participation in the project activities as well as to promote gender equality in management of wetland protected areas, and in livelihoods improvement, in order to (1) empower women's role in awareness raising and education activities; (2) engage women in adopting more wetlands-friendly practices; (3) awareness raising and capacity building on climate change adaptation and natural disaster prevention for women."

144. Despite this strong focus on promoting gender equity in the ProDoc, it appears that only minimal attention has been paid to this aspect during the course of project implementation.¹⁴ During site visits, and in other consultations with stakeholders, only passing reference was made to steps taken to promote gender equity (it was only reported that some women and women's groups were participants in some project activities, with no further efforts mentioned about strengthening women's roles, ensuring equitable representation of women, improving awareness about gender issues, etc.). Given the facts

¹⁴It must be noted that, despite the strong statements that are aimed at promoting gender equity which are found throughout the text of the ProDoc, no mention of gender is found within the project Strategic Results Framework. This is considered a serious deficiency, and is further taken up under Recommendation No. 12 in this report.

that: (i) gender is a key Sustainable Development Goal (SDG #5) under UN Agenda 2030; (ii) women in the two project sites play important roles in providing for the nutritional needs of their families (e.g., through gleaning of shellfish and other seafood on tidal flats in the wetlands); and (iii) commitments to promoting a strong gender focus are made in the project ProDoc, it is recommended that efforts should be redoubled, to better integrate gender considerations within all aspects of project implementation, during the remaining time for completion of the project.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

145. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:

- ISPONRE/BCA to consider how project activities can be re-designed to ensure that: (1) participation and representation by women is increased within project activities; and (2) awareness about women's roles and gender issues is improved
- DONRE/project site coordinators to organize stakeholder workshops at the commune and district levels, specifically for the purpose of soliciting community views about women's roles and how to assist them to be more effective in carrying out their responsibilities for livelihood activities and providing support for their families; participation of a large contingent of women and women's organizations in these activities is essential

7. Expand range of options for livelihood enhancement (e.g., value chains, certification and branding, etc.)

146. It has already been mentioned that, in order to sustainably manage the WCAs, it is necessary to strengthen and ensure the sustainability of the livelihoods of the local people. One aspect of achieving this is to improve their income-generation potential, and one way in which this can be accomplished is by enhancing the value chain of aquatic products being harvested from wetland areas. Value addition can be achieved through several mechanisms, including **postharvest processing, branding, and eco-certification**.

Postharvest Processing

147. There is a diverse range of fish and shellfish products already being produced, along with others that could be produced in the wetlands of Viet Nam, including at the two project sites. Processing increases the value of products being sold, as compared to the sale of raw, unprocessed products, thus increasing the revenue that can be captured by the seller. Development of new processed products may require instruction and capacity building, as well as development of appropriate infrastructure.

Branding

148. Branding is a process whereby a link is established that enables a particular brand (name of product), being marketed by a specific producer, to be associated with higher quality, thus leading to higher volume sales, or justifying higher pricing (or both). One clear example of branding is in the organic foods market. Organic foods normally command a price premium, compared with non-organic products. Another variant of branding links a particular product to a specific location, with labeling to indicate the product being "locally produced." Locally produced foods in general are fresher than foods brought in from greater distances, and may have certain other taste or quality characteristics which make them more desirable.

Eco-Certification

149. In recent decades, there has been a growing awareness among consumers of the importance of the environment for public health, and the overall future quality of life, both for local communities and the extended “global community.” Alongside this growing awareness, there has been a concurrent increase in the number and value of products that are marketed as contributing in some way to protecting the environment. As such, these products are following a “green marketing” approach.

150. Green marketing could be applied as a strategy for improving the value of various products from the wetlands at the project sites. A product labelling and eco-certification system could be developed that has as its focus conservation of the wetlands. Eco-certification of products being produced at the project sites could be linked to already-existing eco-certificates such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

151. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:

- ISPONRE/BCA to conduct consultations to investigate prospects for value-adding as a strategy to improve livelihoods of residents in and around the project sites
- PMU to formulate TOR for consultant (individual or team) to develop value-addition strategy, and to contract consultant
- Consultant to carry out value chain assessment and to recommend feasible options for implementation
- Local communities (e.g., through fishers’ associations), with guidance from DONRE/project coordinators, to conduct pilot projects to test value chain strategies

8. Review project management modality: NIM vs. DIM

152. UNDP makes use of two different modalities for project management—the national implementation modality (NIM), and the direct implementation modality (DIM). NIM is designed to allow national government entities to assume full responsibility for the implementation of the project; as such, it promotes greater project ownership, builds capacity, results in institutionalization of project programs, and allows project successes to be credited to government actors. For this project, the NIM approach is being applied.

153. While management of the project has been proceeding under the NIM, during the review, informants reported that delays have been encountered, especially related to procurement and contracting processes; procurement procedures on the government side often require a long approval process. On the other hand, under the DIM arrangement, UNDP can be relatively quicker and more efficient in carrying out such functions.

154. For the reasons stated, a “hybrid” NIM-DIM management system has been informally adopted for project management, with UNDP in charge of recruitment of international consultants, while the PMU is in charge of recruitment of national consultants. This system seems to be effectively addressing some bottlenecks, and should be more widely applied in cases where it is judged that it would be effective. Such a system would help to preserve a high degree of ownership for the project by ISPONRE/BCA, and would allow capacity-building to continue, while at the same time accelerating procurement and contracting processes. Given that the remaining implementation timeframe is very short, improving efficiency of these processes would be very beneficial.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

155. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:
- UNDP to consult with ISPONRE/BCA to determine the best way to institute a hybrid NIM-DIM administrative and management structure, and to proceed accordingly.

9. Ensure sustainability of NWWG/LWWGs in guiding future wetland conservation efforts

156. According to informants, the NWWG and LWWGs have no budget for meetings, and have not met very often. However, according to the PMU, LWWG representatives have participated in other project activities, most notably (in Thua Thien Hue province) consultation workshops and activities related to WCA profiling. While inter-agency coordination has been somewhat improved as a result of WG meetings, generally speaking, the WGs have not been fully effective in carrying out their main responsibility of providing important technical inputs to project activities.

157. In order to address these shortcomings, it is recommended that the functioning of the NWWG and the LWWGs should be strengthened. Strengthening can be accomplished mainly through the following steps:

- For NWWG/LWWGs, provide small stipend to compensate participants as may be appropriate
- Formulate appropriate mechanisms to institutionalize the LWWGs within relevant provincial government departments, so that an operational budget is secured, thus enabling their operation to be sustained beyond the life of the project
- Once LWWGs are effectively operationalized, use the two LWWGs already established as models, to guide the establishment of LWWGs in other provinces

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

158. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:
- ISPONRE to provide disbursement of small stipends for attendance at WG meetings
 - PMU and DONREs to organize consultations to determine best method for institutionalizing the LWWGs

10. Review project strategic results framework and revise as needed

159. During project inception, critical review of the project strategic results framework (SRF) should have been undertaken. There is not much evidence to suggest that this was done in a thorough and comprehensive manner, and only very minor modifications of the SRF from the initial version presented in the ProDoc, to the one presented in the project Inception Report, were noted.

160. The MTR team has conducted a review of the most recent SRF, has identified the following general weaknesses, and makes the following recommendations accordingly:

- As pointed out in the forgoing discussion (see especially Table 1), while attempting to evaluate and provide ratings for the project objective and project outcomes, it quickly became apparent to the reviewers that there is no significant differentiation between the statement of the

objective and the combined statements for Outcomes 1 and 2 in the SRF. This flaw in the hierarchical logic of the framework should be reviewed and corrected. Perhaps the easiest way to do this would be to elevate the objective statement, to reflect a broader, higher-level biodiversity conservation goal.

- As mentioned earlier, promotion of equitable gender opportunities and empowerment of women is an important theme presented in the ProDoc. However, this is not captured in the SRF—there is no specific mention made of gender, no outputs or outcomes are explicitly aimed at promoting gender benefits, and no indicators contain any gender-dependent targets (e.g., targets for a certain percentage of beneficiaries of project activities to be women). It is therefore recommended that gender considerations be appropriately incorporated and reflected in the SRF.
- In some cases, baseline values for indicators which could be used to measure progress, have apparently not been established, even at this midterm stage of the project. For example, under Outcome 1, the SRF calls for the updating of the Capacity Development Scorecard for MONRE, to be done within the first year. The MTR consultants were not able to find an updated scorecard.
- For Outcome 2, baselines were established for water pollution levels in both provinces, quantified extent of coverage of clam culture activities at Thai Thuy, and catch per unit effort (CPUE) of rabbitfish (*Siganus*) in TGCH. However, at least one of these indicators—the CPUE for capture of rabbitfish—is quite technical and very difficult to measure. It is therefore recommended that the specified indicators in the SRF be reviewed; in cases where no data are available, or where the indicators are difficult to measure, these should be changed to measurable ones.
- Some of the risks described in the SRF, should not be considered as such. For example, the SRF describes the following as a risk: "NWWG and LWWGs are not effective due to insufficient interest and participation of key members..." However, the interest and participation of working Group members is directly influenced by the project, and in fact the effective operation of the NWWG and LWWGs is a target to be accomplished with the support of the project. Thus this should not be considered as a risk. It is recommended that risk factors in the SRF be analyzed. Any factors which are not appropriate as risks, should be removed from the SRF, and if appropriate, replaced by other, actual risks.

Concerned Parties and Specific Actions

161. The concerned parties and actions required to implement this recommendation are as follows:
- ISPONRE/BCA convene stakeholders to participate in a review workshop to consider any required changes to SRF
 - Taking into account the findings of the review workshop, ISPONRE/BCA work with UNDP in revising the SRF to incorporate the required changes

B. Conclusion

162. In its overall conclusion, the MTR finds that a range of actions have been successfully undertaken which have incrementally advanced the cause of wetland conservation at the two project sites, and more broadly on a national policy level. The main strengths of the project have been observed in the following areas:

- Completing the profiling for the two WCAs, as a basis for further management planning;
- Laying the groundwork for policy reform aimed at mainstreaming wetland conservation into national- and provincial-level planning processes; and
- Successfully conducting training and other capacity-building activities for wetlands conservation and WCA management.

163. However, it is noted that a number of significant issues and challenges have impeded more efficient and effective project implementation. Among the main concerns are the following:

- Delays in procurement, contracting and securing necessary government approvals and endorsements. In addition to such procedural delays, other delays have been the result of longer periods of time being needed to ensure higher quality and greater effectiveness of outcomes. These delays have in turn caused a number of project activities to not be completed or advanced according to schedule (the most significant among these being the failure thus far, to have established the two WCAs);
- Continued isolation or “siloing” of project actions and flow of information—where there should have been closer coordination and cooperation between government agencies that have shared mandated responsibilities for actions and information-sharing relating to wetland conservation;
- Weaknesses in performance monitoring and reporting; and
- Some uncertainty for securing sufficient financial support to ensure the long-term sustainability of wetland conservation efforts at the two proposed WCAs.

164. One other weakness, inherent in this review itself (and relating to the delays mentioned above), is the fact that the MTR comes at a point which is well beyond the mid-point of the project—in fact, the project is scheduled to conclude in less than one year from the current date (technically, the review should have been conducted about one year ago). As a result, there is less time to effectively make midterm course corrections, based on the findings and recommendations of this review, than what would be hoped for. This consideration is part of the reason why a recommendation is being made to extend the project timeframe (presented further under “Recommendations,” below).

165. In conclusion, through the midterm review process, it has been determined that there have been both important successes and critical weaknesses in the progress made towards achieving the intended project results. It is hoped that even with the constraints detailed here, there may still be time and opportunity to make adjustments that could strengthen the performance of the project and help in achieving the targets expressed in the results framework. The recommendations which are included in this report are intended to point the way toward achieving significant improvements by which some of the risks which have been identified can be reduced, and the prospects for achieving the desired project outcomes can be improved.

ANNEXES

- A. CONSULTANT TORS (EXCLUDING TOR ANNEXES)**
- B. EVALUATIVE MATRIX**
- C. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**
- D. SCHEDULE OF MTR MISSION ACTIVITIES**
- E. REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONS USED DURING STAKEHOLDER
CONSULTATIONS AND INTERVIEWS**
- F. LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED**
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ANNEX A. CONSULTANT TORS (EXCLUDING TOR ANNEXES)



TERMS OF REFERENCE ONE INTERNATIONAL AND ONE NATIONAL CONSULTANT FOR CONDUCTING THE PROJECT MID-TERM REVIEW

Title:	01 International Consultant and 01 National Consultant for conducting the project Mid-Term Review
Project:	Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes
Reporting to:	UNDP CO in Viet Nam
Duty Station:	Home-based, Hanoi, with possible travels to Thai Binh province, Thua Thien Hue province
Contract Type:	Individual Contract (IC)
Duration:	20 working days each in April-May 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full sized project titled "Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes" (PIMS#4537; GEF ID#4760) implemented since September 2015 through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE). The project started with the signing of the Project Document signed on 9 June 2015 and is in its third year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the third Project Implementation Report (PIR). In the current TOR, the expectations and detailed tasks of the MTR are described. The MTR process shall follow guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (UNDP, 2015)¹.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The project was designed to develop systemic, institutional and operational capacity for effective wetlands biodiversity management in Viet Nam nationally and at provincial level at selected sites. The project's immediate objective is to establish new wetland protected areas (PAs) and create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes. Component 1 will address gaps and weaknesses in the current PA system, institutional capacity and the current policy and regulatory framework in relation to wetlands conservation. Component 2 seeks to ensure that the wetland values are better understood and appreciated and that the principles and know-how for conservation and sustainable use of wetlands are enshrined both at the local level, by strengthening incentives for conservation-friendly livelihoods, and at the landscape level, by promoting wetlands-friendly land use and development planning.

The project is implemented at the national level and undertakes pilot activities in two sites: the Tam Giang - Cau Hai coastal lagoon and surround landscape in Thua Thien Hue province, central Viet Nam, and the Thai Thuy coastal area and surrounding landscape in Thai Binh province, Red River delta, northern Viet Nam. The total budget of the project amounts to US\$ 18,071,887, of which US\$ 3,180,287 is provided by the GEF and US\$ 14,891,600 is co-financing.

¹ Available at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20EN_2014.pdf

Project documentation, including the PIF, GEF CEO Endorsement Request and Project Document signed between the Vietnamese Government and UNDP Viet Nam Country Office is available at <https://www.thegef.org/project/conservation-critical-wetland-pas-and-linked-landscapes>.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE MTR

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project’s strategy, its risks to sustainability.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy, the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Review/PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review). The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Tracking Tool submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Tracking Tool that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach² ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to national government executing agencies (MONRE, MARD, others as relevant); provincial, district and commune authorities and subordinate organizations of national ministries in two pilot provinces; project senior officials and task team/component leaders (ISPONRE, BCA), key experts and consultants in the subject area; Project Board members; relevant project stakeholders, academia, CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to the pilot Wetland Protected Areas under development in Thai Thuy district, Thai Binh province, and Tam Giang – Cau Hai Wetland Protected Area in Thua Thien Hue province.

The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

I. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.

² For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc.) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red).

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Project Strategy	Indicator ¹	Baseline Level ²	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ³	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁴	Achievement Rating ⁵	Justification for Rating
Objective:	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

¹ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

² Populate with data from the Project Document

³ If available

⁴ Color code this column only

⁵ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Green= Achieved

Yellow= On target to be achieved

Red= Not on target to be achieved

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?

- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

iv. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR team will include a section of the report setting out the MTR’s evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.⁸

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report’s executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

Ratings

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for “Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes” (PIMS#4537)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

6. TIMEFRAME

The international consultant is required to work home based and in Viet Nam – in Hanoi, and the two pilot sites in Thai Binh province and Thua Thien Hue province. The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 20 days over a time period of 8 weeks starting 10 April 2018, and shall not exceed 2 (three) months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The duration of working in Viet Nam covers 12 working days in April-May 2018. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
05 April 2018	Application closes
08 April 2018	Select MTR Team

⁸ Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report.

By 10 April 2018	Sign contracts, handover of Project Documents to MTR Team
12 April - 20 April 2018: 3 days	Document review , preparation of MTR Inception Report
20 April-11 May: 12 days	MTR mission: validation of MTR Inception Report, stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits, MTR report drafting
11 May 2018	Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings (Hanoi)
By 25 May 2018: 5 days	Preparing draft report
May 2018: 1 day	Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report/Finalization of MTR report
May 2018	Concluding Stakeholder Workshop (not mandatory for MTR team)
June 2018	Preparation & issue of Management Response (UNDP)
By 15 June 2018	Expected date of full MTR completion

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report.

7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	Before the start of the MTR mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission (tentatively: 11 May 2018)	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	Draft Final Report	Full report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 2 weeks of the MTR mission (tentatively: by 25 May 2018)	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF-OFP
4	Final Report*	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 (one) week of receiving UNDP comments on draft (tentatively 10 June 2018)	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

**The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.*

8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project’s MTR is UNDP Vietnam CO.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits. Field visits will be arranged by the Project Management Unit to the project sites.

9. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR – one International Consultant works as a team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and one national consultant as a team expert. The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project’s related activities.

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall “team” qualities in the following areas:

International Consultant

Se	Criteria	Score
11.	At least Master’s degree in environmental sciences/economics, biodiversity conservation, wetland management or other closely related field	100
12.	At least 10-year experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies	100
13.	Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios	100
14.	Competence in adaptive management, as applied to biodiversity conservation	100
15.	Experience working with the GEF-funded project monitoring and evaluations process	200
16.	Proven knowledge and expertise in technical areas relevant to wetland biodiversity conservation, protected areas management/financing, sustainable livelihood,	80
17.	Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity conservation; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis	100
18.	Excellent communication skill	50
19.	Demonstrable analytical skills	100
20.	Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset	50
11	Experience working in Viet Nam	20
Total		1000

National Consultant

Se	Criteria	Score
4.	At least Master’s degree in environmental sciences/economics, biodiversity conservation, or other closely related field	100
5.	Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies	150
6.	Proven experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies	150
3.	Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios	200
4.	Fluent in written and verbal English	200
5.	Experience working with the GEF-funded project monitoring and evaluations process	100
6.	Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;	100
		1000

10. PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

10% of payment upon approval of the final MTR Inception Report

40% upon submission of the draft MTR report

50% upon finalization of the MTR report

11. RECOMMENDED PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL:

- a) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](#)⁹ provided by UNDP;
- b) **CV and a Personal History Form (P11 form)**¹⁰;
- c) **A sample of similar report (MTR, Evaluation) done before** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how he/she will approach and complete the assignment (max 1 page);
- d) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc.), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the Letter of Confirmation of Interest template. If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

ANNEX B. EVALUATIVE MATRIX

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
Were lessons from other projects incorporated into the project strategy?	Reference of lessons learned from other project captured	Project document and stakeholder interviews	Desk review and interviews
Was the project strategy developed cognizant of national development priorities?	Consistency with national strategies and policies. Participation of relevant national agencies in proposal development	Project document, meeting minutes, national policy documents	Desk review and interviews
Did persons who would potentially be affected by the project have an opportunity to provide input to its design and strategy?	Level of participation of persons potentially affected by the project.	Project document, inception report, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Were gender and social inclusiveness considered in developing the project strategy?	Active stakeholder involvement from both men and women.	Project document, inception report, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Have the tracking tools (METT, financial sustainability scorecard, capacity scorecard) shown improvements from inception of the project through the midterm?	Improved scoring from respective tracking tools.	Tracking tools, stakeholder interviews	Desk review and interviews
What remaining barriers exist, to achieving the project objective, within the time remaining until project completion?	Identification of barriers and strategies to address the barriers	Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Based on identified successes, how can the project further expand these benefits?	Replication of successful outputs and evidence of enhanced Wetlands PAs management	Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?			
Have changes in management arrangements been needed, due to changing conditions?	Results from M&E are used to adjust and improve management decisions	Project Implementation Review (PIR), NSC and PMU minutes, progress reports, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews with project staff
Have changes been made in management arrangements, and were they effective?	Adaptation and reflection characterize the project management	Project Implementation Review (PIR), progress reports, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews with project staff and other stakeholders
Has the PSC been effective in guiding the implementation of the project?	Leadership of the National Project Director and ownership of other PSC members	PSC and PMU minutes, project outputs, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews with project staff

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Have the NIP and CIP been effective in implementation of the project?	Active role in project activities with catalytic support to the project implementation	Stakeholder interviews, project outputs, METT, financial and capacity scorecards	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Has UNDP been effective in providing support for the project?	Quality and timeliness of support	Stakeholder interviews, project procurement, METT	Desk review, data analysis, field visits and interviews
Were delays encountered in project start-up/implementation, disbursement of funds, or procurement?	Compliance with schedule as planned and deviation from it is addressed	Annual workplan, project audits, project outputs, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Is work planning for the project (i.e., funds disbursement, scheduling, etc.) effective and efficient?	Responsiveness to significant implementation problems	Annual workplan, project audits, project outputs, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Have changes been made to the project results framework?	Variances between initial and existing project results framework	Project Implementation Review, progress reports, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Have co-financing partners been meeting their commitments to the project?	Mobilization of resources by partners beyond project funding	Co-financing reports, project audits, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Are the project M&E tools adequate to guide ongoing project management and adaptive processes?	Sufficient budget and fund allocated to M&E and tools aid in its actual undertaking	Tracking tools, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Following conclusion of the project, what is the likelihood that adequate financial resources will be in place to sustain the project's outcomes?	Opportunities for financial sustainability from multiple sources exist	Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIR	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Is it expected that, upon conclusion of the project, stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to sustain the project's outcomes?	Identification and involvement of champions at the three levels of the project	Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Are legal frameworks, policies, and institutional arrangements favourable for sustaining the project's outcomes following conclusion of the project?	Exist strategies available with policies, legal frameworks, and institutional capacity put in place	Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews
Are there any environmental risks that could jeopardize the sustainability of the project's outcomes?	Environmental factors or negative impacts are foreseen and mitigation measures are planned	Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, field visits and interviews

ANNEX C. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Output 1.1

2017. December. Inception Report, Assignment: “Developing the draft National Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands”. Le Thi Van Hue & Le Thi Thu Thanh (authors). (English).
2016. August. Decision 1093/QD-TCMT on wetland classification. Vietnam Environment Administration.
2016. June. Final Report, Assignment: “Revise and update the wetlands classification system and draft the legal document on wetlands classification system in Vietnam”. Le Thanh Binh, Tran Thi Tuyet Thu, and Ho Thanh Hai (authors). (English).
2015. Draft Circular on Wetland classification system of Viet Nam, Assignment: “Revise and update the wetlands classification system and draft the legal document on wetlands classification system in Vietnam”. Le Thanh Binh, Tran Thi Tuyet Thu, and Ho Thanh Hai (authors). (English).
2015. December. Inception Report, Assignment: “Revise and update the wetlands classification system and draft the legal document on wetlands classification system in Vietnam”. Le Thanh Binh, Tran Thi Tuyet Thu, and Ho Thanh Hai (authors). (English).
2016. Báo cáo đề cương. Assignment/gợi thầu: “Cập nhật danh mục kiểm kê đất ngập nước Việt Nam và xây dựng danh sách chi tiết và thiết lập bản đồ kết quả danh mục các khu đất ngập nước quan trọng”. Nguyễn Thị Thu Hà, Trần Đăng Quý, Nguyễn Thị Hoàng Hà, Nguyễn Thanh Nam, Nguyễn Tài Tue, Nguyễn Đình Thái, Lê Thị Nga, Nguyễn Thị Duyên, Nguyễn Thủy Linh, Nguyễn Thị Mai Ngan, Phạm Thị Nhung, Tạ Thị Hoài, Đàm Thị Phương Thảo, Lê Thủy Hằng, Lương Lê Huy, Hoàng Thị Nhung. (authors). (Vietnamese).
2016. December. Summary Report. Assignment: “Updating wetland inventory database, identifying and mapping important wetlands in Viet Nam”. Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, Nguyen Hoang Ha, Nguyen Thanh Nam, Nguyen Tai Tue, Trang Dang Quy, Nguyen Dinh Thai, Le Thi Nga, Nguyen Thi Duyen, Nguyen Thuy Linh, Nguyen Thi Mai Ngan, Pham Thi Nhung, Ta Thi Hoai, Le Thuy Hang, Bui Thi Nhi, Do Thi Xuan, Bui Dinh Canh, Nguyen Thien Phuong Thao, Doan Thi Phuong Anh, Lai Thi Tram, Cong Thi Tiep, Ngo Thi Dinh (authors). (English).
2016. December. Report: Tổng hợp kết quả điều tra, kiểm kê phân loại đất ngập nước Việt Nam và danh sách chi tiết về các khu đất ngập nước quan trọng của Việt Nam. Assignment: Updating wetland inventory database, identifying and mapping important wetlands in Viet Nam”. Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, Nguyen Hoang Ha, Nguyen Thanh Nam, Nguyen Tai Tue, Trang Dang Quy, Nguyen Dinh Thai, Le Thi Nga, Nguyen Thi Duyen, Nguyen Thuy Linh, Nguyen Thi Mai Ngan, Pham Thi Nhung, Ta Thi Hoai, Le Thuy Hang, Bui Thi Nhi, Do Thi Xuan, Bui Dinh Canh, Nguyen Thien Phuong Thao, Doan Thi Phuong Anh, Lai Thi Tram, Cong Thi Tiep, Ngo Thi Dinh (authors). (Vietnamese).
2017. December. Inception Report, Assignment: “Developing the draft National Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands”. Le Thi Van Hue & Le Thi Thu Thanh (authors). (English).
2018. April. Draft report: Kế hoạch hành động quốc gia về bảo tồn và sử dụng bền vững đất ngập nước tới năm 2025 và tầm nhìn tới 2030, Assignment: “Developing the draft National Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands”. Le Thi Van Hue & Le Thi Thu Thanh (authors). (Vietnamese).
2018. Decision Draft, Assignment: “Developing the draft National Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands”. Le Thi Van Hue & Le Thi Thu Thanh (authors). (Vietnamese).
2016. September. Inception Report, Assignment: “Develop the proposal for a new Decree on wetland management in Vietnam and evaluate its impact”. Nguyen Chu Hoi, Nguyen Van Chiem, Le Van Hung (authors). (English).
2018. Degree Draft, Assignment: “Degree on Conservation and Sustainable Development of Wetlands”. Nguyen Chu Hoi, Nguyen Van Chiem, Le Van Hung (authors). (English).
2018. Circular development TOR, Assignment: “Development of the Circular guiding the implementation of the new Decree on the management of wetlands”. English.

Output 1.2

2016. December. Inception Report. Assignment: “Assessment on wetland management capacity and identifying the demand on capacity building for wetland conservation and management for national level and develop the training documents”. Phan Thi Thanh Hoi, Nguyen Son Tung, Hoang Van Thang (authors). (English).
2016. July. Inventory Report. Assignment: “Assessment on wetland management capacity and identifying the demand on capacity building for wetland conservation and management for national level and develop the training documents”. Phan Thi Thanh Hoi, Nguyen Son Tung, Hoang Van Thang (authors). (Vietnamese).
2016. Training documents at national level: (1) Tong Quan ve DNN; (2) Su dung khon kheo; (3) Quan ly DNN Viet Nam; (4) Cong uoc Ramsar; (5) DNN va BKKH; and (6) Long ghep bao ton DNN. (Vietnamese).

Output 1.3

2017. Inception Report. Assignment: “Developing a technical guidelines for establishing provincial level wetland protected area”. Vu Tien Hinh & Tran Hoang Long (authors). (English).
2018. Draft Report. Assignment: “Developing a technical guidelines for establishing provincial level wetland protected area”. Vu Tien Hinh & Tran Hoang Long (authors). (English).
2016. July. Technical Report. Assignment: “Baseline survey for establishment of the Tam Giang –Cau Hai Wetland Conservation area”. (English).
2017. December. Summary profile, Assignment: “Du an thanh lap khu bao ton dat ngap nguoc Tam Giang – Cau Hai, tinh Thua Thien Hue”. (Vietnamese).
2016. Inception Report, Assignment: “Assess the demand and role of stakeholders in participation of WCA management and develop the map of WCA”. (English).
2017. Mapping Report: Developing the maps of coastal wetlands in Thai Thuy District, Thai Binh province, Assignment: “Assess the demand and role of stakeholders in participation of WCA management and develop the map of WCA”. Tran Hong Hai, Pham Thi Van, Tran Ngoc Tuong (authors). (English).
2017. Report on Evaluating the stakeholders of wetland management, Thai Thuy District, Thai Binh Province, “Assess the demand and role of stakeholders in participation of WCA management and develop the map of WCA”. Tran Hong Hai, Pham Thi Van, Tran Ngoc Tuong (authors). (English).
2016. Inception Report, Assignment: “Investigation and assessment of biodiversity, socio-economic conditions, culture and environment to establish the Thai Thuy wetland protected area in Thai Binh”. Viet Nam Sylviculture Agriculture Development Investment and Consultant Company (author). (English).
2016. Baseline report, Assignment: “Baseline report for the establishment of Thai Thuy Wetland conservation area”. (English).
2017. Inception Report, Assignment: “Design a biodiversity monitoring program for the proposed Thai Thuy Wetland Conservation Area and pilot monitoring of selected indicators”. Le Hung Anh, Le Tran Chan, Cao Thi Kim Thu, Nguyen Lan Hung Son, Nguyen Tong Cuong (authors). English.
2018. March. 2 nd report draft, Assignment: “Biodiversity monitoring program for Thai Thuy Wetland protected areas, Thai Binh Province”. (English).
2018. June. Draft Report, Assignment: “Thiet ke he thong cac diem quan trac tai khu bao ton dat ngap nuoc Thai Thuy va thu nghiem quan tracs mo so chi thi”. Le Hung Anh, Le Tran Chan, Cao Thi Kim Thu, Nguyen Lan Hung Son, Nguyen Tong Cuong (authors). (Vietnamese).
2017. Inception Report, Assignment: “Develop the management plan (including detailed operational plan to 2020) for Thai Thuy Wetland Conservation Area”. Le Thanh Binh, Le Van Tu, Le Thi Thu Hien (authors). (English).
2018. Draft Report : Ke hoach quarn ly cua khu bao ton thien nhien dat ngap nuoc Thai Thuy. Assignment : “Xay dung, hoan thien ke hoach quan ly cho khu bao ton dat ngap nuoc Thai Thuy”. (Vietnamese).

2016. Inception Report, Assignment : “Developing the Thai Thuy Wetlands Conservation Area (WCA) Establishment Project (“Profile”). Proposing management structure and necessary resources for WCA’s operation”. (English).
2017. Summary Report, Assignment: “Establishment of Thai Thuy Wetland conservation area, Thai Binh Province”. (English).
2016. Report Draft, Assignment: “Du an thanh lap khu bao ton dat ngap nuoc Thai Thuy, Tien Hai”. (Vietnamese).
2016. Report, Assignment: “Xây dựng dự án thành lập khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Thái Thụy, đề xuất phương án tổ chức quản lý và xác định nguồn lực cần thiết để vận hành khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Thái Thụy”. (Vietnamese).
2016. Draft report 1, Assignment: “Xây dựng dự án thành lập khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Thai Thuy, Đề xuất phương án tổ chức quản lý và xác định nguồn lực cần thiết để vận hành khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Thai Thuy. (Vietnamese).
2016. Master action plan, Assignment: Xây dựng dự án thành lập khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Thai Thuy, Đề xuất phương án tổ chức quản lý và xác định nguồn lực cần thiết để vận hành khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Thai Thuy. (Vietnamese).

Output 1.4

- 2016, December. Final Report, Assignment: Capacity and training needs assessment on wetland conservation and management in the two provinces of Thai Binh and Thua Thien Hue. (English).
2016. March. Decision 490/QĐ-UBND TTH, Assignment: “Establish the local working group of the project (Vietnamese).
2017. April. Meeting minutes, Assignment: “Biên bản họp nhóm đất ngập nước địa phương về kế hoạch tổng thể xây dựng dự án thành lập khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Tam Giang-Cau Hai. (Vietnamese).
2017. July. Meeting Minutes, Assignment: Biên bản họp nhóm đất ngập nước địa phương về kế hoạch phân vùng chức năng khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước Tam Giang – Cau Hai” (Vietnamese).
2016. September. Inception Report. Assignment: “Developing the proposal for establishment and operation of the National Wetland Working Group and the Local Wetland Working Group in Thai Binh province”. Le Thanh Binh (author). (Vietnam)
2017. January. Proposal. Assignment: “Developing the proposal for establishment and operation of the National Wetland Working Group and the Local Wetland Working Group in Thai Binh province”. Le Thanh Binh (author). (English)
2017. October. Decision on LWWG establishment. Thai Binh Committee (Vietnamese).
2016. October. Decision on NWWG establishment. Environmental Administration (Vietnamese).
2018. July. Local training materials: Luồng giá dịch vụ hệ sinh thái đất ngập nước. (Vietnamese).
2018. July. Local training materials: Nguyên tắc lập quy hoạch, thiết kế và vận hành khu bảo tồn đất ngập nước. (Vietnamese).
2018. July. Local training materials: Truyền thông và giáo dục về bảo tồn đất ngập nước (Vietnamese).

Output 2.1

2016. December. Community Strategy. Assignment: “Generating the community strategy”. Tran Minh Vuong (author). (English).
2017. November. Ecosystem Assessment and Valuation. Assignment: “Case studies of Thai Thuy and Tam Giang – Cau Hai Wetlands”. (English).
- Communication brochures, policy briefs and factsheets

Output 2.2

Bao cao nghien cuu tong quan (Overview Report Entrypoints). Assignment: "Nghiên cứu các cơ hội lồng ghép bảo tồn đất ngập nước và các kế hoạch phát triển của tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế". Tran Ho Hai, Le Hong Thai, Hoang Huy Tuan (authors). (Vietnamese).

Inception Report. Assignment: Hỗ trợ lồng ghép bảo tồn đất ngập nước vào các kế hoạch của tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế, cụ thể 03 tq vấn hỗ trợ xây dựng Quy hoạch xây dựng vùng đầm phá Tam Giang-Cầu Hai tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế đến năm 2030. (Vietnamese).

Inception Report. Lồng ghép bảo tồn và sử dụng đất ngập nước vào quy hoạch, kế hoạch sử dụng đất cấp huyện. (Vietnamese).

Inception Report. Xây dựng quy chế quản lý tổng hợp lưu vực Sông Hương. (Vietnamese).

Review the wetland-related management documents in Thai Binh province and propose entry points for mainstreaming wetland conservation and sustainable use considerations into provincial and district development and sectoral plan. (English).

2017. November. Inception Report. Assignment: "Review the wetland-related management documents in Thai Binh province and propose entry points for mainstreaming wetland conservation and sustainable use considerations into provincial and district development and sectoral plan". Vu Thi Minh Hoa, Phan Thi Minh Hoa, Vu Van Minh (authors). (English).

2017. Action Plan. Assignment: "Generate the action plan to implement the red river delta biosphere reserve management regulation framework for Thai Binh Province. (English).

2017. September. Inception Report. Assignment: "Develop an action plan for implementation of the Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve Cooperation Regulation for Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve section in Thai Binh province". Vu Thu Hien (author). (English).

2018. Action Plan of Thai Binh Province. Kế hoạch của tỉnh Thái Bình nhằm thực hiện quy chế phối hợp quản lý, bảo tồn và phát triển bền vững khu dự trữ sinh quyển đất ngập nước ven biển liên tỉnh Châu thổ sông Hồng.

Output 2.3

2017. June. Final Report. Assignment: "Assessment of threats to ecological integrity, and identify suitable threats reduction strategies for planned Wetland Conservation Areas in Thua Thien Hue Province and Thai Binh Province". (English).

2017. Report Research Result. Assignment: "Assessment of threats to ecological integrity, and identify suitable threats reduction strategies for planned wetland conservation areas in Thua Thien Hue and Thai Binh provinces. (English).

TOR livelihood of Thua Thien Hue

TOR livelihood of Thai Binh

Others

2016 Inception Report

2016 Annual Report

2017 Annual progress Report

2017 Annual Financial Report

2016 PIR report

2017 PIR report

2016 PSC meeting minutes

2017 PSC meeting minutes

2018 PSC meeting minutes

2017. Study tour report (Australia, Tram Chim)

2010. HPPMG

2016. September. NIP-CIP contract

2018. July. Official letter regarding the establishment of TT WCA

ANNEX D. SCHEDULE OF MTR MISSION ACTIVITIES

Date	Description/time	Agenda	Participants/contact
July 2 nd 2018	Orientation meeting: PMU, CIP: presentation, FGD 9:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultants present overview of MTR Project personnel Present overview of project and progress to-date, issues and concerns etc. Discussion session, questions, requests for information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISPONRE BCA UNDP <p>Ms Khanh Address: 479 Hoang Quoc Viet, Cau Giay, Hanoi</p>
July 3 rd 2018	Meet with Department of Fishery, MARD, KII 08.30 – 10.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the project Discuss the status of fisheries management, regulations related to biodiversity management in the fisheries sector Information regarding roles and responsibilities of MARD in Thua Thien Hue and Thai Binh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Fishery <p>Mr Bac: Address: No. 10 Nguyen Cong Hoan, Ha Noi</p>
	Meet with Department of special use and protection forest management, VNFOREST, MARD, KII 10.00 – 11.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the project Discuss the status of forest management and development in Vietnam, management of protected areas in special-use forests Discuss the issue of providing financial support for protected areas with high biodiversity values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VNFOREST (Mr Bui Dang Phong, , VNFOREST) <p>Mr Hiệp Address: No.2 Ngoc Ha, Ba Dinh, Ha Noi</p>
	Meet with WWF Vietnam, KII 13.30 – 16.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the project Validity of project design—wetland PA site selection, site characteristics, biodiversity features, existing threats, proposed management plan Discuss issues related to the management of protected areas and WWF Vietnam's support to wetland protected areas management in Viet Nam in general and Thua Thien Hue in particular. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Hoang Viet, Programme Coordinator, Climate Change Address: No. 6, Ngõ 18, Nguyễn Cơ Thạch, Nam Từ Liêm, Hà Nội
July 4 th 2018	Meet with CRES and Vietnam Wetland association, FGD 8.30 – 11.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the project Validity of project design—wetland PA site selection, site characteristics, biodiversity features, existing threats, proposed management plan Discuss on issues regarding law enforcement and management of Pas in Vietnam Discuss on research and cooperation of the CRES on status of wetlands in Vietnam. Validity of project design—wetland PA site selection, site characteristics, biodiversity features, existing threats, proposed management plan Discuss issues regarding management of protected areas, status of wetlands in Vietnam, activities of the Association in the field of wetlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Bui Thi Ha Ly Address: 19 Le Thanh Tong, Hanoi CONFIRM
Afternoon	Meet with Vietnature, KII 13.30 – 15.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the project Activities of Vietnature in aspects of bird conservation, landscapes conservation and sustainable use of natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Le Trong Trai, Vietnature, Address: Room 202, Building 18T2, lane Lê Văn Lương, Thanh Xuân district, Hà Nội, Việt Nam

Date	Description/time	Agenda	Participants/contact
	Travel to Thai Binh 17.00 – 19.00	• Stay at White Palace hotel (Add: 245B, Tran Thai Tong, Thai Binh)	
July 5 th 2018	Meet with TB DONRE, FGD 10.00 – 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accomplishments of the project;• Project challenges;• The management and implementation of the project;• The project’s preliminary impacts (either positive or negative).• Site visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Vu Hai Dang, provincial coordinator Address: No.12, Quang Trung, Thai Binh
	Site visit 13.30-17.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site visit and interview with community members	
	Back to Hanoi 17.30 – 19.00		
July 6 th 2018	MTR team coordination and research		
July 7 th 2018	MTR team coordination and research		
July 8 th 2018	MTR team coordination and research		
July 9 th 2018	MTR team coordination and research		
July 10 th 2018	Travel to TTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flight: 18:00 – 19:10, VN1545Airbus A321-100/200• Hotel: Heritage hotel, No. 9 Ly Thuong Kiet, TTH	
July 11 th 2018	Meet with TTH DONRE, DARD, DPI, PPC FGD 8:30 – 11:00 Address: 115 Nguyen Hue, Tp Hue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accomplishments of the project;• Project challenges;• management and implementation of the project;• Project’s preliminary impacts (either positive or negative).• Current situation in wetland management in the province• Progress IN establishment of TGCH WCA• Overall progress of the project activities in the province• Discuss on experiences of DARD in managing fishery protected areas in the province• Discuss the progress of the Tam Giang - Cau Hai masterplan, mainstreaming wetland management and conservation into land use plans of the five districts around Tam Giang - Cau Hai lagoon, establishment of a multi-sectoral management regulation for the Huong river basin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy, provincial coordinator
	Site visit 13:30 – 16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site visit in Ru Cha mangrove area;• Interview with community members (Women Union, Fishery Association, Farmer Union...)• Interview with selected households that participate in livelihood model supported by the project	
	Back to Hanoi		
July 13 th 2018	Wrap-up Meeting 14:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet w/UNDP and project staff—present preliminary findings, recommendations, and discuss next steps	

ANNEX E. REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONS USED DURING STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

1. Please describe your responsibilities, involvement in, or knowledge about the project.

2. So far, do you feel that the project has made progress towards accomplishing its stated objectives--namely to establish two wetland PAs, and to ensure that there is adequate capacity (within government and local communities) for managing and preserving them? What are some of the strengths which have contributed to the progress of the project thus far (or weaknesses which have prevented progress)?

3. In your opinion, what have some of the main accomplishments of the project been?

4. In your opinion, what have the main problems, issues, barriers, or challenges been, which have affected the progress of the project? Have these issues been resolved? If so, how were they resolved? If not, why have they not been resolved?

5. Do you feel that the project has been efficiently and effectively managed and implemented? Why or why not? Was the management of the project adaptive, i.e., if unforeseen circumstances arose, were adjustments successfully made, to keep the project on-track?

6. What steps could be taken to improve the performance of the project, from now until the conclusion of the project?

7. Do you feel that the benefits of the project are sustainable (beyond the term of the project)? What are some of the main risks (e.g., environmental, financial, institutional, socioeconomic) that you feel could threaten project sustainability?

8. Is the project well-aligned with Vietnam's national/provincial policies and plans (e.g., environmental policy, development plans, etc.)? Is the project well-aligned with UNDP and international policies, goals, and agreements (e.g., SDGs, Aichi Biodiversity Targets etc.)?

9. Please provide any other information or recommendations which you feel may be important to help improve the project, its performance, and its management.

ANNEX F. LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

1. United Nations Development Programme, Viet Nam Country Office

Mr. Dao Khanh Tung, Programme Officer

Mr. Dao Xuan Lai, Unit Head, Climate Change and Environment Unit (CCEU)

Ms. Nguyen Khanh Van, Program Associate, CCEU

Ms. Phan Huong Giang, Media and Communications Analyst, CCEU

Ms. Tran My Hanh, Official

2. Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)

Mr. Nguyen The Chinh, Director General

Ms. Kim Thi Thuy Ngoc, Project Manager, PMU

Mr. Harald Leummens, Technical Advisor—Wetlands PA Project

Ms. Doan Ngoc Khanh, Administration assistant, PMU

Ms. Tran Thi Nguyet Minh, Project Financial Staff, PMU

3. Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA) Vietnam Environment Administration (VEA), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)

Ms. Tran Thi Kim Tinh, Project Coordinator, Sub-PMU

Ms. Nguyen Thi Nhung, Technical assistant, Sub-PMU

4. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Binh, Deputy Director, Department of Conservation and Aquatic Resources Development,
Directorate of Fisheries

Mr. Phan Van Bac, official, Department of Conservation and Aquatic Resources Development, Directorate of
Fisheries

Mr. Nguyen Manh Hiep, official, Department of special use and protection forest management, VNFOREST

5. NGOs, Academia, and Civil Society

Mr. Hoang Van Thang, Director, Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES);
Vice Chair, Vietnam Wetland Association (VWA)

Ms. Le Thi Van Hue, Vice Head, Division of Cooperation and Development, CRES; VWA

Mr. Hoang Hai Duong, Staff, Division of Cooperation and Development, CRES, VWA

Mr. Le Trong Trai, Director, Viet Nature Conservation Centre

Mr. Hoang Viet, Programme Coordinator, Water and Climate Change, WWF-Vietnam

6. Thai Binh Province

Mr. Nguyen Manh Luc, Vice Director, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DONRE)

Mr. Vu Hai Dang, Provincial Coordinator—Wetlands PA Project, DONRE

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Du, Head of Consular and Overseas Vietnamese Affairs Division, Department External Relations

Mr. Pham Tuan Vu, Official, Department External Relations

Mr. Vu Ngoc Huynh, Official, Sub-Department of Sea and Island, DONRE

Thuy Xuan Commune, Thai Thuy District

Mr. Bui Ngoc Hien, Chairman

7. Thua Thien Hue Province

Mr. Nguyen Viet Hung, Director, Sub-Department of Environment Protection (SDEP), DONRE

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy, Official, SDEP, DONRE; Provincial Coordinator—Wetlands PA Project

Ms. Pham Thi Nguyet, Official, SDEP, DONRE

Ms. Le Thi Hong Hanh, official, SDEP, DONRE

Mr. Nguyen Quang Vinh Binh, Director, Fishery sub-Department

Mr. Chau Ngoc Phi, Director, Agriculture extension Center

Mr. Hoang Xuan Thanh, official, Agriculture Extension Center

Mr. Le Huu Ngoc, official, Construction Department

Mr. Tran Ho Hai, official, Planning and Investment Department

Ms. Nguyen Thi Mai Ly, official, Provincial Police

Mr. Nguyen Quang Phuc, official, Provincial Police

Huong Phong Commune, Huong Tra Township

Mr. Phan Huu Vinh, Vice Chairman

Ms. Phan Thi Gam, leader, Women’s Association

Mr. Nguyen Van Tranh, Chairman, Farmer Association

Mr. Nguyen Van Hai, Farmer

Mr. Nguyen Van An, Farmer

Mr. Dang Thi Luyen, Farmer

Ms. Nguyen Nha, Secretary, Fishery Association

Mr Nguyen Van Tan, member, Fishery Association

ANNEX G. PROJECT STRATEGIC RESULTS FRAMEWORK

<p>This project will contribute to achieving the following Country Programme Outcome as defined in CPAP or CPD:</p> <p>Outcome 1: Government economic policies support growth that is more equitable, inclusive and sustainable. Specifically, Outcome 1.4: By 2016, key national and sub-national agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, implement and monitor laws, policies and programmes for more efficient use of natural resources and environmental management, and to implement commitments under international conventions.</p>					
<p>Country Programme Outcome Indicators:</p> <p>Indicator 1: Proportion of land area covered by forest³ Baseline (2010): 39.1% ;Target (2016): 45% MoV: MARD/ GSO data (MDG indicator)</p> <p>Indicator 2: Proportion of terrestrial and marine protected areas protected Baseline (2010): 126 terrestrial/forest protected areas covering 2.2 million ha; 16 marine protected areas covering 169,617 ha; 3 RAMSAR sites, no wetland protected areas. Target (2016): Maintaining 2.2 million ha of terrestrial/forest protected areas; and at least 2 wetland protected areas covering 500,000 ha established and operational MoV: MARD and MONRE reports.</p>					
<p>Primary applicable Key Environment and Sustainable Development Key Result Area : 1. Mainstreaming environment and energy</p>					
<p>Applicable GEF Strategic Objective and Program: BD1: Improve Sustainability of PA Systems, ; BD2: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors</p>					
<p>Applicable GEF Expected Outcomes: 1.1 Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas; 1.2: Increased revenue for protected area systems to meet total expenditures required for management; 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation.</p>					
<p>Applicable GEF Outcome Indicators: 1. Two new protected areas and coverage at least 35,000 ha of unprotected ecosystems; 2. Two business plans for newly-established WCAs; 3. At least 310,000 ha of multiple-use landscape around the two WCAs effectively managed to reduce threats to local wetlands</p>					
	INDICATOR	BASELINE	END OF PROJECT TARGETS	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS
Project Objective⁴ To establish new wetland protected areas	Coverage of natural wetlands within the Wetlands Conservation Area-subsystem	Flooded grasslands and savannas - 0 ha Mangrove – 0 ha Estuaries – 0 ha	Flooded grasslands and savannas – 14,474 ha ⁵ Mangrove – 3,024 ha Estuaries – 17,816 ha	PPC decisions to establish Tam-Giang Cau Hai WCA & Thai Thuy WCA	Assumptions: National & provincial governments (PPCs) remain committed to investing in wetlands management, sustainable

and to create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes	Ecosystem Health Index (EHI) ⁶ monitoring systems for monitoring wetland health developed and in place for WCA sub-system with a focus to reduce threats	Currently no use	Development of EHI and adoption at the sub-system WCA level	EHI Scorecards	use& conservation and give their full support to the establishment and operation of the two WCAs. Stakeholder institutions engage constructively in capacity development initiatives.
	Hectares of landscape where impacts on wetland biodiversity are avoided, mitigated or offset	No planning provisions for the protection of wetland biodiversity outside formal PAs	At least 310,300 hectares covered by provincial development plans/provincial sector development plans where standards and guidelines supporting wetland values integrate effectively preventing impact on wetland biodiversity	Provincial Development Plans Provincial Sector Development Plans RRDBR Management Framework	Government & PPCs are committed to working across sectors & different groups of key actors to address landscape-level threats to Tam Giang Cau Hai and Thai Thay. Risks: Mainstreaming wetland biodiversity conservation into landscape-level development plans and other existing frameworks hindered by competing priorities/lack of adequate incentives. The effects of climate change degrade conservation value of wetlands and the new WCAs.
Outcome 1: New wetland PAs and relevant	Outputs: 1.1 New and updated national policy, regulatory and planning frameworks for wetland conservation 1.2 Strengthened national capacity for administration of wetland conservation areas (WCAs) 1.3 Two new wetland conservation areas (WCAs) established and operational				

systemic capacities for their effective management established	1.4 Strengthened provincial capacity for wetlands conservation and management and sustainable use				
	Changes to major wetlands-related policies, laws & plans	A number of wetlands inventories and classification systems exist, which need to be consolidated, rationalised and updated. Decree 109 on the Conservation & Sustainable Development of Wetlands (2003) needs better alignment with Biodiversity Law (2008) The first Wetlands Action Plan period has come to an end in 2010.	A revised wetlands inventory and database using a unified classification system A new decree (& associated legal guidance) to replace Decree 109 that supports an ecosystem-based approach to wetlands management & emphasises importance of wetlands-related ecosystem services <i>A new 5-year Wetlands Action Plan in accordance with the new Decree and Circular and replace the Wetland Action Plan 2004-2010</i>	Project monitoring reports New Government Decree & associated guidance The new Action Plan	<p>Assumptions: MONRE continues to see value in bringing about these changes. Targeted national and subnational institutions engage constructively in capacity development initiatives, see value in strengthening intersectoral cooperation and coordination including information sharing on wetlands and engage actively in the NWWG & LWWGs</p> <p>Both national & provincial governments remain committed to establishing the two WCAs & engage proactively to make them fully operational. They also commit necessary financial resources to cover operational costs.</p> <p>Risks: NWWG and LWWGs are not effective due to insufficient interest and participation of key members and are thus unable to take wetlands agenda forward. Government institutions are unable to agree on their respective roles & responsibilities with regard to WCA establishment & management</p>
	Capacity of MONRE to implement wetlands-related policies, legislation, strategies and programmes as measured by the Capacity Development Scorecard	21% <i>To be updated in the 1st year</i>	> 45%	Project reports & UNDP Capacity Scorecard applied at Mid-Term and Final Evaluation	
	Extent (ha) of the two areas formally proclaimed and managed as the Tam-Giang Cau Hai WCA and Thai Thay WCA	0 ha	21, 620 ha as the TGCH WCA 13,696 ha as the TT WCA	PPC decision to establish Tam-Giang Cau Hai WCA and Thai Thay WCA Project & WCA reports	
	Income from various sources for the management of the WCA PA Subsystem	\$ 0	Income from various sources covers at least the recurrent costs of TGCH WCA and TT WCA as defined by the business plans developed for each	DONRE Financial Reports	

	METT scores in each of TGCH WCA and TT WCA	TGCH WCA: 0% TT WCA: 0%	TGCH WCA: > 40% TT WCA: > 40%	METT applied at Mid-Term and Final Evaluation	
Outcome 2: Integrity of wetland PAs are secured within the wider wetland connected landscapes	Outputs: 2.1 Increased understanding and knowledge about wetlands values, sustainable use and management across the wider landscape 2.2 Wetlands conservation and sustainable use mainstreamed into key provincial plans 2.3 Reduced threats to biodiversity from local livelihoods.				
	Biodiversity conservation strengthened through monetary and non-monetary valuation of ecosystem services	No comprehensive (evidence-based) valuation of the ecosystem services exists	EIAs of any major development activity in Thua Thien-Hue and Thai Binh Provinces include sections referring to impacts on environmental services as a result of widely communicated assessment of the value of Tam Giang-Cau Hai and Thai Thuy wetlands' ecosystem services	Economic valuation report and communications documents EIAs	Assumptions: A better understanding of the benefits and values of wetlands ecosystem services & the consequences of their degradation and loss provides sufficient incentive to promote change in policy and practice to favour wetlands conservation and sustainable use. Sectors see value in collaborating to further the conservation & sustainable development of wetlands agenda at a wider landscape level and have the capacity and time to do so. Environmentally friendly agricultural, aquacultural and fishing practices generate as much or more benefits to local communities as existing unsustainable practices Locally communities perceive adequate value in adopting new environmentally friendly economic practices and are willing to invest time and effort in learning new methods & applying them.
	Threats reduced by mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and the PA system within the sectoral and development planning frameworks, indicated by effective intersectoral coordination and plans incorporating BD conservation measures.	No provincial inter-sectoral coordination mechanism for BD conservation and PAs at Landscape Level Provincial sectoral plans do not include adequate measures for BD conservation	Two Local Wetlands Working Groups with good representation from key stakeholders and experts established and supporting WCA Management Boards & PPCs more generally in TTH Province and TB Province to strengthen application of key standards & regulations that support wetlands conservation and sustainable use Four Provincial Sector Plans (Thai Binh Province: Agriculture and Aquaculture sectors; Thua Thien Hue Province: Agriculture and Fishing sectors) incorporate wetland biodiversity friendly standards for application in	Minutes of the LWWGs Project Reports The targeted sector plans (4 in total) & project reports Project monitoring records	

		District Development Plans do not currently include any reference to wetlands values of TGCH or TT	relation to activities under that sector 6 District Development Plans zone the different land use types within the WCAs and remaining areas within district boundaries. Zoning includes prescriptions for strict protection areas among others seagrass beds, mangrove and mudflat protection zones.	Revised District Plans	Risks: Mainstreaming WCAs & wetlands biodiversity values into sector policies is hindered by lack of incentives for other sectors to apply this in practice & weak enforcement to ensure that agreed priorities and plans for wetlands conservation are implemented especially where greater short-term benefits may be generated through alternative uses
	Level of water pollution levels around O Lau in TGCH & Thuy Truong in TT as a result of improved agricultural & aquacultural practices	Baselines to be established in Year 1 ⁷	Reduction in pollution level against the baseline levels. Targets to be agreed in Year 1	Project reports Community-based water monitoring records	The benefits of competing landuses are perceived by planners and decision-makers to outweigh their costs in terms of wetlands degradation and loss
	Extent of coverage of clam culture on the intertidal mudflats in Thai Thuy WCA	Baseline to be established in Year 1	No increase in clam culture on the intertidal mudflat	Project reports Clammapping exercises	adopted ecological standards are effectively applied by concerned sectors
	Catch per Effort of <i>Siganus</i> in TGCH WCA as a result of further establishment of aquatic reserves and Fishery Associations, ensuring us of appropriate gear and enforcing existing regulations on	Baseline to be established in Year 1	Increase in Catch per Effort of <i>Siganus</i> against the baseline	Project reports Community-based fishing monitoring records	Unforeseen larger developments outside the control of project & WCA Management Board cause major wetlands degradation and loss at site-level or within wider landscape with knock-on effects on the new WCAs (e.g. a major oil spill at sea) The WCA Management Board
	destructive gear and fishing practices				and key PPC, DPC and CPC officials engage actively with local communities to increase their involvement in wetlands conservation planning and management.

ANNEX H. RATINGS SCALES

Ratings scales presented here are as per guidance in: *UNDP-GEF Directorate. 2014. Project-Level Monitoring: Guidance for Conducting Mid-term Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects.*

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.
Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

ANNEX I. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVALUATORS/MIDTERM REVIEW CONSULTANTS

Evaluators/Consultants:

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 limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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

JAMES T. BERDACH

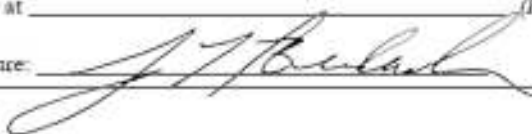
Name of Consultant: _____

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 RESTON, VIRGINIA USA (Place) on 17 MAY 2018 (Date)

Signature: _____



Evaluators/Consultants:

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.
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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 limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form


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

Name of Consultant: Pham Duc Chien

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, Vietnam (Place) on 17 MAY 2018 (Date)

Signature: 

ANNEX J. AUDIT TRAIL

(The audit trail is submitted as a separate file. The audit trail records comments received from various stakeholders concerning the MTR and the MTR draft report, and describes the actions taken and revisions made by the MTR team in response to the comments, to produce the final report.)

ANNEX K. SIGNED MTR FINAL REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

(to be completed by UNDP)