

MID TERM EVALUATION

MARCH 2009

FINAL REPORT

**MAKING THE LINK:
THE CONNECTION AND
SUSTAINABLE
MANAGEMENT OF KON
KA KINH NATIONAL
PARK AND KON CHU
RANG NATURE
RESERVE**

PIMS 2091

PREPARED FOR
UNDP VIETNAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Making the Link: The Connection and Sustainable Management of the Kon Ka Kinh National Park and the Kon Chu Rang Nature Reserve project is designed to contribute to the conservation of the globally significant Central Annamites Priority Landscape in Gia Lai Province. This area contains some of the most intact flora and fauna communities in Vietnam.

The 4 year project is to develop a foundation of support and management to maintain the biological integrity and connectivity of the Forest Complex, which includes the Tram Lap and Dakrong State Forest Enterprises (SFEs) (now Companies (SFCs)), as well as the existing protected areas, strengthening their sustainability, and mainstreaming biodiversity in the production landscapes.

The project is expecting to deliver results in three areas:

1. Strengthened institutional capacity of Gia Lai Forest Protection Department (FPD) in areas of forest management and protection, with specific emphasis on areas within and around the KKK NP and KCR NR
2. Increased awareness among local communities, key decision-makers, scientific community and donors to the unique conservation values of the project area, building long-term support for forest management and protection throughout the project area
3. Established conditions for sustainable forest management and forest management certification in Dakrong and Tram Lap SFEs, leading to the continued integrity of a forest corridor between KKK NP and KCR NR¹

It is being implemented by the Government of Vietnam (GOV) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

This report is the outcome of the mid-term evaluation of this project. It is structured to meet the requirements of UNDP and is intended to provide a forward looking perspective on the project at this midpoint in its implementation. The evaluation team focussed their independent findings and recommendations to support the project to reach its goals, and provide pointers for the final evaluation. These were presented to the key stakeholders at the conclusion of the mission.

This mid-term evaluation concludes that this bold and innovative biodiversity conservation project is achieving some satisfactory progress through increased participation of the local communities (Ba Na) in biodiversity conservation, by strengthening the institutional capacity of the provincial Forest Protection Department and through the progress made so far with the State Forest Companies towards sustainable forest management.

However there are some internal and external challenges to this project that impact on its effectiveness. Internal challenges include the limitation of the project design,

¹ TOR Mid Term Evaluation

budget constraints and their flow on impacts. The project design does not recognise the dependence of the Ba Na communities on the forest resources for food, income and general resource utilisation. These communities have a fundamental dependence on these benefits, and the project does not directly address their need for sustainable use. The community consultation mechanism created by the project to link communities with the protected areas provides a foundation for co management, and benefit sharing that could help address this challenge. The budget constraints have limited some of the project activities. Further the logistical challenges of a remote project area make for challenges in recruitment, internal project communication and building deeper connections between the various stakeholders.

The external challenges create a real threat to the achievement of the project. These challenges include the distinct possibility of the Green Corridor being dissected by the Ho Chi Minh Trail road and the associated impacts of infrastructure development opening up of the area for settlement and uncontrolled resource exploitation. The proper planning, designing (through the use of environmental impact assessments) and implementing of transportation infrastructure development to minimise impact on natural ecosystems, including watersheds, is critically important. Further the conservation of biological and cultural diversity is vital for the integrity and sustainability of the Green Corridor and the wider proposed protected area complex.

The lack of regulations and management mechanisms for the newly created State Forest Companies (SFC) mean that the goal of FSC certification is very challenging at this time. The certification process anticipates companies having independent decision making in a number of areas including marketing, management planning, tenure use rights and compliance with law. As the SFCs are in their infancy their modus operandi and their participation in the FSC process is unclear. The SFCs having clarity of their own regulations and management mechanisms would enable the SFCs to more clearly understand their responsibilities, including biodiversity conservation and sustainable development and consequently their engagement in the FSC process.

Alongside these challenges is the opportunity to achieve the Green Corridor through the evident political commitment and the successful capacity building of the government agencies in Gia Lai. Achieving the Green Corridor, with full stakeholder support must be the dedicated focus for the remainder of the project. The other key priority is ensuring the necessary funding is in place for continuity activities after the project is complete.

The evaluation process identified the potential to link this Green Corridor complex to a further protected area for management coherence. This larger area would help strengthen the ecological integrity of the protected areas, and the Green Corridor. It is suggested that within the second half of the project the feasibility of creating the further connection with the An Toan Nature Reserve in the adjoining Binh Dinh province is explored. This would create an even larger protected area complex that would provide significant further benefits for biodiversity. To do this the Gia Lai and Binh Dinh Provinces should establish a regulation for a larger trans provincial boundary protected area complex for the purpose of collaborative management of the three Special Use Forest sites: KKK NP, KCR NR, the Green Corridor and An Toan NR.

If this ambitious Green Corridor project succeeds it could be a model for strengthening institutional capacity in GOV forest management and protection,

building community awareness of biodiversity conservation, establishing co-management, and building the foundations for sustainable forest management through the FSC processes. To achieve this success, the serious external threat to the Green Corridor from the development of the Ho Chi Minh Trail must be mitigated as it jeopardises the sustainability of this project. The GOV should urgently prepare an EIA for the road, including the social impacts.

For the project to be successful this roading threat must be mitigated. The foundation for the sustainable management of the Green Corridor, connecting with Kon Ka Kinh National Park and Kon Chu Rang Nature Reserve has been put in place through the project. This investment in Gai Lai Province should be capitalised on by urgent implementation of the Green Corridor and its effective management for biodiversity conservation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Larger protected area creation

See Map on page 6.

To find the budget from this project to undertake within the life of the project a feasibility study of the PA that includes KKK NP and KCR NR and proposed Green Corridor. This is required for presentation to PPC, and is an essential element of the case for establishing the Green Corridor.

KKK NP, KCR NR, Green Corridor and An Toan NR should be connected for management purposes and to enable the possibility of a declaration of a larger Man and the Biosphere Reserve in the future.

In the near future Gia Lai and Binh Dinh Provinces should establish a regulation for a larger trans provincial boundary protected area complex for the purpose of collaborative management of three Special Use Forest Sites: KKK, KCR, Green Corridor and An Toan NR to enhance the biological integrity and ensure management coherence of this larger protected area. Further this will enable the declaration of a larger Man and the Biosphere Reserve in the future.

Infrastructure, especially the road through Green Corridor, should be routed away from all boundaries of the larger protected area complex to enhance the biological integrity and ensure the management coherence of this larger protected area.

2. Capacity building

To implement further training building on the initial training activities in the second phase of the project e.g. GIS, biodiversity monitoring, community engagement skills, Ba Na forest protection units KCR NR management board should provide training for all KCR NR staff in environmental education when their staff resources are increased.

What	Who
GIS	KKK NP and KCR NR and SFCs
Biodiversity monitoring	KKK NP and KCR NR and SFCs
Community engagement - PRA	KKK NP and KCR NR, SFCs and CCG
Forest protection patrolling skills and monitoring all illegal logging, harvesting of NTFP and hunting	Ba Na communities FPU's linked to activities of KKK NP and KCR NR

3. Budget

The budget for the remainder of the project should be reviewed and monies reallocated from low priority activities to other priorities that are underfunded e.g. community education with villages, CCG meetings, development of co-management, training workshop for stakeholders and preliminary assessments of the function and roles of stakeholders in co management and preparation of the feasibility case to PPC to enable declaration of the Green Corridor.

That KKK NP and KCR NR co-ordinate their annual budget from PPC with the project activities e.g. environmental education programme, patrolling, biodiversity monitoring of permanent sample plots. And that PPC provide the budget to continue these activities after the project is completed.

4. Environmental education programme

Link awareness raising programmes of KKK NP and KCR NR (existing long term programme) with the environmental education programme of the project, and focus on women and the elders in the community-based programme and children in the school based programme.

Household and village decision makers are women and the elders, consequently they should be the focus in the community based programme, and possibly a wider age range of children in the school based programme.

The education and awareness raising materials should use pictures and paintings of the key protected biodiversity of this area to help reinforce the immediate connection to familiar and local biodiversity.

5. Road

GOV should urgently prepare an EIA for the road, including the social impacts of the road, as this major road through the proposed Green Corridor is a serious threat and will jeopardise the sustainability of this project.

The EIA should include the assumption that the impact on biodiversity of the road in the Green Corridor must be minimised, and consequently further major transportation infrastructure be re-routed around the Green Corridor utilising and upgrading the existing infrastructure. PPC and FPD should monitor the road building activities that may place the biodiversity under further pressure from the construction workers

illegally logging, harvesting NTFPs, and illegally hunting. Once the road is finished PPC should control the transportation route for the illegal logging, illegal harvesting of NTFPs, and illegal hunting, as well as control the agricultural and industrial rubber, coffee etc encroachments and associated settlement and its threat to biodiversity.

6. Co management

To find funding from this budget to undertake within the second half of the project initial activities in co-management e.g. training workshop for stakeholders and preliminary assessments of the function and roles of stakeholders in co management to deepen the approach outlined in the FRR report.

7. Sharing of information

That the Project actively shares information with other projects in the region e.g. the WWF/SDC Sustainable Forest Management project, the WWF Central Annamites Initiative, and the ADB Forests for Livelihoods project etc. That the other projects be invited to participate in mutual workshops and conferences to share information experiences and approaches.

Website

Up to date and all relevant project material should be uploaded to the website, www.kkkkcrproject.org urgently.

Learning workshop at completion

At the conclusion of the project UNDP and the GOV should host a learning workshop and the outcomes of the project be written up into a learning document and shared with key decision makers and protected area managers e.g. Management boards, provincial FPD, and PPC and protected area directors.

8. Staff retention

To increase staff retention for the remainder of the project the Steering Committee should provide for further capacity building for the skills required to implement the project e.g. stakeholder engagement training, and more appropriate employment conditions for staff in the PMU.

9. Project vehicles

At the conclusion of the project the vehicles purchased by the project should be retained in the province and UNDP should allocate to FPD, KKK NP, and KCR NR.

10. Following this project's completion

Following the April 2009 workshop PMU should propose to PPC that they support and provide interim funding for continuity activities after the project is completed e.g. CCG costs, biological monitoring, FPU's etc.

That PMU encourage KKK NP and KCR NR Management Boards to contact VCF in Central Vietnam. VCF will assist KKK NP and KCR NR Management Boards to prepare project proposals for continuity funding e.g. CCG costs, and continuation of biodiversity monitoring and patrolling in the interim. (VCF will determine whether the protected areas meet the necessary prerequisites for VCF funding.)

11. Follow on project

During the second half of this project a follow on project should be designed that builds on the foundations laid by this project for biodiversity conservation in the Green Corridor complex.

12. Post project completion

The Committee (as structured below) should guide the KKK NP- Corridor-KCR NR post project to ensure the continuation of the coordination that is required for effective management of the Green Corridor and its stakeholders.

For clarity the Committee should comprise a representative of the PPC, all relevant Provincial level departments and representatives of local key management stakeholders e.g. KKK NP and KCR NR and SFCs and any key staff of possible follow on projects.

13. FSC

TFT should continue to support the SFC in certification processes both during and when the project is concluded.

PPC and MARD should develop the regulations for the state forestry companies nationally providing a framework for SFC management mechanisms. This would enable companies such as Tram Lap and Dakrong to more clearly understand their roles and responsibilities for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.