BỘ NÔNG NGHIỆP VÀ MÔI TRƯỜNG

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

United Nations Development Programme

Project Document

Project title: Promote Wildlife Conservation and Responsible Nature-Based Tourism for Sustainable Development in Vietnam		
Country: Vietnam	**Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity): Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (NBCA) of Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE)**	**Execution Modality*:*** NIM
Contributing Outcome (UNDAF/CPD, RPD, GPD)*:* **(CPD Outcome 1)** By 2026, people in Vietnam, especially those at risk of being left behind, will contribute to and benefit equitably from a more sustainable, inclusive and gender-responsive economic transformation based on innovation, entrepreneurship, enhanced productivity, competitiveness and decent work. **(CPD Output 1.1)** Next-generation mechanisms to enable vulnerable groups, in particular poor people, ethnic minority women and people with disability, to create and access sustainable jobs and improved livelihoods. **(CPD Outcome 2)** People in Vietnam, especially those at risk of being left behind, benefit from and contribute to a safer and cleaner environment resulting from Vietnam's effective mitigation and adaptation to climate change; disaster risk reduction and resilience building; promotion of circular economy; provision of clean and renewable energy; and sustainable management of natural resources. **(CPD Output 2.2)** Policies and solutions designed and implemented for transformation to low-carbon development, circular economy and environmental protection.		
UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Category: Substantial	**UNDP Gender Marker:** 2	
Quantum Award ID: 1215252	**Quantum Project/Output ID**: 01001683	
UNDP-GEF PIMS ID number: 6377	**GEF Project ID number**: 10787	
LPAC meeting date: 18 December 2025		
Last possible date to submit to GEF: 16 October 2022		
Latest possible CEO endorsement date: 18 Dec 2022		
Project duration in months: 60 months		
Planned start date: 23 March 2026	**Planned completion date:** 23 March 2031	
Expected date of Mid-Term Review: 23 September 2028	**Expected date of Terminal evaluation**: 23 September 2031	
Expected Operational Closure Date: 23 December 2031	**Expected Financial Closure Date:** 23 June 2032	
Brief project description: Vietnam is widely recognized as the 16th most biodiverse country in the world, hosting over 110 Key Biodiversity Areas. Vietnam is also estimated to contain nearly 10% of the world's animal species and nearly 40% of its 9,600 to 12,000 plant species are endemic to the country. Vietnam is home to several of the world's most iconic species with		

many others endemic to the Asia and Indochina region with 109 large mammals and about 850 bird species having been recorded. This remarkably high level of diversity is significant for a relatively small country of only 33.12 million hectares.

The project's demonstration landscapes in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park in Khanh Hoa province and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park in Quang Tri province are equally diverse.[1] (Former) Nui Chua National Park, with an extensive marine seascape, alone boasts more than 1,500 plant species, among which are many rare and endemic to the park. More than 350 species of vertebrates, 79 mammals, 161 birds, 62 reptiles, and 31 fish have been discovered, 44 of which are classified as Near Threatened or higher. Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park is one of the 200 priority global biodiversity hotspots in Southeast Asia and is itself home to at least more than 813 vertebrate species, including many amphibians and reptiles discovered in recent years. Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park hosts a highly diverse primate fauna with 10 out of the 24 primate species found in the country, 7 of which are considered globally threatened species.

This assemblage of biodiversity is a special advantage for tourism development and for the maturity of the nature-based tourism segment, but despite these exceptional biodiversity values, pervasive threats to biodiversity in Vietnam include the overexploitation of its natural resources, habitat loss and degradation and global climate change, as well as destructive fishing practices, overfishing, disturbance in marine areas partly from tourism activities and demand. More insidious and indirect threats include population growth, consumption of wildlife products and increasing demand for natural resources for traditional practices, are also exerting pressures on biodiversity. Of these threats, illegal exploitation and trafficking of wildlife is pervasive and presents serious consequences, especially for endangered species. Unsustainable infrastructure and tourism development, environmental pollution, degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems are emerging concerns.

Over the last decade tourism has emerged as an important driver of growth and nature-based tourism in particular, has the potential to play an important role in sustainable development. If innovative models are nurtured and developed carefully, nature-based tourism has the potential to deliver triple wins of supporting poverty alleviation, economic growth, and biodiversity conservation, while also contributing to sustainable PA financing and commitments under global multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Nature-based tourism's singular potential to create jobs and growth, while protecting wildlife and ecosystems, makes it an enticing prospect for Vietnam to align those interests and harness it. Current barriers to achieving this vision include a fragmented policy framework and poor institutional coordination; a lack of technical guidelines, tools and methods to inform nature-based tourism development; insufficient experience, models and investment in nature-based tourism by the private sector; and limited awareness and capacity across government and local communities to develop and nurture nature-based tourism in a manner which benefits the private sector and local populations alike..

In order to address the threats to biodiversity in Vietnam arising from unsustainable tourism practices, the project will create the necessary enabling regulatory environment, mainstream biodiversity into the tourism sector through enhanced cooperation between ministries and provincial departments, encourage private sector investment through public-private partnerships, and enable local communities to benefit from nature-based tourism products and services through enhanced livelihood opportunities, a deeper appreciation of biodiversity values, and contribution to its conservation and monitoring. In turn, the benefits will lead to reduced poaching and illegal hunting, as well as offset impacts of Human Wildlife Conflict.

The project's outcomes are:

(i) strengthened and harmonized policy, regulatory and incentive framework for promotion of nature-based tourism while reducing threats to wildlife and habitats;

(ii) strengthened public-private partnerships for nature-based tourism enhance local livelihoods, increase PA revenue generation, improve tourism management, and reduce threats in PAs from poaching, illegal activities and related impacts.

(iii) change in social norms and behavior promote society's acceptance of a more sustainable approach to nature-based tourism that protects wildlife; and

(iv) up scaling and replication of nature-based tourism in Vietnam is supported by effective marketing, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation of results. Taken together, the project aims to transform Vietnam into a competitive and sought-after responsible tourism destination which celebrates and prioritizes its natural and cultural heritage.

1 In parallel with the ministerial merger, Viet Nam adopted a major administrative reform that reduced the number of provinces from 63 to 34, effective 1 July 2025, through a series of provincial mergers. Notably, Ninh Thuan was merged into Khanh Hoa to form an enlarged Khanh Hoa Province, and Quang Binh was merged with Quang Tri to form a new Quang Tri Province. In this document, all assessments were conducted prior to this restructuring. Hence, relevant content relating to the former Ninh Thuan Province is now presented under Khanh Hoa, and relevant content relating to the former Quang Binh Province is presented under Quang Tri, reflecting the new administrative configuration.

Global environmental benefits will include improved management of terrestrial and marine protected areas, as well as their buffer zones; high-value biodiversity areas in understudied special protection forested areas will be under improved management practices, and beneficiaries of nature-based tourism will include women and youth. The project will support a shift in tourist purchasing preferences away from illegal wildlife and unsustainable and destructive tourism practices, towards supporting demand for pristine and low impact tourism products and services.

The **Project Objective** is to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods through innovative solutions for nature-based tourism, and will be achieved through four interrelated and mutually reinforcing components:

Component 1: Enabling framework to harmonize tourism development with nature conservation
Component 2: Nature-based tourism partnerships benefitting communities, wildlife and habitats at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks
Component 3: Capacity building and behavior change for acceptance of value of nature-based tourism and wildlife and biodiversity protection
Component 4: Marketing, knowledge management and M&E

Financing Plan	
GEF Trust Fund grant	USD 7,150,000
UNDP TRAC resources	USD 0
Confirmed cash co-financing to be administered by UNDP	USD 0
(1) Total Budget administered by UNDP	USD 7,150,000
Co-financiers that will deliver project results included in the project results framework (Funds not administered through UNDP accounts)	
(2) Total confirmed co-financing to this project not administered by UNDP	USD 91,770,062.00
(3) Grand-Total Project Financing (1)+(2)	USD 98,920,062.00

Signatures:

Ministry of Agriculture and Environment **Nguyen Do Anh Tuan** Director General, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment	Agreed by Implementing Partner	Date/Month/Year: 23/3/2026
United Nations Development Program **Ramla Khalidi** Resident Representative UNDP Vietnam	Agreed by UNDP	Date/Month/Year: 23/3/2026

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ACRONYMS

ASEAN-WEN	ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network
BPPS NCE	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, Nature, Climate and Energy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBT	Community Based Tourism
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CO	UNDP Country Office
CPC	Commune People's Committees
DAE	Department of Agriculture and Environment
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
DOCST	Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism
DOF	Department of Finance
DONRE	Department of Natural resources and Environment
DPC	District People's Committee
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESRA	Experimental and scientific research areas
FIPI	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSP	Full-Sized Project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEFSEC	Global Environment Facility Secretariat
GoV	Government of Vietnam
GRM	Grievance Response Mechanism
GWP	Global Wildlife Program
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict
IBA	Important Bird Areas
ISPAE	Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Environment
IPSARD	Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species
KBI	Key Biodiversity Area
LPA	Landscape Protection Area
MAE	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOCST	Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MSP	Medium Sized Project
NBCA	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency
NP	Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park
OCOP	One Commune One Product
PA	Protected Area
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PFES	Payment for Forest Environmental Services
PIF	Project Information Form
PIR	GEF Project Implementation Report
PMES	Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PWES	Payment for Wetland Ecosystem Services
ROI	Return on Investment

RTC	Responsible Tourism Club
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SES	Social and Environmental Standard
SHCA	Species/Habitat Conservation Area
SRM	Stakeholder Response Mechanism
STAP	GEF Scientific Technical Advisory Panel
SUF	Special Use Forest
VASEP	Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers
VNAT	Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
VTOS	Vietnam Tourism Occupational Standards
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

Figure 1: Project at a Glance



PROJECT LANDSCAPES

This project will include activities at the national level and sub-national level in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park located in Khanh Hoa province and Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park located in Quang Tri province

TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING	GEF TRUST FUND	CO-FINANCING
$ 98.92 MILLION USD	$ 7.15 MILLION USD	$ 91.77 MILLION USD



PHONG NHA - KE BANG NATIONAL PARK (QUANG TRI PROVINCE)

343,381 HA

DECISION 1062/2013/QD-TTG





NUI CHUA - PHUOC BINH NATIONAL PARK (KHANH HOA PROVINCE)

36,970 HA

DECISION 134/2003/QD-TTG
DECISION 199/2018/QD-UBND



COMPONENTS

1 Enabling framework to harmonize tourism development with nature conservation
GEF Financing
US$ 1,674,387
Co-financing
US$ 19,011,820

2 Nature-based tourism partnerships benefiting communities, wildlife and habitats at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha - Ke Bang national parks
GEF Financing
US$ 3,407,854
Co-financing
US$ 40,260,324

3 Capacity building and behavior change for acceptance of value of nature-based tourism and wildlife and biodiversity protection
GEF Financing
US$ 1,212,427
Co-financing
US$ 15,656,793

4 Marketing, knowledge management and Monitoring & Evaluation
GEF Financing
US$ 514,858
Co-financing
US$ 7,548,811

PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS US$ 340,474

GEF CORE INDICATORS

145,414 ha Total protected area under improved management effectiveness (Indicator 1.2)

7,352 ha Total marine protected area under improved management effectiveness (Indicator 2.2)

45,802 ha Area of landscapes under improved practices, excluding protected areas (Indicator 4.1)

-15,704,236 Greenhouse gas emission mitigated (tCO2-e) (Indicator 6.1)

3K Direct beneficiaries of which 44% are women

II. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

1. Vietnam is located in the global Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, one of 25 such hotspots globally, considered extremely rich in biodiversity and playing an important role in nature and human life. It is one of the world's most biologically diverse countries, ranked 16th globally in terms of species diversity and hosts 110 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). The country is home to 10% of the world's species across 95 ecosystems (including 7 terrestrial, 39 wetland and 20 marine ecosystems), while covering less than 1% of the planet's surface area [2]. It

[2] Bui, H. T., Pham, L. H., & Jones, T. E. (2021). Governance and Management of Protected Areas in Vietnam: Nature-Based Tourism in Mountain Areas. In Nature-Based Tourism in Asia's Mountainous Protected Areas (pp. 173-195). Springer, Cham.

has 63 important bird areas and six out of 238 global priority ecoregions for conservation. Over 109 large mammals and roughly 850 bird species have been documented, and Vietnam is also home to between 9,600 and 12,000 plant species Vietnam's 3,260 km coastline hosts a variety of coastal ecosystems. Coral reef ecosystems offer a variety of fauna and flora, with about 255 species and 69 genera in the southern coastal areas and 95 species and 35 genera in the Northern coastal areas; collectively these include 157 fish species, 208 mollusks, 76 crustaceans, 70 seaweeds, 78 Polychaeta, and many species of plankton species[3,4,5].

2. The endemism of fauna in Vietnam is the highest in Indochina (including Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) with the country harbouring some of Asia's most endangered animals, such as the Crested Argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*), Edwards Pheasant (*Lophura edwardsi*), Green Peafowl (*Pavo muticus*), the Doucs (*Pygathrix spp.*), Delacour Langur (*Trachypithecus delacouri*) and Tonkin Sub-nosed Monkey (*Rhinopithecus avunculus*) and many others[6,7,8]. New scientific discoveries over the past 20 years (including 4 mammal species, 3 species of turtle, 15 lizards, 4 snakes, 31 frogs, 55 fish, over 500 invertebrates and more than 200 species of vascular plants) have affirmed Vietnam's global importance for biodiversity (see **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profile Report**).
3. The number of threatened species has risen sharply in recent years, with several species having already gone extinct, including the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), the Giant ibis (*Thaumatibis gigantea*), the Kouprey (*Bos sauveli*) and the Southern River Terrapin (*Batagur affinis*)[9]. In addition, the Indochinese tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is considered functionally extinct, with other large mammal species such as the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), many big cats (*Felidae spp.*), bears (*Ursus spp.*), pangolins (*Manis spp.*) not far behind. IUCN Red List in 2005 categorized 148 plant and 156 animal species from Vietnam as Vulnerable or higher, including 46 mammals, 41 birds, 27 reptiles, 15 amphibians, and 27 fishes[10]. In 2018, the number of threatened species increased to 274 species, including 59 mammals, 57 birds, 75 reptiles, 51 amphibians, and 32 fishes[11]; these statistics do not include plant species. (See **Table 1, Annex 17: Demonstration Landscapes Profiles**).
4. Vietnam's biodiversity and unique landscapes still maintain an extremely high tourism potential[12]. It has 11 Biosphere Reserves[13] , 17 UNESCO-recognized heritage sites[14], 9 Ramsar Sites, and 10 national parks that have been named as ASEAN Heritage[15]. Other potential tourist attractions include lagoon ecosystems, sandy beaches, mangrove forests, limestone cave ecosystems, and fruit gardens.

[3] Project Identification Form
[4] Ibid.
[5] Thuaire B, Allanic Y, Hoang Viet A, Le Khac Q, Luu Hong T, Nguyen The C, Nguyen Thi T (2021). Assessing the biodiversity in Viet Nam – Analysis of the impacts from the economic sectors. WWF-Viet Nam, Ha Noi, Viet Nam.
[6] Duwe VK et al. (2022). Contributions to the Biodiversity of Vietnam. Biodiversity Data Journal 10.
[7] Nguyen, A., Tran B.V., Hoang D.M., Nguyen M.T.A., Nguyen T.D., Tran T.V., Long B., Meijaard E., Holland J., Wilting A., Tilker, A. (2019) Camera-trap evidence that the silver-backed chevrotain Tragulus versicolor remains in the wild in Vietnam. Nature Ecology & Evolution 3: 1650-1654.
[8] World Bank (2005) Vietnam Environment Monitor 2005: Biodiversity. Report.
[9] UCN Red List (2021) The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. WWW at www.iucnredlist.org.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] A total of 61 out of 176 special-use forests in Vietnam currently have ecotourism activities being undertaken, including: at 25/34 national parks; at 36/133 nature reserves and landscape protection areas. There are 8 areas with joint ventures in place and 13 with active concession leases of forests have been designated for ecotourism and/or resort operations.
[13] Including: Cat Ba islands, Dong Nai, Red River Delta, Can Gio Mangrove forest Sea and Coastalline in Kien Giang, West Nghe An, Ca Mau, Cu Lao Cham-Hoi An, Langbiang, Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Kon Ha Nuong Highland.
[14] Of which 2 are natural, 5 are cultural, and 1 is a combined cultural and natural heritage, and the rest having tangible or intangible cultural values.
[15] Including: 1. Ba Be, 2. Hoangg Lien, 3. Chu Mom Ray, 4. Kon Ka Kinh, 5. U Minh Thuong, 6. Bai Tu Long, 7. Bidoup Nui Ba, 8. Ngoc Linh (Natural Reserve), 9. Vu Quang, 10. Lo Go – Xa Mat.

Table 1: Threatened Species within Vietnam according to the IUCN Red List [16,17]

No.	IUCN Red List Category	Number of Species				
		Mammals	Birds	Reptiles	Amphibians	Fish
1	Extinct	1				
2	Regionally Extinct	1				
3	Critically Endangered (CR)	21	11	16	3	22
4	Endangered (EN)	26	19	23	28	40
5	Vulnerable (VU)	28	27	36	22	74
6	Near Threatened (NT)	17	51	11	15	39
7	Least Concern (LC)	220	760	233	120	1,515
8	Data Deficient (DD)	34	1	65	33	351
Total		**348**	**869**	**384**	**221**	**2,041**

5. The project's demonstration sites of Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (NP) in Khanh Hoa province and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park in Quang Tri province are home to a myriad of globally significant biodiversity (see tables below, as well as **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles** and **Annex 33: Supplementary Baseline Data and Tables**). Prior to Viet Nam's major administrative reform in June 2025, Nui Chua-Phuoc Binh National Park was under Ninh Thuan Province and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park was under Quang Binh Province. Following the reform, which reduced the number of provinces through consolidation, Ninh Thuan was merged into Khanh Hoa to form an enlarged Khanh Hoa province, while Quang Binh was merged into Quang Tri to form a new Quang Tri province. The former covers a total of 29,440 hectares, of which 7,352 hectares is high-value biodiversity marine area[18]With an area of 123,326 hectares[19] Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park lies in the central Annamites, a mountain range well-known for its geological history and diversity of ecosystems such as montane, karst, and river ecosystems are of important global significance for biodiversity conservation and is listed in the 2nd World Heritage List of 2015[20]Furthermore, the area has abundant potential for further developing different forms of nature-based tourism such as ecotourism, experiential expedition or adventure sport tourism, etc.

Table 2: Biodiversity values and significance at the demonstration landscapes

Project site	Significance for biodiversity conservation
Nui Chua National Park 29,440 hectares (ha) - Core Zone (before merger)	• Comprised of both terrestrial and marine areas, characterized by a hot and dry climate and the lowest average annual rainfall in Vietnam. Has a varied and rare forest-marine ecosystem with diverse fauna and flora. The semi-arid ecosystem is singular, not only in Vietnam but also in Southeast Asia[21] . The terrestrial and coastal forests of the park (22,088 ha) are dominated by arid forests. • In addition to the NP's core zone, a buffer area of 7,530 ha does not contain significant biodiversity value and is densely populated. However, a parcel outside the immediate park boundaries contains 1,802 hectares of protection forest that possesses high-value habitat and likely shelters some of the most endangered species of the park, including two important flagship species, i.e., the Silver-backed Chevrotain and the Cao Van Sung's Bent-toed Gecko (see **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles - Section 2** for details). The park's biodiversity is still substantially underestimated, especially its herpetofauna and flora, requiring more systemic surveying and monitoring. Nui Chua is known to host more than 1,500 plant species, many rare and endemic to the park. There are more than 350 species of vertebrates, 79 mammals, 161 birds, 62 reptiles, and 31 fish (44 of which are listed in the IUCN Red List in the category Near Threatened or higher, such as *Pygathrix nigripes* and *Tragulus versicolor*), have been discovered.

[16] IUCN, 2021
[17] Thuaire B, Allanic Y, Hoang Viet A, Le Khac Q, Luu Hong T, Nguyen The C, Nguyen Thi T (2021). Assessing the biodiversity in Vietnam – Analysis of the impacts from the economic sectors. WWF-Vietnam, Ha Noi, Vietnam.
[18] Excluding 7,530 ha of buffer zone.
[19] Excluding 220,055 ha of buffer zone.
[20] Sterling, E.J., Hurley M.M., Le M.D. (2006). Vietnam: A Natural History. Yale University Press.
[21] Nui Chua National Park (2020). Nomination Form: Proposed Nui Chua Biosphere Reserve, Ninh Thuan Province, Vietnam. Ninh Thuan Province.

Project site	Significance for biodiversity conservation
	• Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh possesses three distinct types of marine ecosystems, including coral reef, seagrass, and tidal and mangrove. The marine seascape's coral reef system alone hosts 350 different species. 33 species of marine mammals of seven families and three orders have been recorded in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP and surrounding areas, with 2 listed as Endangered, 6 Vulnerable, and 2 Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List. • Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh's fauna is highly threatened, with seven Critically Endangered vertebrates inhabiting the site. In addition, it houses one of the largest populations of the Black-shanked Douc in Vietnam, with up to 700 individuals[22]. The langur occupies all forest types in the park but its distribution and population are reportedly declining per most recent estimates. No recent and systematic surveys have been undertaken to assess its population status and trends. The Silver-backed Chevrotain can help raise awareness of the importance of Vietnam's unique dry coastal forest, benefitting more than 30 threatened terrestrial vertebrates and 20 plant species, as well as a high number of locally and nationally endemic fauna and flora. • Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP is one of the few sites in the entire country where the Green Turtle regularly returns to lay its eggs. As a result, it serves as a keystone species in the marine ecosystem, especially coral reefs, and protecting it will benefit the productive and essential marine core zone supporting more than 300 species of reef-forming corals, roughly 300 reef fish, and hundreds of large vertebrates and seaweed, among others.
Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park 123,326 ha	• Includes a range of terrestrial habitats with 10 distinct habitat zones, including (i) tropical dense moist evergreen forest with major broadleaf species on limestone above 700 m and (ii) low tropical montane evergreen forest with major broadleaf species on hills above 700 m (iii) low tropical montane evergreen forest with major coniferous species on limestone above 700 m; (iv) tropical dense moist evergreen forest on limestone under 700 m (representing the largest proportion of the NP at 58%); (v) tropical dense moist evergreen forest on hills under 700 m (vi) degraded evergreen forest on limestone; (vii) degraded evergreen forest on hills; (viii) riverine forest; (ix) tree and shrub savanna on limestone; and (x) tree and shrub savanna on hills. • Phong Nha-Ke Bang NP lies within most of the two Important Bird Areas (IBAs), namely Phong Nha (VN039) and Ke Bang (VN040), and the two IBAs support four of seven restricted-range species of the Annamese Lowlands Endemic Bird Area. In addition to the NP's core zone, the park is surrounded by a buffer zone of 220,055 ha of commune-managed lands across 13 communes with a relatively high population density (20 persons/km^2). A 1,039-ha protection forest adjacent to the park is considered high-value biodiversity habitat and should be surveyed for flagship primate species and be further protected from anthropogenic threats, including HWC. • Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, with the neighbouring Hin Nam No Biodiversity Conservation Area in Laos, is one of the largest remaining areas of intact forest habitat on limestone karst in Indo-China and are among the oldest and largest tracts of karst in Asia. The site is critical in understanding the geological and geomorphological development of the region, with many notable and spectacular geomorphic features, including 104 km of caves, including what could be the world's largest cave and longest underground river. The limestone block, including Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, contains a very high level of endemism due to its unique geomorphology, karst ecosystems, and geological history. • The park hosts more than 2,700 vascular plant species, with 427 species endemic to Vietnam. Two locally endemic genera, Oligocera and Hiepia, are confined to the Protected Area (PA). In addition, 28 of Vietnam's endemic orchid species have also been recorded. It is one of the 200 priority global biodiversity hotspots in Southeast Asia. • Phong Nha-Ke Bang is of global significance for biodiversity conservation with many endemic species and globally threatened species such as Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*), Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), Gaur (*Bos gaurus*), Red-shanked Douc (*Pygathrix nemaeus*), The Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus siki*), Large-antlered Muntjac (*Muntiacus vuquangensis*), the Crested Argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*), and Central tree frog (*Rhacophorus annamensis*). In addition, the park is home to more than 813 vertebrate species, including many amphibians and reptiles

[22] Hoang, D.M., Ly S.N. (2005). Distribution of the black-shanked douc langur in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP, Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam. Australasian Primatology 17: 11-19.

Project site	Significance for biodiversity conservation
	discovered in recent years. As many as 40 vertebrates are threatened by extinction due to various anthropogenic threats[23]. • The park hosts a highly diverse primate fauna, with 10 out of the 24 primate species found in the country. A total of 7 primate species found in the park are considered globally threatened species. Important flagship species include the Hatinh Langur (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis*) and the Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus siki*), with the latter categorized as Critically Endangered (see **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles - Section 3** for details). • The PA and surrounding buffer zones are home to some of Vietnam's ethnic minorities, namely Chut and Bru-Van Kieu. The ethnic minorities, Kinh or Vietnamese, account for 83.1% of the population in the buffer zones and strongly retain native customs and beliefs, highlighted by their interaction with land and forest through hunting, harvesting and cultivation practices, beliefs in religious spirits, language, costumes and folkloric practices (see **Annex 8b: Ethnic Minority Planning Framework - Section 4** for details).

6. To safeguard its unique biodiversity, the Government of Vietnam (GoV) has established a network of protected areas covering about 7.3% of the land (310,070 km^2) and 8.16% of the sea (21,140 km^2). Per **Table 3**, this area includes 164 PAs nationwide, including 33 national parks (6 under the Vietnam Administration of Forestry and 27 under a Provincial People's Committee or Department of Agricultural and Rural Development), 57 nature reserves, 12 species and habitat conservation areas, 53 landscaped protected areas and 9 experimental and scientific research areas[24,25]. Among these, 61 national parks and nature reserves organize nature-based and ecotourism activities[26]. Furthermore, due to the continued reforestation program, overall forest cover reached 14.67 million ha in 2021, representing some 41.65% of Vietnam's landmass and comprising 10.3 million ha of natural forests and 4.4 million ha of plantation forests, respectively[27,28]. In addition, the country has a total of 11,847,975 ha of wetlands, accounting for 37% of the country's total area, of which 84,982 ha are divided among Vietnam's 5 Ramsar sites[29,30].

Table 3: Summary of Protected Areas in Vietnam[31,32]

Type of Protected Area	Total Number	Total Protected Area (ha)
National Protected Areas		
National Parks	33	1,093,982
Nature reserves	57	1,044,213
Species/habitat conservation areas (SHCA)	12	38,777
Landscape protection areas (LPA)	53	78,129
Experimental and scientific research areas* (ESRA)	9	10,653
Total special-use forest**	164	2,265,754

[23] Frankfurt Zoological Society (2011). Biodiversity Survey of Macaque, Langur and Douc Monkey in and around the Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, Quang Binh, Vietnam. A Report for the Nature Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park Region Project, Quang Binh.
[24] Bui, H. T., Pham, L. H., & Jones, T. E. (2021). Governance and Management of Protected Areas in Vietnam: Nature-Based Tourism in Mountain Areas. In Nature-Based Tourism in Asia's Mountainous Protected Areas (pp. 173-195). Springer, Cham.
[25] GIZ & VN Forest (2019). Report of Management of SUFs, PAs and the Solutions for Sustainable Development, Hanoi December, 2019.
[26] Statement by the Deputy General Director of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) on 29 September 2021. Vietnam+ "Vietnam strives to become an attractive eco-tourism destination". Available at: https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-strives-to-become-an-attractive-ecotourism-destination/208834.amp
[27] Decision No. 1558/QD-BNN-TCLN dated April 13, 2021 by the Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2021)
[28] Thuaire B, Allanic Y, Hoang Viet A, Le Khac Q, Luu Hong T, Nguyen The C, Nguyen Thi T (2021). Assessing the biodiversity in Vietnam – Analysis of the impacts from the economic sectors. WWF-Vietnam, Hanoi, Vietnam.
[29] Ibid.
[30] MONRE (2019). The sixth national report of the United Nations convention on biological diversity. Hanoi.
[31] Bui, H. T., Pham, L. H., & Jones, T. E. (2021). Governance and Management of Protected Areas in Vietnam: Nature-Based Tourism in Mountain Areas. In Nature-Based Tourism in Asia's Mountainous Protected Areas (pp. 173-195). Springer, Cham.
[32] MONRE (2019). The sixth national report of the United Nations convention on biological diversity. Hanoi.

Type of Protected Area	Total Number	Total Protected Area (ha)
Marine protected areas***	9	172,577 (including 104,098 ha. Of Marine area)
Internationally-recognized conservation areas		
Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance	9	84,982
UNESCO Biosphere Reserves	11	not defined
UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites	17	not defined
ASEAN Heritage Parks	10	not defined
Important Bird Areas	63	not defined

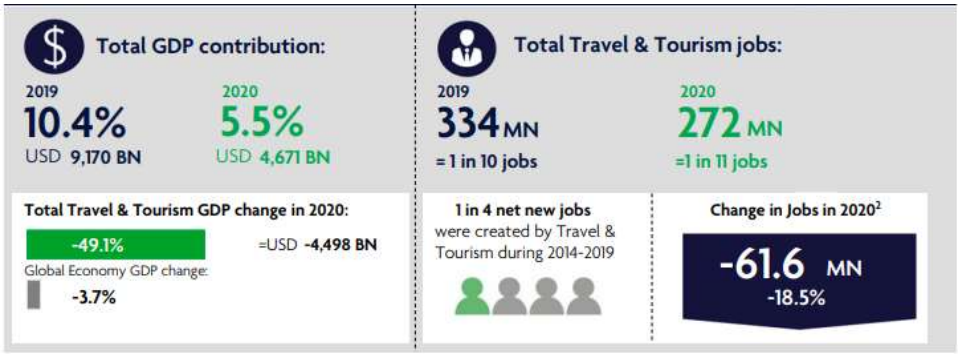
*Considered to be a type of landscape protection area under the Law on Forest Protection and Development, but is recognized as a separate category of PA under the Law on Biodiversity.
**Special-use Forest includes national parks, nature reserves, SHCAs, LPAs and ESRAs.
*** Three categories of MPA are recognized under the law on Fisheries: national parks, natural aquatic reserves, and species and habitat conservation areas. However, six of the 9 existing MPAs are currently established as SUF.

Opportunities and threats to biodiversity related to the tourism sector and from tourism operations

7. One of the most rapid growth economic sectors globally is travel and tourism. It plays a significant role in the development of emerging destinations. According to figures from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the industry currently employs close to 300 million people worldwide, representing some 3% of total employment in the world and is expected to grow by 30% over the next decade sector and will be a driving force of the post-COVID-19 global economic recovery, creating one in three of all new jobs. Across the Asia Pacific region alone, travel and tourism are estimated to create almost 77 million new jobs[33].

8. Vietnam's transition from a planned economy to a more open, market-type system led to a reconstruction of the economic sectors offering a bigger role to the service sector, particularly tourism. Since the 1990s, when it first incorporated tourism into its main socio-economic policy, tourism has become one of the mainstays and drivers of Vietnam's economy. It remains one of the country's major economic sectors.

Figure 2: Global Travel and Tourism Data[34]



9. Today, Vietnam has emerged as a world-class tourism destination that offers a variety of unique experiences, from natural wonders, extraordinary biodiversity, to distinct cultural offerings[35,36,37]. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, nature-based tourism (NBT) is one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism sector, supporting nearly 22 million jobs worldwide and contributing more than $120 billion to global

[33] World Travel and Tourism Council Economic Impact Reports (2022): https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact
[34] Ibid.
[35] Alpert, W. T. (Ed.) (2005). The Vietnamese economy and its transformation to an open market system. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
[36] Cooper, M. (2000). Tourism in Vietnam: Doi Moi and the realities of tourism in the 1990s. In C. M. Hall, & S. Page (Eds.), Tourism in South and Southeast Asia: Issues and cases (pp. 167–177). New York, NY: Routledge.
[37] United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2015). Vietnam National Administration of Tourism: Press release. Retrieved from https://www.unwto.org/archive/asia/news/2015-07-14/press-release-vietnam-national-administration-tourism-vietnam-plans-15-increase-visi

GDP[38]. Nature-based tourism in particular plays an important role in sustainable development. It can support poverty alleviation, economic growth, and biodiversity conservation and contribute to key global agreements and frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. NBT's singular potential to create jobs and growth while protecting wildlife and ecosystems makes it an enticing prospect for developing countries seeking to align those interests. At the same time, it is one of the few export or service sectors in which developing countries and economies in transition can develop a clear comparative advantage. This is because they often possess a rich natural resource base[39,40,41]. With this in mind, Vietnam has significant potential for developing nature-based tourism reflected in its high biodiversity with plenty of wild endemic species, diverse ecosystems, and beautiful scenery.

10. International programmes and national policies around the world have identified tourism as a mechanism for sustainable development, poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation. Studies demonstrate that isolated efforts from individual tourism companies have little tangible impact on the majority of people living in highly populated poor rural communities, but impacts are substantial for the few people who directly benefit. The implications of these findings to increase net benefits to the poor are underexplored and the socio-economic conditions that have the potential to life people and communities out of poverty ought to be studied closer through a programmatic approach[42,43,44].

11. In Vietnam, tourism plays an important role in economic development and environmental protection. Economic reforms over the last three decades have created many jobs, spurred investment in the sector, and contributed to the country's overall GDP. Tourism has since grown into an integral sector of the Vietnamese economy. The number of international tourists has increased around 15% each year and contributed to 6.6% of GDP in 2016 and directly accounted for 8% of GDP a year later in 2017. In 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the total contribution of Tourism to the GDP of Vietnam was US $ 32 billion in 2019. More than 2,667 international travel companies (with Limited Companies accounting for 62.4%) and more than 500 domestic travel companies have been established, replacing state-owned companies in the tourism sector. At its peak, they generated over 2.5 million jobs (5% of total employment in the country). They represented an income of 612,000 billion VND in 2018. Investment in rural areas has also supported poverty alleviation efforts. Many communities derive income from tourism to Vietnam's national parks, which drives the economy in many rural areas[45].

12. Between 2011 to 2017, Vietnam ranked 21st among the top 30 highest performing countries in the travel and tourism sector of the world in terms of the absolute growth across four metrics of (i) total Travel & Tourism GDP; (ii) foreign visitor spending (visitor exports); (iii) domestic spending; and (iv) Travel & Tourism capital investment[46]. The bold vision of Vietnam's tourism strategy to 2030, under Decision 147/2020/QD-TTg, aims to turn Vietnam into a premier tourism destination, among the three leading countries in terms of tourism development in Southeast Asia and within the top 50 nations with the highest tourism competitiveness in the

[38] World Travel and Tourism Council. "*Global wildlife tourism generates five times more revenue than illegal wildlife trade annually*". Available at: https://wttc.org/News-Article/Global-wildlife-tourism-generates-five-times-more-revenue-than-illegal-wildlife-trade-annually

[39] OECD (2009). "Wildlife and Nature-Based Tourism for Pro-Poor Growth", in Natural Resources and Pro-Poor Growth: The Economics and Politics, OECD Publishing, Paris.

[40] Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism (2020). The World Bank Group.

[41] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1077310/vietnam-annual-revenue-of-tourism-sector/

[42] Spenceley, Anna and Goodwin, Harold. "7. Nature-Based Tourism and Poverty Alleviation: Impacts of Private Sector and Parastatal Enterprises In and Around Kruger National Park, South Africa". Pro-poor Tourism: Who Benefits?: Perspectives on Tourism and Poverty Reduction, edited by C. Michael Hall, Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Channel View Publications, 2007, pp. 145-167.

[43] Truong, D.V. (2012), "Tourism policy development in Vietnam: a pro-poor perspective", Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 28-45.

[44] Truong, V.D. (2018), "Tourism, poverty alleviation, and the informal economy: The street vendors of Hanoi, Vietnam", Tourism Recreation Research, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 52-67.

[45] Nguyen, Phuong-Mai & Vo, Nam & To, Quang & Dinh, Toan (2022). Toward Responsible Tourism in Vietnam: Critical Review and Implications for Future Research. 10.1007/978-3-030-81435-9_41.

[46] Ibid.

world. Many state governments in Vietnam have also embraced mass tourism, targeting and catering to the growing Chinese and national middle class, with domestic tourists increasingly more important for the industry than international visitors[47].

13. Vietnam's tourism law recognizes the promotion of ecotourism, defined as "one form of tourism based on nature, associated with local culture, with the participation of communities, combining education on environmental protection". The tourism strategy also recognizes the need to adopt policies to support resources for people involved in community-based tourism development; to improve economic and cultural life, contributing to hunger eradication and poverty alleviation. The law however, does not provide clear direction on how nature-based tourism should be operated or principles to manage this emerging segment of the tourism sector (**see Barrier 1**). Theoretical concepts such as NBT, despite great potential, still remain at an embryonic stage and testing viable models is vital.
14. By 2025, the country expects to welcome at least 35 million international tourists and 120 million domestic holidaymakers. This will be an enormous jump compared to 2019, where total international arrivals to the country reached 18 million. Furthermore, it is estimated that 5-8% of foreign tourists visiting the country also participate in nature-based tourism every year, making this a segment of the sector ripe for growth and an area with special potential to acquire financial sources of funding for natural resource management in Vietnam, if managed properly[48].
15. Vietnam has numerous advantages, and conditions need for a booming tourism industry. The first is the long history of culture. The second is social diversity with nearly one hundred million people in many ethnic communities, including many rich and diverse cultural heritage (see **Annex 8b: Ethnic Minority Planning Framework**). The third is good geography with a long coastline having many beautiful beaches and natural islands. The fourth is globalization. Finally, economic reforms since the mid- 1980s have led to a stable and mature political environment and continue to be evaluated as a promising dynamic economy and a potential business environment in Asia[49,50]. As a result, Vietnam's tourism industry has developed exponentially and places among the group of countries with the fastest growth worldwide.
16. However, with a focus on the quantity and volume of tourists, the high growth of tourism has been sustained by the destruction of the natural environment for the fast construction of the resort and hospitality system. Unchecked tourism growth has led to a myriad of social problems such as the rapid urbanization of tourism cities, deforestation and encroachment, destruction of natural landscapes on which tourism depends, and insidious issues such as an increase in income inequality and illegal/unsustainable practices. While tourism growth has been remarkably high, the quality of tourism development and products has not kept pace. The main challenge going forward will be to balance the rapid development of tourism activities and the preservation of Vietnam's authentic natural and socio-cultural features[51].
17. The project, therefore, provides an opportunity for (i) making optimal use of the country's natural resources for the promotion of nature-based tourism while ensuring that essential ecological processes are nurtured to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; (ii) ensuring respect for social-culture values of communities that are associated with these natural endowments, to conserve their cultural heritage and traditional values and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance; and (iii) ensure viable and sustainable, long-term socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, through employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to communities, to uplift their living standards. In addition, the project will address key tourism-related and other inter-connected threats to biodiversity in the project landscape, including

[47] Michaud, J. and S. Turner (2017). Reaching new heights. State legibility in Sa Pa, a Vietnam hill station. Annals of Tourism Research, 66, 37-48.
[48] An LT, Markowski J, Bartos M, Rzenca A, Namiecinski P (2019). An evaluation of destination attractiveness for nature-based tourism: Recommendations for the management of national parks in Vietnam. Nature Conservation 32: 51-80.
[49] Tung, L.T. (2020). Tourism Development in Vietnam: New Strategy for a Sustainable Pathway. GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites, 31(3), 1174–1179.
[50] Bhati, A. S., Nguyen, T. H., Goswami, A., & Kamble, Z. (2021). Sustainable tourism development in Vietnam: A case of Hue. Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism, 10(2), 79–94.
[51] Tung, L.T. (2020). Tourism Development in Vietnam: New Strategy for a Sustainable Pathway. GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites, 31(3), 1174–1179.

those that are directly related to tourism impacts (e.g., ecosystem degradation, uncontrolled development and pollution) as well as indirectly related threats that impact the biodiversity of interest for tourism visitation (e.g., unsustainable use of, trade-in and harvesting of wildlife and marine products; and climate change impacts). The goal will be to transform Vietnam into a competitive, business-friendly and sought-after responsible tourism destination which celebrates and prioritizes its natural and cultural heritage. This will be achieved by addressing the current challenges and showcasing nature-based tourism as a viable model that can simultaneously strengthen biodiversity conservation and sustainable financing, promote inclusive community engagement and benefit-sharing, foster tourism enterprise development, and deliver employment generation.

18. Central to the project's intervention logic is that nature-based tourism in particular has the potential to disrupt conventional thinking and models of tourism by[52,53]:

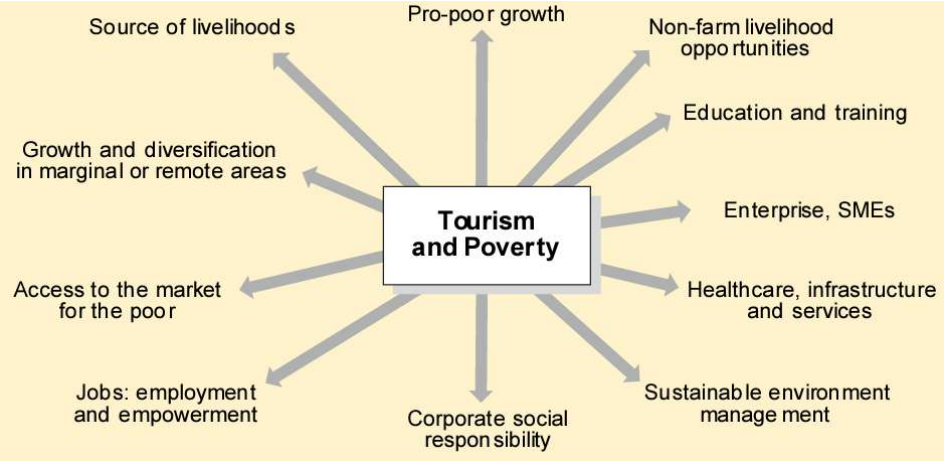
- **Increasing community support for conservation:** the growing interest in wildlife tourism, and the economic benefits that come along with it, can change community attitudes towards conservation. Without tourism, local communities may merely view wild animals as a danger to their farms and families, and only value natural resources for consumption. But when animals and natural areas bring tourism dollars and jobs to their community, it can help residents keep their natural assets intact and healthy;
- **Creating sustainable livelihoods:** Beyond changing mindsets, tourism can prevent ecosystem degradation by creating more sustainable livelihoods for local communities. Jobs as guides, cooks, or housekeepers offer alternative income sources to environmentally-destructive activities such as logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, quarrying, or illegal hunting;
- **Serve as a platform for education by raising environmental awareness of tourists:** Tourism not only bears the capacity to shift local mindsets and behavior, it can also raise environmental awareness among tourists. From camping to beach lounging, tourism provides countless opportunities for individuals to learn about the natural world and experience it firsthand. When people connect with nature during their travels, it can lead them to appreciate it more and become invested in protecting it. Tours, parks, and other travel experiences often facilitate this type of environmental learning through interpretive techniques such as educational brochures, exhibits, or guided excursions;
- **Prompting more favourable conservation policies, regulations and guidelines in Protected Areas:** nature-based tourism can also provide a compelling incentive for governments and organizations to institute environmental policies and conservation measures. This includes the creation of national parks, nature reserves, and other protected areas to preserve their biodiversity and correspondingly boost their tourism appeal. Reef-based activities such as scuba diving, snorkeling, boat trips and whale watching are a particularly important source of economic revenues, this also applies to marine-based tourism and the importance of protecting their coastlines, coral reefs, and beaches;
- **Financing conservation:** simply establishing protected areas isn't enough on its own. Ensuring the conservation of the sensitive environments and vulnerable species that these areas aim to protect requires effective management and conservation measures. Many protected areas are under-funded and tourism plays an essential role in bridging this gap by providing an additional source of funding. Proceeds from visitor entrance fees, operating permits, accommodations, and guiding services can help pay the salaries of park rangers and guards, and fund necessary management activities such as ecosystem monitoring, anti-poaching patrols, invasive species eradication, and environmental educational programs;
- **Aiding ecosystem monitoring:** while park rangers and guards play a critical role in patrolling sensitive environments, tracking ecosystem health, and warding off threats, it is often impossible for them to monitor such vast areas alone. The mere presence of tourists in natural areas can protect wildlife by providing an extra set of eyes on the ground. Citizen science programs and mobile tools can serve to democratize species monitoring and fill different research gaps, which visitors can participate in;

[52] Twining-Ward, Louise; Li, Wendy; Bhammar, Hasita; Wright, Elisson (2018). Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods through Wildlife Tourism. Tourism for Development;. World Bank, Washington, DC.
[53] https://sustainabletravel.org/how-tourism-benefits-nature-and-wildlife/

- **Supporting habitat ecosystem restoration and maintain integrity of ecosystem services:** along with citizen science, visitors and tourism businesses can support conservation by participating in ecosystem restoration. Visitors, guides and tourism businesses can participate in the removal and eradication of non-native species which devastate local habitats, as well as help restore ecosystem health by cleaning up the environments they visit. Models geared towards less overcrowding and mass tourism can allow for the stabilization and regeneration of ecosystem services;
- **Advancing green technologies and fueling innovation:** tourism can trigger technological and environmental innovation through the advancement of green infrastructure, processes, and technologies. For instance, tourism can lead the way in the development of renewable energy infrastructure, like wind and solar farms, on remote islands or rural areas that would not usually be exposed to clean energy. The use of big data for policy formulation in general, and for tourism in particular, is still in its early stages, especially in the developing economies of Asia and the Pacific. The proliferation of mobile technologies, information technology tools and web applications can also help harness and aggregate critical real-time data for more informed decision making within Protected Areas.
- **Eradicating poverty and creating pro-poor growth:** The relationship between nature-based tourism and poverty reduction is not straight forward. Local communities near protected areas sometimes carry a large share of the costs of protected areas in the form of restricted access to land and natural resources and crop damage due to raiding wildlife. In terms of local employment, there is typically a mismatch between the high-skill labor-related demands of the tourism industry and resource endowments of local communities, giving rise to significant "revenue leakage" away from those who need it most. Employment opportunities for local communities tend to be in lower-skilled and lower-paid positions. Rather than feeding the local economy, revenues are often absorbed by nearby urban centers where package tourism is offered, or leak abroad to non-national owners of resorts. When done right however, nature-based tourism can be a significant source of income for local communities, who often live in marginal areas with few pathways out of poverty, when projects are well designed. Carefully designed interventions that strengthen the linkages between nature-based tourism and poverty reduction, and help communities who often have few other economic opportunities by i) protecting the underlying natural assets ensuring these are well managed and maintained over time; ii) growing the model ensuring that key locations attract a sufficient number of visitors and generate sufficient revenues to be economically viable and attractive to the private sector; and iii) sharing benefits be it through jobs and other economic opportunities, revenue-sharing arrangements, or the targeted provision of public goods (schools, roads, clinics, for example)[54]. The pathway can either be "direct participation" in tourism where poor people provide goods and services to tourists, or "indirect participation" where poor people work in the sectors that supply tourism[55].

[54] Harnessing the Potential of Nature-Based Tourism for Poverty Reduction. World Bank (2015).
[55] A. Spenceley, C. Ashley and M. de Kock: Tourism-led poverty reduction programme: Core training module (Geneva, International Trade Centre, 2009), p. 35.

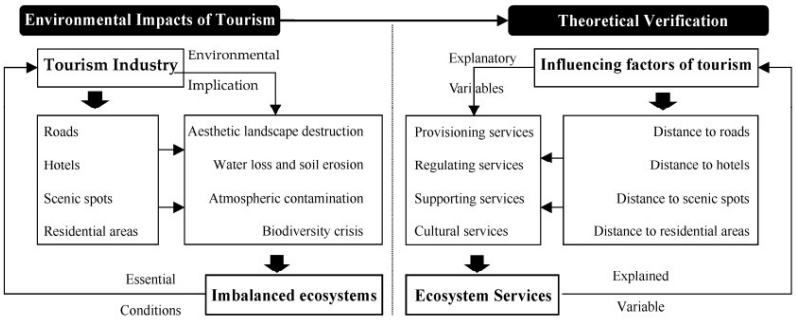
Figure 3: Multi-dimensional Role of Tourism on Poverty Alleviation



19. While nature tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing tourism industry segments, these have produced challenges and opportunities alike for biodiversity. Managing the country's vision in a balanced and sustainable manner is a tall order given the GoV's projections for the sector and poses many challenges because the growing tourism sector is as a source of threats to biodiversity in Vietnam. Degradation of biodiversity-rich terrestrial and coastal areas caused by tourism development has occurred in most high-density tourism zones. Tourism development and high concentrations of human settlements in beach and coastal areas and near high biodiversity areas can significantly impact natural and cultural areas and comprise the principal threats to biodiversity and the ecosystem services they provide. Specifically, tourism-related degradation has affected the functionality and assemblage of terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems: forests, dunes, mangrove forests, sea grass, wetlands and coral reefs. Tourism, both directly through infrastructure development and indirectly through expansion of tourism-related activities and increased population pressure, has caused loss of vegetation cover and associated biodiversity and compromised the ecological integrity and functionality of ecosystems and hydrological systems[56,57]. Also, the use and type of materials for constructing tourism-related infrastructure insufficiently integrate biodiversity, wildlife and climate adaptation considerations. This results in a loss of habitat and nesting grounds for rare, endemic and migratory species.
20. The loss of vegetative cover has contributed to soil erosion and generated heavy sediment loads, which has degraded the coral reefs. The loss of mangroves and coastal vegetation has also diminished the productivity of fish populations, affecting food security for local communities and increasing the risk of natural disasters. Wetlands have been drained and filled, decreasing their functionality. The loss of vegetative cover has also reduced the capacity of sensitive terrestrial and coastal ecosystems to retain carbon. It has increased vulnerability to climate change, including more damage from severe weather events.

[56] IPBES (2019). Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. E. S. Brondizio, J. Settele, S. Díaz, and H. T. Ngo (editors). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany.
[57] Liu, J.; Yue, M.; Liu, Y.; Wen, D.; Tong, Y. (2022). The Impact of Tourism on Ecosystem Services Value: A Spatio-Temporal Analysis Based on BRT and GWR Modeling. Sustainability, 14, 2587.

Figure 4: Typology of Mechanisms of Tourism Impacts on Ecosystem Services[58]



21. **<u>Uncontrolled tourism development</u>.** Studies conducted on the negative impact of tourism development on wildlife have found that the negative effects of wildlife tourism and related human activities on wildlife can be grouped into three main categories. First, disruption of activity such as spotlighting, noisy activities and the approach of tourists towards animals feeding, and if many animals are affected on a regular basis, the population may ultimately decline. Second, direct killing or injury can occur as the result of unintentional events such as road accidents, or from intentional hunting, fishing, collecting, trampling of wildlife; deliberate killing for safety reasons can cause wildlife mortality. And finally, the occurrence of habitat alteration happens when land is cleared or modified to make room for the infrastructure (such as construction of accommodation, camping grounds, roads, parking spaces or picnic areas etc.) needed for tourism activities can significantly decrease population numbers, reduction of protection from predators and the weather, or reduction of prey species[59].

22. Infrastructure-related developments in sensitive habitats could have disastrous impacts on biodiversity and the very resources on which tourism depends. The physical construction of tourism facilities in high biodiversity areas, riparian areas, mangroves and other coastal forest lands can have a direct impact on biodiversity through clearance of natural vegetation, loss and fragmentation of habitats, disruption of feeding and breeding of key species, erosion of beach habitat and filling up of coastal lagoons and wetlands. The indirect spin-off developments from tourism, such as housing for hotel staff, tourist homes, and other service provisions, can impact biodiversity, increase forest and coastal vegetation clearance, and increase waste loads on sensitive ecosystems. Poor regulation compliance has already led to the conversion of 8.44 ha of critical conservation forests in Hoang Lien National Park. In Phu Quoc national park, 98 ha of the park's critical forestland was destroyed to build a safari facility without compliance with legislative procedures. Additionally, over-visitation and uncontrolled access to some protected areas (such as Cu Lao Cham, Hon Mun), to sensitive ecological sites (high-value conservation forests, coastal mangrove ecosystems, coral reefs and migratory corridors) can have a lasting impact on species and biodiversity. Recent studies have noted that rapid visitor growth has been achieved, in large part, through a shift to a lower-spending visitor mix, a continued emphasis on mass market tourism products, and increased concentrations of visitors into already-crowded and popular local destinations. These patterns of unsustainable tourism development threaten to negatively affect the quality of the visitor experience in many of Vietnam's destinations, contributing to low rates of repeat visits. The share of repeat international visitors to Vietnam stood at around 32-40 percent in 2017, which is low compared to key regional competitors such as Thailand, where around 60 to 70 percent of international arrivals in 2016 were returning visitors, and Indonesia, which had 55 percent repeat visitors in 2016[60]. This, coupled with indirect influences on economic policies and strategies related to tourism development such as gaps in Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment requirements, can increase the footprint on these sensitive

[58] Liu, J.; Yue, M.; Liu, Y.; Wen, D.; Tong, Y. (2022). The Impact of Tourism on Ecosystem Services Value: A Spatio-Temporal Analysis Based on BRT and GWR Modeling. Sustainability, 14, 2587

[59] M. Habibullah, B. Haji Dinb, C. Wei Chongc and A. Radamd (2016). Tourism and Biodiversity Loss: Implications for Business Sustainability. Procedia Economics and Finance 35, pp. 166–172.

[60] Vietnam's Tourism Developments: Stepping Back from the Tipping Point-Vietnam's Tourism Trends, Challenges, and Policy Priorities. World Bank (2019).

habitats, with long-term impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems (see **Annex 22: Status of EIA and SEA in Vietnam**). Left unaddressed, these issues, in combination with the increased crowding in destinations, risk deterring first-time visitors from returning and fueling negative word-of-mouth referrals.

23. **The destruction and disturbance of habitats and species account of unsustainable tourism operations.** Tourism operations in protected areas can have a variety of positive and negative impacts. The types of impacts are broad in their range, and affect protected area resources, local economies, local communities, and the tourists themselves. Recreation activities, including plant collection and trampling, poorly controlled trekking and climbing, sports fishing, snorkelling, scuba diving, boat anchoring and fast power activities (cable cars, jet skiing, off-road vehicles, etc.) pose a direct threat to biodiversity. These activities may cause significant and irreversible damage, including soil and water disruptions, ecosystem degradation and habitat loss. Furthermore, the lack of regulations and control of tourism including insufficient guidelines on carrying capacity and zoning even if it is nature-based, can lead to the destruction of habitats and interfere with the reproduction behavior of some species (e.g., sea turtles, nesting sites, birds, etc.). While it is clear that uncontrolled tourism activities can cause the destruction of habitats and species, there is limited availability of information from Vietnam, except for a few locations. For example, in Nha Trang Bay, it is reported that the hard coral cover in Hon Mun islands has decreased from 27% to 3% in 2015[61]. The dramatic decline of the limestone coral framework has almost fully depleted coral fish communities, and future tourism development must be cognizant of the threat.

24. Each new hotel room brings with it increased demands for electricity, water, waste management, and other basic services. However, improvements to such services capacity and other critical infrastructure to support the rapidly-increasing volume of visitors have been lagging[62] and comes at a cost to the environment. Sometimes the balance is difficult to establish. As more infrastructure has been built in some protected areas in response to increased visitation, concerns have been expressed about the negative environmental and social impacts of visitors and the facilities required to serve them. This is a classic conundrum for government and PA managers alike: how to weigh a positive impact (a popular visitor experience) against negative ones (impingements on habitat and human–wildlife conflicts)? Similar anxieties are frequently expressed today as countries struggle to integrate the need to protect the natural heritage in protected areas with society's demand for visiting, seeing and appreciating them, and further, with the opportunity they present as a source of income and foreign exchange. A common scenario occurs when an attractive protected natural area is 'discovered' or promoted for tourists. Inevitably local people wish to benefit. However, without adequate planning and regulation accommodation gets built in inappropriate places, destroying ambience and wildlife habitat; sewage, solid waste and litter are poorly managed; and popular sites within the protected area become overcrowded, damaging both the environment and the visitors' experience. Impacts of tourism on protected areas fall into three broad, often overlapping, categories: environmental, economic, and social, as identified in the table below.

25. If not properly managed, rapid tourism growth threatens to exacerbate Vietnam's already elevated environmental pressures and poor sustainability practices. Southeast Asian countries are among the worst performers globally in terms of environmental sustainability, but Vietnam lags even relative to this low regional benchmark. In that latest 2017 WEF Tourism Competitiveness rankings, Vietnam ranked below the developing Southeast Asia average in nearly all dimensions of environmental sustainability considered in the index.

[61] Thi My Trinh Nguyen and Kwong Fai Andrew Lo (2017). Tourism development impacts and amelioration along coastal areas in Vietnam. International Journal of Development Research Vol. 07, Issue 11.

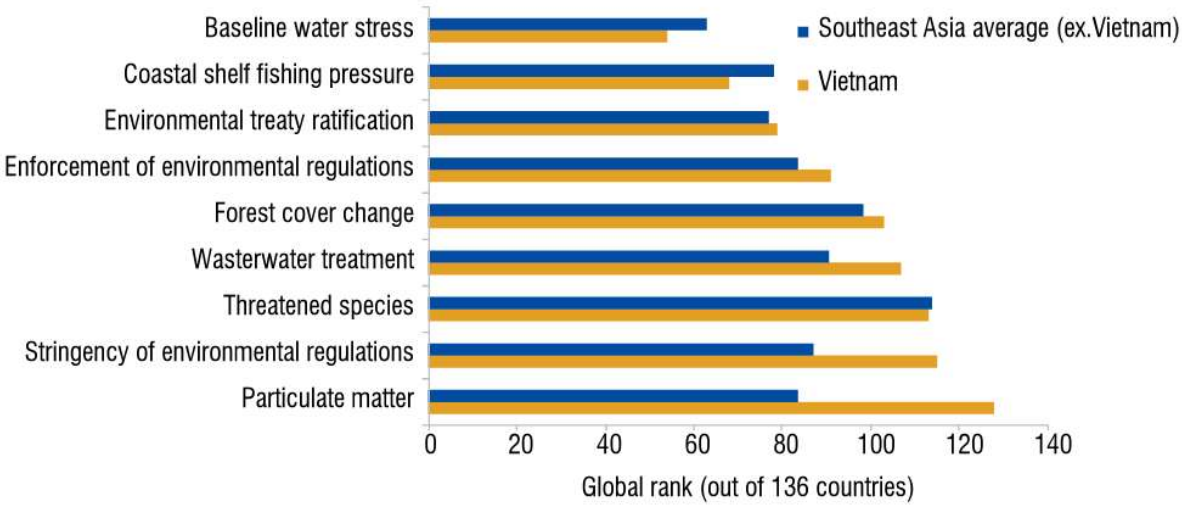
[62] Vietnam's Tourism Developments: Stepping Back from the Tipping Point-Vietnam's Tourism Trends, Challenges, and Policy Priorities. World Bank (2019).

Table 4: A Summary of Potential Benefits to Biodiversity from More Sustainable Tourism Operations in Protected Areas[63]

Type of benefits	Examples of potential benefits—protected areas can:
Environmental	• Provide public education on conservation issues and needs; • Transmit understanding and greater appreciation of natural values and resources through experiences, education and interpretation; • Create awareness of the value of natural resources and protect resources that otherwise have little or no perceived value to residents, or are considered a cost rather than a benefit; • Support research and development of good environmental practices and management systems to influence the operation of travel and tourism businesses, as well as visitor behavior at destinations; • Support environmental and species monitoring through citizen science volunteers.
Economic	• Generate economic benefit to a nation, region or community to strengthen the commitment to conserve the natural area and its wildlife; • Increase jobs and income for local residents; • Stimulate new tourism enterprises and diversify the local economy; • Improve local facilities, transportation and communications with greater sustainability; • Encourage the local manufacture and sale of goods and provision of services; • Access new markets and foreign exchange; • Generate local tax revenues; • Enable employees to learn new skills; • Provide financial support to protected areas through payment of tourism fees and charges.
Social/Community	• Improve living standards for local people; • Encourage people to value and take pride in their local culture and protected areas; • Support environmental education for visitors and local people, and foster greater understanding of cultural heritage values and resources; • Establish attractive environments for destinations, for residents as much as visitors, which may support other compatible new activities (e.g. service or product-based industries); • Improve intercultural understanding through social contact; • Encourage the development and conservation of culture, crafts and the arts; • Encourage people to learn the languages and cultures of others; • Promote aesthetic, spiritual, health and other values related to well-being; • Improve physical health through recreational exercise (e.g. walking, cycling); • Contribute to mental health by reducing stress and fatigue; • Raise the profile of conservation at local, national and international levels; • Interpret values, conservation issues and management issues for visitors.

[63] Leung, Yu-Fai, Spenceley, Anna, Hvenegaard, Glen, and Buckley, Ralf (eds.) (2018). Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 27, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 120 pp.

Figure 5: Vietnam Lags the Region in Multiple Dimensions of Environmental Sustainability[64]



26. **<u>Pollution, solid waste accumulation and effluent discharge</u>.** Environmental pollution such as noise and air pollution from tourist transportation, solid waste disposal, littering, sewage discharges from tourist activities, oil and chemicals from recreational vehicles and other activities threaten biodiversity, wildlife habitat and public health. Hue, a medium-sized city and listed as one of the greenest in Vietnam, has struggled with uncontrolled urban and air pollution, which has led to a deterioration of the natural environment and degradation of national monuments and heritage sites[65]. Sediment and effluent discharge into coastal and marine areas harm coral reefs and fish species. It is reported that tourism activities in the Nha Trang Bay contributed to approximately 5,700 tons of waste and 780 million litres of sewage in 2014, much of which was dumped into the sea without proper treatment and removal of toxic substances[66]. This has caused nutrient enrichment, favouring certain species (algae in particular) at the expense of corals. In addition, tour boats cause significant petroleum hydrocarbon pollution, especially when oil and fuel spills occur. Tour boats also produce a considerable amount of sewage and waste, likely directly discharged into the sea. It is estimated that 500 tons of solid waste are generated in Phong Nha-Ke Bang national park annually, ending in landfills or being burned. Tourism in Can Gio Biosphere Reserve negatively impacts the environment and the community. With the number of visitors increasing rapidly, beach pollution from food refuse from tourist shops is a problem due to the limited knowledge of shop owners of ecotourism and business practices[67]. In terms of marine plastic pollution, Vietnam is ranked the 4th largest generator of marine plastic (0.28-0.73 tons/year), affecting marine biodiversity and ecosystems that have implications for promoting healthy marine tourism[68]. Analysis suggests that if the pace of use of plastic products continues to increase, there will be an additional 33 billion tons of plastic produced by 2050. Thus, more than 13 billion tons of plastic waste will be buried. Backfill into landfills or into the ocean. Meanwhile, the recycling of Vietnam's plastic waste has not been developed[69].

27. **<u>Unsustainable fishing and marine product harvest practices</u>.** The last Rural, Agricultural and Fishery Census took place in 2016 giving a more detailed picture of the importance of fisheries to rural households. The census results suggest that about 4 percent of Vietnamese rural households derive their income mainly from fisheries,

[64] Vietnam's Tourism Developments: Stepping Back from the Tipping Point-Vietnam's Tourism Trends, Challenges, and Policy Priorities. World Bank (2019).
[65] Bhati, A. S., Nguyen, T. H., Goswami, A., & Kamble, Z. (2021). Sustainable tourism development in Vietnam: A case of Hue. Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism, 10(2), 79–94.
[66] Thi My Trinh Nguyen and Kwong Fai Andrew Lo (2017). Tourism development impacts and amelioration along coastal areas in Vietnam. International Journal of Development Research Vol. 07, Issue 11
[67] Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia. Ecotourism in Vietnam: Potential and Reality (Issue 28)
[68] Ta Dinh Thi (2018). Sixth GEF Assembly Meeting, Da Nang, Vietnam
[69] Thanh Hai, Truong & Vu, Nam. (2019). The Crisis of Plastic Waste in Vietnam is Real. European Journal of Engineering Research and Science. 4. 107-111. 10.24018/ejers.2019.4.9.1523.

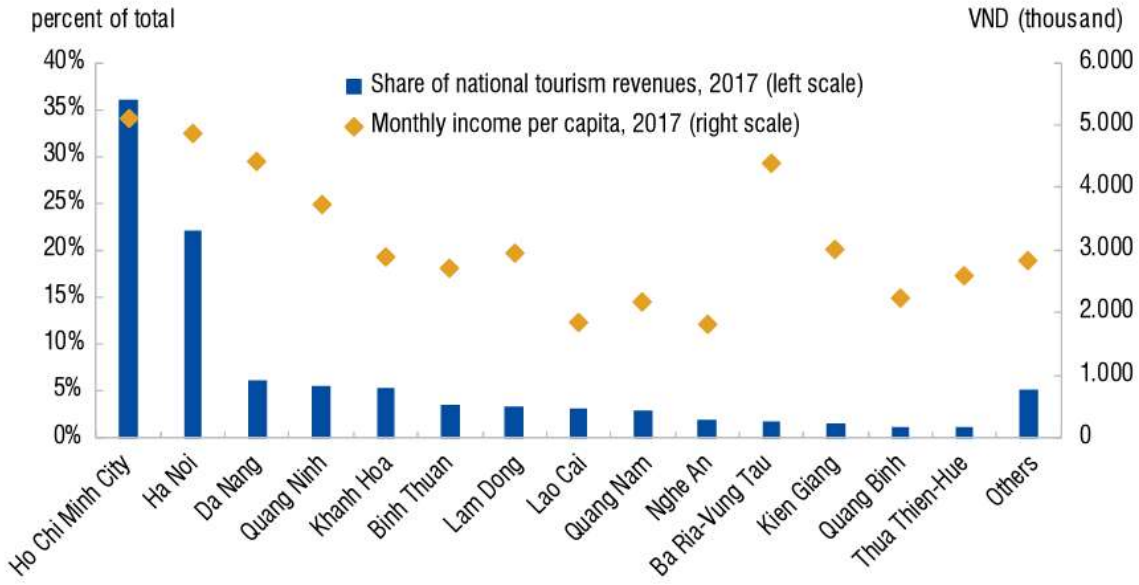
with more than 10 percent indirectly and practicing some form of non-commercial artisanal fishing and about one-fifth of the country's population depends on fishery resources for their lives. In addition, fishing contributes to meeting domestic consumption and exportation and in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park, the sea is the backbone of the economy and the key source of sustenance for local families, many of whom have been fishermen for generations. Increasing demand on the global fresh fish consumption market has also induced the growing exploitation and extermination of fishes coastal coral reefs, which are spawning areas. Hot spots for fishing exploitation are concentrated in places where large number of fish spawn. The increase in consumption and unsustainable fishing management has led to the overexploitation of aquatic products in many regions. As a result, many valuable marine species are decreasing seriously, such as lobster (*Panulirus spp.*), abalone (*Haliotes spp.*), Chlamys spp., etc.

28. Destructive fishing techniques such as explosives, poison and electricity are popularly used in inland and coastal areas. They are considered a severe threat to more than 80% of coral reefs in Vietnam. In tourist areas, overfishing is a threat to meeting the tourist demand for sport and consumption. These include illegal fishing practices, selective removal of species from reef communities and the use of damaging fishing gear and techniques, such as undersized nets and practices of dynamite fishing practices that have wide-ranging ecological consequences. Past studies indicated that coral reefs in Ninh Thuan province (now part of Khanh Hoa) are deteriorating as a result of various natural and anthropogenic impacts such as overfishing, destructive fishing, eutrophication, sedimentation, reef mining, dredging, tourism, hurricanes, coral bleaching from climate change, coral diseases and outbreak of coral-eating predators[70].
29. **Unsustainable exploitation of forest products.** Many communities in Vietnam depend on the forest for their survival. Local communities, including ethnic minorities, collect forest products, fuels, and construction materials and hunt for food. The influx of tourists to these remote locations has increased the demand for illegal meat, timber to construct tourist facilities and other wildlife products, particularly for medicinal purposes. Wildlife is commonly traded for making traditional medicine, such as bears, monkeys, civets, turtles, lizards, pangolins, pythons and snakes. Many bird species are also trapped for selling out as pets. Although Vietnam has adopted its national action plan to control the wildlife trade, this has not reached the expected results because the market is getting bigger with increasing profits (see **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles**). Action is needed to enhance and improve collaboration between protected areas and law enforcement staff to contain wildlife poaching. While Vietnam banned trade in ivory in 1992, selling specimens produced before this date remains legal, allowing some shopkeepers to pass off recently carved ivory as old stock.
30. Much illegal trade continues with impunity. In particular, Chinese tourist demand has been an important driver of the wildlife trade in mainland Southeast Asian countries. Though demand for wildlife parts remains a distinct minority taste, the sheer number of Chinese tourists visiting the lower Mekong countries around 20 million per year before the pandemic, has created a strong pool of demand for endangered wildlife[71] [72].
31. Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) is a growing problem, but the severity of the issue has mostly been neglected in Vietnam and there has been no systematic and scientific study focusing on HWC anywhere in the country. Anecdotal evidence from the demonstration landscapes points to increased pressures as the country develops and land becoming scarcer. Consultations at the landscape level have revealed that there is a dearth of data on HWC and how to approach it at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park and similarly at Phong Nha-Ke Bang HWC has yet received any attention. In the buffer zone where the majority of HWC is anticipated to take place, patrols have not been deployed. With both NPs likely to receive more tourists in the future, including the expansion of tourism infrastructure, there is recognition that HWC warrants more thorough analysis to document it with a focus on threatened species to minimize the impact of tourist activities on wild populations, as well as to equip park rangers and local communities with the skills and tools to address.
32. **Limited economic benefits of tourism accruing to local communities.** Vietnam's richer provinces still capture the majority of tourism sector revenues, and the geographic distribution of tourism earnings remains highly

[70] Long, Nguyễn & Vo, Si Tuan (2013). Degradation trend of coral reefs in the coastal waters of Vietnam. Galaxea, Journal of Coral Reef Studies. 15. 79-83.
[71] TRAFFIC. Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Lower Mekong. (June 2021).
[72] UNODC, *World Wildlife Crime Report 2020: Trafficking in Protected Species*.

concentrated—60 percent of revenues accrue to just 2 of Vietnam's 63 localities (Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi), and nearly 90 percent to only 9 localities.

Figure 6: Most Tourism Revenues Still Accrue to Richer Provinces[73]



33. While nature-based tourism has the potential to bring substantial economic benefits to the local community, there are often limited benefits that are actually derived from the local communities. Tourism development that does not actively enable the participation of local communities can pose an indirect threat to biodiversity. In addition, local people's weak and fragmented participation in the tourism economy can often lead to social conflicts within the tourism sector and the lack of incentives to conserve important natural resources. A number of examples from Vietnam show that viable community-based tourism (CBT) models can flourish with active participation of local communities in ecotourism-related activities, and have led to reduced pressure on marine resource exploitation of local coral reefs and sea grass beds in Cham Islands, for example, and consequential increased economic benefits to local communities. The ILO has noted that CBT ought to combine interaction between local communities with tourists, income generation for local communities and cultural and natural preservation. The typical variety of tourist activities in a CBT village includes trekking, biking, faring, fishing, tea picking, cooking, herbal bathing and spending the nights in home stays. Local villagers are trained as tour guides in guiding trekking tours, explaining nature and culture and improving their English skills. Other villagers might set-up homestays (often with outside financial investments from development organisations, tour operators or other investors) or food production for tourists. A key to the success of CBT is marketing and promotion of the CBT villages. Therefore, involving tour operators from the early beginning of a CBT project through e.g., a familiarisation trip (pre-marketing) would be prudent as well[74].

34. Typical challenges of CBTs are the issues of business formalization, business management skills and the full support of the whole community and the authorities to make it work. For these reasons, local communities hardly receive adequate return from their investment into CBT. The lack of an official business status of many CBTs creates difficulties for tour operators. Local communities cannot sign a contract and come in to business with tour operators unless a cooperative is founded or at least a collaborative group. Both group solutions are some sort of business entity that can enter into contractual relationships with DMCs. Capacity building of a local community can be very time consuming, as it often requires a shift of mindset and not only learning certain technical skills. There are many direct and indirect beneficiaries in each CBT community, but there are always a

[73] Vietnam's Tourism Developments: Stepping Back from the Tipping Point-Vietnam's Tourism Trends, Challenges, and Policy Priorities. World Bank (2019).
[74] Rapid Market Assessment of Responsible Tourism in Vietnam (2017). International Labour Organization.

few villagers that do not benefit from tourism. Therefore, a benefit sharing mechanism needs to be established, like a local fund that redistributes some of the financial benefits from tourism. Another CBT challenge is the consistency of service quality. Usually after one or two years after setting up a CBT service package, the quality of services tends to be degrading gradually due to the lack of standards and quality control mechanisms[75,76].

35. **Climate change exacerbates threats to PAs, particularly marine and coastal ecosystems.** Vietnam is seen as being particularly sensitive to global climate change and predicted as one of ten countries that will soon be seriously affected by climate change. Fragmented ecosystems might be weak to respond to those changes and might not avoid a mass loss of species at high speed. The increased temperature would facilitate forest fire, especially in peat swamp forests, dipterocarpus forests, and pine forests. Climate change, the decrease of watershed forests, and irrational water use might result in more inundation, flash floods, and landslides with severe impacts on the environment and human livelihoods. The increase in average temperature will change many ecosystems' geographic distribution and population structure and exacerbate tourism-related threats, particularly coastal and marine ecosystems. Under climate change projections, the intensity and frequency of storms are expected to change, and storms may become more unpredictable. Over the past few decades, Vietnam has seen higher temperatures and a sharp rise in extreme weather events, including droughts, floods and tropical cyclones. Ongoing research demonstrates the impact of climate change on the distribution of key wildlife species as the distribution of their food sources shifts and the anticipated significant barriers to north-south migration in the narrow, densely populated coastal corridor[77]. Coral reefs have been bleached by warmer temperatures, affecting important ecosystems and nursery areas for fish. The tourism sector is exposed to numerous direct and indirect impacts from climate change, including i) impacts on biodiversity affecting natural tourism attractions (e.g. bleached coral reefs); ii) sea-level rise and more acidic oceans threatening coastal tourism infrastructure and natural attractions; and iii) rising temperatures that will shorten winter seasons and threaten activities in colder seasons (e.g. hiking in Vietnam's mountainous areas in cooler months; wetland boat tours can be disrupted in the dry season) (see **Annex 15a: Climate Risk Screening**).
36. In Quang Binh (now part of Quang Tri), storms normally occur from July to September every year. However, storms have become more unpredictable in recent years and have happened even in March and April, or alternatively in October. Storm intensity has apparently also increased. With increased frequency, intensity and unpredictability, the damages caused by storms are likely to increase with climate change. Without significant, concerted and continuous investments and efforts to address the key issues above, overall climate change is likely to slow down economic growth and negatively affect the quality of life. Natural resources will be more degraded, food production will be reduced, and the impacts of natural disasters will be magnified. The coastal and rural poor (including ethnic minorities in upland areas) with livelihoods most dependent on natural resources will be the most vulnerable to these changes. In the worst-case scenario, recent gains in poverty alleviation may be reversed. Consequently, labour migration, which is already significant, may continue to increase, and social problems may become more prevalent[78].
37. Ninh Thuan (now part of Khanh Hoa) is already one of the country's hottest and most drought-prone areas in Vietnam. The Truong Son Mountain Range is situated such that it obstructs the wind throughout the year. The province has the lowest average rainfall in the country, but some storms and floods occur in October and November. The terrain intensifies the damaging impact of storms, characterized by heavy rains and floods, with harmful impacts on crop production and livelihoods. Climate change has resulted in extreme weather conditions, as seen in increased heat waves, droughts and flooding. Under continuous droughts, it suffered

[75] Long Pham Hong, Huong Thi Ngo & Lam Thi Pham | Willem Coetzee (Reviewing editor) (2021). Community-based tourism: Opportunities and challenges a case study in Thanh Ha pottery village, Hoi An city, Vietnam, Cogent Social Sciences, 7:1.
[76] Rapid Market Assessment of Responsible Tourism in Vietnam (2017). International Labour Organization.
[77] Rhind, Susan. (2010). Vietnam's vanishing wildlife: the new threat of climate change. Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.
[78] Hoang Son, Nguyen & Cham, Dao & Tin, Le & Le Phuc Chi, Lang & Lang, Chi & Nguyen Trong, Quan & Toai, Le. (2019). Assessing the level of vulnerability due to climate change to natural resources and environment in difficult coastal communes of Quang Tri province, Vietnam.

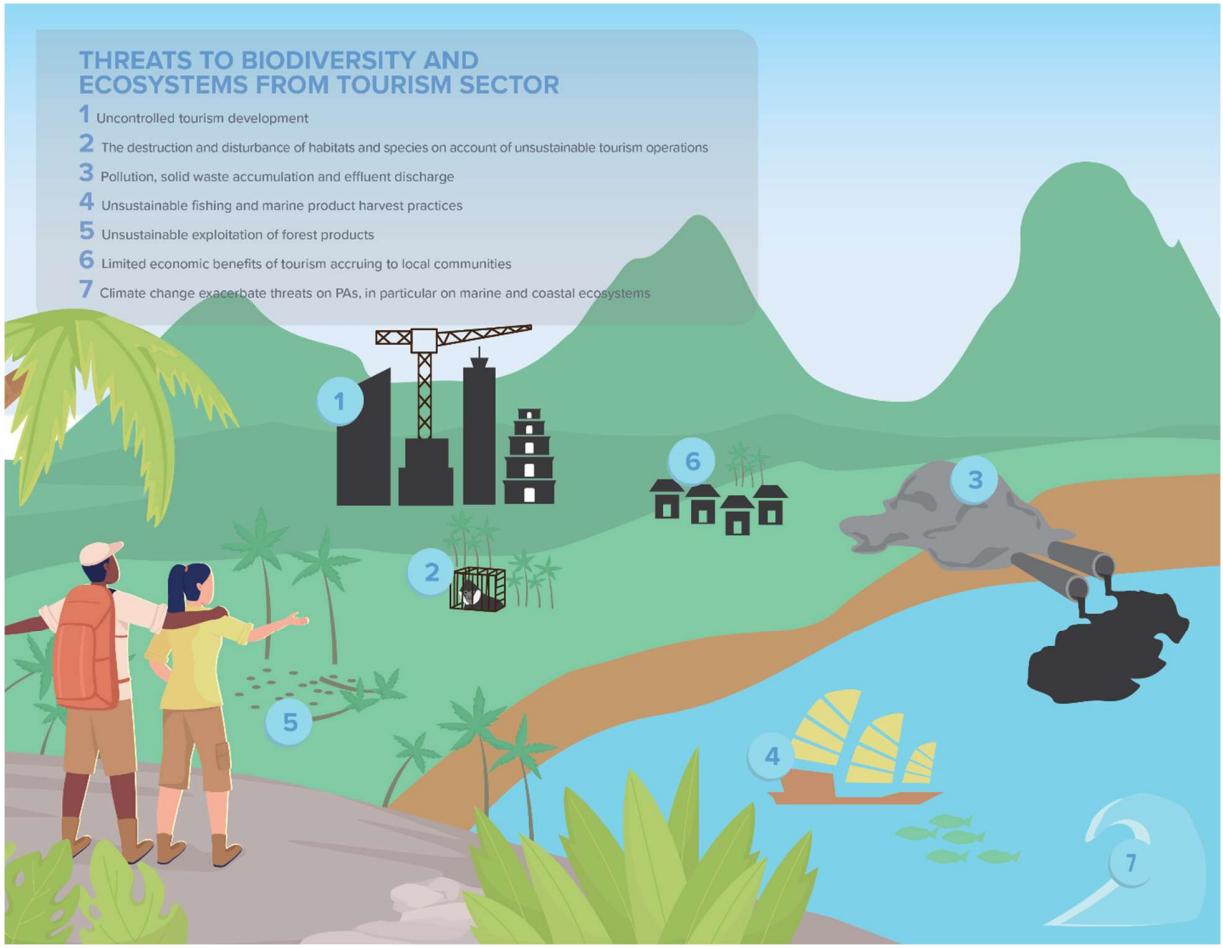
losses of about 165 billion VND (7.1 million USD) in 2004 and 2005 and nearly 1.35 trillion VND (58 million USD) between 2014 and 2016. Meanwhile, flooding caused 300 billion VND in damage (13 million USD) in 2018[79].

Table 5: Presence of Each Threat to Biodiversity at the Respective Project Landscapes

National Park	Pervasive Threats						
	1. Uncontrolled tourism development	2. Destruction and disturbance of habitats and species due to unsustainable tourism operations	3. Pollution, solid waste accumulation and effluent discharge	4. Unsustainable fishing and marine product harvest practices	5. Unsustainable exploitation of forest products	6. Limited economic benefits of tourism accruing to local communities	7. Climate change exacerbates threats to PAs
Nui Chua (now Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓

[79] Hoang Son, Nguyen & Cham, Dao & Tin, Le & Le Phuc Chi, Lang & Lang, Chi & Nguyen Trong, Quan & Toai, Le. (2019). Assessing the level of vulnerability due to climate change to natural resources and environment in difficult coastal communes of Quang Binh province, Vietnam.

Figure 7: Threats to Biodiversity Related to the Cultivation of the Nature-Based Tourism Sector In Vietnam



38. **Root causes and drivers of the threats to biodiversity from unsustainable tourism operations** can be summarized as a combination of a fast national economic growth agenda prioritizing the tourism sector (volume over the quality of products and services), combined with an inadequate supply of skilled and professional tourism workforce and infrastructure to follow the enormous growth rates of international and domestic visitors, as well as weak and inefficient mechanisms and resources for protected area management; made worse by a challenging business climate hindering investment and insufficient experiences of successful NBT models in Vietnam. Furthermore, there are limited favorable policies for promoting nature-based tourism and biodiversity, responsible tourism, local community's participation and particularly for mobilization of financial resources for preservation of tourism resources). The relationship between the tourism and related sectors' appreciation for of the sustainable preservation and utilization of natural resources for tourism development remains weak. Financial resources for investing in environmentally friendly tourism infrastructures (such as renewable energy, waste disposal, climate change adaptation in tourism areas and sites) are very limited. The management capacity in high-value environmental and biodiversity tourism destinations is not sufficient.

Barriers to addressing the environmental problem

39. A key barrier assessment undertaken during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase (see **Annex 16: Policy Baseline Analysis**) finds that the five barriers identified in the PIF still remain pervasive challenges to overcoming the root causes and threats herein, which have also been compounded by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which have derailed the execution of the GoV's tourism strategy but nevertheless offer an opportunity to refocus efforts on a more green, resilient and sustainable economy through contributions of nature-based tourism.

Barrier 1: Complicated and incomplete policy and legal framework to harmonize tourism development with biodiversity conservation and its enforcement

40. Currently, Vietnam has perhaps the most complicated legal system globally[80]. This system is characterized by the numerous legal documents and the complexity of having so many types of legal documents. There is a lack of cohesiveness with too many loopholes, overlaps, conflicts, and inconsistent regulations between them, hindering people and businesses to interpret a messy patchwork of regulations.

Table 6: Summary of the Different Types of Legal Documents in Vietnam[81]

Document Type	Document Owner
Constitution	National Assembly
Code/Law	
Resolution	
Ordinance	National Assembly Standing Committee
Resolution	
Order	President
Decision	
Decree	Government
Decision	Prime Minister
Resolution	Judicial Council of the Supreme People's Court
Circular	Procurator General of the Supreme People's Procuracy, Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court
Circular	Ministers, heads of ministerial-level agencies
Decision	State Auditor General
Resolution	People's Councils at all levels
Decision (and Directive under the 2008 Law)	People's Committees at all levels
Legal documents (introduced for the first time in the 2015 Law)	Local administrations in special administrative-economic units
Joint Resolution	Between National Assembly Standing Committee or Government and Presidium of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (between National Assembly Standing Committee or Government and a central agency of a socio-political organization under the 2008 Law)
Joint Circular	Between Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court and Procurator General of the Supreme People's Procuracy

41. Vietnam has a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation. It consists of laws, decrees, decisions, and resolutions at the national level. In addition, each ministry may develop its own sector-level circulars and decisions to guide the implementation of national legislation. The table below provides an overview of the main laws, decrees, resolutions and circulars relevant to biodiversity and nature-based tourism in Vietnam.

Table 7: Overview of main legal documents relevant to biodiversity and nature-based tourism in Vietnam

Law / Decree / Resolution number	Title (unofficial English translation)	Issued Date
Tourism		
Law No.09/2017/QH14	Tourism law	19 June 2017
Decree No. 168/2017/ND-CP	Detailing some articles for implementation of tourism law	31 December 2017
Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg	Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030	22 January 2020
Decree No. 30/2022/ND-CP	Regulations for management model of the national tourism areas	19 May 2022
Circular 4634/VBHN-BVHTTDL	Details some articles of the tourism law	13 December 2021
Environment		

[80] Report of Minister of Justice Ha Hung Cuong (2014)
[81] Last updated 06 October 2015

Law / Decree / Resolution number	Title (unofficial English translation)	Issued Date
Law No. 72/2020/QH14	Environment Protection Law	17 November 2020
Decree No.08/2022/ND-CP	Detailed regulations on a number of articles of the law on environmental protection 2020	10 January 2022
Decision No. 450/2022/QD-TTg	Approving National environmental protection strategy to 2030, vision to 2050	13 April 2022
Circular No. 02/2022/TT-BTNTM	Detailed regulations on the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on Environmental Protection	10 January 2022
Biodiversity		
Law No. 20/2008/QH12	Law on Biodiversity	13 November 2008
Decree No. 65/2010/ND-CP	Detailed provision and instructions for implementations of some articles of biodiversity law	11 June 2010
Decree No. 66/2019/NĐ-CP	Conservation and sustainable use of wetlands	29 July 2019
Decision No. 1975/2021/QD-TTg	Approving national action plan on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands for 2021 – 2030	24 November 2021
Decision No. 149/2022/QD-TTg	National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2030, vision to 2050	28 January 2022
Circular No. 07/2020/TT-BTNMT	Detailed regulations on the contents at point c, clause 1, Article 31 of Decree No. 66/2019/ND-CP dated July 29, 2019 of the Government on conservation and sustainable use of wetlands	31 August 2020
Forestry		
Law No.16/2017/QH14	Forestry Law	15 November 2017
Decree No. 156/2018/ND-CP	Detailing the implementation of a number of articles on the Forestry Law.	16 November 2018
Decree No. 01/2019/ND-CP	Onn forest rangers and specialized forces for forest protection	01 January 2019
Decree No. 83/2020/ND-CP	Amending and supplementing a number of articles of the Government's Decree No. 156/2018/ND-CP dated November 16, 2018 detailing the implementation of a number of articles of the Forestry Law	15 July 2020
Decision No. 523/2021/QD-TTg	Approving the Vietnam forestry development strategy for the period of 2021 2030, with a vision to 2050.	01 April 2021
Circular No. 27/2018/TT-BNNPTNT	Regulations on management and traceability of forest products	16 November 2018
Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT	Regulations on sustainable forest management	16 November 2018
Fisheries		
Law No.18/2017/QH14	Fisheries Law 2017	21 November 2017
Decree No. 26/2019/ND-CP	Detailing some articles and measures for implementation of fisheries law	08 March 2019
Decision No. 339/2021/QD-TTg	Approving the strategy for development of Vietnam fisheries to 2030, vision to 2045.	11 March 2021
Circular No. 01/2022/TT-BNNPTNT	Amending and supplementing a number of articles of Circular No. 19/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 15, 2018 of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development guiding the protection and development of fishery natural resources	18 January 2022
Species conservation		
Decree No. 160/2013/ND-CP	Criteria to determine species and the regime of managing species under lists of endangered, precious and rare species prioritized protection.	12 November 2013
Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP	The management of endangered, precious and rare wild fauna and flora, and the implementation of the	22 January 2019

Law / Decree / Resolution number	Title (unofficial English translation)	Issued Date
	Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora.	
Decree No. 64/2019/ND-CP	Updates species list include in Decree 160/2013/ND-CP.	16 July 2019
Decree No. 84/2021/ND-CP	Amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP dated 22 January 2019	22 September 2021
Circular No. 25/2016/TT-BTNMT	Instructions for registration form, certificate of biodiversity conservation facility and conservation status report form of species on the list of endangered precious and rare species prioritized for protection of biodiversity conservation facilities.	22 September 2016
Circular No. 29/2019/TT-BNNPTNT	Regulations on handling of wild animals as material evidences and exhibits; forest animals by organizations and individuals voluntarily surrender to the State	31 December 2019
Benefit sharing		
Decree No. 59/2017/ND-CP	On management and access to genetic resources and benefit sharing	12 May 2017
Decree No.99/2010/ND-CP	Policy on payment for forest environmental services (PFES).	24 September 2010
Decision No. 126/2012/QD-TTg	Pilot policy on benefit sharing mechanism (BSM) in management, protection and development of special-use forests (SUFs)	02 February 2012
Decree No.147/2016/ND-CP	Amendments and supplements to some Articles of Decree No. 99/2010/ND-CP dated 24 September 2010 of the on policy on payment for forest environmental services (PFES).	02 November 2016
Circular No.10/2020/TT-BTNMT	Regulations on reporting access to genetic resources and benefit sharing from genetic resource use.	29 September 2020
Directive No. 04/2022/CT-TTg	Some urgent tasks and solutions to conserve wild and migratory birds in Vietnam	17 May 2022

42. Vietnam faces across-the-board challenges of coordination and the lack of policy harmonization for both biodiversity conservation and tourism. Responsibilities for biodiversity and tourism planning, development, and monitoring are spread across mandates earmarked to multiple agencies and ministries. This is a problem for cohesive and coherent planning and coordination on biodiversity and nature-based tourism. There is also no effective mechanism to coordinate policies and prioritization of actions. Although the Government has focused on the planning and development of national tourist areas and has also issued a number of related policies on ecotourism management and development, such as the Law on Biodiversity in 2008, Tourism Law in 2017, Forestry Law in 2017, Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 with a vision to 2050, Prime Minister's Decision No. 24/2012/QD-TTg on development investment policies on special-use forests which regulate the development of eco-tourism, their implementation still faces challenges and shortcomings. There is are also insufficient sector-specific policies and regulations to encourage businesses and communities to participate in nature-based tourism and benefit sharing mechanisms, and to manage tourism activities to ensure that these contribute to effective conservation priorities.

43. There is limited standardized guidance on biodiversity conservation in tourism development and operations and requirements for assessing the environmental and social impacts of tourism and minimizing the impacts on wildlife, habitats and local culture (see **Annex 22: Status of EIA and SEA in Vietnam**). The lack of specific policy and guidance on sharing financial benefits from tourism for biodiversity/PA conservation and national policy and regulations for the promotion of payment of ecosystem services from tourism, particularly from wetlands and marine ecosystems, is not well developed. While the GoV acknowledges tourism as a tool of development and poverty alleviation, participation of local communities in tourism activities is still informal at best.

44. Despite a legal framework for ecotourism inside PAs, there is a lack of parallel institutional arrangements and Vietnam still faces challenges and barriers in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management, which also have implications for nature-based tourism:

- Overlap and conflict between institutional mandates occur because laws and decrees are prepared by different ministries. For example, Vietnam's PAs are classified into four types by the Law on Biodiversity, five types by the Environmental Protection Law, five types by the Law on Forest Protection and Development, and three types by the Law on Fisheries. Only two of these types are common across all guiding regulations. This inconsistency makes applying standard methodologies, strategic development and management of PAs and nature-based tourism impossible complex[82] (see **Annex 16: Policy Baseline Analysis**).
- There was a lack of a singular agency responsible for presiding over unified state management of nature conservation and biodiversity. Inter-ministerial and inter-provincial coordination mechanisms exist but do not work effectively. According to Article 6 of the Law on Biodiversity, the Government unifies the state management of biodiversity nationwide. It assigned the MONRE to be responsible to the Government for implementing the state management of biodiversity. However, this regulation did not clearly indicate whether MONRE was the focal point on behalf of the Government to perform the unified management function on biodiversity because management responsibilities were assigned to both ministries, and other ministerial agencies along the vertical lines, focusing more on the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The existence of both structural systems of state management of biodiversity in the MONRE and MARD sectors had resulted in fragmented management resources, overlapping and lack of focus, and even management practice requirements contradict each other. Nonetheless, in 2025, Viet Nam has undergone a whole-of-government institutional restructuring that merged the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) into a single entity - the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) - to address overlapping mandates and improve administrative efficiency. The subordinate agencies of the former ministries have been consolidated under MAE, and provincial-level departments of MARD and MONRE have similarly been reorganized into provincial Departments of Agriculture and Environment (DAEs). As the analysis in this Project Document was conducted prior to the restructuring, any reference to "MAE" should be understood as referring to either MONRE, MARD, or both;
- While MONRE (now MAE) was legally responsible for biodiversity conservation, MARD (now MAE) was responsible for the management of special use forest (SUFs) and the provision of technical support guidelines to Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) and lower-level administrative units, such as District People's Committees (DPC)83, Commune's People's Committees (CPCs), creating a complex patchwork of responsibilities and vague accountabilities which will need to be resolved for concrete planning and action on nature-based tourism within contiguous landscapes within and surrounding PAs. Since July 2025, the district-level local government no longer exists following Viet Nam's whole-of-government restructuring, which replaced the previous three-tier local government system with a two-tier model. Therefore, any mention of DPCs or other agencies under this level will be removed from the Project Document.
- Responsibility for managing a PA in Vietnam depends on whether it falls entirely within a single province or straddles provincial boundaries. MARD (now MAE) had management responsibility for those PAs that extend beyond more than one province. The PPCs are responsible for PAs contained entirely within one province. This arrangement has resulted in a highly decentralized governance system. This shortcoming impacts management of landscape contiguity.

[82] Bui, H. T., Pham, L. H., & Jones, T. E. (2021). Governance and Management of Protected Areas in Vietnam: Nature-Based Tourism in Mountain Areas. In Nature-Based Tourism in Asia's Mountainous Protected Areas (pp. 173-195). Springer, Cham.

83 Since 1 July 2025, Viet Nam has officially implemented a two-tier local government model, replacing the previous three-tier structure. Under this reform, district-level local government has been abolished; its administrative and budgetary functions are largely transferred upward to provinces and downward to communes/wards.

- The conservation workforce is generally poor, insufficient in number, weak in capacity, and without adequate equipment and requisite training. The sanctioning of violations of conservation laws is inappropriate and causes an increase in cases of illegal exploitation and wildlife trade, even in protected areas[84,85]. According to statistical reports, the total number of officials, employees and employees working in special-use forest management boards is about 3,221 people; in which workers with university and post-graduate degrees are about 2,036 people, accounting for 63.3%; college and intermediate level: 828 people, accounting for 25.7%; technical workers and direct labour workforce: 357 people, accounting for 11%; some workers work on seasonal contracts[86] (see **Annex 16: Policy Baseline Analysis** for more information).

45. Safeguarding biodiversity values is a central pillar for nurturing favourable conditions for developing a compelling tourism industry and nature-based tourism zoning of products and services to become a key driver for national economic development. Vietnam's tourism strategy specifies that sustainable tourism development must be associated with environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and preservation of indigenous cultural values. Wild species, especially indicator species that are the characteristics of their ecosystems and natural habitats, must be protected to develop nature-based tourism. The presence of these species is an important factor in attracting tourists. Local people coexisting with wild species and living around their natural habitats should benefit from nature-based tourism, for example, bird watching, taking photos, stars watching, camping, hiking and visiting, enjoying the natural landscape etc. However, nature-based tourism is still a relatively new segment of the tourism and hospitality sector in Vietnam and still undeveloped, so there are no specific provisions in legal documents or guidelines for developing nature-based tourism in a manner that marries tourism activities and biodiversity conservation at the landscape level, as well as linkages to local livelihoods.

46. Part of the confusion lies around nomenclature, and while a national tourism policy and strategy have been drafted under Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg, implementation is hampered as different agencies have differing views and understanding of what ecotourism and/or nature-based tourism means with the latter not defined at all in the Tourism Law No. 09/2017/QH14 and how it should be implemented in a mass tourism destination such as Vietnam. With so many definitions and nuances between different tourism segments. In fact, definitions of ecotourism and nature-based tourism are quite similar and used interchangeably in key literature there remains a need for a clear definition and standards of nature-based tourism in Vietnam. Standard definitions are also essential to raising awareness on the nexus between and intersections of biodiversity conservation with tourism operations, and differentiating it from other segments of the tourism and hospitality sector.

Table 8: Definitions of nature-based tourism and other comparable terms[87,88,89]

Term	Definition
Community-based tourism	Community tourism is a type of tourism developed based on the cultural values of the community, managed, exploited and benefited by the residential community[90].
Cultural tourism	A type of tourism developed based on exploiting cultural values, contributing to the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values, and honoring the new cultural values of mankind91.

[84] VEA (2020). Consultant report: Stakeholder analysis on conservation of endangered species in Vietnam under WB/BCA GEF Project "Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam (P162792".
[85] VEA (2021). Project Report on "Researching domestic and international scientific and practical bases as a basis for amending some contents of the Law on Biodiversity".
[86] Report from Institute for Tourism Development Research (December 2021)
[87] World Bank (2020). Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism. World Bank, Washington, DC
[88] Rapid Market Assessment of Responsible Tourism in Vietnam (2017). International Labour Organization.
[89] Dr Anna Spenceley (2021). The Future of Nature-Based Tourism: Impacts of COVID-19 and paths to sustainability. Luc Hoffmann Institute.
[90] Tourism Law 2017 (Article 3 - Definitions).
[91] Ibid.

Term	Definition
Ecotourism	A type of nature-based tourism developed based on the local cultural values with an active participation of the local residents and combined with education of environmental protection[92].
Geotourism	Tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place: its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents[93].
Green Job	Decent jobs contribute to preserving or restoring the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency[94].
Nature-based tourism	**Forms of tourism that use natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form. Nature-based tourism is travel to enjoy undeveloped natural areas or wildlife[95].**
Responsible tourism	Tourism that maximizes the benefits to local communities minimizes negative social or environmental impacts and helps local people conserve fragile cultures and habitats or species[96].
Sustainable tourism development	Tourism development that meets the socio-economic and environmental requirements, defending the interests of the participants in tourism activities without having a negative effect on the ability to meet tourism needs in the future[97].
Tourism	Activities are connected to trips people take outside their usual residence place for not more than 12 consecutive months for sightseeing, leisure, recreation, study, exploration, and other legal purposes[98].
Wildlife tourism	A form of nature-based tourism that includes the consumptive and non-consumptive use of wild animals in natural areas. Wildlife tourism is centered around observing and interacting with local animals and plant life in their natural habitats[99].

47. A significant barrier is that the tourism law and current strategy do not include any clear ideas on how nature-based tourism should operate or principles to manage new types and forms of emerging tourism. Terms such as "ecological" and its derivatives "ecological tourism" or "ecotourism" are used loosely and displayed in marketing throughout Vietnam. The freewheeling use of these terms is negative for the image of the quality of tourism in Vietnam, especially among foreign tourists who are better informed and more accustomed to certain benchmarks and standards than most domestic tourists and are often disappointed when they do not have authentic experiences. As a result, the country receives quite a low number of returning visitors. Their spending in Vietnam is relatively modest compared to other ASEAN countries[100].

48. Although Vietnam has made incremental efforts to orient its policies and actions toward more sustainable forms of tourism, in fact, Vietnam's ecosystem and biodiversity are continuously being degraded at an alarming rate. While overall, the tourism strategy provides an overarching vision and clear direction for tourism development in Vietnam, it is remarkably short on details and a guiding framework at best that neither provides the requisite guidelines for action or underpinned by clear operational policies outlining respective roles and responsibilities.

[92] Tourism Law 2017.
[93] Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism (2020). The World Bank Group.
[94] United Nations International Labour Organization: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/news/WCMS_220248/lang--en/index.htm
[95] Leung, Y-F., Spenceley, A., Hvenegaard, G., and Buckley, R. (2018): Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability. Best Practice Protected Area Guideline Series No. 27, IUCN, Geneva.
[96] (Cape Town Declaration 2012).
[97] Tourism Law 2017 (Article 3 - Definitions).
[98] Ibid.
[99] Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism (2020). The World Bank Group.
[100] Ma Xuan Vinh (2022). Sustainable Tourism in Vietnam: Current Situation and Future Challenges. Malaysia University of Science and Technology.

Furthermore, despite a legal framework for tourism inside PAs, there is a lack of parallel institutional arrangements. It is unclear, for example, whether the agency responsible for NBT should be its management board, MOCST or a provincial agency.

49. There are currently 7 international and national certifications being applied in Vietnam (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, Asian Ecotourism Network, Travelife Sustainability System, Green Globe, ASEAN Homestay Standard, Green Lotus and Vietnam Tourism Occupational Standards) and a number of other relevant schemes in use at the provincial level (Biosphere tourism label in Kien Giang Province, Blue Sail Ecolabel for tourist cruise boats in Ha Long Bay and Quang Nam green tourism criteria covering hotels, resorts, homestays, travel companies, community-based tourism and attractions) which can be adapted and upgraded for use at the demonstration landscape[101]. These certifications schemes and labels often do not factor in biodiversity or local livelihoods/community development within their criteria which is a barrier to establishing standardization within the sector and elevating nature-based tourism into the mainstream in a uniform way (see **Table 17** and **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Section 1.2**).

Table 9: Key Gaps in National Policies Governing Tourism and Biodiversity in Vietnam

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
1. Tourism Sector/Industry			
Tourism Law (2017)	Defined generally that (i) Tourism resources include natural and cultural tourism. (ii) Community tourism is a type of tourism developed based on cultural values of the community, managed, exploited and benefited by the residential community; and (iii) Ecotourism is a type of tourism based on nature, associated with local cultural identity, with the participation of the local community, combined with education on environmental protection.	No definition/provision of nature-based tourism needs a clear definition in legal documents on nature-based tourism and required criteria and standards to apply in Vietnam.	There are no specific provisions/considerations in the law and no legal documents for sustainable tourism development and the development of nature-based tourism to harmonize tourism activities in biodiversity conservation, environment protection and other sectors.
Decree No. 168/2017/ND-CP on Details some articles for implementation of tourism law	The Decree stipulated the contents related to the investigation, assessment and classification of tourism resources; measures to ensure the safety of tourists for tourism products that are at risk of affecting the lives and health of tourists; conditions for recognition of tourism spots and tourism areas; escrows for a travel service business.	There is neither terminology/standards of ecotourism nor nature-based tourism.	The lack of implementation guidance of the legal framework for mainstreaming Biodiversity in tourism remains a major obstacle to implementing conservation objectives.
Decree No. 30/2022/ND-CP on Regulations for management model of the national tourist area	The Decree No. 30/2022/ND-CP dated 19 May 2022, stipulates the management model of the national tourism area, which stipulates 3 types of organization to manage the national tourist area. Specifically, there are three types of organizations to manage national tourist areas, including (i) National tourist area management units under the	Only focus on the national tourism area in general. No concepts on ecotourism and nature-based tourism specified.	Focusing on management model of the national tourism area, but no concepts on ecotourism and nature-based tourism specified. As a result, there are no regulations on tourism development mainstreamed in biodiversity conservation.

[101] Based on due diligence conducted during the PPG, some tourism professional specific certification systems such as VTOS or ASEAN Homestay Standards are not open for updating and mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation. Nonetheless, they are especially important to improving the service quality of tourism products and human resources.

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
	management of ministries and ministerial-level agencies; (ii) The National Tourist Area Management Board is under the management of the People's Committees of the provinces and centrally run cities (provincial People's Committees); (iii) The enterprise invests in the formation of a national tourist area. Within 24 months from August 1, 2022, recognized national tourist areas must reorganize their Management Boards according to the provisions of Decree No. 30/2022/ND-CP.		
Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg on approving the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030	It is just stipulated the viewpoint on sustainable and inclusive tourism development, on green growth platform, maximizing tourism's contribution to the United Nations' sustainable development goals; effectively managing and using natural resources, protecting the environment and biodiversity, actively adapting to climate change, ensure national defence and security; Focus on developing cultural tourism, linking tourism development with conservation and promotion of heritage values and national cultural identity.	It is a too simple strategy with a total of 12 pages and too general. No provision for ecotourism and nature-based tourism	There is no guidance on sectoral development and planning for nature-based tourism in the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030. No nature-based tourism activities or plans.
2. Environment Sector			
Environment Protection Law (2020)	Defines the State's policies on environmental protection, which: focus on biodiversity conservation, environmental protection of natural heritage; exploitation of rationally and economically uses of natural resources; payment for natural ecosystem services; natural capital; identification and compensation for damage to the environment; development of clean energy and renewable energy; development of technical infrastructure for environmental protection; Integrating and promotion of the circular economy and green economic models in the formulation and implementation of socio-economic development strategies, master plans, plans, programs, schemes and projects. In addition, the Law stipulates contents related to	More focus on environmental aspects. There are no provisions for nature-based tourism/ and sustainable tourism development, but the law has regulations on tourism activities using natural ecosystem services, they must pay for the use of such ecosystem services.	Lack of systematic coordination between different agencies involved in sustainable tourism development/ and biodiversity conservation activities Determine the State's policy on environmental protection, in which: focus on conserving nature and biodiversity, managing and protecting the environment of natural heritage; rational exploitation and use of natural resources; payment for natural ecosystem services; natural capital; identification and compensation for damage to the environment;

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
	environmental protection in cultural, sports and tourism activities.		
Decree No. 08/2022/ND-CP on Detailed regulations on a number of articles of the law on environmental protection 2020	Promulgated payment for Natural ecosystem services include: (a) Wetland ecosystem services for tourism, entertainment and aquaculture business purposes of important wetlands and mixed eco-regions per the law on biodiversity (2008); (b) Marine ecosystem services for tourism, entertainment and aquaculture business purposes of marine conservation zones and aquatic resource protection zones; and (c) Ecosystem services of rocky mountains and caves belonging to natural heritage for tourism and entertainment business purposes; geopark ecosystem services for tourism and entertainment business purposes; except for the case where payment for forest environment services of the forest ecosystem has been made as prescribed in Clause 1 of this Article.	Terminology "Tourism" is mentioned, but no specific ecotourism or nature-based tourism is specified. The Decree and its Circular No. 02 dated 10 January 2022 stipulates activities that are using ecosystem services, including tourism activities; they have to pay for ecosystem services.	No guidance specifies on nature-based tourism.
Decision No. 450/2022/QD-TTg on National environmental protection strategy to 2030, vision to 2050	One of the specific objectives of the strategy defines that "strengthen the protection of natural heritages, restore ecosystems; prevent the trend of biodiversity loss"[102] with a series of tasks on nature and biodiversity conservation and promotion of environmental protection in the exploitation and use of natural resources.	Recently-adopted national protection strategy articulating the country's long-term vision towards environmental sustainability.	There are no words on tourism, ecotourism, or nature-based tourism defined/stipulated in the national environmental protection strategy.
Circular No. 02/2022/TT-BTNMT on implementation rules for a number of articles of the law on environmental protection 2020.	The Circular sets forth various application and reporting forms to be used for EIA, environmental licensing, and environmental registration.	EIA/SEA implementation is regulated by the LEP 2020, Decree No. 54/2021/ND-CP on preliminary EIA and Decree No. 08/2022/ND-CP detailing a number of articles of LEP 2020. Chapter 3 (Articles 22–32) of the Decree details the EIA scheme, environmental licensing, and environmental registration as stipulated in Articles 28 to 49 of the LEP 2020, and Circular No. 02/2022/TT-BTNMT on implementation rules for a number of articles of the LEP 2020.	There are no wildlife/biodiversity provisions in the existing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) framework. No nature-based tourism consideration/provision is integrated into Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Lack of implementation guidance

[102] Decision No. 149/QD-TTg.

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
3. Biodiversity			
Law on Biodiversity (2008)	The Law defined Biodiversity as the richness of genes, species of organisms and ecosystems in nature; Biodiversity conservation is the protection of the richness of important, specific or representative natural ecosystems; protect the regular or seasonal natural habitats of wild species, environmental landscapes, and the unique beauty of nature; raising, planting and taking care of species on the list of endangered, precious and rare species prioritized for protection; preservation and long-term preservation of genetic specimens. The law also clearly explains terms related to biodiversity, biodiversity conservation, and this task's direct research contents, such as ecosystems, nature reserves, wild species, species threatened with extinction, buffer zones, and sustainable development of biodiversity.	There is neither tourism nor nature-based tourism defined and specified.	There is a lack of regulations on the establishment, management and operation of other conservation objects, such as biodiversity corridors, conservation facilities, areas of high biodiversity, wetlands of importance, international titles of nature conservation and biodiversity, and biosphere reserves; for example for biodiversity corridor, the biodiversity law only mentions the concept of biodiversity corridor (Clause 8, Article 3), stipulates biodiversity corridor is one of the main contents of the biodiversity conservation planning (Clause 3 of Article 9). The law does not contain provisions for establishing and managing biodiversity corridors. The law also does not contain provisions for establishing private and community-protected areas. The concepts and contents of these contents have not been specified in legal documents. They need to be clarified and supplemented to have a basis for practical implementation. The Biodiversity Law only regulates the conservation and sustainable development of natural ecosystems; there are not enough regulations on managing ecosystems and tools in ecosystem management in general. Meanwhile, many countries worldwide and the CBD Convention recommend protecting the forest and marine ecosystems; Ramsar Convention requires sustainable management of wetland ecosystems… Therefore, it is necessary to supplement regulations on ecosystem management and conservation that are comprehensive and fully reflect the types of ecosystems

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
			in Vietnam, which will effectively protect our country's biodiversity. Lack of a unified coordinating institution for biodiversity conservation in Vietnam that is shared between MoNRE, MARD (now both under MAE) and PPCs. Lack of systematic coordination between different agencies involved in sustainable tourism development and biodiversity conservation activities Lack of clarity and overlap in responsibilities lead to conflict or gaps in implementation.
Decree No. 65/2010/ND-CP: Detailed provision and instructions for implementation of some articles of biodiversity law	Guiding the implementation of a number of articles of the Biodiversity Law, but it is too general	No specific provision/consideration linking to tourism or eco-tourism.	There is no definition of activities in buffer zone areas, biodiversity corridors and high-value tourism areas/and national tourism areas. There is also a lack of guidelines and legal standards or criteria. Lack of private sector engagement/ participation in tourism development and conservation activities; and limited participation of local communities in biodiversity conservation.
Decree No. 160/2013/ND-CP on Criteria to determine species and the regime of managing species under lists of endangered, precious and rare species prioritized protection.	Focused on criteria for identifying endangered, precious and rare species prioritized for protection, species management regime; exploiting species on the list of species prioritized for protection; Decree promulgated together with the list of species prioritized for protection. The Decree creates a unified legal basis for the conservation, development and sustainable use of biodiversity resources.	Currently, there exist many different lists of endangered and rare species in different legal documents, with different management regimes, causing overlap in application and problems in management, such as Decree 160/2013/ND-CP and Decree 64/2019/ND-CP under the Law on Biodiversity. Decree 06/2019/ND-CP and Decree No. 84/2021/ND-CP: Amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP under/or guiding the Law on Forestry implementation. Decree 26/2019/ND-CP under the Law on Fisheries provides.	Prior to the merger, lack of a unified coordinating institution for species conservation and management. State management of species conservation and management is shared between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), and the Provincial People's Committees (PPC), and there are overlaps and conflicts within it. However, MARD and MONRE has now merged into MAE, yet implementation overlaps persist in some capacities. No wildlife provisions/considerations
Decree No. 64/2019/ND-CP: Updates species list include in Decree 160/2013/ND-CP.	Updated the list of endangered, precious and rare species prioritized for protection, concretely Article #7: List of species prioritized for protection.		

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
		The Law on Investment[103] also provided one list of endangered species.	included/mainstreamed in SEA and EIA, and tourism infrastructure. Lack of implementation guidance.
Decree No. 66/2019/NĐ-CP on Conservation and sustainable use of wetlands	The state encourages domestic and foreign organizations, individuals, and communities to invest in and participate in activities on wetlands, including (i) implementing environmentally sustainable livelihood models, models of conservation and sustainable use of wetlands; organizing and implementing ecotourism activities as prescribed by law[104]; (ii) organize the implementation of eco-tourism activities, benefit sharing plans in sustainable use of ecosystem services in wetland conservation areas after being approved by competent state agencies according to regulations[105] in restoration zone.	It is too general that needs a specific guideline, especially on wetland payment for environmental services. Only, recent Decree No.08/2022 and its Circular No. 02/2022 dated 10 January 2022 (above) on Environment Protection Law implementation that stipulate activities that are using ecosystem services, including tourism activities, they have to pay for ecosystem services (Article 123).	Within this Decree No. 66/2019/ND-CP, there is no terminology/or concept mentioned on nature-based tourism activities in wetland conservation and management. No guidelines and regulations specify on marine and wetland payment for ecosystem services.
Decision No. 1975/2021/QD-TTg on approving national action plan on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands for 2021 – 2030 dated 24 November 2021	The overall objective of action plan is conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services of wetlands, contributing to sustainable socio-economic development, response to climate change, environmental protection, nature conservation and fulfillment of the obligations of Vietnam as a member state to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention). The action plan defines that payment for ecosystem services for important wetlands is in place at some Ramsar sites[106].	Regulations on payment for wetlands and marine ecosystems services have been firstly introduced in the Law on Environmental Protectioon - LEP (Law No.72/2020/QH14, dated November 17, 2020) and by Law documents including Government's Decree No. 08/2022/ND-CP dated January 10, 2022 detailing a number of articles of LEP 2020 and Circular No.02/2022/TT-BTNMT dated January 10. 2020 on implementation of a number of articles of LEP 2020.	No guidance on implementation of PMES and PWES in either at the national or provincial level
Decision No. 149/2022/QD-TTg [107] on National Strategy on Biodiversity to	It encourages to develop of mechanisms, policies and standards for sustainable eco-tourism and nature-based tourism to minimize impacts on biodiversity; implementing ecotourism models in nature reserves,	National strategy just sets-out general orientations, but lacks specific technical guidelines for both national and provincial levels regarding mainstreaming	No nature-based tourism activities or plans. Lack of specific standards, criteria and guidelines. There is no guidance on nature-based tourism in

[103] Investment law 2014 dated 26 November 2014.
[104] Article 5(4) Decree No.66.
[105] Article 15(2c) Decree No.66
[106] Specific objective No. 5 of the action plan.
[107] Approved 28 January 2022.

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
2030, vision to 2050	important ecological landscapes, and natural heritage areas with green and environmentally friendly service infrastructures; developing specific eco-tourism products that associate with and contribute to biodiversity conservation; strengthening capacity at all levels, coordination and linkage among parties involved in ecotourism activities, especially between Management Boards, organizations assigned to manage nature reserves, tourism businesses calendar, community and promoting the role of the private sector in public-private partnership models[108]. In terms of solutions to implement the proposed decision, it promotes scientific research on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; applied research to develop breeding models and re-releasing wild species into the wild. Sustainable use of species, genetic resources, and effective ecotourism models.	biodiversity in sustainable tourism development/and nature-based tourism	"National biodiversity conservation and development strategy to 2030 and vision to 2050."
4. Forestry Sector			
Forestry Law (2017)	Defined specific types of forests and spaces for organizing or combining ecotourism, relaxation/convalescence, and recreation in special-use forests (such as national parks, nature reserves, species and habitat conservation areas...), protection forests, and production forests.	Only stipulated ecotourism in PAs (including national parks and nature reserves) under MARD management. No provision for nature-based tourism.	Article 3 of the Forestry Law stipulates the principles of forestry activities, emphasizing compliance with international treaties related to forestry to which Vietnam is a member. Clause 2, Article 5- Classification of forests stipulates that special-use forests (SUFs) are mainly used to conserve natural forest ecosystems, genetic resources of forest organisms, and scientific research. However, the law does not clearly state the ecosystem approach in forest classification, forestry planning, forest management, and forest use. In addition, the approach to management and protection of forest fauna and flora, aquatic species in general, and endangered and rare species, in particular, is still not suitable for reality. Therefore, it is unclear which approach will be applied, i.e.

[108] Task #4 of the Decision: Major tasks.

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
			species protection or ecosystem approach.
Decree No. 156/2018/ND-CP: Detailing the implementation of a number of articles on the Forestry Law.	Guiding the implementation of a number of articles of the Forestry Law detailing the formulation of ecotourism development projects; ecotourism business form; managing the construction of works in eco-tourism, convalescence and entertainment in the system of national parks and conservation zones. In addition, the decree specified the order and procedures for developing, appraising, approving and organizing the implementation of ecotourism, resort and entertainment projects in special-use forests.	Only focus on ecotourism in PAs (including national parks and nature reserves). No nature-based tourism specified	Ecotourism activities mainly focus on PAs (including national parks and nature reserves). There is no definition of activities in buffer zone areas, biodiversity corridors and high-value tourism areas/or national tourism areas. There is also a lack of guidelines and legal standards or criteria. Lack of private sector engagement/ participation in tourism development and conservation activities; and limited participation of local communities in biodiversity conservation and ecotourism
Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP: The management of endangered, precious and rare wild fauna and flora and the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora.	It prescribes the list and the management of endangered, precious and rare species of forest wild fauna and flora, and the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora (referred to as CITES) in Vietnam	Both decrees are still lacking (i) a globally recognized definition for "exotic" or non-native animals; (ii) provisions for the management and registration of non-native wildlife species, particularly for any person or entity engaged in the commercial breeding and trade of non-native wildlife species that are not CITES listed in. These provisions should make it clear that it is the responsibility of the trader/ owner to produce a permit or license, evidencing the legal acquisition of the animal, including its source from a third (exporting) country	Prior to the merger, lack of a unified coordinating institution for species conservation and management. State management of species conservation and management was shared between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), and the Provincial People's Committees (PPC). Even with the 2025 merger of MARD and MONRE into MAE, overlaps persist in some capacities, particularly at the provincial level The conservation workforce is insufficient in number, weak in capacity, and without adequate resources.
Decree No. 84/2021/ND-CP: Amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP dated 22 January 2019	Amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP		
Decision No. 523/2021/QD-TTg on Approving the Vietnam forestry development strategy for 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050.	Sets-out goals that the national forest cover rate is stable at 42% to 43%, effectively contributing to the implementation of the national commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; building a green Vietnam. By 2030, 100% of forest areas of forest owners will be managed sustainably; in the period 2021 - 2025, 10% and in the period 2026 - 2030, 20% of the natural forest	Despite an overall legal and regulatory framework for forest protection, this needs to be implemented and enforced through targeted actions.	The rate of forest cover has increased, but the forest quality is not high; productivity and quality of planted forests have not yet met production needs; forest protection, forest fire prevention and fighting to face many difficulties; the forestry sector/industry's growth is not stable; production organization is not

Related Sector Legal framework	Key content related to biodiversity and nature-based tourism	Current status/baseline	Gaps between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism
	area will be improved in quality; improve the efficiency of biodiversity conservation and forest protection capacity; minimizing violations of the law on forestry, ensuring environmental security		effective, the income of forest workers is still low compared to other occupations; Investment capital for the forestry sector is limited and has not met the requirements.
Benefit Sharing			
Decree No. 59/2017/ND-CP	On management and access to genetic resources and benefit sharing.	This Decree focuses on the management of access to use and benefit sharing from the use of genetic resources under the sovereignty of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.	No tourism activities/or nature-based tourism linkage have been stipulated
Decree No.99/2010/ND-CP	Policy on payment for forest environmental services (PFES).	Only focus on terrestrial forest	No guidelines and regulations on marine and wetland payment for ecosystem services.
Decree No.147/2016/ND-CP	Amendments and supplements to some Articles of Decree No. 99/2010/ND-CP dated 24 September 2010 of the policy on payment for forest environmental services (PFES).		
Decision No. 126/2012/QD-TTg	Pilot policy on benefit sharing mechanism (BSM) in management, protection and development of special-use forests (SUFs)	Only focus on the terrestrial forest. No report on the Decision implementation	No guidelines and regulations on marine and wetland payment for ecosystem services.

Barrier 2: Lack of private sector participation, financial mechanisms to support conservation and poor business climate

50. Less than twenty years ago, Vietnam was mainly a tourism destination for intrepid travellers and backpackers. Today, the country boasts an array of world-class luxury resorts and cultural attractions mainly catering to the mass tourism market. Vietnam is hastening efforts to improve the business climate to create favourable conditions for the private sector to invest in the tourism industry and play a role in country's economic growth. Notwithstanding, management of public-private partnerships and investment is currently largely reactive, based on case-by-case responses to investment projects and specific effects, rather than on long-term strategic planning. This prompts a need for regulatory "carrots" stimulating "cool", heritage-sensitive and sustainability-oriented tourism and conversely ensuring effective "sticks" to prevent "hot" or mass tourism development from undermining biodiversity within PAs, heritage and other sustainability dimensions[109].

51. While there is a large engagement of the private sector in the mass tourism market, the participation and support of both the private sector and community for nature-based tourism and ecotourism are limited. The private sector has not fully integrated conservation policies into business operation principles due to lack of specific guidelines for integration. Therefore, its participation in conservation activities is very limited. Although the GoV also has issued policies and regulations to encourage the participation of businesses and communities in ecotourism activities, such as encouraging economic sectors to invest in developing eco-tourism in special-use forests (Article 10. Clause 1 Decision No. 24/2012/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister on policies for investment and development of special-use forests in the 2011-2020 period) and Decree No. 63/2018/ND-CP approved by the Government on investment in the form of public-private partnerships, but practical implementation is not effective.

[109] Larsen, Peter & Pham, Huong & Pham, Truong. (2019). Assessment of Public-Private Partnerships at World Heritage sites in Viet Nam Assessment of Public-Private Partnerships at World Heritage sites in Viet Nam.

52. Under the current-state, PPP investment is predominantly geared towards large infrastructure projects such as road, energy and health, with infrastructure investment costs borne by and benefits shared between government and private companies. Investment under PPP has been defined in Decree 108/2009/ND-CP on construction contracts between public and private sector entities, as well as Vietnam's first law on public-private partnership investment (Law No. 64/2020 and Decree No. 35/2021/ND-CP), as well as financial management mechanisms applicable to investment projects in the form of public-private partnership (under Decree No. 28/2021/ND-CP). Unhappily these mechanisms do not align with the nuances of the tourism sector, let alone to the nature-based tourism segment; a significant gap and hinderance to its relevance and its application (see **Annex 20: Private Sector Analysis - Annex 2**).

53. Whereas policy emphasis continues to be on "exploiting" (khai thac) development within nature and heritage areas with a strong emphasis on big investments and infrastructure development, time has come for a shift towards more sustainable and nature-based tourism-oriented investments, as well as a people-centered approach to public private partnerships in Vietnamese heritage policy[110,111].

54. A major cross-cutting question from both private and public stakeholders concerns the quality and criteria of investment and planning to secure both biodiversity and heritage conservation and sound business opportunities in the long-term. There is a need for both central and provincial government attention to strengthen regulatory measures with clear criteria for social and environmental sustainability as well as economic inclusion in line with the global policy on sustainable metrics and world heritage. There is also a need for experimentation and piloting of different investment models to determine what and what does not work in different contexts and which are most appropriate in Vietnam.

55. Public-private partnerships span a spectrum of models that progressively engage the expertise or capital of the private sector. At one end, there is straight contracting out as an alternative to traditionally delivered public services. At the other end, there are arrangements that are publicly administered but within a framework that allows for private finance, design, building, operation and possibly temporary ownership of an asset. The following terms are commonly used to describe public-private partnership agreements in the tourism sector, although this should not be considered a definitive or complete listing.

Table 10: Types of Public-Private Partnership Models

Acronym	Model Name	Description / Modality
DBFO	Design-Build-Finance-Operate	An entity is responsible for the design, construction, maintenance and financing. The entity is compensated by specific service payments from government during the life of the project.
BTO	Build-Transfer-Operate	An entity finances and builds a facility and, upon completion, transfers legal ownership to the sponsoring government agency. The agency then leases the facility back to the entity under a long-term lease. During the lease the entity operates the facility and earns a reasonable return from user charges.
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer	A concession is granted to an entity to design, finance, maintain, and operate a facility for a period of time. The entity recoups the cost of the project by collecting user fees during the life of the concession period.
BOOT	Build-Own-Operate-Transfer	Ownership of the facility rests with the entity until the end of the concession period, at which point ownership and operating rights are transferred to the host government.

[110] Ibid.
[111] Hanh D.B et. al (2018). World Heritage and sustainable development in Vietnam. In: Larsen, P. & Logan, W. (eds.) World Heritage and Sustainable Development: New Directions in World Heritage Management. London: Routledge.

Acronym	Model Name	Description / Modality
BOO	Build Own Operate	Resembles outright privatization. Projects of this type are often let with no provision for the return of ownership to government.

56. The options available for delivery of public infrastructure range from design-build to outright privatization, where the government transfers all responsibilities, risks and rewards for service delivery to the private sector. Within this spectrum, public-private partnerships can be categorized based on the extent of public and private sector involvement and the degree of risk allocation. A simplified spectrum of public-private partnership models is as follows:

Figure 8: Continuum of Private Sector Risk vs. Level of Involvement by PPP Model

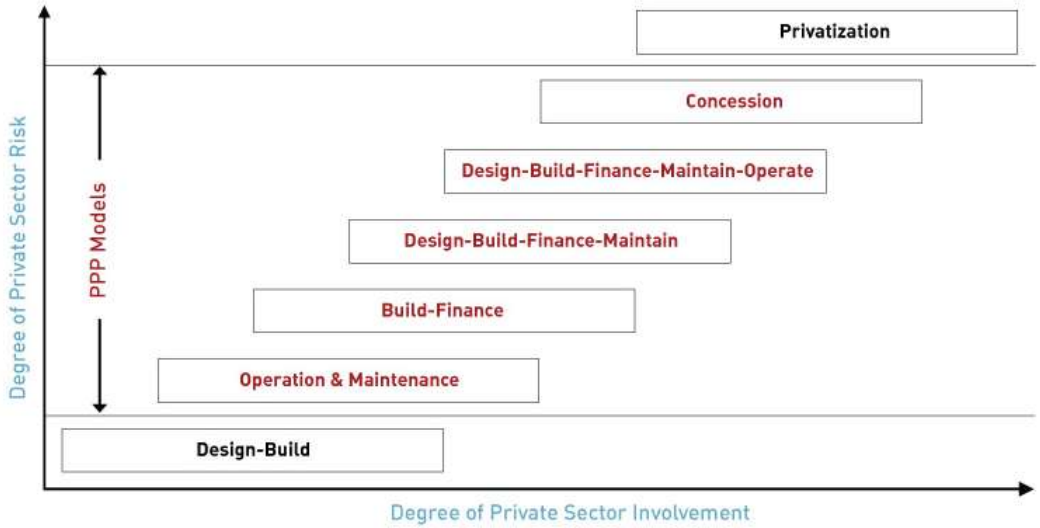


Figure 9: Spectrum of PPP Options

	Public-Private Partnership (PPP)				
Contract type	**Design-Build-Finance-Operate (DBFO)**	**Build-Transfer-Operate (BTO)**	**Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT)**	**Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT)**	**Build-Own-Operate (BOO)**
Construction	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector
Operation	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector
Ownership	Public Sector	Private Sector during construction, then Public Sector	Private Sector during Contract, then Public Sector	Private Sector during Contract, then Public Sector	Private Sector
Who pays?	Users or Offtaker	Users or Offtaker	Users or Offtaker	Users or Offtaker	Users or Offtaker
Who is paid?	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector

57. Organizations and individuals doing ecotourism business in national parks and protected areas (including natural reserves, species and habitat conservation zones, landscape protection forests, scientific research and experimental forests) face difficulty. They cannot link conservation and ecotourism, resulting in fragmented and unsustainable tourism development. In addition, revenue from ecotourism has not yet been mobilized effectively for conservation activities. Therefore, the research, piloting, and strengthening of models of

collaborative management and business in the form of public-private partnerships models on the development of nature-based tourism, community-based tourism associated with sustainable landscape protection and conservation of biodiversity and indicator species is necessary to engage multiple stakeholders and assess the effectiveness of PPP mechanisms for sustainable and responsible nature-based tourism development. The following gaps in particular exacerbate this barrier for the use of PPP as a mechanism to expand and nurture the nature-based tourism sector in Vietnam:

- Lack of unified official policy on PPP cooperation that is contextualized to the types of models of the nature-based tourism segment;
- Poor coordination between public institutions in acting on and realizing tourism development strategies/plans due to the time it takes for private tourism companies to get project approved by government. Provincial authorities approve most tourism investment projects offered by private tourism companies, but the specific areas of land, forest, sea where tourism projects invest in are under the supervision of commune authority, requiring another layer of approval;
- Poor business environment and red tape in public management makes private tourism companies exhaust more time and resources to have their investment proposal approved;
- Small enterprises such as local homestays are facing challenges in terms of permits and homeowners being caught in having initiated projects without permits;
- Tourism companies have weak marketing strategies, as well as poor business plans and inefficient delivery, causing their investment projects to be negatively impacted across scope, schedule and cost, meaning that they become unsustainable over time;
- Low capacity within the Destination Management Organization (DMO). Tourism could develop well when local visiting destinations have a strong management entity. DMO has been set up at the provincial level in Da Nang, Quang Nam, Thua Thien Hue, Dien Bien. But there is no DMO at local level, which is considered to be the most important issue to improve tourism within NPs.

58. Consultations during the PPG phase have reaffirmed the above-mentioned barriers with private companies from the landscapes noting the following:

- The flow of income and investments from public-private arrangements vary considerably from site to site. They also vary considerably among different types of business arrangements within specific sites on type, size, negotiation capacity and period of establishment. In PNKB, for example, the lease arrangement for the Paradise cave involves sharing 2% of yearly revenues from a major private cave tour operator based on a 50-year lease expiring in 2061, whereas adventure tours by smaller companies operate with environmental service fee of 7 % of the tour price itself under 1-3 year permissions to run tours within the park;
- Companies have reported having established more stable and long-term arrangements for tours run in the buffer zone communes;
- Uptick in investment and private sector interest has coincided following World Heritage designation and tourism development;
- There has been considerable push for investment projects within the park core-zones or both core-zone and buffer zone rather than in close proximity. Considerable debate has erupted around infrastructure developments and potential impacts as well as the quality of impact assessment and mitigation measures;
- Strong interest in water activities and adventure tourism;
- Access to resources, technical experience and ability to implement large-scale infrastructure plans appear on the list of impediments to investment;
- There appear immediate risks of expansion into sensitive heritage areas illustrated by high-level lobbying for cable car plans in the core zone of PNKB;
- Big and small companies are finding ways of working around regulatory frameworks and bureaucratic red tape;

- Tour operators noted environmental criteria being significant when their tour plans are reviewed by the management board and provincial authorities.

59. Current tour operations in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Parks can be classified according to four business investment approaches (NP Direct Investment, NP-Private Partnership, Concession and Private investment), and by three destinations (in NP, Buffer zone, and outside NP). These are illustrated and summarized in the table below (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Section 2** for more information).

Table 11: Types of Partnership Arrangements at the Target Demonstration Sites (at the time of the PPG)

Types of tour operations	Tour within NP boundary	Tour in NP Buffer Zone	Tours Outside NP
1. Tour operations invested and run by NP (NP invests and run tours itself)	NC NP: available PN-KB NP: available	NC NP: sometimes PN-KB NP: unavailable	NC NP: unavailable PN-KB NP: unavailable
2. Tour operations invested and run under NP-Private Partnership (NP and Private Company share investment and profit; They run tours together. It called Join Venture or Co-management tour)	NC NP: unavailable PNKB NP: available	NC NP: unavailable PNKB NP: unavailable	NC NP: unavailable PNKB NP: unavailable
3. Tour operations under Concession between NP and Private. (Private Company rents NP's land and pays a concessional fee to NP)	NC NP: available PNKB NP: available	NC NP: sometimes PNKB NP: sometimes	NC NP: available PNKB NP: available
4. Tour operations run by Private Company. (Private company runs tour independently, including delivering visitors to NPs under package tour or share tour)	NC NP: unavailable PNKB NP: unavailable	NC NP: available PNKB NP: available	NC NP: available PNKB NP: available

Table 12: Examples of Public-Private Partnership Engagements at Different Sites in Vietnam[112]

Ha Long	Trang An	Hoi An	Hue	Thang Long	PNKB
• Private ownership of port/ pier – rental • Sun Group infrastructure • Boat model • Wastewater treatment pilot • Wastewater treatment (Phu) • Floating village/ relocated	• 70-year lease arrangements • Medium size developers/ concession holders • Village entrepreneur ship philanthropy (Bai Dinh)	• Outside investors • Big investors / buffer zone • Village/ local entrepreneurs • Both local and external tour development	• Cooperative experience • SME development • Wider landscape	• Limited engagement with the private sector	• Long- term lease arrangements (e.g. 50 years at Paradise cave); • Cable car development debates • Tour development expansion across park • Diverse conditions outside park (buffer zone)

60. Based on the research and consultations undertaken during the PPG phase, barriers regarding tourism PPP should emphasize the pertinent improvement of the tourism industry in general and nature-based tourism segment from a policy perspective. Specifically, it should:

- Formulate guidelines for tourism PPP development in accordance with the development characteristics of the tourism industry and the institutional requirements of PPP;

[112] Larsen, Peter & Pham, Huong & Pham, Truong. (2019). Assessment of Public-Private Partnerships at World Heritage sites in Vietnam Assessment of Public-Private Partnerships at World Heritage sites in Vietnam.

- Local governments should be encouraged to take special measures to develop local tourism PPP projects based on their own characteristics and needs;
- Adhere to the combination of normal implementation and encouraging innovations, and to stick to the combination of the effective market and active government;
- Consider the importance of tourism operations, clarify the responsibilities of governments and enterprises, and actively cultivate suitable and innovative private enterprises emerging from market competitions;
- Government should achieve the benefit of the integration of the economy, society and environment in tourism development through sustainability-oriented PPP

61. Traditional stewardship and benefit-sharing arrangements remain areas of concern poorly spelt out in regulations and management approaches. While Vietnam has realized many significant achievements in applying Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) in terrestrial situations through models and demonstration sites with satisfactory results, there is limited application of the concept of marine and wetland PES to Vietnam (PMES and PWES, respectively). This concept is still quite new, requiring thorough research to apply in practice to the management of marine resources and the environment in Vietnam. In the promotion of marine PES, some of the following policy issues in management need to be considered:
    - The Biodiversity Law mentions PES revenues. The Prime Minister has also issued Decree 99/2010-ND-CP and Decree 147/2016-ND-CP, changing Decree 99/2010 / ND-CP on forest environmental services policy (PFES). Both those decrees have been replaced by Decree 156/2017/ND-CP since 01 January 2019 to implement Forestry Law 2017. However, it is considered that Decree 99/2010/ ND-CP and Decree 147/2016-ND-CP are the first legal framework for PFES applied in forestry sector in Vietnam. The potential for PMES and PWES in Vietnam has not mentioned marine and coastal ecosystems such as corals, mangroves and sea grass, now wetlands. There is a need for a national framework on PMES and PWES as well as detailed instructions and guidelines to ensure coordination and avoid conflicts;
    - At localities/provinces in the country, it is necessary to identify ecological zones with PMES and PWES potential and quantify the economic value of marine ecosystems. Creating a PES exchange market with the identification of service providers and users of marine ecosystems;
    - It is necessary to promote the development of integrated wetland and coastal zone management models as the coastal zone is the region with the most dynamic and rapid economic and social activities. The tools of integrated coastal management will help to reconcile multidisciplinary interests, and contribute to the effective use of position resources, marine space, marine ecosystems, environmental protection and services; marine ecosystems;
    - There is a need for a clear distinction between public/private ownership of the use of marine space, thereby creating a legal basis for building a healthy PMES and PWES exchange market. For areas with unidentified resource owners or with complex interdisciplinary exploitation of resources, the state should be responsible for paying PES to communities living around the area;
    - Need initial support from the state for project implementation, research and application of PES. Help civil organizations improve their capacity, diversify funding sources and technical support from home/domestic and abroad;
    - The Prime Minister approved the system of 16 national marine protected areas in 2010 as one of the conditions for implementing marine PMES and PWES in Vietnam. However, not all nature reserves can rely on the funds collected from ecotourism activities to partially guarantee conservation.
    - PES policy development must ensure that opportunity costs are covered, benefit the entire community, and build confidence in them to deliver long-term services. Encourage socialization of nature conservation in provincial protected areas to involve communities in PES. Gradually raise people's income and contribute to local socio-economic development. In addition, funding from PES should be prioritized for community development activities as this is the group is most affected by marine biodiversity conservation policies.
62. The potential and opportunities to apply PES tools in managing marine protected areas in Vietnam are highly feasible. Based on lessons from countries worldwide, through PES, direct financial investment from the state

can be significantly reduced while management efficiency will be enhanced. Effective implementation of PES requires legalizing how PES can be applied. The interdisciplinary approach to the integrated coastal management model has been feasible under Vietnamese conditions.

63. Another dimension to this barrier is inadequate financing for conservation actions at high-value biodiversity sites in Vietnam. The devolution of management authority to local government has led to a shift in authority and responsibility from the center to the provinces and, by extension, to the communes. PAs have received state budget for operations; however, funds are seldom enough to cover the PAs' full operations and maintenance costs, giving rise to a persistent funding problem; an overall lack of funding for protected area management; varying annual budget allocations; and an imbalance in investment priorities for PAs with a tendency to attach special importance on infrastructure development while giving insufficient investment priority to conservation. At the local level, provinces regularly compete to attract jobs and investment and fill budget deficits. This competition, and the limited ability of central ministries to exert appropriate oversight and control, has often resulted in poor choices to maximize budget at the expense of biodiversity conservation and the unregulated use of natural resources and concomitant degradation of natural habitats, increase in large-scale pollution, and species loss. Nature-based tourism is expected to help offset some of the management costs of PAs, generate income for local populations and promote the acceptance of nature conservation as an indirect driver of economic impact.

64. From a financing perspective, the private sector's involvement in NBT is also ambiguous. Further clarifying the sectors involved in NBT, Decision 104/2007 QD-BNN dated 27/12/2007 of MARD on the management of ecotourism activities in national parks and nature reserves outlines three forms of businesses in the national parks and nature reserves: (a) businesses self-organized by the management board of the parks; (b) private sector investment in national parks, and (c) public-private partnerships, i.e. joint-ventures for tourism initiatives. However, Decision 104/2007 QD-BNN dated 27/12/2007 of MARD is out of date, while the details and enabling policies on how these should operate at a more granular level are non-existent.

65. The national accounting system is also not transparent and complex. Protected area entrance fees are not retained at specific destinations and instead, re-directed to a central/provincial government budget and earmarked for recurring PA expenditures in the annual budget and for investment in approved projects for which PAs must apply on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, revenue from tourism businesses is used to cover overhead costs, with profits redirected to the government budget as well. The problem is that PAs do not keep revenues to directly invest in biodiversity conservation, nor are there provisions in the government budget line for PAs to invest directly in conservation; this means PAs allocate little biodiversity conservation from their allocated government budget (see **Annex 20: Private Sector Analysis - Section 3** for more information on budgeting and gaps therein). There are no direct incentives to improve the sustainability of tourism experiences or maximize revenues because managing tourism well is not compensated. The inefficient collection has also resulted in leakage and revenue loss.

Table 13: Visitor Numbers and Revenue at Nui Chua National Park

Year	Number of Visitors		Revenue (Million Dong)
	Number of Visitors	Growth compared to the previous year (%)	
2014	38.616	--	364
2015	46.884	21,4	401
2016	126.764	170,4	878
2017	153.820	21,3	1.341
2018	209.959	36,5	4.188
2019	125.506	--	2.510

Source: Nui Chua National Park, 2019

Table 14: Visitor Numbers and Revenue at Phong Nha-Ke Bank National Park

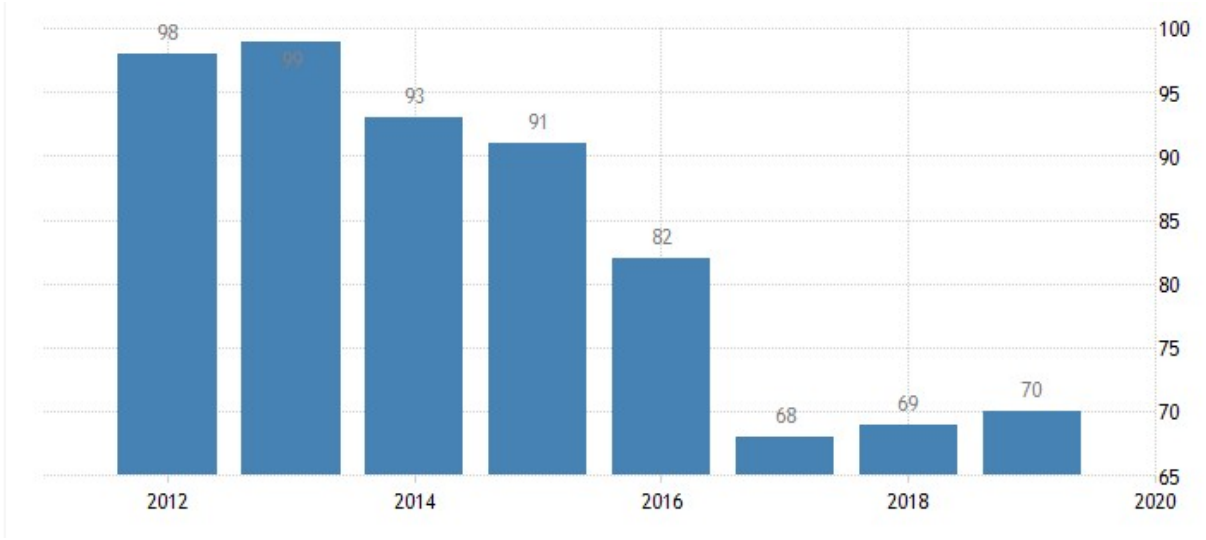
Year	Total number of visitors			Revenue (Billion VND)
	Total number of visitors	Domestic	International	
2017	759.085	629.729	129.356	210

2018	865.594	697.604	167.990	269
2019	954.224	780.240	173.984	275
2020	384.063	358.362	25.701	123
2021	96.986	94.621	2.365	33
Total	3.059.952	2.560.556	499.396	910

Source: PNKB NP, 2022

66. Finally, while the country's business environment has been gradually changing as the government seeks to develop the private sector, the results neither meet enterprises' expectations nor government targets. Industry and businesses often complain that the many conditions and regulations on businesses in the country do not meet international regulations, such as the requirements on minimum or legal capital or human resources rules. As a result, Vietnam has been lagging behind its Southeast Asian peers in the World Bank's Doing Business index. While there has been a marked improvement over the past decade, Vietnam still trails its peers in the region for its business and investment climate. According to the World Bank's 2020 Ease of Doing Business Report[113], Vietnam ranked 70 out of 190 economies, lagging behind neighbours, including Singapore (which came in second place), Malaysia (12th), Thailand (21st) and Brunei Darussalam (66th).

Figure 10: Ease of Doing Business Index in Vietnam



Source: World Bank Group

67. A study undertaken by the Vietnam Private Sector Forum noted that 44% of enterprises had missed market opportunities because of legal barriers and restrictions. Keeping up with the conditions, known as sub-licenses, makes businesses difficult and vulnerable to corruption and bribery. The review also found that some 50% of conditions on business should be removed as they are unreasonable and cause difficulties for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), including creating risk, restricting market entry, limiting creativity and creating unfair competition. In addition, an archaic and unfavourable business climate hinders investment, innovation and participation in emerging sectors. As a result, many Vietnamese start-ups have registered their businesses in Singapore instead of Vietnam, benefiting from the island-nation's faster and more supportive administrative process. It has also proven it easier for Vietnamese start-ups to raise investment funds from overseas sources rather than at home.

Barrier 3: Limited awareness, information and capacity of government to ensure sustainable nature-based tourism

[113] Doing Business 2020. World Bank Group. Available at: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32436/9781464814402.pdf

68. Rigorous consultation during the PPG phase surfaced barriers at the national and local level across five strategic areas: (i) capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism; (ii) capacity to mobilize information and knowledge for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism; (iii) capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programmes for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism; (iv) capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism; and (v) capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism. Observations and nuances across these categories are summarized below. They are bundled by an overall lack of awareness of biodiversity values and opportunities with nature-based tourism, lack of human resources with insufficient professional knowledge in nature/and biodiversity-based and sustainable tourism, weak coordination among government agencies and weak monitoring and evaluation tools and standards both at the local and the national level (see **Annex 14: Capacity Development Report and UNDP Capacity Development Scorecards**).

69. Institutional management and implementation capacity and government agencies' awareness of nature-based tourism are still limited. Government agencies have a limited understanding of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the importance of their preservation for maintaining tourism values, largely attributed to poor skillsets and insufficient opportunities for and availability of professional development. Additionally, key institutions responsible for environmental protection, natural resources management, and tourism have their own mandates and priorities, making it difficult to cooperate across sectors to bring about a balanced approach to tourism development. Similarly, there is a lack of adequate skills to assess the carrying capacity of tourism destinations and technical skills to recognize and address environmental issues. While nature-based tourism provides great opportunities for sustainable economic development, there is a lack of required skills to develop and operate nature-based tourism to meet required standards and ensure conservation objectives are realized. Similarly, government agencies do not have sufficient capacity and mechanisms for inter-agency coordination to oversee and mainstream biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector[114]. At the local level, the potential for partnerships does exist within the demonstration landscape area. Still, only some partnerships persist due to the competitive nature of tourism activities. There has been a strong political commitment to a "new normal" tourism post-COVID-19 that emphasizes sustainable tourism. Thus, political will towards nature-based tourism is likely to be gained during project implementation, and systematic training will ensure that many individuals carry appropriate values and integrity and build consensus among stakeholders.

70. **Public support for prioritizing biodiversity conservation in tourism is high.** A number of environmental groups are pushing for these, especially donor and international agencies, but not enough to drive the market overall and especially not an emerging one without investment. The private sector and communities do not proactively participate in policy development and decision-making. While committed individuals exist, the institutions either lack or have weak coordination and partnerships. With the Government giving strong impetus to promoting sustainable/ecotourism and community-based tourism, there is an increasing trend in more effective coordination and building consensus among government agencies and stakeholders.

71. Cross-sector coordination on sustainable tourism development is impeded by a lack of awareness of functional knowledge of biodiversity benefits from tourism and technical capacity for integrating these within tourism planning, development and monitoring. Generally, biodiversity conservation and tourism are not integrated. They are considered disparate domains, with mainstreaming weak or non-existent within these sectors. This has been evident throughout consultation processes with all key stakeholders. Government agencies in charge of tourism do not understand the critical role of biodiversity and the benefit of ecosystem services. Awareness of value-added biodiversity conservation for tourism development has improved. Still, promoting the mainstreaming of wildlife/and biodiversity conservation themes into responsible nature-based tourism is limited. Ecotourism is promoted in some national parks and protected areas. Still, it is not a high priority and lacks a legal framework and guidelines for implementation. Provinces have superficial plans for sustainable tourism, but they are not pursued effectively. Most communication and public campaigns in ecotourism lack

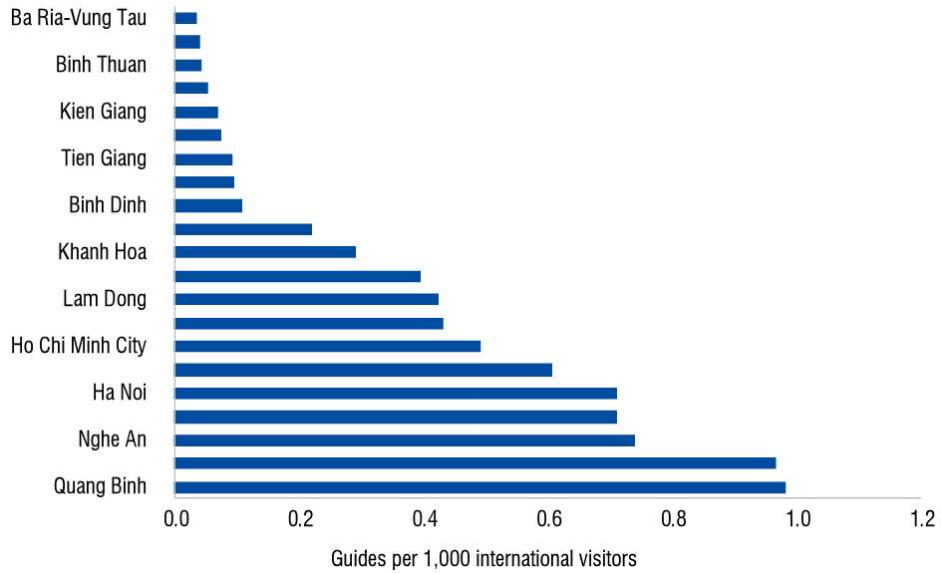
[114] TRAFFIC research has identified illegal wildlife products on offer at tourist hotspots in Vietnam, particularly those catering to Chinese tour groups (https://www.traffic.org/news/traffic-partners-with-local-tourism-organisation/).

in-depth information and often lose opportunities to capitalize on the tourism destination with biodiversity potential. A provincial-level of nature-based tourism/ responsible nature-based tourism plans could provide a strong and clear legal mandate for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism industry. At the national level, ecotourism is used in abusive manner to call all forms of nature-based tourism, including those not complying with principles of nature resources conservation and sustainable development. There are a limited number of conservation NGOs or international development organizations and national institutions trying to integrate biodiversity conservation with tourism, for example, WWF, SNV, GIZ, USAID, EU funded projects (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Annex 1** for details of partner baseline activities and complimentary initiatives). Some relevant legal frameworks on tourism and sustainable tourism/ecotourism are available, but the biodiversity aspect does not stand out. Currently, specific guidelines to mainstream biodiversity conservation into sector policy development are lacking.

72. While biodiversity and nature are recognized as one of the top attractions for tourism in Vietnam (especially Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park and others, i.e. Cuc Phuong NP, Con Dao NP, Cat Tien NP, etc.), these same PAs have not received their due share of technical support and standardization. Currently, specific guidelines to apply nature-based tourism in relevant sectors in a standardized manner are completely lacking. In the process, while some capacity exists and the leaders of institutions themselves are reasonably skilled and knowledgeable enough to understand the concept, there is still a need to build the capacity in this field to ensure more effective planning and implementation to support mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector.

73. The supply of tourism workers has been increasingly unable to keep up with the demands of the rapidly-growing sector. The labor supply gap is most clearly seen in the growing shortage of qualified tour guides—in 2015, there were approximately 1.57 licensed tour guides per 1,000 international visitors, but this ratio has since fallen to 0.96 in 2017. For guides with licenses to tour domestic visitors, the ratio has similarly declined from 0.17 guides per 1,000 domestic visitors in 2014, to 0.11 in 2017. In certain localities, the strains on tour guide capacity are even more pronounced—the international guides-to-visitor ratio is as low as 0.04 in provinces such as Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Ninh Binh, and Binh Thuan.

Figure 11: Licensed Tour Guides for International Visitors[115,116,117]



[115] Vietnam's Tourism Developments: Stepping Back from the Tipping Point-Vietnam's Tourism Trends, Challenges, and Policy Priorities. World Bank (2019).
[116] Vietnam News, "Supply of skilled tourism workers falls short", April 2017, https://vietnamnews.vn/society/374395/supply-ofskilled-tourism-workers-falls-short.html#uK1mGBuMyxvgjRvI.97
[117] "VN Lacks Human Resources in Tourism", November 21, 2018. https://vietnamnews.vn/society/422369/vn-lacks-human-resources-in-tourism.html#v2dLSLMbqtLLux5y.97

74. In terms of requirements for awarding the tour guide license or certificate for the on-site tour guides, the Law on Tourism of Vietnam No. 09/2017/QH14 stipulates decentralization of the awarding authority to the State management agencies at the provincial level after passing a tour guide skill assessment. Concerning the domestic or international tour guides, non-tour guide major graduates are required to take part in an occupational training course for one to three month durations beside other requirements on the college or vocational school study degrees and a foreign language proficiency certificate.

75. Current tour guide training programs/ curricula focus largely on the general knowledge of tourism destinations and the industry and occupational skills such as leading groups, giving interpretation, problem solving, etc. Knowledge about biodiversity is very limited, if not any, and integrated into the components of tourism geography, tourism destinations and routes. In addition, the fact is that it is very difficult, ineffective and bureaucratic to incorporate more biodiversity related content into the national tour guide training curricula. Instead, the on-site tour guide or specialized narrator training programs can be more open and adaptive to the biodiversity theme, especially those targeting at on-site tour guides or nature-based tourism narrators working in national parks and protected areas.

Table 15: Existing Training Curriculum for International and Domestic Tour Guides in Vietnam

No	Training modules	Class hours
1	Introduction to tourism	15 hours
2	Socio-economic geography of Vietnam	20 hours
3	Tourism laws and legal documents	20 hours
4	Ethics in tour guide job	15 hours
5	Interpersonal skills in tourism	20 hours
6	Tourism destinations and routes	45 hours
7	Tourist psychology	20 hours
8	Tour guiding skills	60 hours
9	Fundamentals of Vietnam touism culture	30 hours
10	Global civilization history	30 hours
11	History of Vietnam	30 hours
12	Travel and tourism businesn management	45 hours
	Total contact hours:	**350 hours**

Table 16: Existing Training Curriculum for Onsite Tour Guides in Vietnam

No	Training modules	Class hours
1	Introduction to tourism and tour guide job	08 hours
2	Fundamental knowledge and skills in tour guiding	08 hours
3	Interpersonal skills for tour guide	08 hours
4	Practical session in classroom	08 hours
5	Practical session in the field and assessment	24 hours
	Total contact hours:	**56 hours**

76. **The PA authorities themselves have limited capacity and staff to fully manage this domain independently.** In addition, the private sector (hotel and travel companies) has limited knowledge and awareness of the impacts of tourist behavior and the application of applied environmental or biodiversity-friendly standards regarding services provided. Similarly, there is a lack of monitoring to decipher the impacts of tourism on biodiversity, which could provide a guide for the management and mitigation of tourism-related impacts on biodiversity. PA managers and tourism agencies also do not have access to necessary information for decision-making on appropriate measures for managing biodiversity and ecosystems, including establishing visitor controls and restrictions and maintaining tourism within sustainable limits. There is a limited capacity and tools for sufficient enforcement regarding biodiversity regulations within the tourism sector. While unsustainable tourist behaviors are prohibited in PAs and high biodiversity tourist destinations, there is concern regarding the involvement of tourists in undesirable activities that endanger wildlife and critical ecosystems (such as coral reefs and other sensitive habitats) and the consumption of illegal wildlife products.

Barrier 4: Limited local capacity to develop sustainable local tourism enterprises

77. The capacity and awareness of local stakeholders and communities on the benefits of nature-based tourism is not fully recognized, particularly its contribution to the local economy and the promotion of 'green' employment. Consequently, local communities have not fully capitalized on the potential and strengths of diverse biodiversity values for tourism activities and the need to effectively preserve these values from the negative impacts of tourism activities. Most local community members cannot plan and manage successful green tourism operations and have limited knowledge of potential alternatives available to them to capitalize on the tourism potential. Local tourism businesses have limited incentives and penalties that necessitate them to adhere to sustainable standards and policies. Similarly, there are limited controls placed by local authorities to ensure that particular standards are met and complied with.

78. Decentralization in park management empowers local communities to participate in tourism activities in national parks. However, constraints hindering the development of NBT in Vietnam's national parks derive from the limited capacity of local communities, lack of a comprehensive policy, legal and institutional framework, and limited promotional efforts. Local people that mostly reside in the national parks' core and buffer zones tend to rely on agricultural production inside the park for their livelihoods and have not yet considered or adapted to tourism as an alternative source of income. This is partly due to a low level of awareness of environmental protection among locals and most domestic visitors. Secondly, many PAs lack a clear nature-based tourism development strategy or action plan. There has yet to be the establishment of strict standards and criteria to maintain the quality of infrastructure, technical facilities and services to meet the stricter requirements of NBT.

79. Local governments have an important role in guiding the local economy, they can support households in the core and buffer areas to develop agricultural products and services associated with tourism development. However, the local government does not have a mechanism to handle businesses and organizations participating in the tourism value chain outside formal regulations. Communities benefit from the ecotourism from directly participating in tourism activities and indirectly (through hospitality services such as accommodation and food services, car rental services, porter services, photography, etc.), and are also image builders reinforcing local cultural identities. However, at present, their understanding of ecotourism and nature-based tourism activities is rather limited, there is no strategy of doing it methodically, and it is still fragmented, so the overall view can lead to unsustainable practices.

80. Local stakeholders (e.g. communities, social enterprises, provincial and sub-provincial administrations) also have limited awareness of nature-based tourism opportunities. They lack the required skills to develop and operate tourism to meet required standards and ensure the objectives of different partners. Due to the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, few local operators are currently interested in sustainability, as their operations concentrate on business survival. While communities have diverse and unique knowledge of their local biodiversity and how it is used and interacts with local cultures and livelihoods, language barriers and lack of interpretation materials prohibit the passing on of this information to tourists, impeding their overall tourist experience. A value chain for nature-based tourism at the community level needs to be developed and capacity building provided for communities to develop new community-based tourism ventures, supported by appropriate financing mechanisms, market access and business development skills, so that the benefits of local biodiversity resources utilization can be shared within the community and used to maintain ecosystems in their community.

81. Furthermore, an assessment of standards, certifications labels in Vietnam and within the national parks identified poor reflection of environmental criteria - specifically with respect to biodiversity as noted in **Table 17** below and in **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report** - and key weaknesses in tourism management, including that tour operators emphasized profit rather than resource conservation. In addition, there was a lack of community participation in tourism planning and management, other than peripheral activities operating in an informal economy. Therefore, capacity development plans and strengthening existing training institutions and trainers will be crucial to overcoming these challenges.

Table 17: Tourism standards and certification schemes in Vietnam

No.	Name of Standard or Initiative	Criteria related to biodiversity indicators	Waste management criteria/ guideline	Climate Change guideline
1	Green Lotus	C4.1 - 4.5	D1.1, 1.2, D2.3 - 2.20	D1.3 - 1.26
2	Biosphere tourism label (currently used in Kien Giang Province)	KK5	CS4 - CS7, CC1 - CC2, CC5	KK2 - KK4, CC3, CC4
3	Blue Sail Ecolabel for tourist cruise boats in Ha Long Bay	E1, E2	B3, D3.1 - 3.5, D4.1 - 4.3	D1.1 - 1.2, D2.1
4	Vietnam Tourism Occupational Standards (VTOS) – New version with Responsible Tourism integrated			
4.1	VTOS for Travel and Tour Operations	No biodiversity specific standards	RTS4.1 (E2, E3); RTS4.3 (E2.P4-P6); RTS5.2 (E1.P2); ; GES12 (E1.P3, P4)	RTS4.1 (E1, E4); RTS5.2 (E1.P1); GES12 (E1.P1, P2)
		RTS4.1 - RTS4.6; RTS5.2; GES12 (general RT standards)		
4.2	VTOS for Front Office	No biodiversity specific standards	RTS4.8 (E1.P3, E4); GES12 (E1.P3, P4)	RTS4.8 (E1.P2, E2, E3, E5.P13); GES12 (E1.P1, P2)
		RTS4.8; GES12 (general RT standards)		
4.3	VTOS for Food and Beverage Services	No biodiversity specific standards	RTS4.7 (E4); GES21(E3)	RTS4.7 (E1.P2, E2, E3); GES21 (E1, E2)
		RTS4.7; GES21 (general RT standards)		
4.4	VTOS for Food Production	No biodiversity specific standards	RTS4.7 (E4); GES21(E3)	RTS4.7 (E1.P2, E2, E3); GES21 (E1, E2)
		RTS4.7; GES21 (general RT standards)		
4.5	VTOS for Hotel Management	No biodiversity specific standards	RTS4.7 (E4); RTS4.8 (E1.P3, E4)	RTS4.7 (E1.P2, E2, E3); RTS4.8 (E1.P2, E2, E3, E5.P13)
		RTS4.7; RTS4.8 (general RT standards)		
4.6	VTOS for Housekeeping	No biodiversity specific standards	HKS2.3 (E1.P2, P3); RTS4.8 (E1.P3, E4)	HKS2.3 (E1.P1, P4, E2, E3); RTS4.8 (E1.P2, E2, E3, E5.P13)
		HKS2.3; RTS4.8 (general RT standards)		
4.7	VTOS for On-site Tour Guide	No biodiversity specific standards	GES12 (E1.P3, P4)	GES12 (E1.P1, P2)
		TGS2.4; TGS3.3; GES12 (general RT standards)		
4.8	VTOS for Tour Guide	No biodiversity specific standards	RTS4.1 (E2, E3); GES12 (E1.P3, P4)	RTS4.1 (E1, E4); GES12 (E1.P1, P2)
		TGS2.4; TGS3.3; TRS4.1; RTS4.5, RTS4.6; RTS5.5; GES12 (general RT standards)		
4.9	VTOS for Small Accommodation Operations	No biodiversity specific standards	RTS4.8 (E1.P3, E4); GES12 (E1.P3, P4)	GES12 (E1.P1, P2); RTS4.8 (E1.P2, E2, E3, E5.P13)
		RTS4.8, GES12 (general RT standards)		
4.1	VTOS for Tourist Boat Services	No biodiversity specific standards	TBS1.2 (E3.P10); GES12 (E1.P3, P4)	GES12 (E1.P1, P2)
		TBS1.2, GES12 (general RT standards)		
5	Tour guide training and certification systems in Vietnam	Unit 1 - Introduction to tourism; Unit 2 - Tourism geography; Unit 6 - Tourism destinations and routes; Unit 8 - Guiding skills: Definition of ecotourism and ecotourism resources and its environmental impacts; informing and assisting tourists on environmental protection activities during the visit. Very limited related content was found in these curricula.		

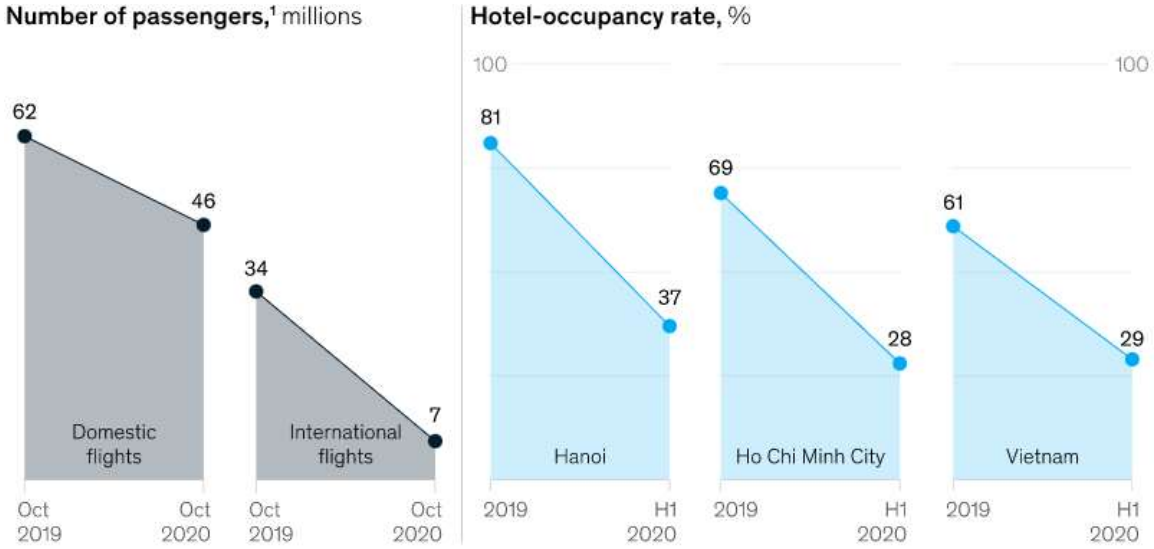
Barrier 5: Impact of Covid-19 related tourism restrictions

82. The Vietnamese government has handled the COVID-19 pandemic flexibly and safely, always making appropriate adaptations to the new situation and measuring adjustments to its public health guidance. In addition, the Vietnamese government has implemented a rapid vaccination campaign. As a result, the COVID-19 vaccination rate in Vietnam is the highest globally, at more than 90%[118]. The Government of Vietnam has also provided strong leadership and a whole-of-society approach in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. A National Steering Committee is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam with high-level representation from 14 Ministries and sectors. Provincial People Committees and other non-health sectors and departments, and local health facilities were also mobilized for the response plan.

83. Notwithstanding its flexible, inclusive and proactive approach, the country was hit hard by the pandemic, and all sectors were affected. Well into its fourth wave of the virus, as of 06 Feb 2022, 2,339,119 cases have been reported, including 38,226 deaths (PFC 1.6%) from 63 cities/provinces. In addition, the number of recovered cases stands at 2,109,898 (90.2%)[119] (see **Annex 25: Vietnam COVID-19 Analysis and Action Framework**).

84. While all sectors were impacted, COVID-19 continues to have an outsize impact on Vietnam's tourism sector. The country's tourism sector relies heavily on international travel, which plunged in 2020. International flights dropped 80 percent in October 2020 from the same period a year earlier, while hotels, in turn, filled only 30 percent of their rooms. As a result, while tourism contributed more than US$32.5 billion in 2019, the tourism industry contributed only US$13.5 billion in 2020, down 41.53%[120]. In 2019 it was estimated that Vietnam received 6.8 million visitors (1.8 million international tourists and about 5 million domestic tourists), of which 2.4 million tourists visited and brought in VND 156 billion (USD 6.7 million) to different National Parks, including Nui Chua and Phong Nha-Ke Ban NPs. However, as highlighted in **Figure 12** and **Figure 13**, this figure dropped sharply in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

Figure 12: COVID-19 Impact on Vietnam's Tourism Sector



Source: McKinsey & Company[121]

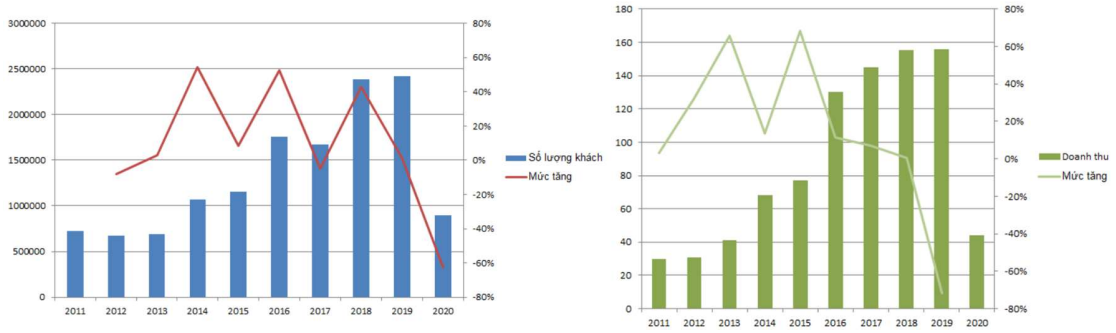
[118] https://www.facebook.com/100067937760425/posts/293308352943755/?d=n

[119] https://www.who.int/vietnam/emergencies/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-in-viet-nam/covid-19-situation-reports-in-viet-nam

[120] Nguyen Bang Nong and Ha Thi Hong Van (2021). Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic to the Tourism Industry: Evidence from Vietnam.

[121] Reimagining tourism: How Vietnam can accelerate travel recovery, 19 March 2021.

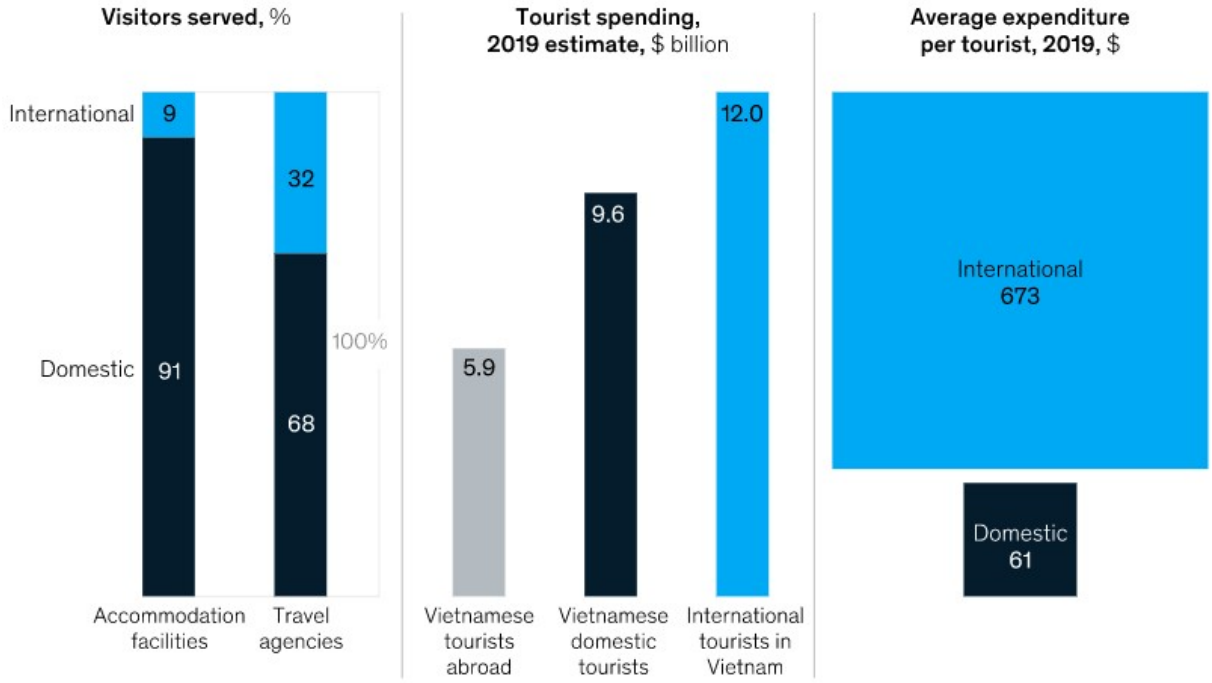
Figure 13: Number of tourists to NPs, and revenue in VND from tourism in NPs in Vietnam in 2011-2020



Source: Report on Ecotourism in Vietnam. WLP Project. NBCA/MONRE. 11/2021.

85. The sharp drop in foreign travellers, including those to Vietnam's NPs, has had an outsize impact on tourism expenditures and revenues that can be used to finance conservation—and Vietnam's overall economy—because they spend significantly more than their local counterparts. For example, in 2019, international travellers made up only 17 percent of overall tourists in Vietnam, yet accounted for more than half of all tourism spending—averaging $673 per traveler compared with $61 spent on average by domestic travelers.

Figure 14: Domestic vs. International Tourism Spending[122]



86. Directive 05/CT-TTg dated January 28, 2021, on urgent measures to prevent and control the COVID-19 pandemic, recommends that travel agencies and tourism management units throughout the country take immediate measures, including frequently updated information and guidance on infection prevention and control during the pandemic. Additionally, all localities in the country have to strictly implement document No. 165/BVHTTDL-TCDL dated January 15, 2021, issued by the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism of Covid-19 preventive measures in culture, sport, and tourism activities during the Tet holidays. It also proposes that travel firms require employees and visitors to comply with safety and health standards and regulations and preventive measures to limit the spread of the virus.

[122] Reimagining tourism: How Vietnam can accelerate travel recovery, 19 March 2021.

87. The disruption from a reduction in tourism demand and public health measures have put pressure on many businesses to stop operations and lay off workers. The COVID-19 pandemic has had mixed impacts on wildlife conservation. While positive signals have been documented, such as increasing political will among policymakers[123] for strengthening wildlife conservation policies in Vietnam and securing more bilateral agreements to help fund wildlife conservation and efforts to address the illegal wildlife trade, there has also been anecdotal evidence of adverse impacts on natural resources like forest products, fishing and illegal exploitation for subsistence and survival. There have also been global and national concerns over human-wildlife interactions, unsustainable and illegal wildlife trade, ecosystem degradation, and the need to transform both policies and practices to achieve effective conservation outcomes. Illegal wildlife trade remains prevalent nationwide, and due to dwindling natural resources, human-wildlife conflict is a growing concern. Challenges in monitoring cross-border wildlife trade and a fall in funding for conservation also hamper the implementation of such policies.

88. The Government has responded to the economic crisis with fiscal stimulus and monetary policies to support affected industries and people. Interest rates were reduced, taxes and social security payments deferred, and direct assistance was provided to vulnerable groups. These policies are credited with cushioning the blow of the pandemic. Still, the Government also realizes that more will have to be done going forward to rebound from the pandemic and turn the economy around. It is also expected that tourism will recover faster than other sectors when the pandemic is under control. For example, Decision 107/NQ-CP on 11/9/2021 has assigned the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) - now MOF - to fast track the Government's Economic Development and Recovery Program in 2022-2023, in which tourism development is one of the 8 priorities.

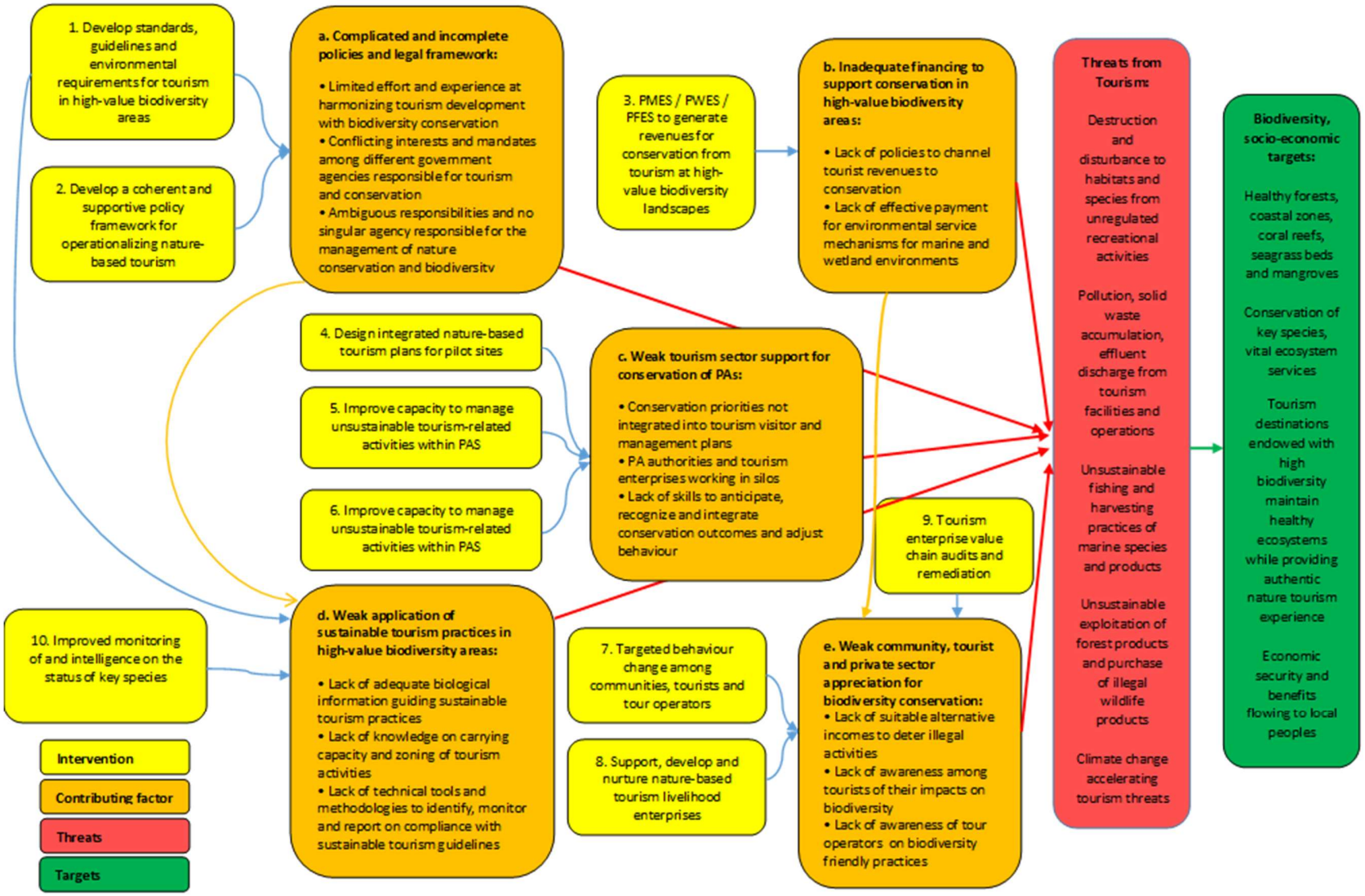
89. While COVID-19 has certainly been a barrier from the perspective of delaying government strategy and impacting tourism numbers and spending, it can also be seen as an opportunity. Vietnam's tourism and hospitality services recognized early on the growing need for diversification, focusing more on domestic tourism demand and upgrading tourism products for Vietnamese travellers, including those pursuing more authentic experiences. Vietnam's tourism industry therefore was forced to focus on exploiting the domestic tourism market to meet strict pandemic protocol and restrictions. In addition, due to the long-term impact of the pandemic, a large market share of consumers (both domestic and international tourists) have changed the purpose and behavior of tourism towards small, safe and small group travel with highly experiential experiences. Nature tourism sites, especially in national parks and protected areas, are suitable destinations to respond well to these changes in behaviour. This underscores that diversification is necessary to resuscitate tourism and the need for a fundamental rethink of tourism's business strategy, raising awareness of reshaping supply chains and promoting innovation activities, enhancing digital transformation for reaching sustainability goals and building resilient business[124]. As Vietnam's travel sector continues to evolve and as prospects of international travel become increasingly feasible with vaccination rollouts, travel and tourism players have to adapt to survive.

90. **Project conceptual model:** The interacting web of factors that threaten the globally significant biodiversity and wildlife in Vietnam - specifically at the two demonstration landscapes, as well as the strategies and targets to minimize these threats, is illustrated in a conceptual model that was developed during the PPG through a consultative and validation process (**Figure 15**Figure 15**)** which revisited and augmented the one which appeared in the PIF. This indicates the key factors and the points where project interventions can reduce threats to biodiversity by addressing important barriers, leading to the conservation of biodiversity and an emerging nature-based tourism model. The main project strategies are summarized in the following section, including the project's Theory of Change (see **Figure 16**).

[123] Directive 29/2020/CT-TTg, dated 23 July 2020 on Urgent Solutions for Wildlife Management.

[124] Binh Dao Thanh, Barysheva G.A. and Ngoc Tran Thi Bich (2020). The Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on Socio-Economic Development: A case Study of Tourism Services, Textile and Garment Industry in Vietnam. Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, Volume 486. Atlantis Press.

Figure 15: Conceptual Model for the Project



Consistency with national priorities and relevant conventions

(a) Alignment with national priorities

91. The project rationale and approach are fully consistent with broader government planning and policy at the national and provincial levels. Therefore, the overall intent of the project is to be strategically aligned with and to operationalize national policy - where it is not already - ranging from the Tourism Law (Law No.09/2017/QH14), Decree No. 168/2017/ND-CP providing details for the implementation of tourism law and Vietnam's recent Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 under Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg. Investment by partners in baseline activities and initiatives are described comprehensively in **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Annex 1**.

92. The proposed project consistent with Vietnam's Tourism Development Strategy to 2030. Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg is anchored to the following 5 priority "viewpoints": (i) tourism development has really become a key economic sector, creating a driving force for the development of other industries and fields, making an important contribution to forming a modern economic structure; (ii) sustainable and inclusive tourism development, on the basis of green growth, maximizing tourism's contribution to the United Nations sustainable development goals; effectively manage and use natural resources, protect the environment and biodiversity, actively adapt to climate change and ensure national defense and security; (iii) tourism must attach importance to the development of cultural tourism, to associate tourism development with the preservation and promotion of heritage values and national cultural identity; (iv) to develop tourism in the direction of professionalism, quality and efficiency; promote the application of achievements of the industrial revolution 4.0 and focus on developing high-quality human resources; and (v) simultaneous prioritization and development of international tourism and domestic tourism; promote local exports through tourism; strengthening linkages in order to bring into play the advantages of natural and cultural resources; develop a variety of tourism products, expand the market and improve the competitiveness of Vietnam's tourism. The project has been built around and responds to each of the 5 priorities within Vietnam's tourism strategy through a programmatic approach with traceability to addressing current gaps and shortcomings within current legislation and regulatory landscape (see **Table 9**).

93. Vietnam's sixth **National Report on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Biodiversity** stated that Vietnam's contribution to the economy and its GDP is still not commensurate with tourism opportunities. It notes further that while tourism models associated with biodiversity conservation have been developed and explored at several national parks and biosphere reserves, although there is untapped potential since development has not generated significant contribution in returning to the conservation and sustainable development of biodiversity resources. In order to harmonize biodiversity conservation and economic development, it is also important to implement measures and models for sustainable use of natural resources that incorporate the role of communities, especially in buffer zones, prioritizing mechanisms for the preservation of indigenous knowledge and traditional cultural activities. The report points out that Vietnam also needs to conduct reviews on existing rules and regulations in order to establish effective mechanisms and guidelines to monitor and control impacts of tourism activities on biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as recommends that measures be developed to reduce the impacts of tourism activities on ecosystems that have been affected from climate change (e.g. coastal areas and wetlands) by building on models tested in various coral reefs in the central of Vietnam, specifically in Cu Lao Cham MPA, Nha Trang Bay, encouraging tourism enterprises to participate in the management and reasonable use of coral reef resources. There is further recognition that, if managed well, nature-based tourism can potentially be of the economic sectors with the largest contribution to the financial resources to maintain the system of protected areas, and therefore, the project has been purpose-built to explore and test different models of sustainable nature-based tourism that can contribute responsibly to the national economy.

94. The project is also aligned to more recent biodiversity priorities. Under Decision No. 149/2022/QD-TTg dated 28 January 2022, the Government of Vietnam has approved a national strategy on biodiversity to 2030, vision to 2050, encouraging the development of mechanisms, policies and standards for sustainable eco-tourism and nature-based tourism to minimize impacts on biodiversity; implementing ecotourism models in nature reserves, important ecological landscapes, and natural heritage areas with green and environmentally friendly service infrastructures; developing specific eco-tourism products that associate with and contribute to biodiversity

conservation; strengthening capacity at all levels, coordination and linkage among parties involved in ecotourism activities, especially between Management Boards, organizations assigned to manage nature reserves, tourism businesses calendar, community and promoting the role of the private sector in public-private partnership models[125]. The project will promote the sustainable use of species, genetic resources, and effective ecotourism models.

95. Furthermore, a national action plan on biodiversity protection, namely as "National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, Vision to 2030" (approved under Decision No. 1250 / QD-TTg of the Prime Minister), in which one of the three specific objectives is to improve the quality and populations of endangered and rare species, ensuring that no new species are extinct. As a result, the status of endangered, rare and threatened species is greatly improved. In addition, the overall goal of the Master Plan on biodiversity conservation to 2020 and vision to 2030 (approved under Decision 45/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister) is that critical natural ecosystems, endangered, rare species and genetic resources are preserved and sustainably used. Therefore, this project is in line with both aforementioned important Decisions on biodiversity.

96. The project is aligned with specific objectives of Decision No. 450/2022/QD-TTg on the Vietnam's national environmental protection strategy to 2030, vision to 2050, specifically the need to "strengthen the protection of natural heritages, restore ecosystems; prevent the trend of biodiversity loss", and while there are no explicit references to tourism, ecotourism, or nature-based tourism in the national environmental protection strategy, the project will act as a conduit for action on its priorities, especially in the context of augmenting wildlife/biodiversity provisions in the existing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) framework and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), through relevant guidance to sectors impacting tourism. The above policies and plans have created a wide range of legal and policy frameworks to mobilize support, participation and integration of conservation and protection of highly endangered species and biodiversity in other sectors. However, as mentioned above and in **Table 9**, many gaps, overlap, fragmented responsibilities and operational issues within the policy framework need to be addressed through enhanced guidance at the decision, decree and circular level.

(b) Alignment with International priorities

97. Recognizing the importance of wildlife protection, Vietnam has joined various international conventions on species and biodiversity conservation, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1994), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar, 1989) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES,1994). Vietnam has also participated in multiple regional and international initiatives, relevant to overarching project themes, such as the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), the London Declaration, the Kasane Statement on illegal wildlife trade, the Declaration of the East Asia Summit and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit on strengthening cooperation efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and reduce demand for illegal wildlife and illegal wildlife products.

98. Vietnam has also signed on to conservation commitments with many countries around the world, such as signing a memorandum of understanding on combating illegal trade in rhino horn with South Africa (2012), the Vietnam-US Joint Statement, which refers to wildlife crime as a serious crime, the Trans-Pacific Trade Partnership Agreement, which stipulates a commitment to fully implementing CITES and taking appropriate measures to combat illegal wildlife trafficking, or the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA).

99. The project is consistent with the Kunming Declaration from the High-Level Segment of the UN Biodiversity Conference 2020 (Part 1) under the theme "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth" and is expected to support community-centred conservation through the identified action targets within the zero draft of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and taking into consideration (i) building the capacity of communities to engage in biodiversity-friendly development activities and improve stewardship of environment protection; (ii) ascertain specific actions by local communities that can enhance protection of key species and their habitats; (iii) reach an agreement through consultative processes on specific practices needed to maintain the ecological viability of commune forests; (iv) agree on specific targets for biodiversity-friendly activities in commune forests, and agricultural lands and (v) seeks opportunities for engagement of women and

[125] Task #4 of the Decision: Major tasks.

women's groups and youth to support transformative change and develop a set of indicators for monitoring ecosystem and forest condition.

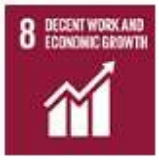
100. **SDGs and Aichi Targets:** The government has adopted the SDGs as a framework for national development. Recognizing the challenge of inequality in Vietnam, the government sees community-based tourism as instrumental for SDG localization, redistributing income from the tourism industry to the community level and maintaining sustainable livelihoods of local people. Many actors are promoting community-led and owned ecotourism. The project will support Vietnam's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Targets. The primary SDG linkages will be **SDG 15** (Life on Land) and **SDG 14** (Life Under Water). There are also contributions from the proposed project toward **SDG 1** (No Poverty), **SDG 5** (Gender Equality), **SDG 8** (Decent Work and Economic Growth), **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

101. Sustainable tourism has been identified as contributing to all SDGs (e.g. see GSTC alignment of the GSTC destination criteria to SDGs[126]), so the project will have the potential for broad SDG contributions and coverage, particularly with criteria A1, A2, A3, A4, A6, A7, A8, A9, B2, B3, B4, B8, C1, C3, C6, C7, D1, D2, D3, D4 and D10[127]. Key contributions to Aichi targets include Target 1 (awareness of values of biodiversity awareness), Target 4 (sustainable production and consumption), Target 5 (habitat loss and degradation), and Target 11 (protected area expansion and management).

Table 18: Project Alignment with SDG Targets

SDG	Key SDG Target Descriptions Relevant to the Project	Contributions by the Project and Alignment with Project Outputs
	**Target 1.1:** By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day **Target 1.2:** By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions **Target 1.4:** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance **Target 1.5:** By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters **Target 1.b:** Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions	Outputs 1.4, 2.2, 2.5, 3.3
	**Target 5.1:** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere **Target 5.4:** Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared	Outputs 1.4, 2.2, 2.5, 3.3

[126] GSTC (2020) Sustainable development goals
[127] https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0.pdf

	responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate **Target 5.5:** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life **Target 5.a:** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws **Target 5.b:** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	
	**Target 8.3:** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services **Target 8.4:** Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead **Target 8.5:** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value **Target 8.9:** By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products **Target 8.10:** Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all	Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4
	**Target 14.1:** By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	Outputs 1.7, 2.6
	**Target 15.4:** By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development **Target 15.5:** Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species **Target 15.7:** Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products	Outputs 1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4

	Target 15.a: Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems **Target 15.b:** Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation **Target 15.c:** Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities	

The project's anticipated impact on and benefits to women

102. The PPG phase included a tremendous amount of primary and secondary research, as well as included a broad-based consultative process both in the field and through workshops held at national, project area and demonstration landscape levels, and included women at all levels – both in community consultations and discussions with local and national authorities. Focus group discussions were held with communities of the landscape area, including with various women and women's groups, to understand the socio-economic opportunities and challenges they face (see **Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan** for the list of consultations with women). Based on consultations, a Gender Analysis and Action Plan was prepared during the PPG phase (see **Annex 9: Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan**) to define measures for gender mainstreaming within both national and demonstration landscape level activities to ensure nature-based tourism opportunities and economic benefits also flow to women. The project has been designed to have a net positive impact on women:

- The anticipated number of direct beneficiaries as co-benefit of GEF investment is 3,000 individuals, of which 1,319 (44%) are expected to be women;
- The gender analysis revealed that most owners of homestays belonged to women. While some homestays were successful, others were not due to poor maintenance, standards, skills and low visitation rates. Despite this, there was widespread recognition of the great potential of nature-based tourism can provide for women throughout the supply chain (tour operation, hospitality, handicrafts, guides, services, etc). Tourism can provide substantial opportunities for both men and women. Unlike other sectors, tourism has proven to substantially benefit women socially and economically and provides significantly for women's advancement through formal, informal and supply chain employment. Some of the benefits include: a) low barriers to entry and greater likelihood to employ women and minority groups than other industries; b) homegrown entrepreneurship opportunities in handicrafts, food products, tour guiding, homestays, etc.; c) part-time and shift work that can be helpful to women with household responsibilities. Similarly, tourism displays huge potential to absorb unemployed youth as "widespread agreement exists that labour turnover is characteristic of tourism employment" and tourism relies "heavily on women's youth employment". Tourism is extremely labour intensive and a significant source of employment, making it the "world's top creator of jobs requiring varying degrees of skills and allows for quick entry into the workforce for youth, women and migrant workers". Tourism development can help improve infrastructure for residents and communities. Improving road, water supply, health facilities, electricity and communications can make a major difference in the lives of poor, particularly women.
- Technical business support will be provided to establish and capacitate new businesses and community/youth groups in enterprise management, governance, and tour operations based on standards and safeguards for hospitality and trail management, etc. Specific opportunities to create economic opportunities for women and women-owned/operated enterprises will be pursued in accordance with the Gender Action Plan. Competitive small grants will be used to facilitate innovative post-COVID enterprises built around nature-based value chains, aiming for resilient, diversified livelihood options. This may also consider connections between agriculture and tourism value chains, or other enterprises that would support the diversification and resilience of livelihoods, while safeguarding the biodiversity asset base in

parallel. Further community enterprise development linked to sustainable use of biodiversity is included under Output 2.4, and Output 3.3, nature-based product and service development, as well as site management under Outputs 2.2 and 2.3. As such, the project estimates increased opportunities for new nature-based employment and recovery of around 1,800 green jobs (70% women).

- A seminal study examining empirical evidence across 61 provinces in Vietnam over the period 2010–2018 highlighted a strong correlation that tourism has a negative and significant impact on poverty, including among women, in all estimated models. Higher tourism revenue was shown to lead to a lower poverty rate in the provinces. It was recommended that policymakers need to expand and diversify the tourism sector as a key tool to reduce the poverty rate of households in the future, by principally focusing on the efficient use of the labour force, investments in education and encourage responsible investment inflows into tourism operations to decrease poverty[128].
- Consultations highlighted the most important barrier entry and a bottleneck for women's engagement in the sector is the lack of capital, while foreign language proficiency was also cited as a hinderance. While an appropriate approach is required to involve local people and women in tourism, alternative livelihoods other than tourism are also needed. Therefore, the project has purpose-built response strategies and activities covering this important area.

[128] Tung, Le & Cuong, Le. (2020). Impact of Tourism on Poverty Reduction: Evidence from an Emerging Tourism Market. Montenegrin Journal of Economics. 16. 45-55. 10.14254/1800-5845/2020.16-3.4.

III. STRATEGY

103. Under the baseline scenario (described **in Section II (Development Challenge)**), gaps in coordination and lack of guidance and supportive policies on nature-based tourism; insufficient awareness and capacity limitations; inadequate financing for conservation; inequitable and uneven distribution of tourism's benefits; degradation of ecosystems; prioritization of mass tourism and overcrowding in popular tourism destinations; poor cooperation and coordination between national parks and tourism operators; unsustainable and illegal use of wildlife; and marginalised community involvement undermine Vietnam's ability to develop this segment responsibly and also safeguard high-value biodiversity areas and generate resilient benefits to the people.

104. The GEF-supported Project Alternative responds to the development challenge by systematically addressing the barriers described above, namely: (1) a fragmented policy framework and institutional coordination; (2) a lack of tested technical tools, methodologies and plans to support nature-based tourism; (3) inadequate financing, incentive mechanisms and flow of benefits for conservation from the tourism sector; (4) limited awareness and capacity across government, private sector, tourists and among local communities on managing and participating in tourism sustainably; all of which have been made worse by (5) the global COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, the project takes full account of the baseline summarized for each project component and will coordinate with ongoing initiatives described in the Results and Partnerships section **Section IV (Results and Partnerships)**.

105. The project proposes an **alternative scenario** for the support and proliferation of more benign nature-based tourism models in high-value biodiversity areas in Vietnam, made possible through enhanced partnerships and coordination between national park authorities, the private sector and communities, established at the community level and which contribute to the conservation and monitoring of globally significant biodiversity. It also seeks to mainstream biodiversity conservation considerations into tourism planning and sectoral development in order to reduce the impacts of unsustainable tourism. Under the alternative scenario, sustainable nature-based tourism offerings are expanded to conserve biodiversity, finance it, and provide net benefits to local people, and the negative impacts of tourism on value chains and biodiversity are significantly reduced. The incremental reasoning for the project strategy is presented in **Table 21**, **Table 25**, **Table 27** and **Table 28**. The connections between the threats, root causes, barriers and intervention strategies have been identified through consultation and articulated in the Project Conceptual Model in **Figure 15**.

106. The **Project Objective** is: To promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods through innovative nature-based tourism solutions. To achieve this Objective, the project will implement four project Components with intervention pathways as shown in the Theory of Change (TOC) in Figure 16.

Theory of Change

107. The TOC outlines the problem the project is trying to address, and the causal logic that has informed the project design to ensure that the objective is achieved. The TOC summarizes the activities through which the project will achieve its intended outcomes, and longer-term impacts and global environmental benefits[129]. The TOC can be summarised as follows: in order to address the serious threats to biodiversity in Vietnam arising from unsustainable tourism trends and practices and nurture the potential of the emerging nature-based tourism segment, the project will mainstream biodiversity into the tourism sector by creating a standardized supportive national regulatory environment of relevant guidance, criteria and requirements that will subsequently be tested at the landscape level. Nature-based tourism will be developed through the expansion of biodiversity-friendly tourism products and services operating in concert with and benefiting high-value conservation areas in Khanh Hoa and Quang Tri provinces. Local communities will be better integrated into the tourism sector and trained to deliver nature-based tourism products and services so that they benefit from nature-based livelihoods, value biodiversity, and contribute to its conservation and monitoring. Raising awareness through a combination of training, marketing and promotion at all levels there will be a marked shift attitudes towards more sustainable behaviors and operations of tour operators and enterprises. The project embeds activities to

[129] GEF-STAP (2019) A Theory of Change Primer - a STAP document.

address persistent threats and challenges of uncontrolled development and mass tourism, pollution, destruction and disturbance of habitats and species from unsustainable tourism operations, unsustainable fishing and harvesting of marine products, poor integration of and benefits to local communities, and climate change, which will collectively help to prevent and mitigate threats to biodiversity from tourism development. The TOC also reflects lessons learned from international experience on sustainable tourism (see **Annex 26: Lessons learned**). The Theory of Change considerations includes the following pillars:

- Putting in place national policy requirements and enablers and both national and local capacity to support ecotourism development, leveraging and strengthening ties between tourism and biodiversity policies;
- Building the infrastructure and ecotourism products/experiences to provide a quality nature-based attraction for tourists aligned to and benefitting conservation priorities and enhancing revenue potential;
- Ensuring appropriate financial mechanisms in forest, marine, and wetland environments for tourism revenue collection and retention of funds for local biodiversity conservation, including an adopted concessions framework to stimulate private sector investment and public-private partnerships and government-agreed policy enabling on incentivizing private sector investment and the reinvestment of nature-based tourism revenues in biodiversity conservation and PA management; along with provision of diversified, resilient and attractive local livelihood opportunities to deter from unsustainable practices;
- Raising awareness of the link between biodiversity conservation, tourism development, and livelihoods through a combination of marketing, training and promotional activities.

108. The Theory of Change is based on four impact pathways: (i) Strengthened enabling framework and systemic guidelines for integrated nature-based tourism; (ii) Demonstration of improved conservation practices in concert with tourism development across different landscape types, improving management practices, reducing threats and enhancing local livelihoods; (iii) Triggering behavior change among key tourism value chain actors through engagement, sustained social marketing and advocacy; and (iv) Design and implementation of systems to ensure monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management and gender mainstreaming to facilitate upscaling and replication.

Impact Pathway 1: Strengthened enabling framework and systemic guidelines for integrated nature-based tourism

109. The first impact pathway will work on parsing out Vietnam's Tourism law and more recent Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 at finer level of granularity, by developing a singular set of guidelines, tools, criteria and monitoring frameworks to inform nature-based tourism conservation and also serve as a means for integration into provincial and PA planning processes to arrest biodiversity loss and species threats. It will help enhance information and capacities that would enable open and active dialogue across multiple stakeholder groups to build a common understanding of priorities and how to management in a coordinated manner, and areas of conflict that need to be resolved to further develop the nature-based tourism segment and wider tourism sector. It will also strengthen the capacity and skills of the PA agencies and managers, development planners and decision makers to enable development of appropriate nature-based tourism priorities, strategies and products, while facilitating both national and inter-provincial monitoring, surveillance and enforcement measures across similar metrics. Central to the first impact pathway is the establishment and operationalization of a BES Platform between MAE and partners on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services to share information, create opportunities for cooperation and coordinate action to promote effective conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including those which are relevant to tourism.

Impact Pathway 2: Demonstration of improved conservation practices in concert with tourism development across different landscape types, improving management practices, reducing threats and enhancing local livelihoods

110. This is the core pathway of the project, that will result in the generation of concrete environmental benefits on the ground through a shift away from the current unsustainable, uncoordinated and ill-informed tourism practices, towards sustainable nature-based alternatives, while avoiding the risk of an environmentally harmful alternative scenario involving the proliferation of current tourism models geared towards mass tourism and unchecked economic growth that continues to omit local communities and ethnic minorities from economic benefits. Practical ways of implementing integrated nature-based tourism with conservation objective will be

demonstrated to manage the ecological, social and economic inter-relationships to deliver positive synergies. In addition to expanding nature-friendly tourism products and services, the project will investigate options for introduction of innovative financial mechanisms to provide benefits to encourage local communities and ethnic minorities to invest in priority actions that are needed to conserve the high biodiversity areas at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks. To facilitate this process, the project will identify and test promising improved technical solutions and incentives to improving conservation, enhance community co-management of buffer zones and high-value protection forests, strengthen effectiveness of protected area management and incubate new small enterprises and financial solutions (including the expansion of PES to marine and wetland ecosystems). In turn, it is assumed this impact pathway will invigorate the nature-based tourism segment with new models and approaches from which to glean lessons and learnings to refine policy directions, guidelines and tools so these can be applied elsewhere.

Impact Pathway 3: Triggering behavior change among key tourism value chain actors through engagement, sustained social marketing and advocacy

111. Central to this impact pathway is to hasten behavior change across target audiences including tourists, the travel sector and local communities in support of reduction of tourism-related and other illegal wildlife threats and improving conservation outcomes. This will be achieved through the engagement of the private sector to encourage the implementation and adoption of more sustainable, biodiversity-friendly practices by tourism operators in high-value biodiversity areas that rely on a healthy ecosystem. Engagement of local communities and the provision of sustainable livelihood benefits through biodiversity-friendly nature-based tourism and other income generation activities. This will contribute to local level participation in the tourism sector, integration into the formal economy and ensuring benefits from sustainable management and conservation of these high biodiversity areas through community stewardship and more benign forms of tourism.

Impact Pathway 4: Design and implementation of systems to ensure monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management and gender mainstreaming to facilitate upscaling and replication

112. Implementation of the project will be guided by strong gender mainstreaming and stakeholder engagement, including vulnerable groups. Participatory monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management processes will be used to enable articulation of key project lessons and experiences, adaptive project management and inform stakeholders at all levels on the extent of impacts intended and achieved. This is particularly important because of the need to generate nature-based tourism models that can be applied in other jurisdictions. Ensuring the long-term economic sustainability of the local people will also require buy-in and commitment from all stakeholders to ensure that the impacts on high-value biodiversity areas and destinations with high nature-based tourism potential are managed with full consideration of the biological, social, and environmental aspects.

113. The key assumptions that have been made in the ToC and designing the project are detailed in **Table 19**. These include assumptions related to the willingness for existing stakeholder platforms and tourism actors to apply and support nature-based tourism as part of the GoV's vision and tourism strategy; a business-friendly operating environment which encourages investment; while a return to pre-COVID-19 levels of international tourism may be far off, that international and domestic tourism recovery from COVID-19 will be sufficient enough to support tourism enterprises' willingness to take on risks of investing in a relatively new and emerging tourism segment; wide benefit distribution in that project activities will sufficiently reach all communities and social groups, including women and ethnic minorities, as well as vulnerable and marginalised people; and stabilization of inflationary pressures observed during the PPG phase which can deter international travel due to rising prices. Given the project's emphasis on tourism, there are a number of COVID-19 linked assumptions underpinning the ToC, including assumptions about a "V" shaped recovery, normalization of international aviation and passenger traffic and return to growth that underpin the project objective. COVID-19 impacts on the tourism sector during the project preparation phase have been substantial, and while there are signs that the global tourism sector is reopening things could shift dynamically over coming months and years. Therefore, these COVID-19 related assumptions will be reassessed during the project inception phase and updated based on new information available at that time (see **Annex 25: Vietnam COVID-19 Analysis and Action Framework**).

114. The baseline situation, incremental reasoning, and global environmental benefits are summarized in **Section II Development Challenge**. The project Components, as the GEF project alternative, aim to remove the barriers

to achieving the project Objective (see Theory of Change in **Figure 16**, **Section II**, **Annexes 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles**; **Annex 16: Policy Baseline Analysis**; **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report**; and **Annex 21: Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services Baseline Analysis**, for more information on the barriers), and can be summarized as follows:

115. **Component 1: Enabling framework to harmonize tourism development with nature conservation**. This component will address the development challenges of: **(1)** a restrictive and fragmented policy and institutional framework that prevents harmonisation of biodiversity conservation and tourism development, and **(2)** a lack of technical tools, guidelines and methodologies to identify, plan, monitor compliance and report on nature-based tourism. The project will expand on Vietnam's national nature-based tourism strategy by addressing the gaps in the supporting detail by providing the necessary guidelines, criteria and requirements to undertake nature-based tourism sustainably, as well as establish operational policies that support innovative biodiversity financing solutions Vietnam's marine and wetland destinations, and develop guidelines and incentives encouraging public-private partnerships in tourism. It will review and provide input to emerging national policies, strategies and plans in order to mainstream biodiversity into tourism development, especially by reducing negative impacts on biodiversity by strengthening EIA and SEA requirements. Capacity building among key government agencies will ensure that the improvements are fully implemented and coordinated between key line ministries and departments. These activities will establish clear policy direction, an improved business-friendly environment encouraging private sector investment, a suite of validated guidelines, standards and tools integrating biodiversity criteria, and coherent, trained and well-resourced coordination systems, and a long-term enabling policy and coordination framework.

116. Building on Vietnam's tourism strategy, supporting guidelines, criteria and requirements, as well as private sector partnership guidelines and incentives will be developed under Component 1, a national tourism will be produced with special attention to the demonstration landscapes and other high-potential destinations, to integrate nature-based tourism, and addresses problems of mass tourism, uncontrolled development, pollution, unsustainable fishing and harvesting of products and enhancing local socioeconomic benefits, while addressing COVID-19 responses and recovery scenarios. Participatory processes will be applied to the development of the roadmap, while ensuring Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and equitable access by local communities, women, ethnic minorities and marginalised groups.

117. Component 2: Nature-based tourism partnerships benefitting communities, wildlife and habitats at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks. This component will simultaneously demonstrate and refine the guidelines, criteria, technical tools and requirements developed under Component 1 and the knowledge sharing and capacity building mechanisms of Component 3 at two national parks; Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP in Khanh Hoa province and Phong Nha-Ke Bang in Quang Tri province (see **Annex 2: Project Map and Geospatial Coordinates of the Project Area** and **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles**). It will achieve this by engaging local communities, private sector entities, protected area management, and local governments in integrated nature-based tourism development with an overarching purpose of reducing threats to globally significant biodiversity in the area. The component will address the development challenges of: (3) a weak private sector, poor vision and engagement of private sector that support biodiversity conservation; (4) inadequate financing mechanisms to transfer tourism revenues to conservation and inequitable distribution and flow of benefits; (5) underperforming natural tourism assets; and (6) additional pressures on biodiversity and tourism from unsustainable behaviors and from COVID-19.

118. This will be done by first establishing a provincial multi-sector tourism platform for each province working across the demonstration landscapes, to validate and fine-tune guidelines, tools, methodologies and technologies to the provincial context for national park authorities for enhanced planning. It will expand the suite of model nature-based products and services that enhance community livelihoods through wildlife and nature-based enterprise development within the project landscape. Community/women-owned enterprises will be established through a revolving fund and facilitating access to microcredit to diversity tourism and cultural offerings beyond those targeting international tourists. These actions will help develop resilient local livelihoods. It will also test and demonstrate the operation of public-private partnerships leveraging the guidance and incentives from Component 1 to spur investment and sustainable PA financing. The project is fundamental in protecting nature-based tourism assets by supporting interventions to reduce the threats to globally significant

biodiversity including flagship species by engaging stakeholders in participatory approaches to biodiversity conservation, monitoring and threat reduction, including the harnessing the power of citizen science and crowd sourcing of data. Finally, awareness raising and campaigns will be conducted on key biodiversity, conservation priorities, nature-based tourism offerings, and HWC management to improve management effective and threat reduction.

119. Visitor management and nature-based tourism plans will be developed to feed into and support implementation the roadmap under Component 1 at site level. National park authorities and new and existing nature-based tourism enterprises will collaborate and be supported with technical business training and guidance on the application of sustainable nature-based tourism business planning.

120. Component 2 will be implemented at landscape scale at two national parks, of which 145,414 ha is terrestrial and 7,352 ha marine. Best practices will be introduced in high-value biodiversity protection forest totaling 45,802 ha, including demonstration of some of the national mechanisms for the operationalization of the national tourism strategy advanced under Component 1 and provide field-tested findings and lessons that will then be fed back into Component 1 implementation for fine-tuning and policy development.

121. Collectively, Component 2 will generate intermediate outcome of strengthened public-private partnerships for nature-based tourism that enhance local livelihoods, increase PA revenue generation, improve tourism management, and reduce threats in PAs from poaching, illegal activities and related impacts. For Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bank national parks, the long-term outcome will be a competitive, inclusive and sustainable tourism destinations where biodiversity is conserved, financed and benefiting local people, and high-quality natural assets where tourism does not exceed carrying capacity in high-value biodiversity areas.

122. Component 3: Capacity building and behaviour change for acceptance of value of nature-based tourism and wildlife and biodiversity protection. While there are certainly some elements of capacity building in Component 2 (i.e. Output 2.4), this purpose-built component will support capacity building and training needs across Components 1, 2 and 4. Component 3 will be implemented at both national level and at landscape level within the two target PAs. It is designed to facilitate the adoption of more sustainable behaviors to enable nature-based tourism, reduce negative impacts to biodiversity from private sector operations and foster a deeper appreciation of conservation, biodiversity monitoring and wildlife protection across the travel and tourism sector. In particular, this Component will focus on ensuring behavior change among tourists, tour operators and among local communities and ethnic minorities to promote environmentally-friendly practices, as well as address the demand for wildlife and wildlife products and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. The component will address the development challenges of: (4) inadequate financing mechanisms to transfer tourism revenues to conservation and inequitable distribution and flow of benefits to livelihoods of local communities, ethnic minorities and women in tourism operations; (5) underperforming natural tourism assets (including destination management and site development) and insufficient community-based tourism operations and participation in the formal economy; and (6) additional pressures on biodiversity and tourism from unsustainable behaviors and from COVID-19.

123. Given the limitations of and weak capacity to manage industry-led measures to promote and support biodiversity conservation across the tourism sector, and limited voluntary mechanisms and codes of conduct to cultivate good corporate environmental stewardship by tourism businesses, the project will work towards the proliferation, adoption and implementation of existing and new standards and certification schemes and ensure private sector entities understand and internalize the business case in doing so. Finally, the project will pilot PPP and community engagement and incentive models developed under Component 1. In its entirety, Component 3 will generate intermediate outcome of a change in social norms and behavior promote society's acceptance of a more sustainable approach to nature-based tourism that protects wildlife. The benefits that will accrue longer-term are improved management and reduction of pervasive threats in high biodiversity tourism areas from misinformed tourists, tour operators and better integration and appreciation by local communities of the benefits of biodiversity and sustainable nature-based tourism.

124. **Component 4: Marketing, knowledge management and M&E.** This component is cross-cutting, supporting Components 1, 2 and 3 through a combination of information and knowledge management, marketing, awareness, gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation. Knowledge management and strategic communications are aimed at increasing learning and uptake of the project's experiences to increase the

adoption of sustainable tourism in other high-value biodiversity destinations in the country, and to bring livelihood and green recovery benefits to other communities living in and around high-value biodiversity areas. It will address the development challenges of: (4) inadequate financing mechanisms to transfer tourism revenues to conservation and inequitable distribution and flow of benefits to livelihoods of local communities, ethnic minorities and women in tourism operations; and (7) poor recognition of Vietnam as a premier nature-based tourism destination. Execution of a targeted marketing and promotion strategy will inform domestic and international tourists of the presence and benefit of the nature-based tourism operations, and capitalise on the post COVID-19 recovery to promote renewed interest in conservation and sustainability among consumers. A knowledge exchange platform will be established to share experiences from the project and upscale best practices. The intermediate outcome will be upscaling and replication of nature-based tourism models to other jurisdictions in Vietnam supported by effective marketing, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation of results. The long-term outcome will be improved understanding of multi-level success factors within Vietnam and models for replication across the ASEAN region.

125. The project components and outcomes are described in greater detail in the Results and Partnerships section **Section IV (Results and Partnerships)**, which also includes the outputs and related activities (see also **Annex 3** for the Multi-year work plan). Indicators and assumptions for the achievement of expected outcomes under each component are also described in the Project Results Framework **Section V (Project Results Framework)**.

Figure 16: Theory of Change

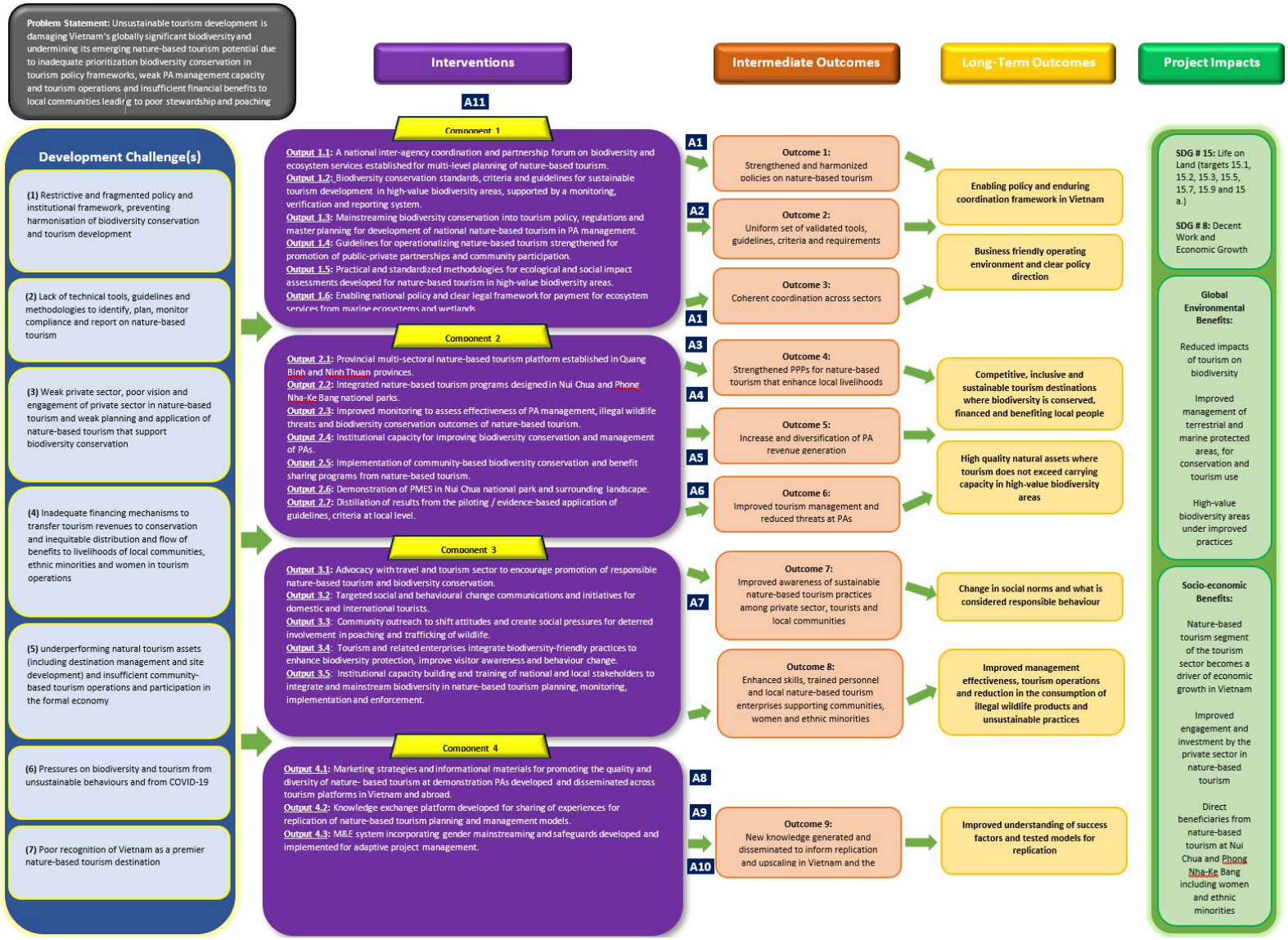


Table 19: Assumptions and Evidence for Project Theory of Change

Identifier	Assumption	Description
A1	There is political and institutional support for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism development, for improving coordination, and for reducing threats to biodiversity from the impacts of unsustainable tourism.	The PPG phase highlighted those roles and responsibilities for tourism planning, development and monitoring are spread across multiple agencies and Ministries and there is no effective mechanism to coordinate coherent policies specifically for the nature-based segment of the tourism sector (see **Annex 16: Policy Baseline Analysis**). This has impeded communication, coordination across agencies on fostering linkages on tourism that supports biodiversity conservation and more clarity on the details supporting Vietnam's Tourism Law and National Tourism Strategy in the past. According to Decision No. 149/2021/QD-TTg, action on Vietnam's NBSAP will be coordinated by MAE (previously MONRE) and it is currently, implementing a plan to set up a Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to promote the participation of stakeholders including government agencies, development partners, conservation NGOs, private partners to implement the goals of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and its NBSAP. While a partnership forum will be chaired by MAE to over many thematic areas, nature-based tourism is not represented as it is under studied, and there is insufficient knowledge, data and experiences despite recognition of its importance. During the PPG phase, the implementing partner MAE confirmed that it would play central role in spearheading a partnership forum on nature-based tourism and serve as key coordinating body with MOCST. MAE will work closely with MOCST to champion the nature-based tourism model at national level under the project.
A2	Testing and validation of nature-based tourism guidelines, standards, tools, criteria and requirements prior to their finalization and adoption into formal policy.	The nature-based tourism segment of the tourism sector is greenfield. There is currently little experience and standardization of guidelines and models due to insufficient quantifiable data and studies. There is an assumption that any nature-based tourism guidelines, standards, tools, criteria or requirements will have to be underpinned by rigorous due diligence and undergo testing before uniform recommendations on how to apply them in a harmonized manner throughout Vietnam can be made. Therefore, there is an assumption of key dependencies prior to any formal adoption and development of any national level policy.
A3	Existing coordination committees and platforms at provincial level are willing to support project activities, and integrate them among their existing functions.	State management of biodiversity conservation is shared between the MAE and the Provincial People's Committees (PPCs). There are overlaps and conflicts within these. PPCs and other natural resource management agencies are given incentives for economic development, but not for biodiversity conservation, which is considered an important obstacle to conservation and sustainable use. This means lack of systematic coordination between different agencies at the sub-national level involved in biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism development activities. There is an assumption that there will be little resistance to take up these issues as they relate to nature-based tourism and marrying tourism with conservation.
A4	Stakeholders are willing to accept the nature-based tourism as an approach.	With conventional mass tourism being the norm in Vietnam and principal driver of growth in the past, old habits may die hard unless the project can demonstrate nature-based tourism can have triple wins. The project will hone efforts on ensuring different stakeholders understand, appreciate and internalize the business case towards more sustainable alternatives and models of tourism.
A5	Financing mechanisms will support nature-based tourism products, enterprises and experiences,	This is a core assumption without which, local communities and ethnic minorities will continue to be marginalized and operate in the informal tourism economy. The project aims to resources from existing and newly established funds to support new nature-based tourism products and enterprises in the project landscape. These include a

Identifier	Assumption	Description
	especially among local communities and ethnic minorities.	revolving fund, support to access microcredit and PES in forest, marine and wetland landscapes. The project will support awareness raising of the resources and help eligible enterprises and entrepreneurs to apply, as well as encourage and incentivize private enterprises to absorb newly certified members of local communities surrounding the two national parks.
A6	Destinations embrace and adopt best practices in visitor management amidst COVID-19	Vietnam's popular natural destinations have suffered from environmental damage relating to over and unsustainable tourism, pollution and poor solid waste management. Vietnam's national tourism strategy and vision to 2030 aims to mobilize tourism in Vietnam according to five viewpoints (Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg), one of which is to hasten "sustainable and inclusive tourism development, on the basis of green growth, maximizing tourism's contribution to the United Nations' sustainable development goals; effectively manage and use natural resources, protect the environment and biodiversity, proactively adapt to climate change, and ensure national defense and security". This will require enhanced business intelligence and analytics across standard parameters. There may be reluctance to adopt this due to lack of experience and reluctance to take on new risks after COVID-19 decimated tourism flows. As part of the project's information technology investment a change management strategy will be developed to accelerate and enable implementation and adoption.
A7	Owners of existing standards, awards and certifications are willing to incorporate stronger biodiversity criteria.	Various tourism standards and certification systems operating in Vietnam and the project landscape address environmental issues, but several have weak biodiversity criteria (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report**). There has also been poor update of these standards across Vietnam. The project will work with owners of these standards and certifications, including the Green Lotus among others, to strength biodiversity indicators and targets within them. The project will also support application of the standards in the two project demonstration landscapes among nature-based tourism products and the broader private sector, also targeting tour operators' operations and value chains.
A8	Online blogs, e-magazines, travel agents and tour operators are willing and able to incorporate nature-based tourism products supported by the project	Online travel agents, blogs and magazines are predominantly used by international and domestic tourists globally, and in Vietnam, and increasingly dominate the way that people select and buy their trips[130]. With increasing emphasis amid COVID-19, some of these are creating mechanisms for tourists to select more sustainable trips, by highlighting accommodations or activities that are independently certified against a sustainable tourism standard. The project will ensure that a dedicated and seasoned communications consultant can act as a conduit and bridge between the products and standards developed through the project and what is presented to prospective customers online. As part of Component 4, the project will support nature-based tourism products to register with online travel agents and blogs that have the functionality to profile sustainable actors, and will help integrate them within local tour operator itineraries through familiarization trips.
A9	Domestic and international tourists are willing to pay for nature-based tourism experiences and will be drawn towards sustainable tourism standards and certification	Market intelligence from Euromonitor International and others suggests that traveler priorities will include sustainability in addition to health, social wellbeing and contributions to local priorities[131]. The project will capitalize on this demand through a targeted outreach and education campaign to mainstream biodiversity (Output 4.1).

[130] World Bank. (2019) Tourism and the sharing economy: Policy and potential of sustainable peer-to-peer accommodation

[131] Bremner, C. (2020) Travel and Tourism: Embracing Transformation to Move Beyond Coronavirus, Euromonitor International. Webinar, August 2020. Spenceley, A. (2020) COVID-19 and sustainable tourism: Information resources and links

Identifier	Assumption	Description
	schemes as opposed to conventional mass market products.	
A10	Stabilization and normalization of tourism numbers	While Vietnam fully re-opened its borders to tourists from March 15, 2022 as a return to pre-COVID-19 levels of international tourism may be far off, and the travel sector's short-term revival could depend on local tourism. Even with favorable tailwinds driven by domestic tourism, Vietnam will be dependent on international markets, which represents the lion's share of spending. There are still risks to the recovery from more contagious and virulent strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Inflationary pressures in 2022 have increased the price of travel, goods and services which could be a damper on Vietnam's ambitions of a full recovery and return to normal tourism growth.
A11	Effective project management	Successful delivery of the project Objective will depend on seasoned project management, including coordination of dependencies, continually working and motivating stakeholders to appreciate the bigger picture, ongoing monitoring of progress in delivery against result-based targets, regular evaluation through annual PIRs and the Midterm Review, and adaptive management. Future management of the project under the prospect of different COVID-19 scenarios will make it essential for the PMU to be able to leverage a mix of virtual measures and support from local execution partners if field travel is not possible. Deep experience in project management and coordination of multiple moving parts will be essential given the complexity of the project's scope. This is captured in both the implementation arrangements and the risk mitigation plan.

Alignment with GEF 7 Focal Area Strategy

126. The project aligns to GEF-7 biodiversity programming directions through BD-1-1 to mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors. It is also aligned to BD-2-7 in addressing direct drivers to protect habitats and species and improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate. Tourism is an identified priority sector for mainstreaming in the GEF-7 programming directions and a key sector impacting on biodiversity in Vietnam, with impacts likely to increase as visitation grows and as tourism is developed across more destinations.

127. More specifically, in terms of its alignment with GEF program BD-1-1, the project will support spatial planning of provincial tourism planning that identifies and recognizes natural tourism assets, promotes systemic change across the tourism sector in Vietnam (e.g. through capacity development, awareness-raising and development of technical tools and operational guidelines and leveraging frontier technologies for monitoring biodiversity). Information will become available for informed decisions regarding ecological carrying capacity, zoning and management of specific areas within the PAs for improved conservation, sustainable tourism development and low-impact visitation, including changing of existing tourism practices. This will ensure that development and operations are more sensitive to biodiversity needs, and develop and demonstrate financial incentives for the adoption of biodiversity-positive tourism development and operation. Through its focus on two national parks, the project will also support enhanced protected area management and financing through reducing potential threats of tourism to habitats, enhancing revenue from tourism operations and activities that can contribute to protected area management (and community management of high-value protection forests adjacent to park boundaries and buffer zones), and strengthening management capacity in the areas of visitor management and community engagement. Targeted and bespoke capacity building, training and incentives for tourism facilities and communities will help transition to nature-based activities, demonstrating the value of new business models that better integrate dimensions of environmental protection, human rights, gender mainstreaming and community engagement in the post-COVID-19 recovery.

128. In terms of the GEF program BD-2-7, the project will arrest the drivers of habitat and species loss, by honing efforts at species and habitat protection - using flagship species as a bell weather for wider conservation objectives - by promoting the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation (and threat reduction) into tourism development sectors. As part of this effort, the project will focus on improving and changing tourism practices to be more nature-friendly through capacity building, training and diversification of nature-based tourism products and services to change current mass tourism practices that degrade biodiversity and habitats. Without the GEF project, it is likely that there will be loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the protected areas that support tourism. The project will also establish community-private partnerships, thus, unlocking non-public sources of financing for nature-based tourism that benefit local communities, so as to provide alternative sources of incomes that replace illegal hunting and poaching, as well as act as an incentive for community engagement and stewardship for conservation. It will overall, strengthen policies for nature-based tourism development including viable livelihoods and job creation for local communities that will translate into individual and community incentives to protect wildlife, forests and PAs (in turn also providing a disincentive for unsustainable practices such as poaching, forest crime, or allowing unsustainable development in PAs).

Baseline Projects and Lesson Learned

129. The project builds upon a strong baseline of prior GEF investment in Vietnam including:

a) GEF-6 Mainstreaming Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Objectives into Socio-Economic Development Planning and Management of Biosphere Reserve in Vietnam, implemented by MONRE and supported by UNDP, which will provide a scalable model for mainstream biodiversity conservation and natural resources management objectives into governance, planning and management of socio-economic development and tourism in biosphere reserves (that can be applied to nature-based tourism development). The project is also relevant in helping inform the establishment of functional governance and coordination mechanisms to support dialogue, information flow and decision–making between provinces and national levels to facilitate integrated planning and management of biosphere reserves that will be of relevance for nature-based tourism governance structures at national and provincial levels. It also supports other activities that are extremely relevant to the GEF-7 project, namely the zoning of the reserves for

biodiversity conservation, natural resource use, tourism and livelihood activities, application of biodiversity impact monitoring, improved management effectiveness of PAs, law enforcement to address hunting and poaching and enforcement of infringements in PAs. The GEF-7 project is also expected to leverage and dovetail on its framework for small grant mechanisms to local communities for livelihood-based enterprise development, that would be beneficial for promotion of community-based ecotourism ventures, establishment of community-based revolving funds as a basis for ensuring sustainability and the promotion of responsible tourism through design of tourism certification programs, voluntary certification for hotels, guesthouses and tourism facilities and promotion of selected ecotourism products and services.

b) GEF-6 Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam, implemented by MONRE and supported by the World Bank, focuses on strengthen the legal and regulatory framework, and the related implementation capacity for the protection of threatened wildlife, and is relevant under the project's demand reduction component, includes activities to change behavior of key consumer groups for illegal wildlife products and raise industry awareness of the links between tourism and illegal wildlife trade (e.g. ivory purchase in Vietnam's under-the-radar markets by Chinese tourists). Efforts will be made to leverage and build on the project's advancements in law enforcement efforts, changes to the penal code and application of the national wildlife crime prevention strategy in order to reduce poaching, illicit wildlife trade and consumption of wildlife products, as well as deter tourists from actively or tacitly consuming or purchasing illegal wildlife products as exotic experience or souvenirs.

c) GEF-7 Sustainable Forest and Forest Land Management in Vietnam's Ba River basin landscape, implemented by the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) - now MAE, is relevant as it uses the tourism sector as one of its pilot sectors to promote a comprehensive and integrated approach to mainstream land, resource management, and biodiversity conservation into forest management. The project is expected to pay special attention to the manner in which the GEF-7 Ba River project is able to improve opportunities for community co-management of forests in commune lands, promotion of livelihood improvement programs and strengthening financial incentives to local communities through payment for forest ecosystem services. The latter is particularly important as the project explores ways to bridge PES to marine and wetland habitats. Tourism aspects such as developing tourism products associated with production process or traditional craft will be useful demonstration models on the real value of the handicraft products, as well as mechanisms to support for small-scale tourism enterprises,.

d) GEF-7, Integrated Sustainable Landscape Management in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, implemented by MAE (previously MONRE) and the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Environment - ISPAE (previously IPSARD), supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization provides a model for the development and use of an integrated monitoring and reporting platform and how to digitize pre-defined metrics and enable the collection of site-level geo-tagged data from value-chain actors and communities in real-time to enable the aggregation of periodic reports, updates, and information from myriad stakeholders and how to harvest related information for compliance against indicators and enhance decision-making. It will serve as a mechanism for learning on the integration of web-based tools and implementing a multi-layered dashboard to visualize the reported spatial and temporal data.

130. The project builds on other partner initiatives in Vietnam (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Annex 1** for an exhaustive list), including:

Table 20: Summary of Baseline Projects and National Initiatives

No.	Other Initiatives	Main Partners	Intersection With Project Outputs
1	MOCST Support the development and implementation of Viet Nam tourism development strategy for 2011-2020, vision to 2030, with focus on socially responsible policies	VNAT and ITDR	1.2, 1.5, 1.6; 2.5; 4.2

No.	Other Initiatives	Main Partners	Intersection With Project Outputs
2	French Development Agency (AFD) Rural infrastructure development and tourism project in Lao Cai Province	Provincial tourism department, Sa Pa City, Hoang Lien National Park	1.5; 2.2; 3.1-3.5; 4.2
3	DANIDA Nature-based tourism Development In and Around Protected Areas in Vietnam	WWF Vietnam, Nature Conservation Department and VNForest of MARD, Cat Tien National Park, Ta Lai Commune, Tan Phu District of Dong Nai Province	1.2, 1.4; 3.3; 4.2
4	USAID Biodiversity Conservation Activity - no longer available since 2025 due to US Government's funding cut	Provincial departments, and all Special Use Forests (SUFs) of five provinces (Quang Binh (now merged with Quang Tri), Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue (now Hue), Quang Nam (now Da Nang), and Lam Dong)	2.3, 2.4; 3.2, 3.3; 4.2
5	AUSAID Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT) Program	Provincial, District, Commune's women union and agriculture agencies of Son La and Lao Cai provinces (North-West of Vietnam)	4.2
6	EU Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme (ESRT)	MOCST , VNAT and Tourism universities, colleges and vocational training centers	1.3, 1.4; 2.2, 2.4; 3.1; 4.2
7	ADB Mekong Tourism Development Project (MTDP)	Provincial Departments of six provinces (Tay Ninh, Ha Tinh, Kien Giang, Lao Cai, Tay Ninh and Hanoi).	1.5; 3.1, 3.3; 4.2
8	Lux Dev-VIE/031 Strengthening of Human Resources in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector in Vietnam	Tourism colleges in nine provinces and cities: Hue, Danang, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City, Vung Tau, Dalat, Can Tho, Hanoi and Hai Phong.	3.1, 3.4

131. These baseline projects that the project will build on and coordinate with are described in more detail in **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Annex 1**. A key initiative among these is the USAID Biodiversity Conservation and Demand Reduction Program being implemented by WWF. WWF is working to strengthen PA management effectiveness and financing in Vietnam with site-based interventions on SMART patrolling and nature-based tourism development, offering excellent opportunities for partnership. It's important to note that the USAID Biodiversity Conservation Activity, originally planned for 2021–2026, has been significantly affected by the deep USAID budget cuts and restructuring announced in early 2025. While the activity was designed to run through 2026, the broader termination and freezing of USAID climate and biodiversity awards worldwide have placed its continued implementation in Viet Nam at serious risk, and parts of the programme are likely being scaled back or wound down earlier than planned. Also relevant for the project, is building on the successes achieved by the EU funded Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme to promote the delivery of environmentally and socially responsible tourism services as part of Vietnam's tourism sector strategy The baseline activities and partner initiatives have been reviewed in detail during the PPG phase and used to inform development of the activities of this project so that active projects are closely integrated and mutually reinforcing.

132. The project is aligned with the *GEF White Paper on a GEF COVID-19 response strategy*[132], which highlights opportunities to effect change including establishing better models of tourism that support nature conservation, are less reliant on long-distance travel; and exploring innovative financial mechanisms to

[132] GEF/C.59/Inf.14, November 17 , 2020 at: https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/white-paper-gef-covid-19-response-strategy

buffer economic impacts of the pandemic. Ways that the project will address these include by: (1) developing more resilient domestic tourism and models for supporting nature conservation that are less reliant on long-distance tourism; (2) establishing nature-based tourism products and experiences as a form of tourism that can still be enjoyed while socially distancing and is based on, and contributes to, biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods; and (3) by promoting these products and experiences to domestic markets through online blogs, travel agents, on social media, and local tour operators, as well as through virtual experiences.

IV. RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Expected Results:

133. The baseline scenario (without GEF Intervention), along with current threats and barriers are described in **Section II (Development Challenge)**. The Project Objective, Strategy, and Theory of Change, project alternative (with GEF Intervention) and Outcomes are described in **Section III (Strategy)**.

134. To ensure achievement of the Project Objective and Outcomes, the project will deliver Outputs organized within four complementary and interconnected components[133].

Component 1: Enabling framework to harmonize tourism development with nature conservation
Component 2: Nature-based tourism partnerships benefitting communities, wildlife and habitats at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks
Component 3: Capacity building and behavior change for acceptance of value of nature-based tourism and wildlife and biodiversity protection
Component 4: Marketing, knowledge management and M&E

Component 1: Enabling framework to harmonize tourism development with nature conservation

135. Taken together, this component will create a supportive environment through an integrated set of harmonized policies and regulations needed for the responsible diversification and sustainable growth of the tourism sector, and specifically the nature-based tourism segment. It will entail enabling the transition towards more conservation and biodiversity-oriented tourism, by strengthening the institutional and policy framework to mainstream biodiversity conservation with tourism development. The six corresponding Outputs under Component 1 are designed collectively to ensure that the framework developed is, at least, compliant with UNDP SES. The intended results of developing such a UNDP SES-compliant framework include: the establishment of the necessary regulatory conditions and policies for responsible tourism growth to flourish, environmental conservation and social well-being to be mutually reinforcing - with green tourism creating new, green jobs -, accelerating investment opportunities and partnerships with the private sector, and supporting the local economy by reducing poverty.

Total Cost: $ 20,686,207**; GEF project grant requested:** $1,674,387**; Co-financing:** $ 19,011,820

Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policy, regulatory and incentive framework for promotion of nature-based tourism while reducing threats to wildlife and habitats.

Table 21: Incremental Cost Reasoning – Component 1

Summary of baseline situation	Incremental reasoning	Global Environmental Benefits
Component 1: Creation of an enabling framework to harmonize tourism development with nature conservation		
There is a lack of coordination and insufficient focus on sectoral mainstreaming within the Government's tourism strategy, to support biodiversity conservation, particularly in protected areas, and a lack of understanding of how to improve the flow of conservation benefits of tourism, including the preservation and promotion of heritage values. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity requires the participation of many stakeholders, but so far there is no mechanism to mobilize the participation and contributions of stakeholders including key agencies: government, private and development partners and NGOs, as well as local	The GEF investment will establish nature-based tourism as a new emerging segment of the tourism sector in Vietnam to help arrest unsustainable tourism and unlock financial benefits from tourism to local communities. A long-term roadmap and strategy for nature-based tourism will be established and multi-sector engagement and capacity development will help mainstream the nature-based tourism concept across government.	Reduced impacts on national tourism industry on biodiversity assets – including PAs, critical marine habitats such as coral reefs and terrestrial ecosystems such as arid and tropical evergreen limestone forest, and globally threatened species present in tourism areas A framework of financial mechanisms and incentives for funding biodiversity conservation from the tourism sector from marine habitats, wetlands and forest ecosystems, benefiting PA management and species conservation Increased support for biodiversity conservation within the tourism

[133] These components correspond to the strategic approaches to the project and align to the main impact pathways described in Section III of the PRODOC and illustrated in the TOC diagram in **Figure 16**.

Summary of baseline situation	Incremental reasoning	Global Environmental Benefits
communities. Specifically: In Decision 149/2021/QD-TTg , approving the National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2030, with a vision to 2050, the Prime Minister has assigned MONRE (now MAE) to establish a partnership forum between it and relevant organizations on biodiversity and ecosystem services to share information, create opportunities for cooperation and coordination to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Currently, MAE is developing and implementing a plan to establish a platform to promote the participation of stakeholders including government agencies, development partners, NGOs, private partners to realize the goals of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Vietnam's NBSAP. While nature-based tourism is a key pillar to the Government's vision, it has not been studied enough to become a focal area of the forum; Article 1 (Paragraph 9) of Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg calls for the renewal of inter-sectoral and inter-regional coordination in tourism, improve the operational efficiency of the State Steering Committee on Tourism and the Provincial Steering Committee for Tourism Development. Article 2 (Paragraphs 10 and 11) of the same decision calls for enhanced coordination between MOCST and MAE in researching and formulating mechanisms and policies for the development of eco-tourism and community-based tourism in national parks and nature reserves. Management of nature conservation and biodiversity is still fragmented, lacks coordination and suffers from poor cooperation. Sub-committees have been established under Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg, including inter-ministerial and inter-provincial coordination mechanisms, but these are not effective and have yet to prioritize the integration of biodiversity into the tourism sector. Without intervention, there is a risk of further negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems if tourism expansion and development is not planned and implemented in a sustainable fashion that respects ecological limits and needs.	According to Decision No. 149/2021/QD-TTg, NBSAP will be organized and coordinated by MAE without establishing a National NBSAP Steering Committee. A national BES platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services is being established by MAE, in coordination with relevant partners, as a mechanism for the parties to share information, coordinate to improve the efficiency of resource use, consult on policies, strengthen capacity, promote initiatives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The BES platform will create a shared vision and mode or collaboration among science, policy and practice communities for sustainable conservation and management. There are many thematic areas envisioned in this forum, and the project will ensure inclusion of topics/thematic areas about nature-based tourism to be explored by a sub-committee of the forum. Decision making will be better informed though policy analysis on areas for strengthening policy to support nature-based tourism as well as the mainstreaming of biodiversity into other forms of tourism, and application of Natural Capital Assessment and/or Payment for Ecosystem services approaches (Output 1.1). The project will develop and validate biodiversity conservation standards, including criteria and guidelines for accommodation sustainable tourism development, management and operations in high-value biodiversity areas developed and adopted, supported by a monitoring, verification and reporting system adapting internationally-recognized visitor management and assessment tools for protected areas tailored to Vietnamese conditions (Output 1.2), as well as chart a roadmap for ecologically sustainable nature-based tourism under the overall framework of Vietnam's tourism development strategy (Output 1.3). Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment standards and guidelines will be revisited from the perspective	industry through increased capacity development and integration of biodiversity into tourism industry standards, guidelines and criteria that can be monitored innovatively and intuitively

Summary of baseline situation	Incremental reasoning	Global Environmental Benefits
Ecotourism is captured in Vietnam's tourism strategy but has not been successfully operationalized due to lack of clear understanding of key definitions, vague and overlapping agency responsibilities, and lack of practical and agreed technical guidelines, standards and criteria for how to develop and operate tourism in a nature-friendly manner. International advances in visitor management planning, carrying capacity, zoning and economic assessment of protected area visitation have not yet been applied in Vietnam. Developing national guidelines, standards and criteria for sustainable tourism development and operations in high-value biodiversity areas, digitizing them and applying them in the project landscape (in Component 2), will ensure that the country is utilising the most innovative approaches and tools available, and is also able to adjust its compliance to national requirements based on performance against agreed metrics. Without the project there is a risk that biodiversity in tourism destinations will continue to deteriorate. Limited national experience and lack of a national engagement strategy and policy, has led to poor involvement from the private sector and inadequate community participation in nature-based tourism activities promoting biodiversity conservation, as well as insufficient benefit realization from tourism revenues. Due to the robust demand, a range of tourism experiences, from mass uncontrolled tourism to small-scale community-based ecotourism are place at PAs and tourism sites, although no national enabling policy and standards are in place to guide them or put in place controls to minimize impacts and ensure benefits are shared with local communities. Furthermore, while there has been a proliferation of hotels and accommodation to keep pace with visitor numbers, the majority of hotels are ranked on the low standard levels in Vietnam and are under domestic private ownership with little understanding of and capacity to adopt tourism label schemes, such as the Green Lotus Label among others, and there is no certification or label	of biodiversity, wildlife and cultural considerations (Output 1.5). These will allow the new national park authorities to operationalize visitor management practices that reduce over-tourism, ensure that development planning minimizes negative impacts on biodiversity, and improve the quality of experience for tourists. The GEF investment will establish guidelines and model biodiversity / wildlife / community development criteria to underpin and standardize nature-based tourism certifications for private sector enterprises and service industry in the tourism sector. The project will also develop guidelines for operationalizing nature-based tourism for the promotion of public-private partnerships in nature-based tourism; and community participation and benefit sharing from nature-based tourism that ensure biodiversity conservation improvement to inform a clear policy (Output 1.4). An enabling national policy and clear legal framework for the promotion and application of payment for ecosystem services from marine ecosystems and wetlands will be explored and tested to inform decision makers on new mechanism to raise funds for biodiversity conservation (Output 1.6). These will broaden the range of financial incentives and solutions that enhance local financing for biodiversity conservation.	

Summary of baseline situation	Incremental reasoning	Global Environmental Benefits
relating to ecotourism qualities for hotels, resorts and guest houses below 3 stars. The poor status of tourism service infrastructure reduces competitiveness, overall visitor experience and impacts on nature.		

136. The key deliverables under Outcome 1 are:

Output 1.1: An effective national BES platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services established for multi-level planning on nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to support the effective coordination and implementation of the NBSAP, tourism law and national tourism strategies.

137. A supportive legislative and regulatory landscape is the cornerstone in transforming Vietnam into a more competitive and sought-after sustainable tourism destination. Currently, there are minimal nature-based tourism activities or plans under relevant Decisions[134] and there is insufficient systemic coordination and mainstreaming within Government on nature-based tourism strategies that also support biodiversity conservation, particularly in high-value biodiversity and protected areas, and insufficient understanding of how to enable the flow of conservation and financial benefits from tourism. MAE (previously MONRE) has been tasked by the Prime Minister under Decision 149/2021/QD-TTg, with establishing a partnership forum between it and relevant organizations on biodiversity and ecosystem services to share information, create opportunities for cooperation and coordination to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Currently, MAE is developing and implementing a plan to establish a platform to promote the participation of stakeholders including government agencies, development partners, NGOs (both national and international), private partners to realize the goals of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Vietnam's NBSAP. While nature-based tourism is a key pillar to the Government's vision, it has not been studied enough to become a focal area of the forum. Without the intervention, there is a risk of expansion of the status quo with further negative impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity and the conservations status of wildlife in Vietnam, including key flagship species, if tourism growth and development is not planned and implemented in a sustainable fashion that respects ecological limits, carrying capacity, zoning restrictions and local needs.

138. Vietnam was recently selected as a priority target country under the BES-Net II project to 'create a shared vision and mode or collaboration among science, policy and practice communities for sustainable BES conservation and management in target countries'. BES-Net II aims strategically to strengthen the interface and partnership between 'policy', 'science' and 'practice', and promote the harmonized implementation of National Ecosystem Assessment. As part of this output, a new sub-group on nature-based tourism will be formed under the forthcoming BES platform for information exchange and dialogue between policy, science, and practice promote joint efforts to protect, maintain, and improve biodiversity and key ecosystem services in Vietnam, to press forward with this important pillar of work to advance objectives of improving conservation outcomes in tourism policy and planning, especially as it applies to high-value biodiversity destinations, and to ensure a coordinated effort across government and the alignment of sector strategies and policies. By leveraging existing governance structures, this will provide a cross-government mechanism to support the development and adoption of biodiversity friendly economic development and nature-based tourism policies and approaches. This group is expected to consist of MAE, other ministries and competent authorities on environmental matters, development partners, NGOs and the private sector.

139. The intent of this platform is to bring together a range of key stakeholders and sectors to facilitate and support common dialogue and collaborative cross-sectoral decisions relating to the harmonization and better integration of biodiversity conservation, nature-tourism development and social-economic development to increase community livelihoods, especially in high-value biodiversity areas. It will facilitate MAE's efforts to strengthen cross-sectoral planning functions within and across agencies to enable more effective technical guidance for project implementation, advocacy for creation of awareness and support

[134] (1) Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg on Approving the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030; (2) Decision No.450/2022/TTg on National Environmental Protection Strategy to 2030, vision to 2050; (3) Decision No. 149/2022/QD-TTg on National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2030, vision to 2050; (5) Decision No. 523/2021/QD-TTg on Approving the Vietnam forestry development strategy for the period of 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050. See also **Annex 16: Policy baseline analysis**.

for biodiversity-friendly socio-economic and nature-based tourism development and define the roles and responsibilities of key sector institutions (including MAE, MOCST, Provincial governments and provincial specialized agencies such as DAEs DOCST/or DOT, and commune governments, etc.) to ensure a coordinated approach to promotion of biodiversity conservation outcomes.

140. When required, it will include and solicit the input and participation of the various stakeholders, including private sector. Representatives of the hotel sector (large chains, local hotels and tour operators) and of other related tourism services will participate in the generation of inputs as well as recommendations to harmonize planning measures with the economy and development of Vietnam and to better integrate biodiversity conservation objectives in the tourism strategy. The Project Management Unit will serve as the primary interface and liaison between the platforms at national and provincial levels.

141. Indicative activities under Output 1.1 include:

1.1.1 Assessment of the current state of existing committees established, as well as requirements to support the BES platform, including the issue of nature-based tourism, and validation of platform model. This will be undertaken during the project's inception phase within the first 60 days of operations.

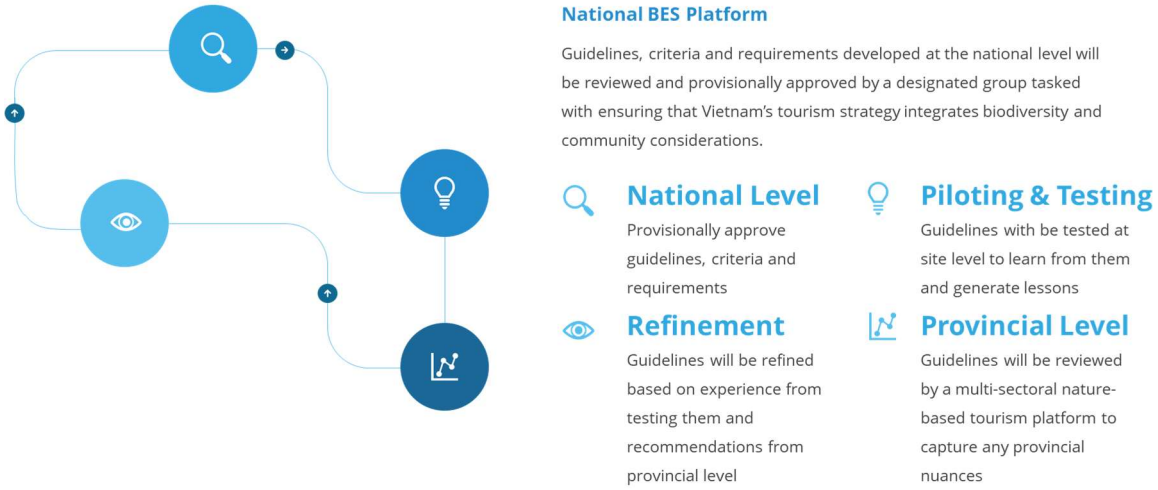
1.1.2 Support the formalization and operationalization of the BES platform with a focus on thematic area of nature-based tourism, including (i) agreeing on its mandate and scope; (ii) identification and confirmation of line agencies and other entities to participate in the platform; (iii) assembling / convening the platform; and (iv) validation and adoption of its Terms of Reference to integrate nature-based tourism.

1.1.3 Formalize and operationalize the communication function and prepare documents for meetings during the operation of the Platform for 3 years.

1.1.4 Augment the 3-year action plan of the Platform to integrate the thematic area of nature-based tourism.

1.1.5 Support the operationalization, transition and sustainability of the national BES platform. This will also entail a comprehensive review of its effectiveness, mandate, value added to nature-based tourism and transition plan post-project upon its operational closure.

Figure 17: Coordination Mechanism Between National and Provincial Platforms



Output 1.2: Biodiversity conservation standards, criteria and guidelines for sustainable tourism development, management and operations in high-value biodiversity areas developed and adopted, supported by a monitoring, verification and reporting system.

142. Sustainability of tourism development in protected areas relies largely on the ability of destination management to harmonize the activities of visitors, local communities, entrepreneurs and other tourism actors with the primary aim of nature and landscape protection. In the current state, tourism development is skewed towards quantity and volume of tourists rather than the quality of tourism assets and the high

growth of the tourism sector has not been sufficiently aligned with carrying capacity[135] and has been maintained by the destruction of the natural environment for the fast construction of the resort and hospitality system (see **Section II Development Challenge)**, and **Annex 16: Policy Baseline Analysis; Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Report; and Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report).** An accurate evaluation of the tourism sector and nature-based tourism segment, therefore, necessarily involves aspects related to productive activities (production of goods and services for tourists), the construction and management of tourist facilities (hospitality and leisure structures, management of mobility), consumption of resources (energy consumption, water consumption and wastewater treatment, waste management) and the effects of tourism activities on the quality of life of the local community (availability of services, crowding, pollution)[136]. If managed in a responsible and sustainable way, tourism can be a motivating force for the conservation of landscapes, species and local heritage; on the other hand, if the strategy adopted for tourism development has the sole aim of getting large and immediate economic results through the uncontrolled growth of the tourist flow, it will lead to a rapid exploitation of the destination, which, after a short period, will become spoilt and no longer attractive.

143. While the global COVID-19 pandemic has reduced foreign tourism demand in many popular destinations, domestic visitor pressures have increased in many rural and natural areas, to cater to pent-up outdoor recreation demands as viral cases decrease. Increasing tourism intensity in many areas as well as ever-changing visitor demands and behavior patterns require planning and temporal and spatial zoning to implement and enforce limits of acceptable use.

144. This Output will enable better assessment of tourism carrying capacity and alignment of load limits for high-visitation and high-biodiversity sites, providing information that will guide where tourism activities need to be subject to stricter control measures and where nature-based tourism development must be compatible with conservation objectives. Spatial analysis and carrying capacity assessments will be developed through technical studies and practical tools for creating and establishing more rational management principles and zoning requirements (to be included in a sustainable tourism plan) within PAs. These will also address how marine and wetland ecosystems are and should be used, considering the demand that this sector is generating at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park. The participation of representatives of the tourism sector will be of great importance for the development of the spatial analysis and the carrying capacity assessments. Visitor management requirements for COVID-19 safety protocols (e.g. social distancing and visitor tracking) will also be integrated and monitored to avoid over-promotion of popular sites.

145. In addition to ensuring that standards, criteria and guidelines for sustainable tourism development are effective, this project will promote environmentally and socially sustainable practices within the organizations that are responsible for the implementation of the policies designed under the project. The various activities under Output 3.5 that involve training, monitoring and evaluation will all be focussed on ensuring that staff within the relevant organizations are informed on the UNDP SES and will disseminate/assess the implementation of the requirement that all policies developed under this project must, at least, be UNDP SES-compliant.

Table 22: A Conceptual Analysis of Approaches to Protected Area Carrying Capacity[137]

Concept / Criteria	Tourism Carrying Capacity Model	Limits of Acceptable Change Model	Visitation Optimization Model	Systems Approach to Tourism Model
Objective	Determine the limits of destination use on the basis of the professionally assessed regenerative capacity of the destination's	Determine the limits of destination use while considering the needs of stakeholders by setting the	Determine the optimal use of destination resources with regards to the needs of stakeholders. The	Approach the destination as a complex, open and adaptive system and capture the key processes in the

[135] From an ecological perspective, carrying capacity is "the maximum number of individuals of a given species that a given habitat can support without being permanently damaged"

[136] Castellani, Valentina & Sala, Serenella (2012). Carrying Capacity of Tourism System: Assessment of Environmental and Management Constraints Towards Sustainability. 10.

[137] Castellani, Valentina & Sala, Serenella. (2012). Carrying Capacity of Tourism System: Assessment of Environmental and Management Constraints Towards Sustainability. 10.

Concept / Criteria	Tourism Carrying Capacity Model	Limits of Acceptable Change Model	Visitation Optimization Model	Systems Approach to Tourism Model
	ecosystems and social system.	acceptable level of adverse changes.	target optimum is a compromise between minimizing risks (sub-optimal visitation) and maximizing benefits in the long run.	destination including the links between tourism, nature and stakeholders for analytical and managerial purposes, considering both positive and negative feedbacks, mutual influences between variables and the acceptability of professionally determined limits of the regenerative capacity.
Theoretical foundations	Correlations between the intensity and type of influence on primary destination resources (formerly natural resources) and their consequences in long run. Based on the population theory, limits of use and carrying capacity in farming, urbanism, economy etc.	Social exchange theory-based consensus on the limits of destination resource uses.	Integrated approach to tourism management with focusing on participatory research and long-term monitoring of a set of indicators. Based on motivation heuristics and optimization theory.	Dynamic optimum inferred from recognizable impacts of tourism on the primary destination sources, interpreted through their acceptability to stakeholders over the course of the destination life cycle. Based on reconceptualized tourist carrying capacity systems theory, system dynamics, population dynamics, qualitative modelling, operations research and social dynamics.
Applicability in destination management	Tourism intensity dimensioning (mainly through the type and capacity of the destination	Tourism intensity dimensioning (mainly through the type and capacity of the	Continuous tourism intensity dimensioning towards the visitation	Continuous information support for evidence-based proactive

Concept / Criteria	Tourism Carrying Capacity Model	Limits of Acceptable Change Model	Visitation Optimization Model	Systems Approach to Tourism Model
	infrastructure) so that primary destination resources are protected.	destination infrastructure) to protect needs or interests of key stakeholders.	optimum using key performance indicators negotiated by stakeholders, leading to results acceptable for most actors.	participative destination management, allowing predictive analysis and visualizations, leading to comprehensive planning, fast and integrated decision-making and strategy implementation. Potential to augment self-regulatory mechanisms by influencing flows, behaviors, preferences and motivation of visitors.
Key methods	Longitudinal monitoring of sets of potentially correlated variables (determined by experts), determination of a threshold value under given conditions, bottleneck monitoring and analysis.	Participative negotiation and knowledge-collection methods (Delphi method, focus groups, brainstorming), monitoring and data collection, participatory research, stakeholder analysis.	Participatory management as a collaborative visitor management frame utilizing a continuous process of (key performance indicators (KPIs) negotiation as a way of compromise seeking and mutual learning among stakeholders.	Participatory research, stakeholder analysis, knowledge management, systems analysis, sensor-based monitoring, big data collection, processing and analysis, multivariate statistics, systems of differential equations, convolutional networks and related artificial intelligence approaches, data and systems integration, systems engineering, sensitivity analysis, scenario simulation, specific modelling methods related

Concept / Criteria	Tourism Carrying Capacity Model	Limits of Acceptable Change Model	Visitation Optimization Model	Systems Approach to Tourism Model
				to the selected type of model
Philosophy	Absolutist, deterministic.	Idiographic, relativistic, deterministic.	Idiographic, relativistic, usually deterministic.	Holistic (organic), rather idiographic though general (nomothetic) principles may be involved; relativistic, but can be probabilistic (stochastic).
Independent variables	The number of visitors per unit may be measured by a variety of methods.	Visitation, which may involve also visitor characteristics.	Visitation, which may involve also visitor characteristics.	A multitude of input variables including visitation data (either independent variables or factors) is chosen according to data availability, the managerial goal or the purpose of the analysis.
Dependent variables	Consumption of the given destination resource (or a negative impact on the resource) resulting from visitation, regardless of stakeholder.	The adverse impact of resource depletion resulting from visitation on stakeholders (or perception of the impact by stakeholders).	Both positive and negative impacts of visitation on stakeholders (or perception of the impact by stakeholders) reflected in a negotiated set of KPIs covering economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects	The overall state of the system represented in numerous variables. A specific dependent variable may be determined by the managerial goal or the purpose of the analysis, such as risks (impacts) or benefits for stakeholders.
Complexity level	Just a correlation (with implied causation) between the independent variable and one or more dependent variables). "Dimensions": parameters are typically not included or the level of parameterization is very low	Low level of mathematical sophistication.	May be implemented with moderate complexity with some level of parameterization, depending on how the negotiation process defines KPIs	Typically highly complex, composed of a multitude of elements (geographical, organisational, functional), variables (both measured and calculated, categorical or

Concept / Criteria	Tourism Carrying Capacity Model	Limits of Acceptable Change Model	Visitation Optimization Model	Systems Approach to Tourism Model
				qualitative, typically in the form of time series data) and relations between them, reflecting different semantic layers (including TCC dimensions), the spatial structure of the destination, its multiple stakeholders and temporal transformations of the whole system; allows a high level of parameterization.
The main drawbacks or challenges	Factors of importance are omitted from the model.	Deals only with the negative effects of tourism.	Difficulties in the KPI negotiations because of the lack of data and understanding about the destination system behavior.	Relevant theory is emerging and must undergo more scrutiny by experts. Relevant methods and approaches are yet to be evaluated systematically. Implementation requires extensive use of technology. Data and resources intensive, systems analysis and subsequent implementation, as well as maintenance, may be demanding, thus costly.

146. Responsible visitor management in a protected area strives for an evidence-based approach for determining the optimal intensity and form of tourism while considering the balance of economic, ecological and socio-cultural aspects, including the experience of visitors. The overall aim is to construct a comprehensive destination model which can be embedded into a decision-support system for visitor management. Testing of the proposed system, derived through an inductive process. Based on the requirements, criteria and guidelines established, a standardized national monitoring, verification and reporting system for tourism in high biodiversity areas to monitor compliance will be developed on the basis of the adopted standards and load limits (for demonstration at PAs under Component 2, Output 2.7).

Figure 18: Systemic Visitor Management; Areas in Which Implementation of the Destination Model May Bring the Highest Added Value (Highlighted)

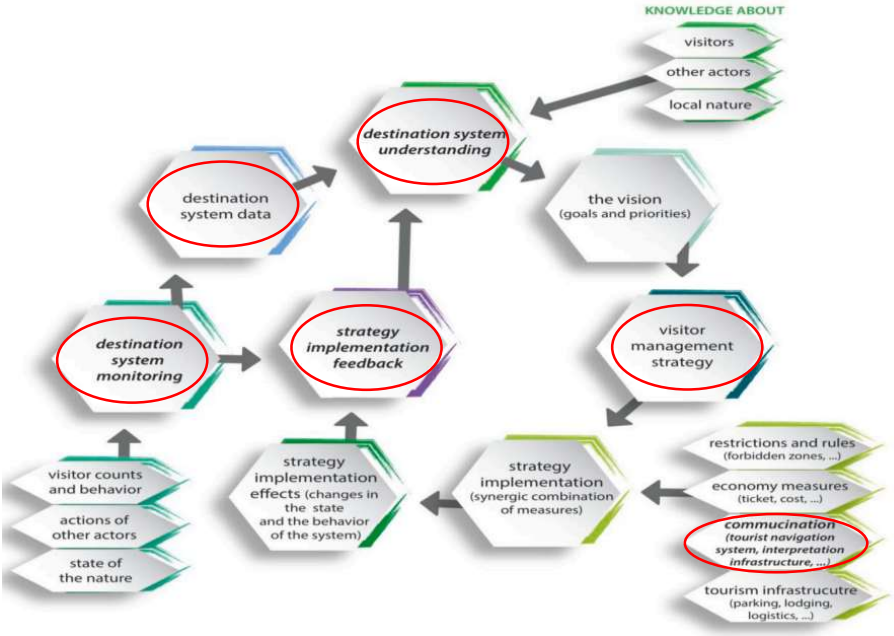


Figure 19: Carrying Capacity Extension Potential Through Improvement of Visitor Management

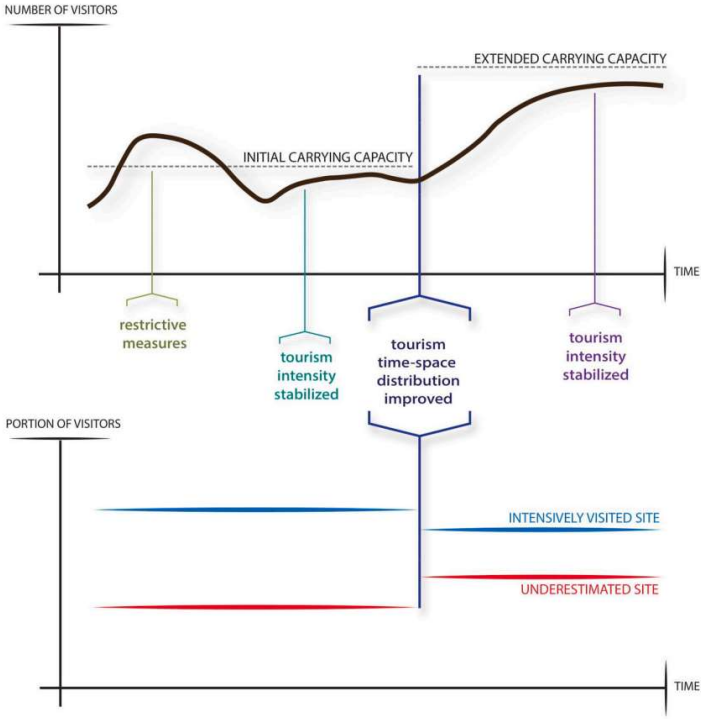


Figure 20: Indicative Visitor Uses in Protected Areas

Type of visitor	Type of visitor use	IUCN Protected Area Categories					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Volunteers (officially recognized and supported)	Firefighters and search and rescue personnel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Historic site maintenance and restoration		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Walking track maintenance		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Introduced plant removal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Fauna protection such as seasonal bird nesting site protection surveillance	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Visitor service support such as volunteer campground wardens or guides		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Researchers, such as those conducting a biodiversity assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Researchers (officially permitted)	All aspects of natural heritage research including baseline condition measurement, trends in condition and ecosystem processes, and social and cultural heritage research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Commercial users (officially permitted)	Nature-based filmmakers		✓			✓	✓
	Visitor access services including pack animals, bicycle taxi, bus, aircraft, motor launch, snowmobile, and others		✓			✓	✓
Tourists and recreationists (sustainable use)	Education-focused visitors		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Car-based sightseers, cycling, photography, painting		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Picnicking, walking, bushwalking, camping		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Nature study and cultural awareness		✓			✓	✓
	Orienteering, cross-country running		✓			✓	✓
	Use of official horse riding, mountain biking, four-wheel drive, and motorcycle routes		✓			✓	✓
	Sustainable use (such as management-approved hunting in private protected areas and fishing)						✓
	Approved non-powered flight hang gliding, paragliding, hot-air ballooning		✓			✓	✓
	Water-based activities, fishing, swimming, sunbaking, canoeing, boating, sailing, white-water rafting		✓			✓	✓
	Snow and ice-based skiers, snowboarders, ice climbers		✓			✓	✓
	Mountaineering and caving		✓	✓		✓	✓
Spiritual and cultural users (officially endorsed and supported)	Formal access and protected areas for spiritual, ceremonial, and cultural reasons such as traditional access routes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Commemorative users (officially endorsed and supported)	Access to protected areas for commemorative purposes such as visitors returning to site of cultural significance within a protected area		✓	✓		✓	✓

Source: World Bank. 2020. Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism. World Bank, Washington, DC

147. Indicative activities under Output 1.2 include:

1.2.1 Assess and develop national carrying capacity guidelines for PAs and high-value biodiversity areas and at designated national tourism areas, including spatial analysis and carrying capacity assessment.

1.2.2 Impact assessment of tourism activities on wildlife, biodiversity and natural heritage to propose suitable nature-based tourism solutions and development of criteria for determining sustainable nature-based tourism products and services in the PAs and in high-value biodiversity areas.

1.2.3 Develop biodiversity conservation impact management and monitoring framework for tourism in high-value biodiversity areas[138,139,140] to underpin the monitoring of compliance against guidelines and criteria. This will integrate the requirements, criteria and KPIs and inform the design and development of the information system / dashboard.

1.2.4 Review national tourism area planning and propose visitor management criteria and guidelines and operational mechanisms such as landscape zoning and protection of high-value biodiversity habitats and tourism areas in PAs and in designated national tourism and heritage areas.

This will include (i) initial endorsement of criteria and guidelines by the BES platform; (ii) dissemination of guidelines and making them available to key stakeholders in digital format(s); (iii) leverage guidelines for the development of capacity and training modules (to be used as part of Output 3.5) and supporting awareness materials; (iv) integration of criteria and guidelines into the tourism impact management, monitoring, compliance and reporting information system; and (v) once guidelines have been tested and refined as part of wider piloting at the landscape level under Component 2, their formalization will be supported through the enactment of appropriate Laws/Decrees/Decisions/Circulars at national level.

1.2.5 Design and develop a comprehensive information system / dashboard for monitoring, compliance and reporting of tourism operations at NPs/PAs (to be piloted as in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang NPs under Component 2) against national requirements.

This will include: (i) eliciting of and definition of requirements in a comprehensive requirements document (see **Annex 23: Nature-Based Tourism Management and Planning Information System Business Requirements Document**); (ii) procurement of a vendor; (iii) development of a conceptual, logical and physical application design by the vendor based on the requirements document and approval by the project; (iv) definition of test cases and execution of unit testing by the vendor and user acceptance testing by the project; and (v) approval for go-live and launch of information system. Requirements and procurement of the system shall take into consideration mobile-enabled applications to be used by other stakeholders under activities in Outputs 2.3 and 3.2.

1.2.6 Establish an incentive framework with uniform criteria, to minimize the negative impacts of tourism development in high-value biodiversity areas while maximizing positive contribution to nature conservation and local communities.

As part of this activity, performance measurement indices will be developed and adopted for (i) individual PAs and (ii) overall nature-based tourism objectives with identified targets for incentive requirements. This will leverage application of and achievement of METT objectives.

[138] As part of this activity the project will validate and adapt internationally recognized visitor management tools and approaches addressing ecological, social and economic impacts of tourism in protected areas, adapted to the Vietnamese context, to develop biodiversity conservation impact management and monitoring framework for visitors and tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to underpin the monitoring of compliance against guidelines and criteria. This will integrate the requirements, criteria and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and inform the design and development of the information system / dashboard. It will make use of, leverage and adapt Visitor Use Management Framework and "Visitors Count!"

[139] Spenceley, A., Schägner J. P., Engels, B., Engelbauer, M., Erkkonen, J., Job, H., Kajala, L., Majewski, L., Metzler, D., Mayer, M., Rylance, R., Scheder, N., Smith-Christensen, C., Beraldo Souza, T., Cullinane Thomas, C., and Woltering, W. (2021). Visitors count! Guidance for protected areas on the economic analysis of visitation, UNESCO, BfN.

[140] Interagency anagement Council (2021) Framework & Guidebooks: Visitor Use Management Framework.

Figure 21: Nature-Based Tourism Management and Planning Information System - Conceptual Design

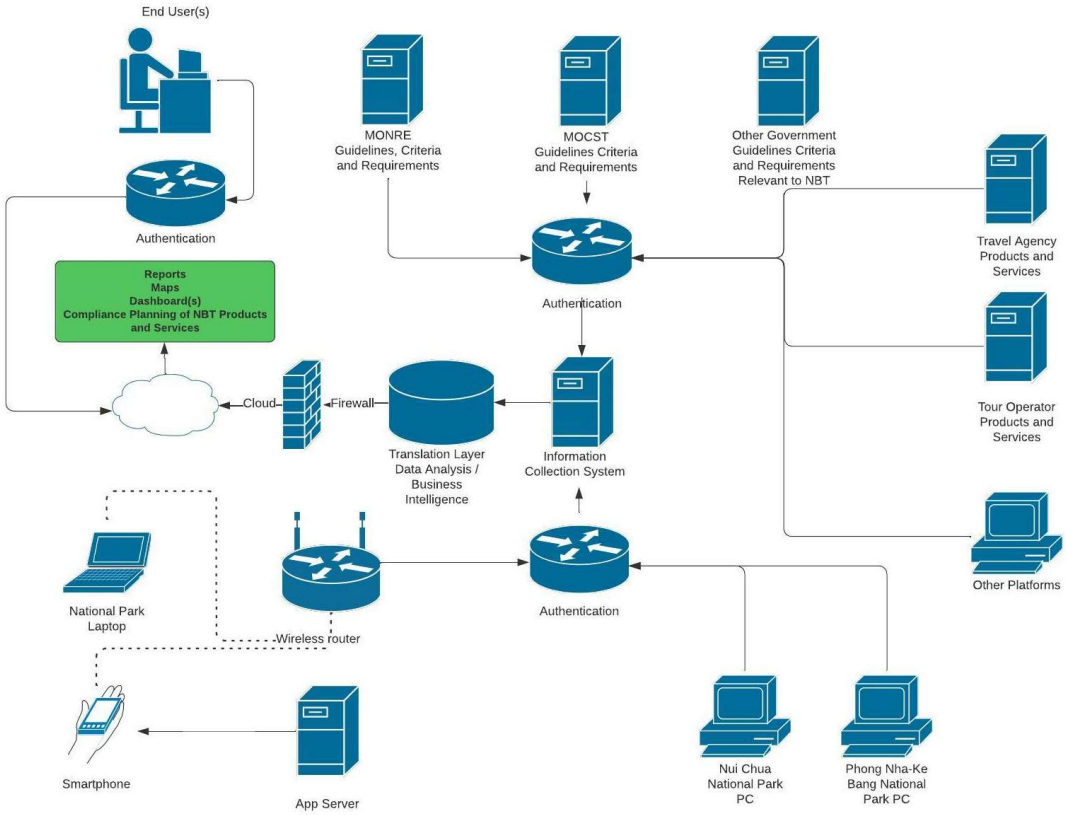
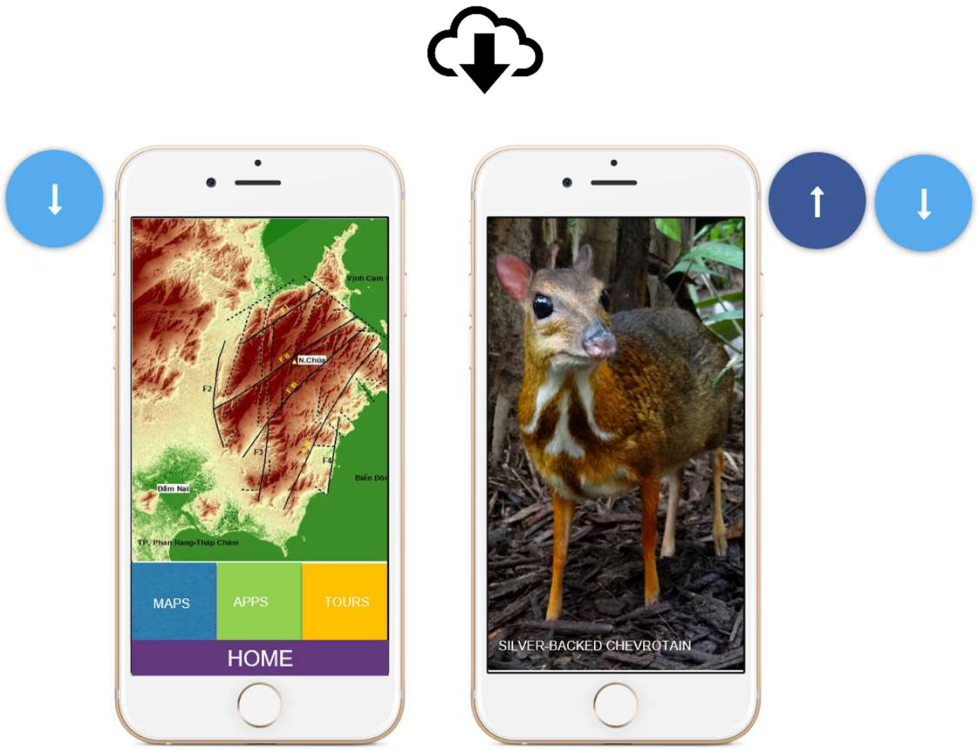


Figure 22: Nature-Based Tourism Management and Planning Information System - Conceptual App Design



1.2.7 Assess management and conservation effectiveness of PAs and recommend standards/criteria for effective management of PA in Vietnam.

Currently, the management of natural resources is fully regulated in the legal system of Vietnam, specifically the law on biodiversity, forestry, fisheries and other related laws. However, up to now, there is no specific system, criteria or standards for evaluating the effectiveness of natural resource management in practice, leading to activities taking place in PAs, including tourism, which have not been strictly controlled as well as evaluated for their effectiveness with respect to underlying conservation and management objectives. This activity will support the assessment of conservation and management effectiveness of PAs and proposed national standards for effective PA management in Vietnam. Prime Minister Decision No. 149/2022/QD-TTg promulgated the National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2030, with a vision to 2050, for which the following key tasks have been identified: *"developing and promulgating criteria and organizing evaluation of management effectiveness of nature reserves and natural heritages, and defining specific goals by 2030: 70% of nature reserves, natural heritage is evaluated for effective management; Effectively conserve wild species, especially endangered, precious and rare species prioritized for protection, and migratory species; no more wild species go extinct; the population status of at least 10 endangered, precious and rare species prioritized for protection is improved; The value of biodiversity and ecosystem services is assessed, maintained and enhanced through sustainable use, limiting negative impacts on biodiversity; nature-based solutions are deployed and applied in socio-economic development, disaster prevention, and climate change adaptation"*, underscoring that the development of standards/criteria and assessment effective management of natural heritage and natural resources is a top priority for the country to implement. The system of standards/criteria and performance assessment for the management of natural resources and natural heritage sites therefore, referenced on the basis of international standards such as METT and adapted to the context, conditions and capacity of implementation and application in Vietnam.

Output 1.3: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism policy, regulations and master planning for development of national nature-based tourism and integration in PA management policies.

148. As part of this Output the project will develop sectoral guidelines and recommendations on integrating the requirements of nature conservation and biodiversity in tourism planning/plans, as well as sustainable development of nature-based tourism at national, provincial and site levels. These will be piloted at each demonstration site as part of Component 2. Technical and documentation for interpreting requirements on nature-based tourism to control impact on high-value biodiversity areas will also be developed.

149. A roadmap for ecologically sustainable nature-based tourism under the overall framework of Vietnam's tourism development strategy to 2030 and vision to 2050 will be developed and approved at the national level. Adopted guidelines will also be integrated into revisions of the biodiversity policies, curriculars guiding the implementation of decisions and planning instruments, and into key tourism policies, master plans and tourism development plans at national tourism areas. They will also be integrated into PA management policies and practices and will guide the integration of biodiversity conservation objectives in tourism development and tourism development projects within national parks.

150. Indicative activities under Output 1.3 include:

1.3.1 Develop a long-term roadmap and vision for ecologically sustainable nature-based tourism based on priorities of Vietnam's NBSAP to 2030, vision to 2050 and Vietnam's Tourism Development Strategy to 2030.

1.3.2 Develop national guidelines, standards and criteria on nature-based tourism for integrating into master planning, sectoral and local development planning.

1.3.3 Develop and seek approval for priority tourism programs and projects related to species conservation and nature-based tourism/wildlife watching addressing current legislative gaps and operational needs while also considering species conservation goals and priorities in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in order to reorient the current regulatory framework and Vietnam's national tourism strategy towards promoting biodiversity conservation and operationalizing nature-based tourism with a sustainable longer-term vision.

1.3.4 Review regulations on ecotourism at NPs/PAs/BRs and regulations on species conservation and biodiversity, and contribution to a national policy amendment to strengthen and enable a greater share

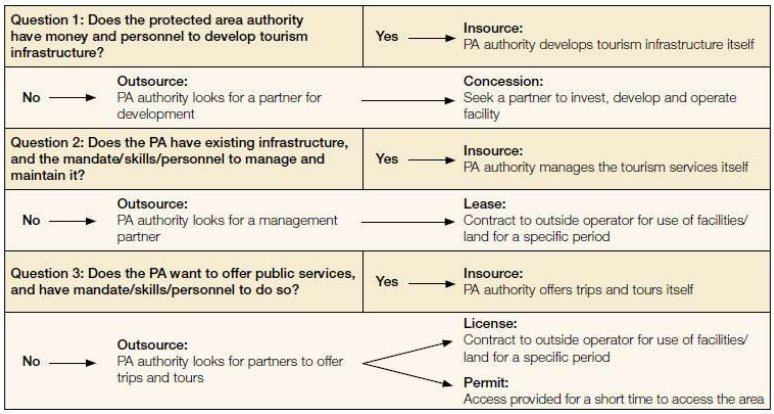
of tourism revenue to be earmarked and directly re-invested for biodiversity conservation or shared with local communities.

Output 1.4: Guidelines for operationalizing nature-based tourism strengthened, in particular for promotion of: (i) public-private partnerships in nature-based tourism; and (ii) community participation and benefit sharing from nature-based tourism, that ensures biodiversity conservation improvement and informs a clear policy.

151. While a PPP is not the best tool for every requirement, the strategic use of partnerships can indeed benefit and contribute to investment in and the development of sustainable tourism, and PPPs can also be a vital tool for facilitating tourist access and improving the destination experience. Within the PA context public–private partnerships will entail formal agreements between the protected area authority and private sector in which the private partner is tasked to deliver a particular tourism product or service at a greater quality and efficiency, allowing protected area managers to focus on their core functions. The 'private sector' in this regard may be a commercial business, an NGO or even a community organisation. Currently in Vietnam, PPP investment mainly focuses on large infrastructure projects and while investment under PPP is well-defined for a number of sectors such as construction, energy and public health under special policies such as Decree 108/2009/ND-CP and the 2020 Law on PPP Investment, these do not apply to the tourism sector (see **Section II Development Challenge** and **Annex 20: Private Sector Analysis**).

152. This Output therefore, will involve supporting the development and adoption of forward-thinking instruments and policies to encourage investment in nature-based tourism through PPPs in a manner which optimises quality of the product and service, and to mobilize community participation and ownership within this segment. The project will explore the range of legal options and models (see **Table 10**) for the use of outsourcing, which include instruments such as concessions, leases, licences and permits. The decision tree of whether to adopt a PPP and characteristics of different models usually employed are described in the tables below and typically, PA management uses several of these instruments, sometimes within one contract for one service.

Figure 23: Outsourcing vs. Insourcing Decision Tree[141]



[141] Leung, Yu-Fai, Spenceley, Anna, Hvenegaard, Glen, and Buckley, Ralf (eds.) (2018). Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 27, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 120 pp.

Table 23: Characteristics of PPP Instruments[142]

Type of Legal Instrument	Description	Length	Examples
Concession	A concession is the right to use land or other property for a specified purpose, granted by a government, company, or other controlling body. It can include a commercial operation and/or a piece of land.[41] A tourism concession could provide accommodation, food and beverage, recreation, education, retail, and interpretive services	10 - 40 years	Accommodation, restaurant or retail facilities.
Lease / management contract	A contractual agreement in which one party conveys an estate (i.e. land and facilities) to another party for a specified, limited time period. The lessor retains ownership in the property while the lessee obtains rights to use the property. Typically a lease is paid for.	5- 30 years	Use of fixed infrastructure such as accommodation, airports, restaurants, shops etc. for a rental fee.
Licence	Gives permission to a legally-competent authority to exercise a certain privilege that, without such authorization, would constitute an illegal act. Often seen by the public as a form of quality control and requires due diligence by the competent authority, in contrast to a permit. Possession of the land is not granted through the license. Licenses give protected area authorities the ability to screen applicants to ensure that they fulfill a set of conditions.[42]	Up to 10 years	Vehicle-based tours (e.g. game drives, hot-air ballooning, white-water rafting, boat cruise) using operators own equipment.
Permit	A temporary form of permission giving the recipient approval to do a lawful activity within the protected area. Permits normally expire within a short length of time. Usually the number of permits is large and limited by social or environmental considerations. In most cases, permits are given to anyone who pays the corresponding fee.	Up to 10 years	Activities such as guiding, canoeing, hunting, and climbing using operators' own equipment.

153. Guidelines on mobilizing participation of the private sector investment in nature-based tourism activities and on community engagement and benefit sharing will undergo a feedback loop where they will be first tested at the provincial and landscape level, undergo subsequent refinement and finally, inform policy and wider adoption. Guidelines will be vetted by both national and provincial platforms and in the latter case, adapted to the local provincial context if required.

154. Indicative activities under Output 1.4 include:

1.4.1 Assessment of PPP experiences, engagement / participation strategies, models, instruments and incentive models to accelerate investment in nature-based tourism within the Vietnam context. These will leverage both national experiences and will be based on international case studies and best practices[143].

1.4.2 National study, gap analysis, guidelines and model biodiversity / wildlife / community development criteria to underpin nature-based tourism certifications for private sector enterprises in the tourism sector.

1.4.3 Develop a mechanism on mobilizing participation from the private sector and communities, and how to incentivize biodiversity-friendly conservation priorities in tourism investment and benefit sharing to local communities. Dependencies will be made with Activity 1.2.6. These guidelines will address legislative gaps and underpin the development of priority programs and projects under key related Decisions[144] to support the National Tourism Development Strategy to 2030, also in conjunction with

[142] Spenceley, A., Snyman, S. & Eagles, P. (2017). Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions for protected areas: Generating sustainable revenues for conservation and development. Report to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and IUCN.

[143] Three key tourism concession guidelines for protected areas have been developed and are extremely useful resources for any protected area considering this option: UNDP's Tourism concession in protected natural areas; the World Bank Group's Introduction to Tourism Concessioning: 14 Characteristics of Successful Programs; and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessioner protected areas.

[144] (1) Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg on Approving the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030; (2) Decision No.450/2022/QD-TTg on National environmental protection strategy to 2030, vision to 2050; (3) Decision No. 149/2022/QD-TTg on National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2030, vision to 2050; (4) Decision No. 523/2021/QD-TTg on Approving the Vietnam forestry development strategy for the period of 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050.

biodiversity conservation strategy to 2030, vision to 2050 and National environmental protection strategy to 2030, vision to 2050.

1.4.4 Compile an inventory of priority programs and projects for PPP and community engagement, through consultation with private sector enabled by requests for information and expressions of interest.

1.4.5 Strengthen current guidelines and framework to enable NP authorities to effectively engage in livelihood activities, including establishing guidance on skill sets and mandatory roles.

1.4.6 Establish a national standards and policy framework on minimum management capacity and mandatory roles to ensure enabling conditions are present at PAs to address PPPs and community development to support nature-based tourism, including: (i) recommended skill sets (ii) support to increase personnel and head count to align with mandatory roles; and (iii) training programme(s).

1.4.7 Develop national policy proposals on PPP and community participation in nature-based tourism based on testing of and experiences with guidelines.

Output 1.5: Practical and standardized methodologies for ecological and social impact assessments developed for nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to minimize impacts on wildlife, habitats and local culture and lifestyles and standards to ensure compliance.

155. Standards and guidelines developed will cover the use of SEA/EIA in tourism development planning, sustainable infrastructure design, specified forms of access and the operation of specific tourism activities to ensure that tourism development is compatible with biodiversity and ecosystem conservation outcomes and minimize harm on local cultural and social practices and norms.

156. In Vietnam all biodiversity relevant Laws, such as LEPs, Law of Biodiversity, Law on Forestry, and Law of Fisheries, Law on Tourism, Law on Planning etc. have included the provision that any projects, policy, programs which has the potential to affect biodiversity, must implement an EIA or SEA. However in recent years, the EIA, SEA reports evaluated and approved have unsatisfactory and very sketchy biodiversity impact assessments. They do not provide enough baseline information on biodiversity in order to assess the impacts and do not provide enough guidance on how to manage and mitigate the impacts on biodiversity and wildlife.

157. Indicative activities under Output 1.5 include:

1.5.1 Review and analyze current Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) standards and guidelines from the perspective of biodiversity, wildlife and cultural considerations.

1.5.2 Based on gaps within current EIA standards and guidelines, integrate biodiversity conservation elements into EIA process focusing on wildlife protection and human-wildlife conflict issues stemming from tourism development, as well as local cultural considerations.

1.5.3 Based on gaps within SEA standards and guidelines, mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations and provisions into the SEA framework to inform nature-based tourism policy and strategy and investment projects.

1.5.4 Develop and submit for approval a mechanism to unify and harmonize the SEA/EIA methodologies used by line ministries and provide streamlined guidance for their application at PAs.

1.5.5 Develop guidelines for nature and wildlife watching/viewing tours for application and refinement in targeted PAs and high-value national tourist areas.

Output 1.6: Enabling national policy and clear legal framework underpinning the promotion and application of payment for ecosystem services from marine ecosystems (PMES) and wetlands applied in project sites and replicated.

158. There is currently a robust policy, legislation and extensive experience in the application of payment for forest environmental services (PFES). PFES has been practiced in Vietnam for many years ago under the Law of Forest protection and Development (now the Law on Forestry). However, while the wetland and marine ecosystems have substantial potential (from commercial fisheries and marine products, tourism and recreation, storm protection services from mangroves, etc.) for generating revenues for promoting

conservation outcomes, these are a relatively new idea. While PMES and PWES have been regulated under the 2020 LEP, and a newly adopted Governmental Decree No. 08/2022/ND-CP, guidance on their implementation has not been developed yet (see Section II (Development Challenge) and **Annex 21: Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services Baseline Analysis**).

159. As part of the consultation process during the PPG extensive consultations and foundational research was undertaken to enable these instruments. The activities detailed below seek to address the requisite enabling conditions, as well as trigger the requisite actions for a preparatory phase before piloting can commence. It is expected that the MAE will provide an important supporting role at the central level in establishing these enabling conditions for PMES to be piloted, refined, phased-in and scaled-up over time. It is also recommended that a functional working group is set-up within MAE to support the PMES piloting. This working group might not need to have regular and more formal face-to-face meetings but could generate ideas and recommendations via online forums or group conversations. Finally, specific support actions have been proposed for the project at both central and local level will focus on supporting MAE in developing PMES in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP. The indicative activities or work packages have been gleaned from the following list of near- and medium-term priorities at the national level.

Table 24: PMES and PWES National Level Priorities

Step	Timeframe	Responsible Parties
1. Communications and Advocacy Conditions for PMES		
Development of communications and materials for implementing the LEP and PMES/PWES	YEAR 1	MAE with support of the project and in close collaboration with the Directorate of Fisheries and NGOs
Advocacy paper on PMES is produced presenting at least the following issues: - International experience and best practices on PMES. - A synthesis of experiences from implementing PFES in Vietnam and application for PMES - An analysis of the potential sellers, payers and payment scheme, payment level for PMES. - An evaluation of the ability to apply voluntary or compulsory payment approaches for the reinvestment in conservation and development of ecosystems; - Determination of the roles and responsibilities of service providers and service users and the government. - An assessment of the possible payment vehicles and related conditions for the provision of the service; as appropriate, propose the legal framework and system for transactions including payment frequency, contractual setup, etc.	YEAR 1	MAE and its development partners
Presentation of PMES with MAE leaders	YEAR 1	NBCA and Administration of Sea and Island (preparation supported by Project)
Preparation and execution of study tour for PMES lesson learned (see justifications below)	YEAR 1/2	Project with MAE and UNDP to select and invite high-level and appropriate participants from MAE, MOCST, MOF and Prime Minister's office
Policy paper on result of PMES piloting	YEAR 4/5 (After piloting in Component 2)	MAE and its development partners
2. Preparation for piloting of PMES		
MAE sets-up informal working group to support consultant/s inclusive of their development partners	YEAR 1	MAE and its development partners
National workshop to discuss the PMES	YEAR 1	MAE
Drafting technical guidelines guiding the implementation of PMES	YEAR 1	MAE with national consultants and working group
3. Technical Conditions		

Step	Timeframe	Responsible Parties
Drafting of Guidelines for piloting of PMES at the provincial level	YEAR 2	MAEand working group, DAEs and NP/PA in pilot provinces
Drafting guideline for PES plan at provincial and park levels	YEAR 2	MAE and working group, DAEs and NP/PA in pilot provinces

160. The project will support the development of policies, legislation and protocols for promotion of payment for marine environmental services (PMES) and wetland environmental services (PWES) that channels revenues from tourism in high biodiversity areas as a means to generate community support for conservation of the marine and wetland space, which will be trialed in Component 2 in Output 2.6.

161. By improving the overall regulatory environment, filling in legislative gaps by articulating guidance and criteria and standardizing and enhancing the quality of guidelines, towards the diversification of nature-based products and experiences which respect ecological thresholds and boundaries, while professionalizing human and institutional capacity, the project will establish a long-term foundation for stability and vision for Vietnam to reach its international and domestic nature-based tourism potential.

162. Indicative activities under Output 1.6 include:

1.6.1 Review existing legislation and regulations relating to PES to identify key gaps in promoting PMES and PWES with special emphasis on pricing mechanism and revenue creation from tourism activities.

1.6.2 Support development of guidance on development of provincial ecosystem services plan

1.6.3 Support development of guidance on development of national park ecosystem services plan

1.6.4 Policy learning and report on the results from piloting PES at project site and recommendations for policy revision and improvement.

Component 2: Nature-based tourism partnerships benefitting communities, wildlife and habitats at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks

163. Under Component 2, the project will demonstrate public-private partnerships and mechanisms for stronger engagement with and integration of local communities, towards sustainable biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism development at provincial level and at the two demonstration sites at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park in Khanh Hoa Province and at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park in Quang Tri Province. The seven corresponding Outputs which make up the WBS under Component 2 are designed to develop and establish an integrated approach to nature-based tourism built around effective partnerships between government, private sector and communities that combine economic and social development and environment protection. Importantly, the demonstration sites will also act as a testbed for piloting, testing and subsequent refinement of the nature-based tourism guidelines, criteria and requirements developed under Component 1.

Total Cost: $ 43,668,178; **GEF project grant requested:** $3,407,854 **Co-financing:** $ 40,260,324

Outcome 2: Strengthened public-private partnerships for nature-based tourism enhance local livelihoods, increase PA revenue generation, improve tourism management, and reduce threats in PAs from poaching, illegal activities and related impacts.

Table 25: Incremental Cost Reasoning – Component 2

Summary of baseline situation	Incremental reasoning	Global Environmental Benefits
Component 2: Nature-based tourism partnerships benefitting communities, wildlife and habitats at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks		
Viet Nam still lacks a unified coordinating mechanism on tourism and biodiversity issues, particularly at the provincial level.. State management of biodiversity conservation is now primarily shared between MAE line agencies and Provincial People's Committees (PPCs). There are overlaps and conflicts within these. PPCs and other natural resource management	Responding to the baseline scenario the project will operationalize a provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform (Output 2.1) to support coordinated cross-sectoral action and investment across government and private sector for promotion of nature-based tourism, biodiversity conservation and development planning which could impact tourism	Improved PA management effectiveness covering **145,414 hectares of terrestrial protected areas and 7,352 hectares of marine protected areas (Core Indicators 1.2 and 2.2)** 45,802 hectares of additionally important terrestrial high biodiversity areas (excluding protected areas) in buffer zone of the two PAs effectively

agencies are still strongly incentivised to prioritize economic development, with limited incentives for biodiversity conservation, which is considered an important obstacle to conservation and sustainable use in the formulation of the Strategy. This means lack of systematic coordination between different agencies at the sub-national level involved in biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism development activities. Without intervention tourism will be unplanned, fragmented and unsustainable. The merger into MAE has mostly reduced one important source of vertical fragmentation (MONRE vs MARD) without addressing other continuing gaps. There is increasing appreciation of impacts of and potential for unsustainable tourism, especially at high-value biodiversity areas within the demonstration landscapes at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang NPs. Private enterprises working with the National Parks have business plans but they do not have up-to-date and reliable information on biodiversity and nature-based tourism and focus on adventure type products such as cave exploration. Therefore, biodiversity and nature do not factor highly in tourism product and tour planning and design. Improved and data-driven methods of managing visitation and impacts through the development of new innovative tools need to be implemented in order to ensure decision-making is informed by clear requirements, the latest data and minimize overcrowding and unsustainable behavior from tourists at high-value biodiversity areas. Vietnam receives quite a low number of returning visitors and their spending in Vietnam is up to 43% less compared to other ASEAN countries[145, 146, 147]. Tourism's benefits in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Parks are inequitably and unevenly distributed. Neither international nor Vietnamese tourism companies operating in protected areas provide equitable	operations, habitats and species in Quang Tri and Khanh Hoa provinces. The GEF investment will ensure that the development of tourism guidelines and criteria under Component 1 will be tested and applied at site level and digitized allowing for stronger and more robust business intelligence. Improved access to visitor and biodiversity data will help with the development of new tourism products tailored to the local carrying capacity and zoning requirements. These will subsequently be entrenched in management and business plans (Output 2.2). The application of financial tools also developed under Component 1 in the project landscape will contribute to sustainable PA financing and enhance benefits flowing to local people (Outputs 2.5), and improve local authority budgeting for biodiversity management. Improved coordination and planning between national parks, tourism operators, service industry and local communities will improve the quantity and quality of nature-based tourism products and services and reduce the risk of overtourism in the NPs. This is expected to lead to improved tourism management and operations, an increase in visitor says and spending and benefits accruing to local communities and ethnic minorities. Development and implementation of visitor and tourism management plans, and nature-based tourism business plans together with the application of financial tools in the project landscape (Outputs 2.2), will and improve local authority budgeting for biodiversity management. Improved monitoring of status of key biodiversity resources and strengthening effectiveness of PA management, capabilities (Output 2.3) to respond to illegal wildlife threats (Outputs 2.4) will serve to protect critical assets on which nature-based	integrating tourism development with biodiversity conservation, to reduce threats on natural resources (e.g., habitat disturbance), reduce supply of wildlife related products through enhanced patrolling, community engagement and enforcement techniques, thereby building trust and disrupting and reducing poaching/illegal activities, as well as minimizing incidences of HWC (Core Indicator 4.1, through activities under Outcome(s) 2.3 and 2.4) Reduced poaching impacts on globally significant species including Silver-backed Chevrotain (DD), Black-shanked douc (CR), Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (CR), Hatinh Langur (EN), Crested argus (CR), Cao Van Sung bent-toed gecko (EN) and Green turtle (EN) (Outcome 2, Indicator 12) A total of -15,704,236 greenhouse gas emission mitigated (tCO2-e) (Core Indicator 6.2) Reduced supply for illegal and endangered wildlife products for local and tourism consumption in Vietnam due to enhanced patrolling, surveillance, detection and arrests (Outcome 2, Indicator 11) Increased opportunities for new nature-based employment and recovery of around 1,800 green jobs (70% women) (Outcome 2, Indicator 14) Scaling up and national impact of PMES and PWES for replication based on project lessons (Outcome 4, Indicator 19)

[145] Vietnam National Administration of Tourism statistics from Q1 2019.
[146] Nguyen, L.Q.; Fernandes, P.O.; Teixeira, J.P. (2022). Analyzing and Forecasting Tourism Demand in Vietnam with Artificial Neural Networks. Forecasting 2022, 4, 36–50.
[147] Tung, L.T. (2020). Tourism Development in Vietnam: New Strategy for a Sustainable Pathway. GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites, 31(3), 1174–1179.

benefits to local people and economies; at best they participate in the informal economy surrounding tourism. Without diversification of high-quality nature-based products and services and without further enhancing business intelligence and analytics at the landscape level, Vietnam will continue to fall behind its peers in average stays and spending, and unsustainable practices are likely to continue and uninformed management decisions likely taken. In addition, without the project, inequalities will continue or may be exacerbated. Despite the strong national legislative framework and an extensive network of PAs, biodiversity at the two demonstration landscapes face many threats and many species are listed as globally threatened and the abundance of species has decreased at both sites. Poaching and illegal wildlife trade, together with illegal exploitation of non-timber forest products, remains a serious challenge in the buffer zones and in areas of the parks situated close to settlements and villages. Direct threats also include increasing incidences of Human Wildlife-Conflict (HWC) leading to negative community attitude towards wildlife, distrust and suspicion of conservation agendas, retaliatory killing or snares/traps of primates and other exotic animals for tourist consumption and degradation and loss of wildlife habitat. While there are some modest interventions to address these threats through regular SMART patrolling, HWC prevention and mitigation, habitat enrichments etc. However, these existing mechanisms are insufficient to adequately manage the threats. Additional efforts are also needed to enhance information and knowledge, on-ground conservation action, coordination and monitoring across a range of stakeholders. Large, yet unfunded PA network managed by government means that it will be unable to effectively manage threats such as poaching, trapping and illegal wildlife trade. Conservation and tourism development efforts are underway but are limited by a lack of local capacity and understanding of tourist expectations, and absence of knowledge of nature-based tourism activities, as well as insufficient knowledge and awareness of effective	tourism depends within the landscapes. The GEF investment will lead to improved tourism management and operation benefitting over 145,414 ha of terrestrial and 7,352 ha of marine PAs in Vietnam. Enhanced monitoring capabilities and improved practices will be introduced in buffer areas totaling 45,802 ha and the project will ensure that PA managers are better equipped and have the requisite skills and knowledge for better planning and operation of tourism that reduces negative impacts on biodiversity within PAs, also made possible through setting up visitor and education and rescue center facilities in the core zone of each national park to support nature-based tourism programs and capacity building (Output 2.4). The project will develop and test mobile applications will enable surveillance, monitoring, and information sharing among partner agencies on wildlife crime and rescue efforts, as well as promote citizen science. The use of frontier technologies will be promoted to support anti-poaching and surveillance efforts. The above will contribute to supporting the conservation of globally-threatened species such as Silver-backed Chevrotain (DD), Black-shanked douc (CR), Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (CR), Hatinh Langur (EN), Crested argus (CR), Cao Van Sung bent-toed gecko (EN) and Green turtle (EN). It is expected therefore, that the activities under Output(s) 2.3 and 2.4 will collectively contribute to the achievement of core indicator 4.1. Leveraging the national framework developed under Component 1, the GEF investment will trial relevant elements of the national PMES and PWES policy and legal framework (Output 2.6) for promotion of a PMES mechanism in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and surroundings. In doing so, it will Increase resources for conservation from PMES and PWES programs that generate revenues from tourism and benefit local communities. It is anticipated that a portion of PA revenue will be returned into PA management reducing ongoing management cost of PA estate to	

monitoring, surveillance and prevention techniques of illegal wildlife activities. Without intervention the landscapes will not maximize their nature-based tourism potential of safeguarding it foundational assets by improving biodiversity conservation and management of PAs and effective monitoring, surveillance and prevention of illegal wildlife activities. Lack of visitor facilities, interpretation and educational programming will restrict visitation to PAs, particularly repeat visitation. Further, there is an opportunity to progress conservation of flagship species for tourism to show the link to the ongoing sustainability of the tourism products they support. This will in turn support conservation of biodiversity as the foundation of tourism development. Though the PFES program in Vietnam is considered as an evolving success and an important initiative for ensuring sustainable forestry management can be a financing tool to generate revenue from tourism, there are persistent weaknesses for which an expansion to other ecosystem services like marine or wetlands would be appropriate (see **Annex 21: Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services Baseline Analysis**). One of the biggest challenges for marine and wetland ecosystem services applications is the scarcity of spatial and economic data. This challenge is applicable across the natural sciences and to all biomes, but there is an argument that this disproportionally affects marine systems. The opportunity that PMES and PWES could offer to a significant expansion of the current PFES program should be seen as a catalyst for establishing a comprehensive database on ecosystems.	government, and contributing to the distillation of experiences and lessons (Output 2.7) to help fine-tune the national framework into formal policy.	

164. The key deliverables under Outcome 2 are:

Output 2.1: Provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform established to support coordinated action and investment across government and private sector for promotion of nature-based tourism development and biodiversity conservation in Quang Tri and Khanh Hoa provinces.

165. Existing sectoral planning platforms in provinces lack provincial tourism planning frameworks, guidance on symbiotic and cumulative impacts of tourism at provincial scale, and a strategy to strengthen nature conservation while reducing risks to biodiversity and critical wildlife from existing and conventional tourism practices. Without intervention there is a risk that tourism will be unplanned, fragmented and unsustainable.

166. At a further level of granularity to Output 1.1 therefore, and operating at the sub-national level, the project will establish a provincial multi-stakeholder platform for nature-based tourism development and biodiversity conservation (see **Figure 17**: Coordination Mechanism Between National and Provincial Platforms) with government and private sector participation, aiming to bring about more coordinated action and investment in nature-based tourism development, built on a common definition of nature-based tourism in the Vietnamese context and what standards need to be met. The multi-sectoral coordination mechanism will adapt and support the implementation of national policy, regulations and guidelines for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in tourism planning and development, promoting public-private partnerships in nature-based tourism, promoting community participation in nature-based benefit sharing arrangements, overseeing EIA process in tourism development and investment, and creating the supporting regulatory environment for PMES / PWES policy realization in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National park and its surroundings in Khanh Hoa Province.

167. To ensure continuity, it is anticipated that any representatives from the provincial departments of line ministries participating in the BES Platform will also participate in the provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform and will be hosted by the respective national park management boards in each province, together with representative from PPC and provincial tourism and private sector entities to be identified during the inception phase, through a nomination process.

168. Indicative activities under Output 2.1 include:

2.1.1 Validation of provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform for biodiversity conservation model. This assessment, along with Activity 1.1.1, will be undertaken during the project's inception phase within the first 60 days of operations.

2.1.2 Establish and operationalize the provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform model, including (i) agreeing on the mandate of the provincial platform; (ii) identification and confirmation of provincial line departments and private sector entities; (iii) assembling / convening the provincial platform; and (iv) validation and formalization of its Terms of Reference (TOR) during its first sitting.

2.1.3 Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with private sector tourism entities, through an expression of interest, to support project activities such as exploration of nature-based tourism PPP opportunities at PAs, as well as participate in the provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform. This activity will also include a mini-study on private sector partners for PMES that might benefit from the improved environmental services.

2.1.4 Establish and operationalize a liaison and communication function via national park management boards and nominate representative to participate in the BES platform established under Activity 1.1.1[148].

2.1.5 Undertake and coordinate consultations of key project deliverables for trialing at the provincial level. It is anticipated that draft versions of the deliverables, guidance, criteria and studies developed under the first component will undergo a formal review and vetting process by the provincial multi-stakeholder platform to ensure these reflect and are tailored to the nuances of and reflect the needs of the provincial and local context.

2.1.6 Make and communicate recommendations for the refinement of deliverables, guidance, criteria and studies to the inter-agency coordination mechanism based on the experiences from them being piloted, via dependencies with Output 2.7.

2.1.7 Support the implementation of project activities at sites.

Output 2.2: Integrated nature-based tourism programs designed in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks.

169. Under this output, the project will facilitate the development of nascent nature-based tourism products and services which generate biodiversity conservation benefits, that improve local employment and incomes and which also mitigate harmful tourism practices to wildlife (e.g., market demand for wild products, habitat degradation and pollution). This will entail: (i) development/revision of nature-based tools and resources, tourism plans, tourism business planning and management, tourism investment project regulations in both

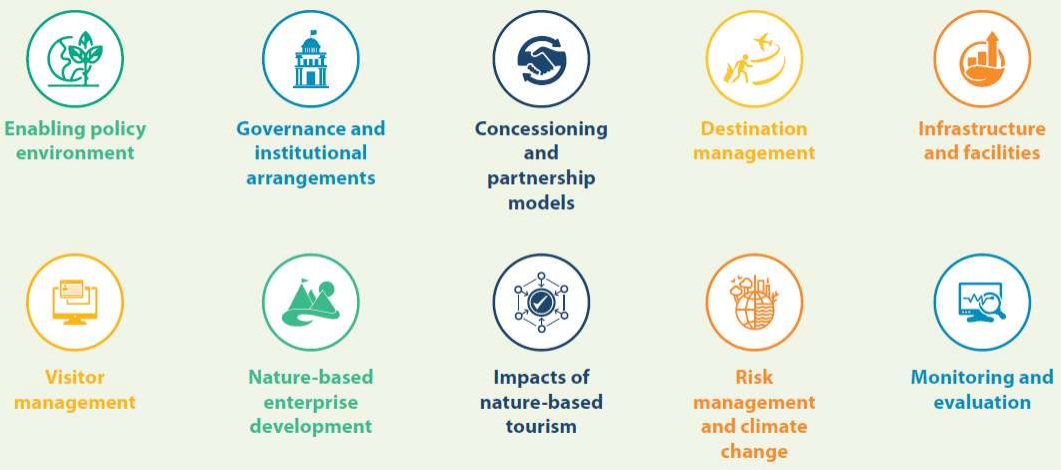
[148] This will likely be a nominee or representative from the Provincial People's Committee.

national parks; (ii) identification and development of innovative and culturally sensitive community-based tourism offerings; and (iii) exploration and demonstration of public-private partnerships in support of biodiversity conservation based on different models and using different instruments. It is expected that the nature-based tourism programs designed in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks will leverage and make use of the guidelines and standards developed under Component 1 (i.e., zoning guidelines, carrying / load capacity, SEA / EIA and agreed monitoring and reporting parameters).

170. Through close consultation with local communities and tourism operators, nature-based tourism services and products will be identified/ modified that reflect the unique characteristics and local cultures of each region, and public-private partnerships and sustainable financing mechanisms demonstrated including the use of concessions, co-management, licencing arrangements[149]. Exact mechanisms to be applied at each site will be determined based on feasibility assessments and the results of local consultations.

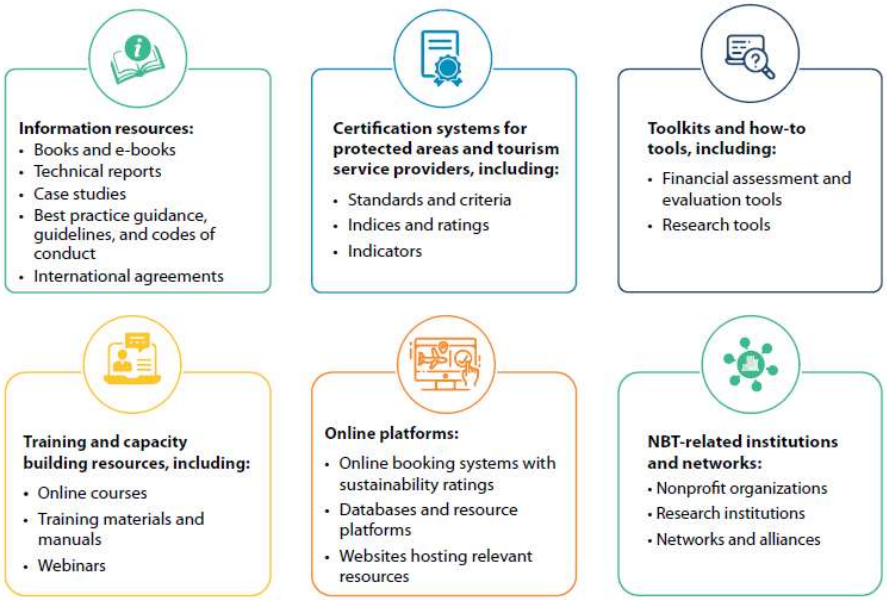
171. Particular account must be taken of all of the applicable requirements of UNDP's SES when determining the sites and type of nature-based tourism programs that are designed and implemented under Output 2.2. In particular, site-selection and program design must be cognizant of the requirements of: Standard 1 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management; Standard 3 on Community Health, Safety and Security; Standard 4 on Cultural Heritage; Standard 5 on Displacement and Resettlement; Standard 6 on Indigenous Peoples; and Standard 8 on Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency. Further assessment, management and monitoring of SES compliance in respect of this output will be actioned through the development and implementation of the relevant safeguards documents (SESA, ESIA, ESMP, EMP as the case may be).

Figure 24: Relevant Nature-based Tourism Topics for PAs[150]



[149] NPs may have co-investment tourism projects with private tourism companies and run co-management tourism services/ products with them. NPs may issue licenses to private tourism company to run tour in NP.
[150] World Bank (2020). Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism. World Bank, Washington, DC

Figure 25: Types of Nature-Based Tourism Tools and Resources[151]



172. Investment opportunities in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Parks have tremendous potential due to their rich biodiversity resources, beautiful landscapes and pristine environment and cultural heritage. Potential investment opportunities for Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang PAs could generate revenue from promoting more biodiversity-oriented nature-based tourism for sustainable wildlife conservation and development. However, the direct transfer of benefits and revenues from tourism development within NPs to biodiversity conservation in those same NPs is impeded by an opaque and restrictive budget management process (see **Section II (Development Challenge)**, **Annex 19: Current Tourism Operations within the Demonstration Landscapes** and **Annex 20: Private Sector Analysis**). In an effort to establish a more favourable long-term financing strategy to support biodiversity conservation efforts in PAs, the project will explore the boundaries of new revenue streams, seek opportunities for sustainable revenue generation from the marrying of tourism activities with biodiversity protection, and collaboration in conservation efforts. During the PPG stage, various options have been reviewed to assess their viability, including, (i) identification and assessment of an array of potential investment opportunities for PAs (while also taking into consideration the BIOFIN catalogue of financing solutions[152]); (ii) defining a time plan and sequencing of different revenue options; (iii) providing recommendations for best concessionary options, partnerships and investments for potential promotion and marketing; (iv) identifying and supporting feasibility studies and business plan development for best business opportunities; (v) developing safeguards and environmental actions for these businesses that integrate best practices; (vi) capacity building for enhancing co-management between communities and businesses and the effective enforcement and monitoring of business outcomes; and (vii) seed financing to support implementation of pilot tourism business investment opportunities. In terms of private-public partnerships, this output will seek opportunities to engage the private sector on investments in nature-based tourism products and services for the creation, enhancement and recovery of jobs, and promote green responsible tourism standards and practices. The learnings from Output 2.2 will support promotion of replication of these successful models (including use of PMES) to other high tourism destinations (including PAs) in the country through advocacy, sharing of best practices, exchange visits and capacity building that is covered under output 4.2.

Current Tourism Operations at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park

173. Tourism activities in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park mainly serve and cater to the needs of domestic tourists. The number of international tourists visiting Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park is still low. Tourism in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh is aligned to seasonality, and quite limited in the rainy season (from

[151] Ibid.
[152] https://www.biofin.org/finance-solutions

September to March). Tours organized by travel companies often come to Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh in the summer months, with the highest proportion of visitors from Ho Chi Minh City.

174. Investment in tourism facilities in the area is slowly increasing. There are 32 hotels and motels with 560 rooms in the area, including: 1 five-star resort, 2 four-star-standard resorts, 2 two-star facilities, and 1 star hotel, more than 20 facilities meeting customer service standards. There are also 5 travel companies operating glass-bottom boats to visit coral reefs in Vinh Hy Bay; more than 30 restaurants serving local specialties for tourists.

175. With respect to tourism services and hospitality facilities at the then Nui Chua National Park, a detailed survey undertaken during the PPG phase (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report** for additional details) found:

- **Number of tourism ventures that have supported local livelihoods criteria in the project sites:**
    - Homestays, hotels and resorts: 42
    - Tour operators: 7
- **Number of hotels and tourist operations within the National Park functioning in accordance with biodiversity-friendly best practice:**
    - Hotels and resorts: 1
    - Tour operators: 1
    - Botanical and fruit gardens: 10
- **Number of tour guide certificate courses / accreditations in Vietnam issued with biodiversity conservation components as part of curriculum:**
    - Number of tour guide skill training and/ or refresher courses conducted in 2021: 1
    - Number of certified tour guides: 25

176. Tourism activities in Nui Chua National Park are also just starting to be exploited, focusing mainly on accessible places in coastal areas with beautiful landscapes such as Rai Cave, Vinh Hy Bay, Binh Tien Beach, the Stone Park, the peak of the Mountain of God. Travel companies such as Saigon Tourist, Ninh Thuan Tourism Joint Stock Company and Hoan Cau Company are the main providers of sightseeing services in the coastal area of the National Park. In addition, local tourists use facilities on weekends and holidays taking advantage of picnic areas at notable scenic areas, such as Lo O stream, freshwater stream and Tien stream.

177. Currently, only study tours and research tours are organized inside the National Park. Current tours include coral viewing activities on glass bottom boats, walking on the beach, with all boats anchored at Vinh Hy. The potential to organize glass-bottom boat tours is high, but the product quality is still limited (quality of coral reefs, professionalism of boat drivers, ability of guides, etc.). In Thai An village, local people provide some tourism activities and services such as visits to local vineyards, onions, garlic, chili gardens to experience, introduce and sell agricultural products and learn traditional production methods. Currently, there are about 50 households organized to welcome groups to visit the vineyards and trade local products such as: grape wine, grape honey, dried apples, rim apples, rim grapes, dried grapes, seaweed products. Other untapped tourism potentials include hiking, mountain climbing, forest visits, swimming, scuba diving, and turtle spawning visits.

Current Tourism Operations and Facilities at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

178. Phong Nha-Ke Bang reaches 4 main consumer segments: a) tourists with strong motivation to be close to nature, exposure to fun and new experiences, exploring the unknown, building good memories, escaping from routine, getting away from the daily stress, looking for adventure and relaxation, b) visitors enjoying nature, such as observation of flora and fauna education (nature explorers), c) visitors for nature education and research and d) visitors with multiple motives seeking to participate in all activities carried out in the park (nature experience seekers). There is a smaller group of people who share nature activities with family and friends (relaxing socializers).

179. There are three types of tourism business operations in the park. First, the Provincial People's Committee assigns units under the Park Management Board to organize and exploit tourist routes in the NP by themselves, specifically: 1) Phong Nha-Ke Bang Tourism Center (non-business unit with self-funded operating expenses) was established under Decision No. 1170/QD-CT dated 24/5/2012; assigned to exploit tourist routes, including: Mooc spring ecotourism site; Chay River - Dark Cave; Phong Nha - Tien Son cave and Phong Nha cave - Discover the mysterious depths; and 2) Center for Rescue, Conservation and Development of Organisms (non-profit organization) was established under Decision No. 2193/QD-UBND dated September 10, 2013; assigned to directly exploit the ecotourism site and interpret the environment

of Nui Doi Botanical Garden and Semi-Wildlife Farm. Second, leasing forest environment for ecotourism development is available in the following areas: Paradise Cave and Me Bong Con cave; Survival Valley - Aquarium and Hamada valley - Tra Ang cave; and 3) Joint ventures and public-private partnerships are formed to exploit tourist routes: Conquering Son Doong - the world's largest cave; Hang Va - Nuoc Nut Cave - different experiences; explore the nature of Rao Thuong - Hang En; Survival Valley - Aquarium Cave; Explore Ha Ma Da valley - Tra Ang cave.

180. With respect to tourism services and hospitality facilities at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, a detailed survey undertaken during the PPG phase found:

- **Number of tourism ventures that have supported local livelihoods criteria in the project sites:**
    - Homestays, hotels and resorts: 123
    - Tour operators: 50
- **Number of hotels and tourist operations within the National Park functioning in accordance with biodiversity-friendly best practice:**
    - Hotels and resorts: 1
    - Tour operators: 4
    - Botanical and fruit gardens: 1
- **Number of tour guide certificate courses / accreditations in Vietnam issued with biodiversity conservation components as part of curriculum:**
    - Number of tour guide skill training and/ or refresher courses conducted in 2021: 1
    - Number of certified tour guides: 35

181. Indicative activities under Output 2.2 include:

2.2.1 Identify, catalogue, design, demonstrate and test innovative investment models, instruments, tools and resources that can be applied to both national parks and for the tourism sector to underpin feasibility studies, cost-benefit / Return on Investment (ROI) analyses, investment opportunities, business case development and planning of nature-based tourism programs and to also assist with the definition of tangible and intangible benefits to biodiversity in order to help refine current and future programming / tourism offerings.

These tools will be leveraged to design, pilot and adopt nature-based tourism PPPs, programs and ecotourism schemes at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks. This activity will make use of and test carrying capacity, zoning requirements and SEA / EIA guidelines and standards developed under Component 1.

2.2.2 Training and capacity building on business planning and tourism business operations. This activity will focus on the removal of capacity barriers, prioritizing business planning and revenue generation skills, as well as co-management skills with local communities and identification of local products and markets.

2.2.3 Development of and implementation of eco-tourism plans in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks for improving coordination with private tourism and biodiversity conservation management, as well as work with private sector to augment the business plans of tour operators in Quang TriTri and Khanh Hoa provinces to ensure the integration of biodiversity conservation considerations and to diversify nature-based tourism offerings. Tourism operators may also revisit existing tourism products and services to ensure there is alignment of biodiversity and conservation priorities within current tourism offerings.

2.2.4 Develop ecotourism plan, environment management and protection plan for natural heritage and develop new operational management plans for the period 2023-2030 through full engagement and consultation with local stakeholders.

2.2.5 Establishment of a community-based revolving fund, as well as other mechanisms/tools to be explored and developed by the project, to act as a catalyst for new and existing nature-based tourism enterprises. It is expected this will leverage the guidelines and build on the existing architecture and model established through the GEF-6 Biosphere Reserve project, with a targeted focus on tourism business potential within the two targeted landscapes. As part of this activity the project will explore revolving microcredit mechanisms through engagement with private sector financial institutions whereby local communities can borrow to participate in forest protection and conservation through innovation and entrepreneurship, and will orient itself towards the creation of commune-based and women-owned

small business and enterprises. As an additional financial service, the project will provide support to develop community-based business and family spending plans for aspiring entrepreneurs to enable access to existing microcredit offered through the Bank for Agriculture, Rural Development and Vietnam Bank for Social Policy. These banking institutions provide credit to applicants who have a solid strategy anchored to a good business plan.

2.2.6 Based on application of certification guidelines under Activity 1.4.2 and inclusion of "green" and "responsible" criteria within existing certification schemes and labeling, such as Green Lotus Label[153] and other national and provincial initiatives, the project will work towards the proliferation of these existing schemes, ensuring tourism standards and practices prioritize biodiversity conservation and support to local livelihoods. In parallel, the project will propose and nurture new standards and certifications for tour operators, travel agencies, commune-based enterprise and nature-based tourism service offerings in Quang Tri and Khanh Hoa provinces and pilot them in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks (see **Table 17** and **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report**).

Output 2.3: Improved monitoring of status of key biodiversity resources to assess effectiveness of PA management, illegal wildlife threat management and biodiversity conservation outcomes of nature-based tourism. It is expected that the activities under Output(s) 2.3 and 2.4 will collectively contribute to the achievement of core indicator 4.1.

182. The monitoring, evaluation and reporting system developed under Component 1 will be demonstrated and standards applied to protected area management, illegal wildlife threat management and local tourism developments and operations to assess impacts on key biodiversity species and habitats. A compliance and enforcement mechanism will also be demonstrated introducing best practice, especially in buffer areas, special protection forests and in marine habitats, harnessing the power of innovative frontier technologies to enhance conservation potential of the two targeted demonstration sites. Based on the monitoring exercise, situational awareness will be enhanced through the collection of new information and intelligence, enabling the more effective zoning and management of specific areas within the PAs for improved conservation, effective threat management, sustainable tourism development and low-impact visitation, including changing of existing tourism practices.

183. Indicative activities under Output 2.3 include:

2.3.1 Develop and implement a nature-based tourism focused conservation plan for iconic/flagship species in the pilot sites, including establishment of captive breeding and release program for silver-backed chevrotain in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park and other key flagship species at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (see **Section II Development Challenge)** and **Annexes 17 Demonstration Landscape Report**). This activity will also include surveys necessary for the development of corridor management plans and also hone efforts on underexplored areas of the PA where there is currently a dearth in data. The project's ESMF includes procedures to ensure that the details of this activity will be designed and implemented in compliance with UNDP SES Standard 1 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Resource Management.

2.3.2 Establish SMART patrol in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and expand SMART patrol in Phong Nha-Ke Bang in accordance with MAE's general guidelines on forest patrol and forest biodiversity monitoring, including SMART patrol software upgrade and integration with monitoring, compliance and reporting information system through the development of an application programming interface (API). This will also include development of drone capabilities to assist with monitoring efforts, rescue and fire prevention through automated flight paths and image processing technologies. This will be integrated into the requirements of the comprehensive information system (see **Annex 23: Nature-Based Tourism Management and Planning Information System Business Requirements Document**).

2.3.3 Introduce, pilot and integrate frontier technologies such as smart phone technologies (such as Gaia GPS), land-use crowdsourcing tools (such as Geo-Wiki and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Merlin app), wave devices in areas where there is poor signal, as well as integration of custom built mobile-enabled

[153] The Ministry of Cultures, Sports and Tourism issued the criteria of Tourism Sustainable Label for Accommodation – Green Lotus Label in April 2012. This is a tool to evaluate, manage the environmental protection in Vietnam's tourist accommodation establishment system to improve the awareness, knowledge and consciousness in environmental protection towards sustainable development in tourism industry of Vietnam.

biodiversity identification tools within existing operations, to support and enable the work of park rangers and tour operators to blur the lines between tourism, education and conservation. There is a dependency between the mobile-enabled tools and the information system built as part of Component 1, and therefore, will be bundled as part of a single procurement. Mobile apps will be an extension of the system to facilitate data capture and the graphical user interface (GUI) should be tailored to different audiences and needs (see **Annex 23: Nature-Based Tourism Planning and Management Information System Business Requirements Document**).

2.3.4 Promotion of citizen science and crowd sourcing for the monitoring of species via the online app, as well as development of key messaging (i.e., modeled after the "see something, say something" campaign to encourage reporting of suspicious and illegal activity) to be rolled out in concert with Output 3.2 (activities 3.2.5, 3.2.6 and 3.2.8) and Output 3.3 (activity 3.3.3).

2.3.5 Establish and implement standardized guidelines on monitoring (including guidelines for sensitive / endangered species) based on parameters defined in Component 1, ensuring that data is captured, fed into the monitoring system and information generates knowledge to support decision making.

2.3.6 Develop guidelines and standard operating procedures on building skills on working and building trust with local communities, especially with ethnic minority groups, on issues such as wildlife crime and human wildlife conflict and integrating them into patrols.

2.3.7 Development of at least 2 corridor management plans in the context of Phong Nha-Ke Bang and Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh landscapes, including protected forests and biosphere reserves.

2.3.8 Development of 2 pilot models on nature-based and species conservation linked responsible tourism development at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha – Ke Bang NPs, while ensuring sustainable forest management.

184. While it is important that all project activities are designed and implemented to avoid contravention of UNDP's SES, particular emphasis will be placed on SES compliance in the site-selection process for activities 2.3.1 and 2.3.7. In particular, during site selection, regard must be had to the requirements of: Standard 1 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management; Standard 3 on Community Health, Safety and Security; Standard 4 on Cultural Heritage; Standard 5 on Displacement and Resettlement; Standard 6 on Indigenous Peoples; Standard 7 on Labour and Working Conditions; and Standard 8 on Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency. Further assessment, management and monitoring of SES compliance in respect of this activity will be actioned through the development and implementation of the relevant safeguards documents (SESA, ESIA, ESMP, EMP as the case may be).

Output 2.4: Institutional capacity for improving biodiversity conservation and management of PAs and effective monitoring, surveillance and prevention of illegal wildlife activities. It is expected that the activities under Output(s) 2.3 and 2.4 will collectively contribute to the achievement of core indicator 4.1.

185. Under this Output, the project will help build capacity of protected area staff for improved protected area management. This will entail technical guidance on survey and mapping techniques of hotspots for illegal wildlife activities to develop targeted responses for management such threats. Surveillance, monitoring and enforcement will be strengthened through improved SMART patrols, including collaboration with local communities for undertaking such patrols. It will also enhance PA staff capacity to integrate tourism development and management of the PA and generate revenues for management of services provided by the national parks. The intention is to strengthen the law enforcement value chain. It will demonstrate increased management effectiveness at the site level, through improved institutional and technical management capacities of sub-national PA network and guided by the national criteria and guidelines on ecological limits and carrying capacity.

186. The Centers of Education for environment protection and biodiversity conservation[154] that are public-oriented service units legally established and operated by the respective PA Management Boards and will be strengthened and serve as a launch pad for technical support and training to PA staff in support of

[154] This nomenclature varies by each national park/nature reserve (Center for Environmental Education / Tourism Center / Environmental Services).

ecotourism and PFES/PMES operations and conduct of non-business activities such as environmental education and awareness, enhancement of tourism visitor experience and local ecotourism operations. The project will build and complement the lessons emanating from the World Bank GWP project, in that this output will help support capacity improvements for integration of protection of key species into the PA development activities at the two targeted national parks, support enhancement of management capacity of PA staff, including collaboration with law enforcement to address illegal activities and community capacity development for information sharing on illegal activities. By specifically honing efforts on threat management, the intent is to also maintain healthy and intact ecosystems within the PAs, with abundant wildlife and productive ecosystems so as to enhance the overall visitor experience, raising awareness, while working towards the global and national biodiversity benefits expected from the project.

187. Indicative activities under Output 2.4 include:

2.4.1 Environment protection and biodiversity conservation education capacity gap analysis and needs assessment during inception phase based on the results of the capacity development scorecard due diligence and analysis undertaken during the PPG (see **Annex 14: Capacity Development Report and UNDP Capacity Development Scorecards**).

2.4.2 Technical support to renovate and/or set up visitor and education and rescue center, as well as nature and cultural interpretation center facilities in the core / administrative zones of each national park to support nature-based tourism programs and capacity building.

2.4.3 Capacity building for improved protected area management and conservation effectiveness at the landscape level leveraging both the METT and national management effectiveness system specifically designed for Vietnam.

2.4.4 Training in SMART patrol and monitoring techniques, METT/national PA management effectiveness system, as well as the use of innovative tools for species identification, using technology tools, apps developed for local context tailored for tourists and park staff. Training in responding to human wildlife conflict and conflict resolution targeting rangers.

2.4.5 Training and skill enhancement to park rangers, law enforcement personnel and expansion of the national Wildlife Crime Unit, focusing on identified gaps by the two national parks, including investigation and handling techniques, including enhanced detection and criminal investigation skills, preparation of administrative dossiers to process violations, conflict de-escalation and defensive skills, training in the usage of tools by environmental police requested to ensure there is sufficient expertise and knowledge to identify violations and make arrests.

2.4.6 Training on how to leverage data that is being collected for data-driven decision making, what story or narrative the data is telling and how tools are intended to be used as part of existing job descriptions and supported by a change management plan.

2.4.7 Application of zoning guidelines based on carrying capacity / load assessments undertaken under Component 1, as well as carrying capacity / gap and performance assessment (dependency on information system) including the development of a species distribution and illegal hotspot map for each national park.

2.4.8 Training local communities to integrate them into patrols, as well as sensitization of illegal wildlife trade, human wildlife conflict.

2.4.9 Capacity building and skill enhancement through “learning by doing”, focusing on priority topics and thematic areas relevant to nature-based tourism and conservation best practices, facilitated through an expression of interest, to facilitate exchanges with other national parks, heritage sites and tourist areas

in Vietnam (e.g., at Cat Tiên[155,156], Con Dao[157,158], national parks, Pu Hu Nature Reserve[159], cultural heritage destinations such as Hue[160], or other well-known tourist destinations such as Sapa[161] in Lao Cai province). Where appropriate, linkages will be made to sections of the METT and national management effectiveness system specifically designed for Vietnam.

2.4.10 Support for capacity development priorities at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park based on gaps identified in the capacity development scorecard and where appropriate, making linkages to the METT and national management effectiveness system specifically designed for Vietnam, including: (i) training and capacity building in habitat monitoring (ii) capacity building training in coral reef monitoring; (iii) capacity building training in seagrass monitoring; (iv) training to improve monitoring capacity and identification of a number of endemic, endangered and rare species, including animals and plants using web-enabled tools; (v) training to improve the capacity of the community and local authorities in law enforcement for both terrestrial and marine; and (vi) support on conservation monitoring and active restoration of spawning grounds for sea turtles in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park.

188. Particular regard must be had to UNDP SES requirements during the design and implementation of activity 2.4.2. The standards that are relevant to the potential renovations under this activity are: Standard 1 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management; Standard 3 on Community Health, Safety and Security; Standard 4 on Cultural Heritage; Standard 6 on Indigenous Peoples; Standard 7 on Labour and Working Conditions; and Standard 8 on Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency. Further assessment, management and monitoring of SES compliance in respect of this activity will be actioned through the development and implementation of the relevant safeguards documents (SESA, ESIA, ESMP, EMP as the case may be).

Output 2.5: Implementation of community-based biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing programs from nature-based tourism and related products and services that provide new and innovative income generation activities.

189. At the two project sites, community participation and benefit sharing from nature-based tourism products and services is poor and tend to operate in the informal economy. Furthermore, hunters who operate professionally out of villages in the buffer areas near the national parks also supply a stream wildlife through middle-men for additional income, and into supply chains destined for consumption by well-heeled domestic tourists and international tourists (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report)**. The project will replace this practice through nurturing other income generation streams and livelihood strategies that can provide additional and sustainable sources of income. The intent of this output is to provide substantial economic benefits to local communities to replace incomes derived from current destructive activities such as hunting, poaching, unsustainable extraction of both timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), pollution and land encroachment. Efforts will be made to attract and transition professional hunters and loggers out of illegal trade into legal businesses and gainful employment.

190. The project will also encourage communities to value forests and biodiversity in new and sustainable ways, thereby incentivizing their preservation and internalizing environmental opportunity costs. These efforts might include growth of forest and biodiversity friendly value chains for NTFPs, high-value agriculture and products that have clear established and unmet demand. There is also potential to support women's entrepreneurship initiatives that are complementary to the nature-based tourism activities, such as organic

[155] Pham, T.T.; Nguyen, T.D.; Dao, C.T.L.; Hoang, L.T.; Pham, L.H.; Nguyen, L.T.; Tran, B.K (2021). Impacts of Payment for Forest Environmental Services in Cat Tien National Park. Forests 2021, 12, 921. https://doi.org/10.3390/f12070921

[156] Do, Huong & Weaver, David & Lawton, Laura (2014). Evidence of an emerging domestic ecotourist market from Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam

[157] Philip Hayward, Giang Thuy Huu Tran (2014). At the edge: Heritage and tourism development in Vietnam's Con Dao archipelago, Journal of Marine and Island Cultures, Volume 3, Issue 2, 2014, Pages 113-124.

[158] An LT, Markowski J, Bartos M, Rzenca A, Namiecinski P (2019). An evaluation of destination attractiveness for nature-based tourism: Recommendations for the management of national parks in Vietnam. Nature Conservation 32: 51-80.

[159] Le Khac, D.; Hoa, A.X.; Tai, L.N.; Nguyen, N.T.H.; Techato, K. (2021). Monitoring of Field Patrolling Efforts, Vietnam: Insights from a Forest Station in Pu Hu Nature Reserve. Sustainability 2021, 13, 8407. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13158407

[160] Bhati, A. S., Nguyen, T. H., Goswami, A., & Kamble, Z. (2021). Sustainable tourism development in Vietnam: A case of Hue. Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism, 10(2), 79–94.

[161] Cahill, Alexandria (2018). "Sustainable Tourism Practices in Vietnam: The Influence of Institutions and Case Study of Sapa's Growing Tourism Industry" (2018). Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. 2975.

vegetable production, and small-scale businesses (local specialty products). Training can be provided on the one commune one product (OCOP) program procedures and business planning, linking products with access to marketing. Products, will vary depending on the location, but can include production of fruit juices (pineapple, passion fruit, etc.), macadamia nuts, dried bamboo shoots, honey, medicinal plants, brocade weaving, handicrafts, musical instruments made of bamboo, cork, and rattan, ethnic cultures, etc. This will include training and support for establishing production groups, cooperatives, or interest groups managed by women, support for accessing affordable inputs, credit, technical support and extension services and trainings, and connecting these groups with traders, businessmen, cooperatives, and enterprises to help them improve market access.

Figure 26: Community Co-Management Paradigm



191. Indicative activities under Output 2.5 include:

2.5.1 Conduct market surveys and options analyses to develop an assessment and an inventory of indigenous knowledge. The project will also replicate participatory community-based commune level planning processes piloted by the GEF-6 Biosphere Reserve project to develop commune conservation plans (CCPs) for improving and diversifying community income-generating activities that reduce pressures on biodiversity and improve climate resilience.

2.5.2 Study of mechanisms for benefit sharing and fair flow of and distribution of resources among communities in each national park, including the optimization of PFES to address shortcomings at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park. This will be followed by the set up and operationalizing of benefit sharing mechanisms, supported by training and awareness on the importance and benefits of equitable benefits.

2.5.3 Training on both input- and output-oriented business knowledge, including business planning and knowledge (i.e., cooperatives, women groups, revenue generation, soft business skills such as negotiation, inventory planning and distribution and accessing credit - with built-in dependencies with the revolving fund, microcredit and other job creation tools.

2.5.4 Awareness directed at local communities on the importance of biodiversity, role of national park its resources and nature-based tourism.

2.5.5 Hiring and absorption of former hunters and poachers in tourism activities: national parks to play an active role in hiring former hunters who know the park very well to be engaged in tours to high-value biodiversity areas. There needs to be proactive internalization of benefit sharing and engagement by national parks.

2.5.6 Co-management arrangements in key biodiversity areas (dependency with species distribution surveys under 2.3.1) and corridor management plans with local communities not only in national park but also in biosphere reserve.

2.5.7 Engagement of local communities to join tourism activities organized by tour companies. Tour companies and operators have their own guides and there needs to be a paradigm shift (supported by decisions) ensuring that tour operators employ local communities and involve them in operations. It is not possible, nor economically viable for communities to only be engaged in peripheral services like porter and local tour guides.

2.5.8 Provide scholarships so that community members can become certified and then be absorbed into tourism operations by being hired by companies, resorts and other nature-based tourism enterprises.

2.5.9 Establish and sustain business linkages between commune-based enterprises with nature-based tourism companies and production / value chains.

Output 2.6: Demonstration of PMES in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and surrounding landscape.

192. Despite several studies examining PFES impacts in Vietnam, there is a paucity of research and experiences evaluating the effectiveness of PFES on communities living in national park buffer zones and core zones, and no experience documenting the potential of either PMES and PWES in the country (see **Annex 21: Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services Baseline Analysis**). Under this output, the project will support the trialling of relevant elements of the national policy and legal framework for promotion of PMES and PWES mechanisms in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and its surroundings. It will entail primary evidence gathering to identify those ecosystem services that can be conserved and restored/maintained in the marine space, resource management practices that can contribute to achieve this outcome, interest of the private sector (particularly tourism enterprises in this high biodiversity destination) to participate and contribute to the PMES, capacity and interest of the community to implement such measures, etc.

193. Following the initial evidence gathering exercise, the planning and design of the PMES activities will require technical support for establishment of baselines, assessing market values and business and opportunity costs, enhancing technical and negotiating capacity of key partners, design and implementation of PMES agreements and measures for verification of PMES delivery and benefits. In terms of Phong Nha-Ke Bang national park, current PFES operations (channel revenues from tourism) provide revenues to the Provincial Administration, part of which are channelled to PA management to maintain PA operations related to tourism, support ecotourism activities and forest conservation. The project would support assessments to improve the targeting of these PFES resources to ecosystem quality improvements and help strengthen and scale-up revenue generation in Phong Nha-Ke Bang national park.

194. During the project preparation phase, the national consultant team conducted a preliminary assessment and triage for piloting PMES in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP of Khanh Hoa Province, specifically. As such, PMES has been already socialized at the provincial level and introduced to DAE, Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP, and actors in the tourism sectors that would be future stakeholders in this domain (see **Annex 21: Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services Baseline Analysis - Annexes 1 and 2** for details of these consultations). According to the preliminary assessment, the current context creates favorable conditions for PMES piloting in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP. However, based on experience of PFES, it also worth noting that for PMES to flourish and be successfully piloted, certain enabling conditions or actions must be met.

- First, there is a need to develop communications actions so that potential stakeholders (payers, collectors etc.) have a common understanding of the PMES policy and new LEP;
- Second, there is a need to have a mechanism for granting the marine use right like the forestland use rights in the case of PFES.
- Third there should be a much more transparent mechanism for PMES revenue management and use.
- Fourth, clear links between the payments and the investment outcomes should also be established.
- There would be a need to further refine the scientific basis and technical application for PMES.

195. The proposed steps for piloting PMES are as follows:

Table 26: Enabling the Piloting of PMES

Step	Timeframe	Responsible Parties
1. Technical Conditions		
Baseline assessment of ecosystem services and biodiversity value of Khanh Hoa Province	YEAR 1/2	NBCA/PMU with support of the project and in close collaboration with Khanh Hoa PPC and DAE and Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP
Baseline assessment of marine biodiversity and services at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP	YEAR 1/2	NBCA/PMU with support of the project and in close collaboration with Khanh Hoa PPC and DONREDAE and Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP
Economic valuation of Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang NPs	YEAR 1/2	NBCA/PMU with support of the project and in close collaboration

Step	Timeframe	Responsible Parties
		with Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha Ke Bang NP
Drafting provincial ES plan for Khanh Hoa province. The plan should cover at least the following elements: (a) General information about areas providing ES; map of areas providing ES (printed and digital map at scale 1:25,000 - 1:100.000, depending on shape and area of the province); (b) List of organizations and individuals that provide and get paid for natural ES; (c) Types of ES provided; types of activities using ES and measures to minimize adverse impacts on natural ecosystems; (d) Form of payment, the minimum level of payment ES is 1% of total revenue from economic activities; (e) Implementation PES plan and responsibilities of relevant agencies, organizations and individuals; (f) Inspection and supervision of PES.	YEAR 2/3	NBCA/PMU with support of the project and in close collaboration with Khanh Hoa PPC and DAE and Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP
Drafting ES plan at park level. The plan should cover at least the following elements: (a) The name and place of ecosystems; (b) General information about the ES provision area; a demarcation map with boundaries, and area of natural ecosystem service provision at the scale of 1:5,000 to 1:25,000 (depending on the shape and area of the natural ecosystem service provision area); (c) Types of natural ES provided; (d) List of organizations and individuals using ES; (e) Measures to conserve, maintain and develop natural ecosystems; (f) Expected payment level and form of payment for ES; (g) Plan to use revenue from PES.	YEAR 2/3	NBCA/PMU with support of the project and in close collaboration with Khanh Hoa PPC and DAE and Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP
Determine pilot sellers, payers and payment rates based on national guidelines and baseline assessment. Special focus should concentrate on: - Sellers: NP and local communities - Payers: Tourism operators and companies - Payment method: Direct - Payment rate: Negotiation with targeted payers	YEAR 2	NBCA/PMU with support of the project and in close collaboration with Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP
Administrative Conditions		
Establishment of PMES Provincial Oversight Committee	YEAR 1	Khanh Hoa PPC, DAE, Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP and local stakeholders
Communications materials on PMES developed specifically for Khanh Hoa province	YEAR 2	NBCA/PMU
Implementation agreed-upon communications protocols with provincial stakeholders	YEAR 2/3	NBCA/PMU and local partners
Training of local personnel on overall PMES implementation, communications	YEAR 3/4	NBCA/PMU and Project
Budgeting for piloting in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP	YEAR 2/3	

196. Indicative activities under Output 2.6 include:

2.6.1 Economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks. This will entail the recruitment of an economic valuation expert. A thorough and exhaustive valuation exercise is the starting point for determining the price of the PMES scheme. While economic valuation is not a new idea and many projects have done this, it has not been undertaken within the national parks in question. The value of park will be linked to the services provided by marine and wetlands ecosystems and fees defined accordingly. Even though PMES will be piloted at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park, the valuation exercise will be undertaken at both sites so there is sufficient baseline data supporting management effectiveness and planning and as input into an ecosystem services plan.

2.6.2 Validation of site selection in PPG for PWES to ensure location of appropriate wetland habitats.

2.6.3 Based on guidance / guidelines from 1.6.2, support the provinces to develop a provincial ecosystem services plan.

2.6.4 Based on the guidance / guidelines from 1.6.3, develop and implement a national park ecosystem services plan in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park. This activity will be dependent on the following issues that need to be addressed in Khanh Hoa province: piloting mechanism for marine water services (many stakeholders using water resources), mechanism for granting water rights and concessions (water concessions need to be reflected under Provincial plan and implemented under plan of the park) and demarcation of piloting site must be reflected in the provincial ecosystem services plan.

2.6.5 Exchanges on marine management and PMEs experiences with other NPs and PAs in the country.

197. Particular regard must be had to UNDP's SES requirements in undertaking activity 2.6.2. Relevant standards to this activity include: Standard 1 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management; Standard 3 on Community Health, Safety and Security; Standard 4 on Cultural Heritage; Standard 5 on Displacement and Resettlement; Standard 6 on Indigenous Peoples; Standard 7 on Labour and Working Conditions; and Standard 8 on Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency. Further assessment, management and monitoring of SES compliance in respect of this activity will be actioned through the development and implementation of the relevant safeguards documents (SESA, ESIA, ESMP, EMP as the case may be).

Output 2.7: Distillation of results from the piloting / evidence-based application of guidelines, criteria at local level as a feedback loop for refinement.

198. This output serves as an aggregator of the results from the application of guidelines and criteria developed under Component 1. It will force the project to distil results, make recommendations for refinement and report back to the provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform.

199. Indicative activities under Output 2.7 include:

2.7.1 Distill lessons from the guidelines, frameworks, criteria developed at the national level based on the project experience in piloting, including an assessment of tourism impact.

2.7.2 Distill lessons and recommendations based on the PMES / PWES pilot and implications on concession rights for PAs to feed into national discussions on the concession regulations and law.

2.7.3 Submit and present recommendations to the BES Platform and provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform.

2.7.4 Report on the outcomes of the PES (PMES/PWES) to related agencies to inform policy making, research and education / awareness.

Component 3 Capacity building and behavior change for acceptance of value of nature-based tourism and wildlife and biodiversity protection

200. Consisting of 5 Outputs within its WBS, Component 3 will facilitate the adoption of more sustainable behaviors and capacity building to accelerate the transition towards more responsible nature-based tourism and wildlife protection across the travel and tourism sector, including among tourists. In particular, this Component will focus on ensuring behavior change among tourists and tour operators and local communities to promote environmentally-friendly practices as well as address the demand for wildlife and wildlife products and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources to meet the tourist demand covering PA network. The project will also put communities at the center of conservation-oriented tourism. Through strengthening disincentives for illegal behavior, increasing incentives for wildlife, forest and marine stewardship, and supporting sustainable livelihoods that are not related to wildlife and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, this model addresses the drivers of unsustainable hunting and the wildlife trade, as well as poor participation and benefits flowing to local communities and ethnic minorities from the tourism sector at the local level. Component 3 will be implemented at both national level and at local level within the two targeted PAs.

201. There have been significant emerging developments in the theory of applying Social and Behavioral Change Communications (SBCC) to encourage voluntary shifts in behavior of the tourism sector, but this has not

been sufficiently applied in relation to the uptake of nature-based tourism alternatives and wildlife consumption demand reduction[162] [163]. This evolving body of literature provides a basis for developing impactful social marketing messaging for impact and demand reduction campaigns and measuring impact, utilizing techniques that go beyond simple environmental education and mass awareness. Application of more sophisticated demand reduction at the local level directed at communities engaged in hunting has also not been attempted at any scale in Vietnam and, as such, represents an opportunity to address what has been an intractable issue for past awareness raising efforts.

202. Building on these approaches the project will utilize SBCC theory for all shifting behaviors and norms among tourists and tour operators, and demand reduction work under the project following a five-step approach which includes; (i) behavior identification to determine which behavior to alter; (ii) audience segmentation to determine who is the target for change; (iii) behavior modelling to determine appropriate approach; (iv) marketing framework to develop appropriate messaging and channels, and; (v) initiative implementation including monitoring, adaptive management and assessment.

Total Cost: $ 16,869,220; **GEF project grant requested:** $1,212,427; **Co-financing:** $ 15,656,793

Outcome 3: Change in social norms and behavior promote society's acceptance of a more sustainable approach to nature-based tourism that protects wildlife.

Table 27: Incremental Cost Reasoning – Component 3

Summary of baseline situation	Incremental reasoning	Global Environmental Benefits
Component 3: Capacity building and behavior change for acceptance of value of nature-based tourism and wildlife and biodiversity protection		
The PPG Capacity Development report (see **Annex 14: Capacity Development Report and UNDP Capacity Development Scorecards**) concluded that there was a lack of human resources with professional capacity (as well as practical experience) within government at both national and at the local level among key line ministries and institutional stakeholders to implement frameworks, strategies and plans such as those developed under Outcome 1, for mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism, including for conservation financing. Similarly, local communities lack the basic understanding of ecotourism development and potential in order to be able to make informed decisions that could improve their livelihoods. There are a total of at least 65 universities, 55 colleges and 75 vocational schools that provide trainings in tourism management and travel services that equip students with the knowledge and skills to help them succeed as managers, directors of travel businesses, hotels, and restaurants. The formal tourism service and hospitality training system in Vietnam however, suffers from a variety of shortcomings, such as overly	The GEF investment will result in a transformational improvement in capacity among national and demonstration landscape-level stakeholders (including government, private sector and local communities) towards a deeper awareness and appreciation of biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism. A bespoke and multi-pronged training programme will be established directly to national level stakeholders (Output 3.5) from key governmental and private sector organizations as well as to local stakeholders in the demonstration landscape, according to the individual needs and gaps of each target audience. The GEF investment will improve tourism occupational standards in Vietnam and ensure that VNAT adopts training content and updates its curriculum to integrate biodiversity and nature-based tourism requirements and essential hospitality skills, that have not been officially recognized by the MOCST. High-quality vetted and standardized professional train-the-trainer programmes will be developed focusing on the middle and high	Increased support for biodiversity conservation among tourism operators, visiting tourists and engaged communities through increased awareness, capacity development and sharing of best practices and knowledge management. Shifts in behavior and mindset for reduced demand for illegal and endangered wildlife products for local and tourism consumption in Vietnam.

[162] Truong, Dao & Hall, Colin. (2015). Promoting voluntary behavior change for sustainable tourism. The potential role of social marketing.

[163] Wallen KE, Daut EF (2018). The challenge and opportunity of behavior change methods and frameworks to reduce demand for illegal wildlife. Nature Conservation 26: 55-75.

theoretical education, poor integration of environmental and biodiversity considerations, sub-optimal quality of trainers and outdated curricula. The formal tour guide training is of rather low quality, as trainers miss practical experience. Graduates seem to be particularly weak in destination knowledge, history, culture, environmental issues and work ethics. The Vietnam Tourism Occupational Standards (VTOS), have also defined training content and approach of 13 hospitality skills, have not been officially recognized by the MOCST. In addition, there is a need for high-quality professional train-the-trainer programmes at the middle and high management level of hospitality enterprises that are underutilized. This results in a low quality of the tour guide labour force based on the limited number of subjects taught and is not aligned with the needs and underpinnings required for an emerging nature-based tourism segment, also leading to the entrenchment of staff from other enterprises and low-quality services overall. Trainings at the local level on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector are almost non-existent except for short courses offered by environmental NGOs or donor-funded projects, which are ad-hoc and funding dependent. The result is limited knowledge within the tourism sector at both national and local levels on environmental and community considerations, leading to inadequate practices, particularly related to biodiversity conservation and community engagement. Tourism and related enterprises also have limited awareness of biodiversity-friendly practices and ways in which their operations can impact and enhance biodiversity protection, as well as improve overall visitor awareness on protecting biodiversity. Groups such as the Responsible Tourism Club (RTC) of Vietnam engage in training to promote responsible tourism principles but have limited reach at the provincial level. It is estimated the tourism sector needs an additional 40,000 workers on a yearly basis, but produces only 15,000 graduates, who mostly receive low quality training and therefore lack skills and practical experience.	management level of hospitality enterprises. The project will nurture the adoption of responsible tourism principles and ensure integration within private sector operations (Outputs 3.1 and 3.4). Through the project, tourism and related enterprises will integrate biodiversity-friendly practices to enhance biodiversity protection, improve visitor awareness and behavior change and participation in actions that protect biodiversity. The GEF investment will pilot PPPs - using the framework and principles developed under Component 1 - that provide opportunities to promote nature-based tourism and related services that enhance creation and recovery of jobs (Output 3.1) and local communities will be afforded an opportunity to integrate into the formal tourism economy through the facilitation of scholarships, certifications and incentives for private sector enterprises to hire and absorb local communities and ethnic minorities into the formal economy and tourism sector (Output 3.3). The project will also shift towards more sustainable purchasing behaviors among tourists in parallel with reduced unsustainable tour offerings and products among travel sector reduces the potential for Vietnam to be a destination for unsustainable and illegal wildlife tourism (Output 3.2). Community outreach to shift attitudes and create social pressures for deterred involvement in poaching and trafficking of wildlife and increased awareness of the benefits of nature-based tourism, and payment for environmental services (Output 3.3).	

Therefore the formal hospitality training system in Vietnam has poor capacity to cope with this traveller growth and entailing demand increase in a responsible and sustainable manner. There is also currently a lack of adequate vocational training and employment opportunities for local communities and entrepreneurs in tourism in Vietnam, with local communities and ethnic minorities mostly engaged in an informal economy providing low-quality products and services in the periphery of tourism operations. Vietnam's future tourism growth is expected to come from international markets, and specifically Asia. The majority of Vietnam's international tourists come from Asian countries, with those from China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan accounting for around 80 percent of Vietnam's foreign tourism spending. Vietnam's strong economic ties with these countries could lead to a relatively fast tourism-industry recovery compared with other key tourist destinations in Europe and North America. Without sustained investment in awareness and behavior change, there is concern that the status quo will fuel demand for, consumption of and purchase of endangered wildlife, products or wildlife parts, as well as destruction of natural assets. Local stakeholders have limited awareness of biodiversity values, nature-based tourism opportunities and lack the required skills to develop and operate tourism that meets required standards and ensure objectives of different stakeholders and within acceptable ecological limits. With insufficient livelihood opportunities they are drawn into unsustainable hunting and into the illegal wildlife trade.		

203. The key deliverables under Outcome 3 are:

Output 3.1: Advocacy with travel and tourism sector to encourage promotion of responsible nature-based tourism and biodiversity conservation.

204. This Output will seek to facilitate more sustainable behaviors and practices among tour operators, hotels and tour associations through advocacy for the adoption of responsible tourism practices (e.g., pledges of 'biodiversity friendly' practices and commitments to go 'illegal wildlife free') and adherence to Codes of Conduct. In this regard, it will promote responsible tourism best practice guidelines that will be developed with project support including for promotion of: (i) best practice guidelines and codes of conduct for ensuring sustainable biodiversity-link tourist products and services and (ii) 'green tourism' network to

promote uptake of responsible travel practices and create networking and marketing opportunities for nature-based tourism. The project will also demonstrate a 'green tourism' and 'nature protection', or 'biodiversity conservation' or 'wildlife friend' network approach to bring together tour operators at a provincial level to jointly adopt more responsible tour practices, share lessons, and create social norms and pressure that facilitates increasing adoption of responsible tourism practices.

205. Indicative activities under Output 3.1 include:

3.1.1 Augment principles and proposed guidelines by MOCST in line with biodiversity conservation best practice. Currently these principles are theoretical but there is a need for them to be grounded in experience and data, rather than aspirational.

3.1.2 Expansion of awareness of and training of responsible tourism principles to cover all of Vietnam, with an explicit focus on incrementally establishing a green tourism network of a responsible-minded travel and tourism sector stakeholders that prioritize nature-based tourism and wildlife / biodiversity conservation.

3.1.3 Establish consensus on code of conduct and guidelines through engagement with Vietnam tourism association – and different branches under their umbrella, as well as provincial departments of tourism, culture and sport.

3.1.4 Piloting of PPP and community engagement and incentive mechanism developed under Component 1 for behavior change among tour enterprises at national level.

206. Indicative activity 3.1.2 involves the expansion of awareness of and training of responsible tourism principles with a focus on incrementally establishing a green tourism network. The training programs/workshops developed under this activity will be designed to take account of all relevant standards and principles of the SES. Relevant SES-related information will be built into these training workshops themselves to ensure that the participants and informed of how the SES can guide best practice in implementing the principles that the trainings emphasize.

Output 3.2: Targeted social and behavioral change communications and initiatives for domestic and international tourists aiming to influence the purchase, use and trafficking of illegal wildlife products and promote more positive attitudes towards wildlife and nature conservation.

207. Tourist-facing social and behavioral change communications, social marketing and strategic initiatives will be developed to deter tourist engagement in destructive activities in sensitive sites (coral reefs, mangroves, endangered species habitats, etc.) as well as activities such as poaching, purchase, trade and consumption of endangered wildlife or wildlife parts as well as destruction of natural assets. A mix of approaches will be used including advocacy, social mobilization, behavior change communication and incentives that leverage gamification techniques. Target audiences will include domestic and international tourists, including Chinese citizens travelling for ivory purchase and medicines.

208. According to pre-pandemic market surveys, Chinese tourist demand in particular, has been an important driver of the wildlife trade in the mainland Southeast Asian countries. Though demand for wildlife parts remains a distinctly minority taste, the sheer number of Chinese tourists visiting the lower Mekong countries - around 20 million per year, prior to the pandemic - has created a strong pool of demand for endangered wildlife. These include exotic meats, known in Chinese as yewei, or "wild taste," luxury knick-knacks carved from ivory, and wildlife products believed to have potent medicinal properties[164] [165]. Recovery forecasts and scenarios underscore the need to tackle this issue as illustrated in the figures below.

[164] Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Lower Mekong (June 2021). TRAFFIC.
[165] UNODC, World Wildlife Crime Report 2020: Trafficking in Protected Species.

Figure 27: Number of Inbound Arrivals to Vietnam by Top Source Markets in 2019 (in millions)



Source: McKinsey & Company

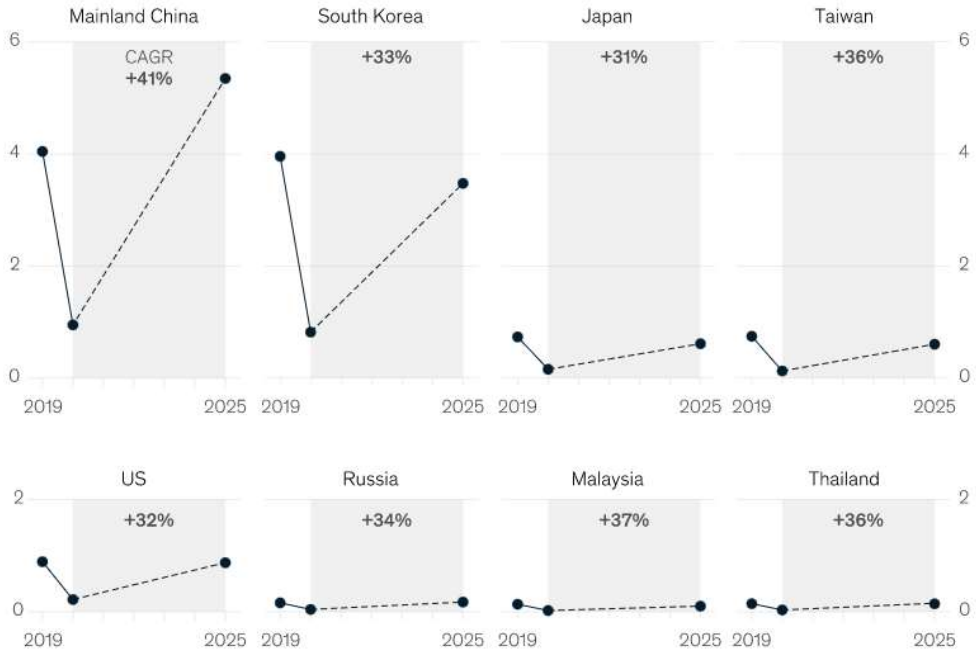
Figure 28: Inbound Arrivals and Outbound Departures by Percentage

2019	2020
1. China **29%**	1. South Korea **23%**
2. South Korea **25%**	2. China **23%**
3. Japan **6%**	3. Russian Federation **9%**
4. Taiwan, China **5%**	4. Japan **6%**
5. United States **4%**	5. Taiwan, China **5%**
Rest of world 30%	**Rest of world 34%**

2019	2020
1. China **27%**	1. Laos **21%**
2. Thailand **13%**	2. China **17%**
3. Cambodia **11%**	3. Cambodia **14%**
4. Laos **10%**	4. Japan **9%**
5. South Korea **7%**	5. Thailand **8%**
Rest of world 32%	**Rest of world 31%**

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council, 2021 Annual Research Report

Figure 29. Projected Inbound Tourism Expenditure by Recovery Model Scenarios



Source: McKinsey & Company

209. The targeted efforts will include a number of educational and social media tools to promote changes in visitor attitudes, including production of leaflets, brochures, media campaigns, installation of sign boards in sensitive sites, promotion of awareness campaigns, training of tour operators in responsible behavior and development of guidelines for acceptable tourism behavior in different ecological habitats.

210. Indicative activities under Output 3.2 include:

3.2.1 Survey and assessment on consumptive habits and purchases to establish a baseline on consumer insights in the context of the illegal wildlife trade chain to inform and underpin messaging and awareness campaigns. Based on results, develop proposed recommendations on awareness/social norms/behavior of visitors and tourism operators on environment and wildlife/biodiversity protection.

3.2.2 Develop a strategy for changing in social norms and behavior to promote society's acceptance of a more sustainable approach to nature-based tourism that protects wildlife / biodiversity.

3.2.3 Address gaps in endangered species management legal documents (including Decree No. 160/2013/ND-CP, Decree No. 64/2019/ND-CP) and the Red Data Book of Vietnam[166] by updating guidelines for the harmonization of species under the IUCN Red List, under CITES appendices, as well as flagship species being targeted for improving biodiversity conservation.

3.2.4 Enhance law enforcement efforts targeting illegal wildlife traders and intermediaries with the objective of increasing detection rate, arrests and prosecution.

3.2.5 Creation and installation of signboards, especially in sensitive marine environments at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park, at airports, hotels and within communities in buffer zones in concert with activities under Output 2.3 (activity 2.3.4) and Output 2.4 (activity 2.4.7).

3.2.6 Development and implementation of communication material and campaigns (radio, commercials), also integrating the need to mainstream marine protected species. Awareness needed in the city campaigns focus on the demand – behavior change campaigns and other awareness of penal code on trafficking and consumption activities. Linkages will be made with activities 2.3.2, 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 supporting integrated into mobile-enabled apps.

3.2.7 A photo, drawing, poem, play competition among communities, organizations (women's union, farmer associations), university, secondary and elementary students, at both national level and at site level to bring attention to key biodiversity issues.

Output 3.3: Community outreach to shift attitudes and create social pressures for deterred involvement in poaching and trafficking of wildlife and increased awareness of the benefits of nature-based tourism, and payment for environmental services.

211. This Output will promote behavioral shifts among communities at two targeted PAs, through outreach by adopting SBCC principles that aim to prevent and deter participation in poaching, forest offences and trafficking of illegal wildlife and forest products, as well as consumption of endangered wildlife or wildlife parts as well as destruction of natural assets through inappropriate behavior[167,168]. A mix of approaches will be used including advocacy, social mobilization and behavior change communication. This Output will be enhanced by targeted capacity building and awareness aimed at increasing awareness and acceptance of the benefits of application of nature-based tourism practices, ensuring implementation of acceptable tourism practices to protect natural assets and increasing community-level awareness of payment for environmental services from forest and marine resource conservation.

[166] Ministry of Science and Technology, and Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (2007). Vietnam Red Data Book. Part 1. Animals. Science and Technology Publishing House, Hanoi, Vietnam.
[167] Olmedo, A., Sharif, V. and Milner-Gulland (2018). Evaluating the design of behavior change interventions: A case study of rhino horn in Vietnam. Conservation Letters 11(1): 1-9.
[168] TRAFFIC and BIT (2019). Reducing Demand for Illegal Wildlife: Designing effective messaging. TRAFFIC.

212. Through a combination of strategic communications, social marketing and capacity building, this Output has been designed to ensure positive impacts that can be scaled for wildlife and is counterpoint to hard enforcement actions under Component 2. Engagement with communities is central under the theoretical framework described above, as the project must understand motivations for illegal behavior and develop approaches that reduce the need and desirability of these activities. Gender analysis is also relevant, with hunters being predominantly male, and informal guardians more likely to be female - gender power imbalances are important to address to achieve success here.

213. Indicative activities under Output 3.3 include:

3.3.1 Engage and work with local communities and rangers at the two targeted PAs to raise awareness on the laws and penalties regarding poaching and trafficking of illegal wildlife. Trade-in program: guns and traps in exchange for seeds, fertilizer and livestock, as well as technical knowledge supported by communications and strategic messaging, with a focus on helping safeguard important ecosystem services, such as soil and water conservation, thus securing livelihoods for local populations, including subsistence farmers and generating NTFPs in degraded lands and forest areas within the densely populated buffer zones in each National Park.

This activity will also raise awareness on the implications of illegal logging, poaching and unsustainable hunting from a biodiversity perspective. Awareness on the importance of flagship species within the national park and importance of corridors within wider landscapes and the parallel benefits that accrue.

3.3.2 Based on activity 2.5.2, streamline and clarify distribution of environmental and forest fees collected earmarked to local communities at the two targeted PAs and establish a transparent and simplified payment and benefit mechanism in realizing current policy and regulation(s) (see **Annex 21: Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services Baseline Analysis**).

3.3.3 Set up an informant network and anonymous local hotlines at the two targeted PAs on the basis of and learning from successful models in the region and linkages to the Global Wildlife Program, as well as building on the work of community-based organization (CBOs).

Output 3.4: Tourism and related enterprises integrate biodiversity-friendly practices to enhance biodiversity protection, improve visitor awareness and behavior change and participation in actions that protect biodiversity.

214. As an extension to Output 3.1, the project will support targeted efforts at integrating biodiversity-friendly practices and activities in hotels and tourism enterprises to demonstrate a holistic and integrated approach to improving their overall environmental management. This would require these enterprises, particularly the hotels to grasp emerging opportunities based on biodiversity and ecosystem service (BES), securing cost effective management options, develop new and biodiversity-friendly products and services and help them integrate BES in their business strategy and actions, reduce demand for illegal wildlife products and unsustainable natural resources (fish, seafood, harvest practices, forest products, etc.) as well as measures. The project will promote programs to improve staff and service provider awareness and responsibility for better stewardship of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation through environmental courses for conduct of responsible diving/snorkelling/water sports to create awareness of the impact of tourism on the coral reef ecosystem and marine environment and easy practices that could be introduced to reduce their impacts.

215. To complement this program, the project will support the development/strengthening of guidelines to integrate biodiversity considerations in tourism service activities, such as in hotel gardening (fertilizer and pesticide use indoors and outdoors), in landscaping and species choices to promote native vegetation, waste management and garbage disposal, beach clean-up, recycling, composting, shore management, etc. The project can provide supplementary materials and best practices that can be used by hotel management to help staff become more aware of the need for environmental stewardship and to recognize the linkages between good environmental ethics and tourism benefits. In addition, workshops will be conducted to encourage hotels to recognize the benefits of sourcing from sustainable food producers. It will also promote improved guest and visitor awareness and experiences through development and promotion of education and awareness activities to inform them on behavior and measures they can take to protect biodiversity and the natural environment around the tourist

sites. Additionally, the project will work to introduce (either existing and new) 'green' tourism certification schemes developed under Component 1 for hotels, guesthouses and tourism service providers, as well as opportunities for the private sector to participate directly in conservation action and/or support community programs of conservation and livelihood development.

216. Indicative activities under Output 3.4 include:

3.4.1 Build awareness and conduct training on species identification app under Component 2 combined with workshops to identify use cases.

3.4.2 Develop / amend certification system of tour guides to include nature protection and biodiversity as a criterion to be assessed in certification exams and to modify curriculum.

3.4.3 Impact assessment of tour operators and hotel operations within the two targeted PAs against guidelines. Develop and strengthen voluntary guidelines to integrate biodiversity considerations in tourism service activities, such as in hotel gardening (fertilizer and pesticide use indoors and outdoors), in landscaping and species choices to promote native vegetation, waste management and garbage disposal, beach clean-up, recycling, composting, shore management, catering (using more responsibility and locally sourced foods), sustainability of toiletries and value chain purchases.

3.4.4 Awareness raising of certifications / codes of conduct, gaps identified in the audit against voluntary guidelines and working with service industry on implementing remedial measures. Dependencies will be made with corresponding activities under Outputs 2.5 and 3.1.

Output 3.5: Institutional capacity building and training of national and local stakeholders to integrate and mainstream biodiversity in nature-based tourism planning, monitoring, implementation and enforcement.

217. In terms of nature conservation, the unsustainable development of the tourism industry is considered a major threat to biodiversity conservation and relevant sectors due to notable gaps in adequate knowledge and understanding of biodiversity values (see **Annex 14: Capacity Development Report and UNDP Capacity Development Scorecards**). There are also a lack of tools, mechanisms and guidelines on managing the sustainable use of biodiversity in tourism sector. Enhanced institutional and professional capacity is an essential pillar to the project's intervention logic and is at the core of its success, not only to mainstream the opportunities of nature-based tourism into biodiversity conservation and wider tourism sector, but also engineer a new paradigm for tourism in Vietnam that can deliver responsible growth.

218. Following consultations with stakeholders during the PPG phase, training / capacity building will be facilitated and delivered in the following manner:

- At the national level through the government agencies and universities to build in biodiversity conservation modules and conduct training program for trainers;
- Support the Tourism Authority of Vietnam to effectively communicate and raise public awareness nation-wide about nature-based tourism and sustainable tourism to create new paradigm of tourism in Vietnam;
- Conduct the Training Needs Assessment around protected areas that enhance mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism industry;
- Engage the tourism sector associates to improve and enhance their understanding, skills and capacity to deliver support to biodiversity conservation;
- Awareness building at the local level and two national parks by experts or relevant agencies;
- Support the establishment of training outreach to cover demonstration landscape areas in two provinces;
- Support independent tourism associations like VNAT to strengthen coordination and partnerships between tourism stakeholders for promotion of sustainability in overall tourism development in the Vietnam.

219. Indicative activities under Output 3.5 include:

3.5.1 Design and deliver an awareness raising program among tourism stakeholders on the importance of biodiversity and different ecosystems to tourism industry and the roles of protected area in safeguarding environment and improving local livelihood, as well as about the importance of ecological and social impact assessment and monitoring.

This activity will also establish and equip marine protection volunteer group / clubs with promotional material for tourists, encouraging them to assist with marine clean-up, removal and prevention of plastic waste. Plastic waste will be collected for re-use and upcycling into tourism products and souvenirs.

3.5.2 Training national and provincial stakeholders within different sectors on the interpretation of guidelines, criteria and requirements, as well as how to use EIA / SEA in sectoral, development and tourism planning.

3.5.3 Communication and raising public awareness about nature-based tourism or biodiversity-based tourism to create new paradigm of tourism in nature reserves (PAs).

3.5.4 Training to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of protected area management (for other PAs nationwide). This activity will develop standard curriculum on management and conservation effectiveness leveraging the methodologies and classification system developed under activity 1.2.7 for Vietnam for national institutionalization of this new methodology.

3.5.5 Conduct specialized standardized trainings on nature-based tourism or biodiversity-based tourism activities, including 1) Bird watching, 2) Primate watching, 3) Butterfly watching, 4) Wild flower watching, 5) Forest trekking, 6) Cave and Rock climbing, 7) mountain biking, 8) Eco-lodging, 9) Eco-Camp, 10) boating service, 11) Foraging of edible plants and identification traditional medicinal plants, etc.

3.5.6 Publicize and standardize methodologies for tourism ecological and social impact assessment and monitoring developed for nature-based tourism/ biodiversity- based tourism in PAs and high-biodiversity areas across landscapes based on international best practices.

3.5.7 Conduct international exchanges on knowledge in wildlife/biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism.

Component 4: Marketing, knowledge management and M&E

220. Finally, Component 4 which is comprised of 3 Outputs in its WBS will strengthen marketing networks and knowledge exchange to help Vietnam become better-known as a premier travel destination for its nature-based tourism and also support the replication and upscaling of project approaches, interventions and outputs.

Total Cost: $ 8,063,669; **GEF project grant requested:** $ 514,858; **Co-financing:** $ 7,548,811

Outcome 4: Up scaling and replication of nature-based tourism in Vietnam is supported by effective marketing, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation of results.

Table 28: Incremental Cost Reasoning – Component 4

Summary of baseline situation	Incremental reasoning	Global Environmental Benefits
Component 4: Marketing, knowledge management and M&E		
Sustainable nature-based tourism development in Vietnam is also impeded by a lack of awareness of its potential as a premier nature destination and knowledge of its unique resource endowments and biodiversity. This is largely attributed to insufficient marketing. Upscaling of successful approaches is limited by lack of replication mechanisms and knowledge exchange across different provinces within the	The GEF investment will catalyze bespoke marketing strategies, informational materials and campaigns targeting international and domestic audiences on promoting the quality and diversity of nature- based tourism products, services and offerings at demonstration PAs developed and disseminated across tourism platforms in Vietnam and abroad easily accessible to domestic	Vietnam recognized and positioned as a sought-after nature-based tourism destination.

country and within the region. This challenge will continue to constrain the proliferation of sustainable tourism practices if it is not remedied. Domestic and international tourists and tour operators have limited access and knowledge of nature-based tourism products offered by local communities. Without intervention, nature- -based tourism products will be marginalized and unprofitable, as consumers and businesses will not be aware that they are available.	and international tourists (Output 4.1). Project knowledge management will put in place a mechanism to capture and share lessons and best practices from nature-based tourism facilitating replication across Vietnam. This will lead to enhanced awareness and greater support for tested models of biodiversity conservation integrated with tourism, as well as benefits that can accrue at local level through community engagement and integration into the tourism sector (Output 4.2). The GEF project will design and implement systems and processes to ensure rigorous monitoring and evaluation (Output 4.3), knowledge management and gender mainstreaming are undertaken at regular intervals to facilitate upscaling and replication.	

221. The key deliverables under Outcome 4 are:

Output 4.1: Marketing strategies and informational materials for promoting the quality and diversity of nature- based tourism at demonstration PAs developed and disseminated across tourism platforms in Vietnam and abroad.

222. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, traveler's interest in sustainable tourism products that also support biodiversity and local communities has grown. People are becoming more aware and appreciative of the value of nature and wildlife and the need to steward these resources. They are drawn to natural destinations to escape lockdowns and to improve mental health, and they are easily amenable to social distancing. This is expected to lead to more demand for close-up and purposeful experiences with nature. Amid the post-pandemic recovery, travel seems poised to re-emerge with experiences that include immersion in nature and new cultures, staying active and visiting remote communities[169].

223. However, domestic and international tourists and tour operators have limited access and knowledge of nature-based tourism products and services offered by national parks and local communities. Without intervention, nature-based tourism products will continue to be marginalized and unprofitable, as consumers and businesses will not be aware that they are available. The project will establish and strengthen marketing channels to businesses and tourists for nature-based tourism in viable originating international and domestic markets, including business linkages with tour operator packages and online systems. Marketing strategies and promotional materials will be developed to showcase nature-based tourism opportunities at demonstration PAs and disseminated across national, regional and international tourism platforms.

224. Even before the pandemic, consumer reliance on digital for travel-related bookings had been growing. In 2018, online travel activity made up 19 percent of the total tours and activity market size. The pandemic has made the adoption of mobile and digital tools even more essential. Strategic collaborations—such as online travel

[169] Spenceley, A. (2021). The future of nature-based tourism: Impacts of COVID-19 and paths to sustainability, Luc Hoffmann Institute.

agencies providing ticket-booking services via instant messaging and social-media platforms—could offer an opportunity for increased market penetration.

225. At the same time, travel companies should revamp their online touchpoints and experiences to improve customer experience. This is already starting to happen: the website of the VNAT has virtual tours for its most popular destinations, and some tour guides have organized real-time online tours for international customers. In addition, a commercial titled, "Why not Vietnam" aired on CNN in October 2020 to drive international traffic to the website, and on the domestic level, a reality show with the same name offered up weekly online travel photo contests to engage viewers. These resulted in an uptick in travel to popular destinations.

226. Furthermore, companies could also think about placing digital tools in new places within the customer journey. They must recognize that factors promoting customer loyalty may have changed; near-term uncertainty may mean, for example, that the ability to cancel a reservation matters more than brand choice or price. Taking this into account, companies could empower customers to build their own itineraries using connected digital tools that make it easier for them to modify or cancel their plans. Solutions and policies that provide choice and control will help build the long-term trust and confidence necessary to get travelers back on the road and in the air.

227. Indicative activities under Output 4.1 include:

4.1.1 Assist nature-based tourism companies and tour operators to register their products and services with online travel agents that have the functionality to profile sustainable actors.

4.1.2 Collaborate with online travel magazines, blogs and podcasts to periodically showcase nature-based tourism offerings and products.

4.1.3 Integrate nature-based tourism products and activities into local tour operator itineraries, by organizing familiarization workshops/trips for tour operators, major hotels in the project landscapes. Establishing a Greentour network/system and promoting tourist attractions.

4.1.4 Provide technical guidance and mentorship to tour operators to develop and monetize virtual tours for nature-based tourism products, allowing them to supply COVID-19 safe experiences while diversifying their revenue streams. Embed biodiversity conservation and climate change awareness messages within the virtual tours.

4.1.5 Establish an online virtual tour platform, to collect revenues from virtual experiences and allocate to nature-based tourism products in the project landscape.

4.1.6 Cooperation with organizations, including religious associations, national and international carriers, cellphone apps companies, etc. in Vietnam, and with influencers via social media, to improve market access of products and services supported under Component 2.

Output 4.2: Knowledge exchange platform developed for sharing of experiences for replication of nature-based tourism planning and management models.

228. The project will establish processes to share knowledge and best practices between the project sites, and from the project sites with other national tourism areas with high biodiversity in Vietnam, as well as across other countries by focusing on platforms that allow for two-way dissemination from global-to-site level and vice versa, as part of the effort to promote replication of successful models. In particular, this Output will entail: (a) improving dialogue with other provincial authorities; (b) strengthening awareness and improving capacity; and (c) developing best practice manuals and handbooks. As part of the effort to promote replication, the project will provide training, site visits and technical support to survey potential other PAs for promotion of best practices and lessons emanating from the project. The potential for replication of the project approach by the

government to other high biodiversity areas that attract tourists will be assessed during the PPG with government counterparts, and an associated plan will be developed.[170]

229. Indicative activities under Output 4.2 include:

4.2.1 Develop a Knowledge Management Plan and Communications Strategy. Building on the KAP (see **Annex 24: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Framework**), and disseminate lessons via awareness materials from the demonstration landscape, including through different digital channels and databases both provincially, nationally and within the region.

4.2.2 Establish a one-stop project "digital front door / website" and multichannel presence, including on social media on nature-based tourism, hosted by MAE, that will be sustained for the duration of the project, and will continue to be used by MAE subsequently. As part of the project's website, create and operate a national multi-lingual webpage on Vietnam's nature and biodiversity, aiming at promoting the country's natural image to the whole world.

4.2.3 Support the establishment of a national exhibition and exhibition center on nature and biodiversity for multi-purpose protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity, awareness raising, education, tourist attraction and scientific research activities.

4.2.4 Identify, review and systematically document lessons learnt, developing knowledge products such as horizon scans and for the PANORAMA platform (Outcome 4, Indicator 19) from the demonstration landscape to be shared with project stakeholders and also a wider audience at the regional level and globally. The project will also conduct landscape and national level workshops on nature-based tourism development, biodiversity conservation, and solid waste disposal (including single use plastic) to share project lessons with stakeholders, including gender mainstreaming and women's leadership. These will collectively be used as inputs to inform the development of a replication / upscaling strategy (see **Project Results Framework Outcome 4, Indicator 20**).

4.2.5 Conduct an annual provincial coordination and innovation forum on nature-based tourism from year 2, led by NPs with support from DOCST/or DOT[171].

4.2.6 Collaborate with the Global Wildlife Program (GWP) on knowledge sharing and on potential participation in relevant GWP events; Host a regional online conference on best practices in nature-based tourism in Vietnam and Asia, to share experiences and knowledge about systems supported by the project.

Output 4.3: M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management.

230. Implementation of project-based M&E including gender mainstreaming and social and environmental safeguards will ensure adaptive management and maximum project impact. Hold at least two Project Steering Committee meetings per year.

231. Indicative activities under Output 4.3 include:

4.3.1 Convene project inception workshop and compile inception workshop report within the first 60 days of the project.

4.3.2 Annual Work Plan (AWP) preparation and monitoring of indicators in project results framework for adaptive management including annual lesson learning session among project stakeholders.

4.3.3 Support the monitoring of project implementation, which includes completion of annual PIR review of annual work plan implementation status for adaptive management of project activities.

[170] The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)/Decision No.149/2021/Q-TTg aims at having 80% of PAs and natural heritage sites nationwide with ecotourism operations benefiting local communities.
[171] DOCST in Khanh Hoa province, DOT in Quang Tri Province.

4.3.4 Develop gender auditing scoring tool / rubric with rating and manual and conduct gender auditing analysis of the project at baseline, mid-term and end of project, in addition to annual implementation review of the the SESP, national ESIA/ESMP, EMPF/EMPP, and Gender Action Plan, while ensuring completion of sensitization workshops on gender and other safeguards for the Project Management Unit and executing partners.

4.3.5 Conduct KAP survey towards conservation and biodiversity mainstreaming in nature-based tourism to assess KAP baselines (Year 1) and target achievement (Year 5).

4.3.6 Conduct independent Mid-term Review (MTR) in line with UNDP/GEF requirements and incorporate recommendations of MTR into revised project plans (management response) following PSC's approval.

4.3.7 Prepare a project completion report to compile project results and lessons learned, to inform the Terminal Evaluation.

4.3.8 Conduct independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) in line with UNDP/GEF requirements.

4.3.9 Review and update METT and Capacity Development Scorecard with identified national ministries and with PAs at project start, at Mid-term (Year 3) and end of project (Year 5) (see **Annex 13: METT and Annex 14: Capacity Development Report and UNDP Capacity Development Scorecards**).

Global Environmental Benefits:

232. The project will contribute to delivery of global environmental benefits through:

- Reduced impacts of national tourism industry on biodiversity assets – including PAs, critical habitats such as coral reefs and tropical forest, and globally threatened species present in tourism areas;
- Increased financial support for biodiversity conservation from the tourism sector, benefiting PA management and species conservation;
- Increased support for biodiversity conservation within the tourism industry through increased awareness, capacity development and integration of biodiversity into tourism industry standards;
- Improved tourism management and revenue generation benefiting over 145,414 ha of terrestrial PAs at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks; benefitting 7,352 ha of marine PAs at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park; and indirectly benefitting 45,802 ha of adjacent landscapes to the targeted PAs;
- Reduction of threats from tourism development to biodiversity through adoption and enforcement of industry requirements, guidelines, standards and impact monitoring at critical sites within the two landscapes;
- Improved nature-based tourism opportunities and options within PAs strengthens revenue generation and management, supporting the conservation of globally threatened species, including Silver-backed Chevrotain (DD), Black-shanked douc (CR), Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (CR), Hatinh Langur (EN), Crested argus (CR), Cao Van Sung bent-toed gecko (EN) and Green turtle (EN);
- Increased recognition and awareness of the need to support for biodiversity conservation within business operations among tourism operators, among visiting tourists and engaged communities through increased awareness, capacity development and sharing of best practices and knowledge management;
- A shift in tourist purchasing preferences away from illegal wildlife and unsustainable and destructive tourism practices, towards supporting demand for pristine and low impact tourism products and services;
- Reduction of 15,704,236 (tCO_2-e) through improved management effectiveness of targeted PAs and improved management of biodiversity in the targeted production landscape.

Table 29: Project's Contribution to GEF 7 Core Indicators

Project Core Indicators		**Expected at CEO Endorsement**
1	**Terrestrial protected areas** created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)	145,414

2	**Marine protected areas** created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)	7,352
4	Area of **landscapes under improved practices** (excluding protected areas)(Hectares)	45,802
6	**Greenhouse gas** emission mitigated (tCO_2-e)	-15,704,236
11	Number of **direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender** as co-benefit of GEF investment	3,000 people (1,319 Female, 44%)

Partnerships:

233. The project will bridge current gaps in communication and promote collaboration within and between different sectors of government at national and landscape level, with complementary projects, NGOs, the private sector and local communities, including women and ethnic minority groups. Linkages and collaboration will be established and/or strengthened through consultations, networking, BES Platform and multi-sectoral provincial level platform, training, technical advice, information sharing and joint strategic planning and implementation to ensure the delivery and achievement of the project objective. The mechanisms by which existing partnerships will be strengthened and new partnerships will be nurtured are as follows:

234. National level partnerships:

e) The project will be led by MAE, as the government agency responsible for promoting conservation of biodiversity - through aggregation of existing experiences and lessons from past and ongoing initiatives at both the national and landscape level – for improving local community knowledge of best practice for sustainable production, and enhancing nature-based economic development.

a) One of main pillars of Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg on Vietnam's Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 is the fostering and promotion of new partnerships through inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral mainstreaming. Within the strategy:

- There is a recognition that fully realizing organizational mandates and policies for tourism development will require the "promotion of public-private partnerships and governance models that integrate public and private sectors, entrepreneurs and local communities in sustainable tourism development; establish conditions to create a favorable business environment, stimulate innovation, start a business, develop business force, form many tourism businesses with strong brands; supporting small and medium enterprises and tourism business households to acquire new technology, digital skills and access to finance".

f) The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) will assume the prime responsibility for, and coordinate with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in managing the use of tourism resources, protecting the environment, conserving biodiversity, and responding to climate change. and natural disaster prevention; propose mechanisms and policies to develop tourism in association with natural resource protection, environment and sustainable development, ensuring that it fully meets the United Nations' sustainable development goals;

g) The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) will assume the prime responsibility for, and coordinate with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in integrating tourism development contents into the national target program on new rural construction; building agricultural products, developing models of clean agriculture, high-tech agriculture associated with tourism development; coordinate with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in researching and formulating mechanisms and policies for the development of eco-tourism and community-based tourism in national parks and nature reserves.

b) Vietnam's Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 calls for inter-sectoral and inter-regional coordination in tourism to improve the operational efficiency of the State Steering Committee on Tourism and the Provincial Steering Committee for Tourism Development, albeit these governance structures are either in the early stages of gestation or altogether inactive. Through implementation of

the project, this objective will be made possible through the establishment and operationalization of (i) the BES Platform (Output 1.1); and (ii) the provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform (Output 2.1). In addition to these formal multi-partner coordinating mechanisms, the project will also collaborate closely on a bilateral and day to day basis with numerous partners, particularly the tourism associations, the nature conservation NGOs and past and/or ongoing initiatives (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Annex 1**). The Annual Work Planning (AWP) and budgeting exercise of the project at various levels will be a conduit for further strengthening the partnership and collaboration among the stakeholders.

235. Landscape level partnerships:

a) The provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform will co-exist and work to improve the maturity of the Provincial Steering Committee for Tourism Development and provide it with strategic guidance, ensuring continuity of coordination at the landscape level in Khanh Hoa and Quang Tri (see **Section VII Governance and Management Arrangements**).
b) The respective Management Boards under the Provincial People's Committee and under the Forest Protection Department will continue to support and finance the implementation of complementary efforts to address biodiversity conservation, responsible nature-based tourism development and sustainable livelihoods in the project landscape, in tandem with donors, CSOs and the private sector.

236. Regional and international partnerships:

a) Relationships will be established with other UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects in the region to capitalize on the potential for exchange visits (see activities 2.4.4, 2.4.6, 2.4.9, 2.6.5, 4.2.7 and 4.2.8) on issues pertaining to conservation-oriented tourism (GEF-7 project *"Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development"* (GEF Project ID: 10409) and GEF-7 project *"Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan"* (GEF Project ID: 10234)), as well as initiatives which have put in place robust SMART patrolling regimes, have successfully leveraged real-time data for decision-making, addressed HWC with local communities and managed to diversity PA financing through innovative revenue tools and performance-based incentives, such as the *"Transforming effectiveness of biodiversity conservation in priority Sumatran landscapes"* project (GEF Project ID: 4892), the *"Combatting Illegal and Unsustainable Trade in Endangered Species in Indonesia"* project (GEF Project ID: 9150) and the *"Enhancing the Effectiveness and Financial Sustainability of Protected Areas" project in Malaysia* (GEF Project ID: 3906)
b) While the project is **not** a child project of the GEF-7 Global Wildlife Program, it will nonetheless seek out participation in GWP knowledge-sharing events and platforms under Component 2 (Output 2.4) and Component 4 (Output 4.2) to learn more about curtailing the illegal wildlife trade, reducing unsustainable hunting and HWC models, as well as to disseminate lessons learned and project results and experiences globally, and use national platforms and processes. The support provided by the GWP will extend project partnerships to the international level and bring lessons and best practices to Vietnam through the GWP global knowledge platform. The project will also seek to have bilateral exchanges and partnerships with other GWP national projects as relevant (e.g., projects working on ecotourism, threat reduction and illegal wildlife trade).

237. Partnerships with the private sector:

a) The first tier of partnerships will include those private sector entities that will be invited to participate within the project's governance, specifically the BES Platform operationalized under Output 1.1 and the provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform established under Output 2.1.
b) The second tier of partnerships will include those private sector entities with whom each national park already has an ongoing relationship and ongoing program through concessions within the national parks. The project will engage, consult with and solicit input from these companies on the definition of new nature-based tourism guidelines, criteria and requirements under Component 1. Private sector entities will be invited to participate in project activities under Component 2 via competitive tender(s) for the development and management of the demonstration ecotourism products and services; enhancement of biodiversity criteria within existing and development of new certifications for nature-

based tourism offerings, as well as nurturing community- and women-owned businesses and absorption of local communities and ethnic minorities in tourism operations or any other service opportunities that may emerge within demonstration sites.

h) The third tier will include private sector tourism firms, professional tourism associations or outdoor activity / adventure companies from beyond the project demonstration landscapes who can be engaged in the commercial operation of or investments into nature-based products and services (e.g. investors in accommodations, sustainable transport, supplies, services or outdoor recreational activities), or that might benefit from improved environmental services relating to PMES within the demonstration landscape but have yet to forge relationships with the national park authorities or unable to gain traction within the tourism sector due to red tape, regulatory hurdles and bureaucratic requirements, prohibitive cost of licenses and fees for operations, or barriers due to high investments or standards that small- or medium-sized enterprises at local-level cannot match up as a result of the financial impacts and investment risk caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These could include products such as the operation of catch and release fishing, snorkelling, diving and sailing journeys at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park or opportunities for investments in new homestays or eco-lodges within the demonstration landscapes. The partnership model for the private sector will be based on a concessions framework or the lease or basis of fees developed under Component 1. Collectively, it is aimed that this form of private sector engagement would result into stimulating and creating around 1,800 green jobs (70% women). UNDP private sector due diligence processes will be adhered to for all project private sector partnerships, including potential co-financers.

c) Finally, through engagement with the private financial sector in activity 2.2.5, the project will work to ensure that local communities - and especially women and vulnerable groups – have access to tools and access to access microcredit to start and investing nature-based tourism enterprises.

Table 30: Overview of Private Sector Tour Companies at the Landscape Level[172]

Province / National Park	List of Tourism Companies
Quang Tri Province / Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park	Oxalis Adventure Jungle Boss Company Private Commercial and Tourism Company Viet Hung Truong Thinh Company Moc Nam Company Phong Nha Heritage Company
Khanh Hoa Province / Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park	Chu Lam Tour Company Beehive Adventure Company FDI South of Nui Chua Management Company Gia Viet Company Ninh Thuan Solar Power Company Phat Hoang Long Company Son Long Thuan Company

238. The Project Steering Committee and the Project Management Unit will ensure that these partnerships work effectively. UNDP, as the GEF Agency for this project and a development partner to Government, will play a central role in oversight of these partnerships and will liaise at the highest level with Government to ensure that the project fully delivers against its work plan and targets. The UNDP Country Office (CO) will provide oversight and quality assurance support, and the UNDP Regional Technical Adviser located in Bangkok will also provide support to the CO for oversight, monitoring and evaluation in accordance with GEF requirements (see **Section VII Governance and Management Arrangements)**.

239. While nature-based tourism is a relatively new and emerging segment of the tourism sector, there have been complimentary programs, projects and initiatives advancing a number of thematic areas of the project at the national and landscape level (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report - Annex 1** for a comprehensive table of partner baseline activities, as well as complimentary programs, projects and initiatives on which the project will build). The proposed project will coordinate with selected government programs and donor projects associated with them to generate positive results through combined action (where appropriate) and to share lessons learned and best practices.

240. In the context of the above, the project will collaborate with agencies on knowledge and lessons learned from important, recently completed projects (which are described in the table below and various sections of the project design), as well as ongoing and pipeline projects (usually assisted by donor/development partners). Collaboration with ongoing and pipeline projects would primarily aim to synergize planning and implementation with concerned projects in common sites. For projects without common sites, the main purpose is to build on each other's methodologies and share information needed for policy dialogue.

Table 31: Co-financing Summary Table Indirectly Linked to the Outputs

Co-financing source	Co-financing type	Co-financing amount	Included in project results?[173]	If yes, list the relevant outputs
Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE)	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	2,500,000.00	No	N/A
	Cash (Recurrent Expenditures)	291,918.00	Yes	Contributing as counterpart fund to cover project office rent; other operational costs; workshops and

[172] While the project consulted extensively during the design phase, private sector entities will be invited to participate in project activities in Year 1 through public tenders. All prospective private sector partners engaged during implementation will be expected to satisfy the requirements of UNDP's Policy on Due Diligence and Partnerships with the Private Sector (2013), complemented by application of the Private Sector Risk Assessment Tool (2016) and the Risk Assessment Tool Guidelines. Private Sector partners will also be expected to uphold the principles and standards of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards Policy and comply with all safeguards risk management plans that apply to the project.

[173] For the co-financing that is "in-kind", its contribution is considered not included in project results.

Co-financing source	Co-financing type	Co-financing amount	Included in project results?[173]	If yes, list the relevant outputs
				travels for NBCA/MAE staff members
Quang Tri Provincial People's Committee (QB PPC)	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	4,562,672.00	No	N/A
	Public investment (Investment Mobilized)	54,130,409.00	No	N/A
	Other (Investment Mobilized)	299,299.00	No	N/A
Khanh Hoa Provincial People's Committee (NT PPC)	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	1,737,725.00	No	N/A
	Public investment (Investment Mobilized)	28,048,039.00	No	N/A
United Nation Development Programme (UNDP)-Vietnam Country Office	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	200,000.00	No	N/A

Risks:

241. The identified project risks from the PIF, have been reviewed consultatively and augmented as part of the PPG, their overall rating and the mitigation actions required during project implementation are given in **Annex 5 in the UNDP Risk Register** and are listed in in the ensuing table. The assumptions on which these project risks depend are listed in the project's Theory of Change (**Table 19**), with assumptions applied to the project indicators also described in the Monitoring Plan for project indicators (Annex 27). Risks are only shown if their rating is considered to be Moderate, Substantial or High, with the exception of risks identified in **Annex 4: UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)**. As per standard UNDP requirements, the Project Director will monitor risks quarterly and report on the status of risks to the UNDP Country Office. The UNDP Country Office will record progress in the UNDP Risk Register (**Annex 5: UNDP Risk Register**). Risks in the UNDP risk register and SESP will be reported as critical when the impact and likelihood are high. Management responses to critical risks will also be reported to the GEF in the annual PIR.

242. The SESP was finalized during project preparation, as required by UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES). The SESP identified **15 risks** for this project that could have potential negative impacts in the absence of safeguards, of which 4 are rated as "SUBSTANTIAL", 10 "MODERATE" and 1 "LOW" also summarized in the table below (see also additional details provided in **Annex 4: UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)**.

Table 32: Description of SESP and project risks, impact and probability and mitigation measures

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
Social and Environmental Risks				
Risk 1: Given the presence of ethnic minorities in both PA sites, certain key project outputs/components will require the informed consent (FPIC) of ethnic minorities before the implementation of these activities. This is particularly the case for project supported activities on the development of local nature-based tourism products and experiences, as well as participation during project design and the implementation.	Substantial	I = 4; L = 3	**Management:** An Indigenous People/Ethnic Minorities Planning Framework (IPPF/EMPF) with FPIC procedures has been developed during the PPG, following consultations with EMs in the two proposed PA sites. The framework outlines measures for issues such as appropriate nature-based tourism and livelihood activities that are culturally appropriate, how to ensure appropriate resource use and benefit sharing and recognize ethnic community rights to ecosystem-based forest, marine and land management, etc. A GRM has also been developed during the PPG phase that serves as a mechanism to ensure that ethnic minority concerns are heard during project implementation and conflict is resolved. As per UNDP policy, guidelines, and toolkit on SES, the IPPF and the GRM are included in the ESMF. The development of a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been undertaken at PPG stage. The SEP identifies culturally appropriate means of participation of stakeholders in project design, management and monitoring and ensures that such measures are inclusive, participatory, and transparent.	NPD
Risk 2: Project-related policy changes could lead to new tourism activities and potential cessation/reduction of existing operations. This	Moderate	I = 3; L = 2	**Management:** E&S risks associated with upstream/policy changes will be assessed through the conduct of a SESA. The SESA will include	NPD

[174] Likelihood L: 1 (low) to 5 (high); Impact I: 1 (low) to 5 (high)

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
in-turn could lead to conflicts with local communities in and surrounding the PA sites.			specific requirements and guidance on management and control measures for risks that may emanate from upstream project supported activities, including conflicts with local ethnic minorities within the project's area of influence. The ESMF includes a project specific GRM to address and manage any conflict situations that may arise during implementation. At the national level, the project will support preparation of standards and guidelines for community consultation, governance and benefit sharing for tourism within high biodiversity destinations during the project. Based on discussions and confirmations during the PPG phase, a SESA approach will be required to be applied to development of the standards and guidelines during project implementation.	
Risk 3: Nature-based tourism development might not fully incorporate or reflect views of women and girls and ensure equitable opportunities for their involvement and benefit as well in decision-making on resource use and management.	Moderate	I = 3; L = 2	**Management:** A gender mainstreaming action plan was prepared at PPG stage which identifies specific measures on gender mainstreaming within both national-level (upstream) activities and demonstration activities to ensure nature-based tourism opportunities and economic benefits also flow to women and girls. Additionally, specific livelihood options have been identified for women. The gender action plan includes specific indicators to measure women's participation in decision-making, nature-based tourism activities and benefit sharing. The comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan also includes identification of women's engagement in project related activities.	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
Risk 4: The project interventions could cause/support activities that lead (either directly or indirectly) to impacts of changed amount/type of tourism and/or nature-based tourism and increasing demand for nature-based products on sensitive habitats or ecosystems (e.g., soil/vegetation erosion, waste, sewage, IAS spread) or threatened or harvested species.	Moderate	I = 3; L = 2	**Management:** Under Component 1, national policies, guidelines, and standards for nature-based tourism will be updated or new guidelines developed (fulfilling or exceeding SES requirements) to reflect use of EIA/ESIA for placement and management of nature-based tourism activities to avoid impacts on sensitive habitats, ensure such operations are within carrying capacity of habitats, and identify and manage social impacts of changed tourism (including potential restrictions). Project-developed standards for nature-based tourism development and operations will be designed to reflect best practices to avoid, mitigate and manage the range of potential environmental impacts.	NPD
Risk 5: The Project may involve the harvesting of NTFP from natural forests and marine resources for proposed livelihoods and small-scale community enterprises, which could inadvertently adversely affect critical habitats.	Moderate	I = 3; L = 3	**Management:** The ensuing ESMP that will be developed in early project implementation period will indicate measures and tools that would be used to manage and monitor sub-project activities that include harvest of natural resources and small-scale community enterprises that depend on these resources.	NPD
Risk 7: The development of nature-based tourism could change current access to PAs and their resources, including by unintentional restricting access to local communities.	Low	I = 2; L = 3	**Management**: Communities will be engaged in all stages of project design and management at demonstration sites, including use of FPIC as needed (see Risk 1) to ensure that development has a positive impact and that any restriction on resource access and use will be managed and mitigated. The ESMF identifies measures to be instituted in case there is potential economic displacement, following consultation with affected groups, including the potential need for developing a Livelihoods Action Plan.	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
Risk 8: Local communities, governments and tour operators may not have the capacity to manage and oversee tourism development and operations to adhere to established standards and benchmarks for sustainable tourism planning, development and operations and therefore impinge on human rights	Moderate	I = 3; L = 3	**Management:** The ESMF has preliminarily identified specific capacity constraints to enable key government agencies (PA staff, provincial agencies, etc.) and private tour operations to adhere to sustainable nature-based tourism guidelines and standards (in line with UNDP SES requirements), and to oversee compliance and enforcement of them. The ensuing ESMP will identify specific capacity building and training programs and compliance monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for promoting the implementation of nature-based tourism standards.	NPD
Risk 9: The operation of nature-based tourism adventure activities could pose safety risks to communities, local tourism operators and tourists during operation. Project supported NBT activities could include activities with heightened safety risks such as cave expeditions etc.	Moderate	I = 3; L = 2	**Management:** Minimum standards for safety of relevant activities have been integrated into project design and the requirements for development / management of operations at project sites. These will be further developed in the ESMP during early project implementation.	NPD
Risk 10: The nature-based tourism activities could potentially enhance release of pollutants and waste (from increased tourist numbers and inadequate waste management practices at PA sites) into natural ecosystems resulting in localized impacts	Moderate	I =3; L=2	**Management:** The ESMP (i.e. to be developed later at early project implementation) will identify specific mitigation measures and plans to avoid, reduce, or mitigate such impacts. Component 1 will include the development of relevant tools for nature-based tourism activities and will include specific criteria and procedures that will be used to assess potential environmental impacts related to pollution, resource use, and the generation of waste. Additionally, project design includes an output that envisages working with hotels and tourism facilities to test appropriate measures for ensuring	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			environmentally sustainable operations, including management of wastes and effluents, improving hotel staff capacity to address environmental concerns, etc.	
Risk 11: Project support for site-based management effectiveness such as law enforcement or awareness-raising could bring safety risks for PA staff due to increased interaction with poachers. Conversely, support to PA staff/security personnel may also pose risks to local communities.	Substantial	I = 4; L = 3	**Management:** As part of the ESMF development, the capacity needs of PA staff were assessed to understand to what extent they have the skills to address conflict and potentially violent situations. Establishment and implementation of a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for management of illegal activities, that will specifically include safety and security-related procedures will be defined as part of the ESMPs during project implementation. These ESMP will be developed based on UNDP SES requirements (most notably those of the Accountability principle, and SES 3).	NPD
Risk 12: Unintended negative consequences from upstream policy changes that result in changes to tourism development in Vietnam (for example new nature-based tourism standards and guidelines) could lead to adverse impacts on cultural heritage or could restrict access of local communities to PAs and the resources therein.	Moderate	I = 3; L = 2	**Management:** Based on the assessment of social and environmental impacts of policy changes, the ESMF includes direct precrural reequipments for the integration of a SESA approach as part of the development of these policies, guidelines and standards.	NPD
Risk 13: Covid-19 and other potential zoonotic disease outbreaks that remain prevalent in the project sites could pose the risk of infection and exposure of persons involved in implementing project activities to these diseases.	Substantial	I = 4; L = 3	**Management:** In the remote location of the PAs, in particular where ethnic minorities are predominant, these communities are not equipped with remote means of communication. The project will look at options to use local NGOs, local community mobilizers and local staff to carry out consultations, fieldwork and local level planning. If the Covid situation deteriorates to the extent that safety concerns prevail, this will entail application of national and local Covid-19 health protocols (in consultation with the Provincial governments) in	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			outreach to the vulnerable groups, such as use of masks, hand sanitizer, and social distancing, giving the option to communities to decide if they are comfortable with participating.	
Risk 14: Child labor remains a pertinent issue in Vietnam, and may occur in surrounding project areas, especially since ethnic minorities are at particular risk of being affected[175].	Low	I = 4; L = 1	**Management:** Relevant measures will be taken at project level to prevent and avoid child labor: • comply with minimum age requirements set out in International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions or national legislation (whichever offers the greatest protection to young people under the age of 18) and keep records of the dates of birth of all employees verified by official documentation • check the activities carried out by young workers and ensure that children under 18 are not employed in hazardous work, including in contractor workforces. Hazardous work will normally be defined in national legislation and will be likely to include most tasks in construction and several in agriculture. • assess the safety risks relating to any work by children under 18 and carry out regular monitoring of their health, working conditions and hours of work • ensure that any workers aged 13-15 are only doing light work outside school hours, in accordance with national legislation, or working in a government-approved training programme • ensure that contractors have adequate systems in place to check workers' ages,	NPD

[175] https://www.ilo.org/hanoi/Areasofwork/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			identify workers under the age of 18 and to ensure that they are not engaged in hazardous work, and that their work is subject to appropriate risk assessment and health monitoring • assess the risk of child labour occurring in the primary supply chain and, where identified, take steps to remedy or mitigate the problem	
Risk 15: The project involves support for a weapons trade-in program under indicative activity 3.3.1. If the project staff involved in this activity lack the required capacity/training to handle and dispose of weapons in adherence to international best practice, safety risks could be posed to project staff and the communities in which the cache of weapons is collected, stored and/or disposed of.	**Moderate**	I = 3, L = 2	**Management:** The risks posed by the project's promotion of a weapons trade-in program will be managed through the site-specific ESMPs that will be developed during the conduct of the ESIA process. Management measures will be catered to each specific site to address the level of risk identified in more detail in the ESIAs. The main method for managing this risk is likely to be capacity-building and targeted training to ensure that relevant project staff are informed of international best practice in respect of collecting, storing and disposing of weaponry. Depending on the scale of the sites at which this program is to take place, it may be necessary to establish infrastructure for the safe storage/disposal of weapons collected through the program. The need for such infrastructure and any additional risks that the establishment of such infrastructure might entail will be assessed through the ESIAs and managed through the resultant site-specific ESMPs.	NPD
Other Risks				
Insufficient interest from and willingness to take risks in investing in new forms of tourism, especially considering recent economic downturn caused by the pandemic	Operational	I = 5; L =3 **SUBSTANTIAL**	Per **Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan**, the project has been cognizant of the centrality of the private sector ownership and buy-in to its core objective. The PPG has held consultations with private sector entities, especially those with whom	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			the national parks already have a relationship to communicate a compelling business case for their involvement. Participation in and turnout to these consultations has been remarkably high, underscoring their interest and understanding of the potential of the nascent nature-based segment of the tourism sector. During implementation the project will continue to nurture relationships with these entities during the inception phase and build new relationships through frequent communication of the value-proposition of being an early adopter and breaking new ground by providing input into guidelines and criteria and by helping develop new products and services for consumers. Private sector entities will be also drawn to the potential of new possible concessions and being a key player in a relatively new market. Ownership will also be nurtured through the introduction of new tools which companies can leverage, through training opportunities and through the project's strategic communications where they can be seen as an early adopter and among the few companies to offer new nature-based products and services to consumers. Private sector engagement and ownership will also be secured through (i) welcoming private sector involvement in the project's governance mechanisms as equal partners on a rotational basis; and (ii) through open calls for expressions of	

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			interest to provide input into and testing of project activities and deliverables.	
Delays in the development and approval of guidelines, criteria and standards for nature-based tourism, which will result in a lack of strategic direction for the project	Operational	I = 4; L = 2 **MODERATE**	Priority guidelines, criteria, standards and requirements are mentioned, albeit only in passing, in Vietnam's Tourism Strategy under Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg and the Vietnamese Government has made it a priority to implement a national campaign led by MOCST on "Vietnamese travel Vietnam" to encourage open-spaced and natural destinations for tourism and contribution to tourism green recovery. Hence, this project is seen as a catalyst at the national level through provision of technical and consultative processes to help mainstreaming environmentally-friendly standards, guidelines - including those which relate to carrying capacity and zoning - in tourism as well as provide a means to facilitate its piloting in the two PAs. A liaison function to both the BES Platform and the provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform has been established as part of Outputs 1.1 and 2.1 respectively, which will compile a list of approvals required during implementation. This list will be regularly reviewed by the Project Steering Committee, the NPD and NPM will regularly engage senior government officials to ensure that the required approvals are processed promptly and effectively. Moreover, Output 2.7 was purpose-built so as not to lose track of ensuring new guidelines, criteria, standards and requirements are documented once	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			tested and make their way towards refinement and turned into policy, where relevant.	
Despite the project's intent at bridging ministerial and sectoral divides, government agencies at different levels do not fully cooperate or see value in coordinating activities effectively for mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism and their sectoral agendas dominate	Institutional/Political	I = 4; L =2 **MODERATE**	The project design has been guided by principles of frequent communication and inclusion among a small core group of stakeholders critical to the project's mandate and success. The PPG's approach to stakeholder engagement provided a mechanism for coordination and communication between key stakeholders, in full collaboration with the IA, IP and representatives from the tourism sectors and provinces (including national park authorities), particularly tourism and biodiversity. The momentum created by the project and governance mechanisms to be established out Outputs 1.1 and 2.1 respectively aims to strengthen and institutionalize the coordination and joint action mechanisms for landscape-scale nature-based tourism development that prioritizes biodiversity conservation. Collaborative work will be demonstrated in the demonstration landscape and the necessary systemic and institutional capacities will be strengthened to ensure sustainability. The Project Steering Committee will help to integrate the efforts of multiple stakeholders at the national level, and to promote coordination between local authorities and the community.	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			The members of the BES platform will prioritize mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism through a roadmap and integration of activities into sectoral plans. At the provincial level, the members of the multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform will not only support the local authorities to mainstream biodiversity into tourism and their sectoral plans, but also ensure provincial nuances are reflected into guidelines during refinement so that these are taken into consideration during formal approvals.	
Transitioning to nature-based tourism will require a significant paradigm shift from current models that prioritize quantity (number of tourists) over quality (in products and services and integrity of tourism destinations). There is a risk of stakeholders eschewing nature-based tourism concept due to due to an under-appreciation of biodiversity benefits, jurisdiction and overlapping mandates of ministries involved, as well as a prioritization of short-term gains.	Institutional	I = 3; L =2 **MODERATE**	The government is committed to high-value low volume tourism (and this continues to be emphasized in COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery), and the current project has been developed in full coordination of both MAE and MOCST. The project will also prioritize in Component 1, the establishment of a harmonized regulatory framework where mandates are made clear and cooperation is promoted through mechanisms at national and sub-national level. The project will also incrementally demonstrate through testing of new products and services that economic growth can occur responsibility and in a manner that prioritizes both the needs of the tourism and conservation sectors. The project will also seek to attract foreign investment to develop nature-based tourism and focus on well-known tourism investors that have successfully managed innovative nature-based products worldwide, thereby forming a series of	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			tourist destinations closely connected between Vietnam and other markets. The project will also encourage domestic private companies to join in the tourism sector. Inheriting and expanding the achievements of the innovation economic policy in Vietnam in promoting private resources in various economic fields. Finally, there will be a focus on investment in infrastructure, which harmoniously combines industrial development goals with services. Incorporate infrastructure for industrial development in the overall planning for tourism development. This will be achieved through the promotion of public-private partnerships to develop the infrastructure for a competitive tourism, hospitality and service industry to succeed.	
Limited capacity to carry out or sustain improvements in nature-based tourism due to its infancy.	Operational	I = 3; L =2 **MODERATE**	This risk will be addressed through policy changes, planning regime change, more open governance, and through targeted capacity-building and effective training of personnel. The quality of human resources to engage in tourism businesses will be strengthened thereby increasing the competitiveness of the tourism industry as a whole. The quality of tourism human resources, and particularly as it relates to the nature-based segment, is a decisive factor for improving the quality of products and services, contributing to turning tourism to become a key economic sector and driver of growth in Vietnam in the future, and a sustainable financing mechanism for PAs.	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			Human resources must be systematically developed in both quantity and quality by investing in upgrading facilities of a system of vocational training schools managed by the tourism industry to meet the requirements of high-quality manpower in the future. It is necessary to have training programs for tourism managers in the provinces to keep up with the development trends of the tourism industry worldwide. Financial sustainability will also be promoted through the introduction of PMES in the marine and coastal areas and strengthening of existing PFES mechanisms in the terrestrial PAs. Where appropriate and for complex activities for which there may insufficient domestic subject-matter expertise, the project shall promote a "two-in-a-box[176]" model, that will leverage peer-to-peer relationships at multiple levels where international experts will perform mentoring, knowledge transition and quality control.	
Unrealistic expectations or failure to generate sufficient economic benefits for the community from nature-based tourism (due to insufficient market demand and COVID-19 impacts) leads to disillusion and limited community participation and hinders resolution of the threats arising from continued poaching, wildlife trade and HWC	Social and Environmental	I = 3; L =2 MODERATE	Cultural tourism is one of the cornerstones of Vietnam's Tourism Development Strategy and ensuring stronger integration in the formal economy and the flow of benefits to local communities and ethnic communities in a manner which preserves and promotes heritage values and national cultural identity has strong support from	NPD

[176] https://bit.ly/3z42Egq

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			governmental stakeholders at national and local levels. During the PPG, the communities expressed their strong interest in participating in the project and this will be reconfirmed during the inception phase, as well as co-design, development and validation of nature-based tourism products and services product development. In parallel the project will raise awareness among local communities on the values of biodiversity so that is internalized as an asset. While demand for community-led products and services is intertwined with the post-pandemic recovery, the project will invest in laying the groundwork and create strong fundamentals for local communities, ethnic minorities and women. This will involve targeting at domestic, regional and international markets to reduce vulnerability to particular market segments, such as emerged through the COVID-19 related restrictions on international travel. Investment in new high-value nature-based tourism products will be associated with business planning and market demand studies, coupled with improved branding and labels, as well as promotion of Vietnam's nature offerings through marketing (Output 4.1) and strategic communications (Output 4.2).	
Potential zoonotic disease outbreaks, including but not limited to the likes of COVID-19,could pose serious difficulties for the project, namely (i) effective project implementation and socio-economic hardships; (ii) disruptions to the	Operational	I = 4; L = 4 **SUBSTANTIAL**	As part of the PPG the PPG stage, a comprehensive COVID-19 analysis was undertaken (see **Annex 25: Vietnam COVID-19 Analysis and Action Framework**) assessment of the social and economic	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
international tourism market and to some extent the local market causing economic hardship and disruption of employment; (iii) could accelerate resource exploitation due to economic disruptions in other livelihoods as a result of reduced demand for certain products and services.			impacts of past and ongoing Covid-19 waves, hotspots and infection rates. The GoV has agreed to reopen Vietnam for international tourism from 15 March 2022 and Vietnam's Ministry of Health on March 15 released COVID-19 entry procedures for foreign arrivals as per Official Letter No 1265/BYT-DP. It also dropped COVID-19 testing requirements for all international arrivals from May 15 as per Official Dispatch No. 416/CV-TTg after a significant and sustained decrease in the number of cases. With the COVID-19 virus now endemic it no longer represents a major constraint to project implementation. While the likelihood of large-scale COVID-19 disruption has diminished, the project recognizes the continuing risk of other emerging infectious diseases and zoonoses. Mitigation measures will be put in place to blunt the impact on the project (see Table X), as well as new pathogens and zoonoses. The project must remain vigilant. The project is expected to start implementation in January, 2024, and the first 18-24 months will focus on developing the enabling mechanisms and starting to design and develop and test nature-based tourism products under Components 1-2. The project will only begin to depend upon a significant recovery in demand for tourism in Year 3 by which time there is greater chance of recovery in the tourism sector. The project will reassess the situation during the first year of implementation and continue to work with other national projects and partners in	

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			addressing longer-term policy issues and impact analysis. The review at inception could also prioritize demonstration of products on domestic tourism, however this is also an effective downtime to engage in development of tourism policy (frontloaded in project workplan) and additional tourism investments and infrastructure (i.e., renovation of Centre for Educations) while tourism numbers are low. The project will support resilient, diversified local livelihoods that are not fully reliant on international tourism. In order to tackle and mitigate the prospect of other zoonoses, the project will take a One Health approach to promote multi-stakeholder communication and collaboration in achieving better health outcomes – this includes public health threats at the human-animal ecosystem interface.	
Ongoing/prolonged social distancing restrictions and measures related to COVID-19 result in implementation delays and challenges (e.g., challenging recruitment, stakeholder consultation, training, demonstration)	Operational	I = 3; L = 4 **MODERATE**	To mitigate these, flexibility and adaptation has been incorporated across the project. The Inception Workshop will review the logical sequence of studies and assess the field visits including options for virtual discussions. The Inception Workshop will review the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, SESP and all project outputs requiring consultations and meetings. Based on the situation, stakeholder consultation and engagement processes including the number of participants will be further agreed upon during the Inception meeting.	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			Use of virtual measures has been incorporated into the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. For community consultations, COVID-19 norms and all government requirements based on prevailing situations will be followed.	
While the government has plans to boost the economy, GDP for the first six months of 2020 grew by only 1.81 percent compared to 6.77 percent in the same period last year; the slowest rate GDP growth rate since the mid-1980s, and far below the average for the 2011-2020 period of 5.44 percent. This may impact government co-financing contributions.	Financial	I = 3; L = 3 MODERATE	The project remains well-aligned to government COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery priorities and tourism is one of the prioritized recovery sectors for investment. Notwithstanding the project will focus on sustainable financing that can help generate additional revenues for tourism and the government. Also, any short-term risk to realization of government co-finance will be offset by the diversity of secure co-financing sources. The project's major co-financing are from the approved projects with assured co-financing.	NPD
Macro-economic trends such as an era of higher-than-normal inflation and the impact geopolitical conflicts on fuel and energy costs risks further impacting the rebound in international tourism and a broader economic recovery	Political / Financial	I = 3; L = 3 MODERATE	To mitigate any residual effects and prolongation of normalization of tourism trends the project shall lay the groundwork for eventual recovery of international tourists but also focus on inbound / domestic demand. Local demand can be revitalized by focusing on emerging destinations with the joint cooperation of local governments, online travel agencies, attractions, hotels, and airlines. Nature and adventure tourism that involves sunshine, beaches, mountains, and nature were among the top choices for Vietnamese travelers after the lockdown was lifted, and airports at the two big travel hubs of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi were busy.	NPD

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			To further tap into the domestic opportunity, operators will have to focus on affordability while striving to maintain high-quality products and experience. Rebuilding demand and propelling volume will also be done initially through discounts, promotions and presales, which are key tactics during the early stages of recovery, especially for higher-end operators that will not be able to tap into international demand for some time. Central to creating demand will be digital tools and an increase in marketing and to introduce the image of the country, people, culture and landscapes of Vietnam to traditional and potential tourism markets. The project will thoroughly use websites, social media channels and domestic / international television channels to advertise and take advantage of regional conferences and seminars to introduce and promote Vietnam nature-based tourism. It will emphasize and promote the landscapes ranked by international organizations in order to make differences for Vietnam tourism compared to others. Build representative tourism offices in potential markets. Promote more extensive advertisement to the overseas Vietnamese communities.	
With many moving parts, dependencies and stakeholders, there is a risk that without seasoned project management the project will not achieve its full potential and core objective.	Operational	I = 3; L = 2 MODERATE	Successful delivery of the project Objective will depend on seasoned project management, including coordination of dependencies, continually working and motivating stakeholders to appreciate the bigger picture, ongoing monitoring of progress in delivery against result-based targets, regular evaluation through annual PIRs and the Midterm Review, and adaptive management.	UNDP CO / IP

Description of Risk (Brief description of the risk)	Significance / Type (Risk category)	Impact and Likelihood[174]	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
			Future management of the project under the prospect of different COVID-19 scenarios will make it essential for the PMU to be able to leverage a mix of virtual measures and support from local execution partners if field travel is not possible. Deep experience in project management and coordination of multiple moving parts will be essential given the complexity of the project's scope. It will be incumbent on the IA and IP to ensure comprehensive and complimentary skills. The PMU should be supported by a seasoned international Chief Technical Advisor who is also a subject-matter expert on nature-based tourism. The NPM must be accustomed to managing diverse stakeholders and large transformation projects, with government clients at the helm.	
Capacity of NBCA's programme, financial and operations management policies, procedures, systems and internal controls might affect the project implementation	Operational	L=1, I=4 MODERATE	Regular spot checks and HACT/NIM audits will ensure risk assessment and management. During the Inception Workshop, the development of the HACT Assurance Plan will support the regular trainings and spot checks needed to ensure necessary capacity of the IP; financial and operations management in relation to the project.	NPD
Capacity in procurement by the Implementing partner NBCA might affect the procurement process	Operational	L=1, I =1 LOW	The IP will be responsible for monitoring the potential conflict of interests strictly following the national rules and regulations. The IP present the documents are made available for auditing purposes and submitted to the CO when requested and during the M&E reporting (I.e. PIR, mid-term and terminal evaluation).	NPD

243. Consistent with the PIF, the overall SESP risk categorization for the project is "**SUBSTANTIAL"**. Further screening will be required for currently unspecified conservation-compatible, nature-based tourism activities undertaken by the project. The screening process to be followed is explained against the relevant project activities described above. In summary, these additional screening processes for environmental and social safeguards include:

244. Additional FPIC procedures will be undertaken from the start of the project with ethnic minorities to achieve their consent for activities[177] in the project sites within both PA landscapes. FPIC will continue throughout implementation (per the EMPF and subsequent EMP);

245. Development of scoped ESIAs[178] and ESMPs in Year 1-Q3 and an Ethnic Minorities Plan (equivalent to an Indigenous Peoples Plan) to replace the Ethnic Minorities Planning Framework (EMPF) developed at PPG stage;

    a) The conduct/application of a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) to assess and manage 'upstream' risks/potential impacts that may arise as a result of project activities: 1.1.4, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.4, 1.4.3, 1.4.6, 1.4.7, 1.5.5, 1.6.2, 1.6.3, 2.1.6, 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.3.1, 2.3.6, 2.3.7, 2.4.5, 3.1.3, 3.2.2

    b) Application of additional screening process (with the SESP). The ongoing FPIC process will enable the incorporation of any emerging concern from EMs in further SESP application and ESMP continuous updates.

246. Applying the GEF-STAP Guidelines for Climate Risk Screening, the project's climate risk rating during its anticipated lifecycle is **Moderate (see Annex 15a: Climate Risk Screening).** With its extensive coastline of 3,260 km, Vietnam is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, which have compounding effects to the country's coastal zones and its socio-economic systems. Vietnam faces high disaster risk levels, ranked 91 out of 191 countries by the 2019 INFORM Risk Index[179], driven particularly by its exposure to hazards, including tropical cyclones and storm surges, droughts, and floods. The impact of tropical storms in the period from 1953-2010 affected 45 million people. The second most threatening natural hazard in Vietnam is flooding - ranked joint 1st with Bangladesh and includes, riverine, flash, and coastal flooding - with around 60 major events has affected 25 million people in the past half century. It is estimated that Vietnam's average annual losses to disasters amount to$2.4 billion, or almost 1.5% of GDP. However, the absolute value of losses is projected to rise dramatically in the coming years as the value of both the exposed assets and the climate-related hazard increase[180].

247. Vietnam's National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) for 2021-2030 is centered around four priority climate change adaptation areas of activity, namely: securing climate smart agricultural and livestock production practices; mainstreaming of climate change into development and implementation of strategies and plans, and strengthening capacity building to respond to climate risks. Decision No. 149/2022/QD-TTg on Vietnam's National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2030, vision to 2050 recognizes biodiversity to be an important natural capital for green economy development, which is both an immediate solution and a long-term, sustainable solution to protect the environment, prevent natural disasters and adapt to climate change. Furthermore, one of foundational pillars of Vietnam's Tourism Strategy under Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg is to actively adapt to climate change and the GoV has entrusted the support of provinces on environmental protection, climate change adaptation and disaster prevention.

248. As outlined in **Table 32 and Annex 5: UNDP Risk Register**, the project will deploy risk management activities which prioritizes two strategies related to natural resources and tourism sectors: (i) Natural resource management - focusing on the conservation and restoration of natural resources and the resilience of ecosystems (forest, riparian, marine and coastal habitats), as well as providing a regulatory framework for sustainable utilization of natural resources; and (ii) Tourism - focusing on responsible and nature-based tourism to conserve natural resources and resilience to climate change in areas with an tourism industry or tourism potential, as well as assisting vulnerable local populations and ethnic minorities to cope with climate

[177] i.e., 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 1.2.6, 1.3.3, 1.4.3, 1.4.5, 1.4.7, 1.5.4, 1.5.5, 2.1.3, 2.1.5, Output 2.2, Output 2.3, 2.4.3, 2.4.5, 2.4.8, 2.4.9, 2.4.10, Output 2.5 (all activities), activity 2.6.2, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 4.1.3, 4.3.4

[178] It may be determined during the inception phase of this project to undertake the "scoped ESIA" following the SAPA methodology (so long as this continues to meet the requirements of UNDP SES). See section 7.2 for further details.

[179] Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). Assessed on Nov 26, 2018. URL: https://www.emdat.be/

[180] Climate Risk Profile: Vietnam (2020): The World Bank Group and Asian Development Bank.

impacts through improved management practices in buffer areas / special protection forests and through livelihood diversification. Example interventions that are supported by the project include: (i) Protect and conserve marine and wetlands by, develop appropriate provincial and national park ecosystem services plans with stakeholder participation; (ii) Policy that support the role of local communities in the conservation of forests and ecosystems via mechanisms such as the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme; and (iii) development of corridor management planning in buffer zones and special protection forests currently not under formal protection.

249. The fourth and latest wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam started in late April 2021. This ongoing wave of COVID-19 infections has been much more acute than any before it[181]. Despite drastic actions, localities, especially Ho Chi Minh City and southern provinces, have faced complex COVID-19 outbreaks, with much more negative impacts on daily life as well as socio-economic development than the previous waves. For example, the three previous waves of COVID-19 were brought under control within a month to a month and a half, but the Delta variant present in the fourth wave had spread two to three times faster than the original coronavirus. Cumulatively for this wave, as of February 6, 2022, 2,339,119 cases have been reported including 38,226 deaths (PFC 1.6%) from 63 cities/provinces. The number of recovered cases is 2,109,898 (90.2%)[182].

250. The key risks presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to implementation of this project and achievement of its intended outcomes include (i) Availability of technical expertise and capacity; (ii) Changes in implementation timelines; (iii) Stakeholder engagement processes; and (iv) Financing. These are elaborated in **Table 33** along with a description of planned mitigation measures. As noted in **Annex 25: Vietnam COVID-19 Analysis and Action Framework**, the project will be consistent with the "One Health" principle, which promotes multi-stakeholder communication and collaboration in achieving better health outcomes – this includes public health threats at the human-animal ecosystem interface.

Table 33: COVID-19 risks and mitigation measures

COVID-19 related risk	Mitigation actions to be implemented by the project
Implementation/operational challenges	
The inability to manage COVID-19 in the country and a future upsurge may result in strict movement/social distancing/travel bans, which can hinder the recruitment and visits of international consultants, as well as local travel for national consultants and PMU. This may also hinder stakeholder engagement processes, capacity building programmes and consultations.	The inception workshop will review the logical sequence of studies and assess the field visits including options for virtual discussions in which case the local consultants shall prepare additional materials and background information for the national and international consultants. The Inception workshop will review the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, SESP and all project outputs requiring consultations and meetings. Based on the situation, stakeholder consultation and engagement processes including the number of participants will be further agreed upon during the inception meeting. For example, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan also integrated an option to assess and follow COVID-19 norms and where feasible and effective, stakeholder consultations will be done virtually. For community consultations, COVID-19 norms and all government requirements based on prevailing situations will be followed. In addition, post-COVID tourism planning will engage the health sector.
Further delay in the arrival of tourists beyond 2022 may reduce the effectiveness of project interventions with limited opportunities for product demonstration.	The project will reassess the situation during the first year of project implementation and continue to work with other national projects and partners in addressing longer-term policy issues and focusing on infrastructure, capacity building and domestic tourism. The review at inception could also prioritize demonstration of products on domestic tourism depending on the timeline for opening of international tourism, however this is also an effective downtime to engage in development of tourism policy and additional tourism infrastructure while low tourism numbers.
COVID-19 impacts on livelihoods have been severe and could limit interest or potential for	COVID-19 impacts have been considered in the development of tourism products and experiences. Project efforts will aim to diversify and build resilience in tourism-related livelihoods. For example, domestic tourism has been incorporated in tourism development under Outputs 2.2 so that operators are not wholly dependent on international tourism. Innovation in livelihoods diversification and resilience will be

[181] Former Health's Minister, Nguyen Thanh Long (July 2021)

[182] https://www.who.int/vietnam/emergencies/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-in-viet-nam/covid-19-situation-reports-in-viet-nam

COVID-19 related risk	Mitigation actions to be implemented by the project
project activities to build tourism livelihoods.	captured through the awarding of low-value grants to entrepreneurs under Output 2.5, explicitly recognizing the impacts of COVID-19. Additional livelihood opportunities from nature-based economy beyond tourism have been captured under Output 2.6 to further support diversification of livelihoods. Project baselines on livelihoods and opportunities will be re-assessed during the inception phase to confirm that baselines are accurate and that proposed activities and approaches remain feasible and with strong support of local communities.
Financial risks in the enabling environment	
While the government has contingency plans to boost the economy, a worst-case scenario projects Vietnam's GDP plunging to negative 6-6.5%[183] which would affect government co-financing contributions.	The project remains well-aligned to government COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery priorities and proposed activities have been adjusted during PPG to maximize this alignment. The government has placed the utmost importance on the tourism sector with frontloading of investments as part of the economic recovery. In addition, this project will focus on sustainable financing that can help generate additional revenues for tourism and the government. Any short-term risk to realization of government co-finance will be offset by the diversity of secure sources from which the project's co-finance will accrue. The project's major co-financing are from the approved projects/programs with assured co-financing: e.g. public investment projects/programs including from government and donors-funded projects. These projects are ongoing despite the pandemic crisis.
Health and safety risks	
Project staff, consultants or tourists travelling to the demonstration landscape could potentially bring COVID-19 infection risk to remote communities (SESP risk).	Project staff and consultants will abide by all government restrictions and SOPs regarding COVID-19 social distancing and movement restrictions. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing measures will be used for all project activities and consultations in accordance with these restrictions, with use of virtual consultations and meetings as needed as set out in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. PPE for PMU/local communities has been included in the project budget. For stakeholders (government staff, communities, private sector), project will adhere to all government requirements and social distancing/movement restrictions on tourism facilities and operations. COVID-19 hygiene and safety considerations will be considered across all project outputs.

251. The project will strictly observe all national and provincial government COVID-19 regulations and guidance as well as UNDP CO guidance. Capacity assessment on health and safety with specific focus on the COVID-19 in local communities in the PAs is required to ensure health of both community members and tourists and other visitors during project implementation. Measures and protocols on health and safety standards will be developed for the project implementation. Such protocols may include a health and safety checklist for community outreach, field visits, small and big group trainings and consultations. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hand-held temperature checkers will be adequately distributed to communities in the PAs where project activities are taking place. Where necessary the project can institute adaptive management as conditions and risks of exposure change to reduce the risks of community outbreak since physical distancing and new normal remote meetings have already become a norm. For example, meetings have been held during the PPG with local communities and with commune-level representatives remotely using effective virtual platforms, health hazard assessments will be required for gatherings of multiple people, and mitigation measures will be implemented, e.g., ensuring physical distancing, providing personal protective equipment, avoiding non-essential travel, delivering trainings on risks and recognition of symptoms, etc. These management measures are not expected to adversely impact the service delivery of the project. Social and environmental risk assessments will be regularly updated, e.g., in the annual review of the SESP (see **Annex 4: Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)**). Moreover, nature-based tourism strategies and activities to be developed in the demonstration landscape will include relevant social and environmental safeguards.

Grievance redress and stakeholder response

252. As required in the SESP (see **Annex 8a: Environmental Social Management Framework (ESMF)** – Section 9 and **Annex 4: UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)**), stakeholders who may be adversely affected by the project need to be able to communicate their concerns about the project's social and environmental performance. MAE will establish and implement, as described in the Project Document,

[183] According to the resolution of the National Assembly, the Government has set tasks for 2022, in which the GDP growth rate will reach 6-6.5%.

a transparent, fair and free-to-access project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), approved by stakeholders, which will be put in place at the start of implementation. UNDP will ensure that an effective project-level grievance mechanism is available. Interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the Project Management Unit, the Executing Agency, Implementing Agency (UNDP), or the GEF. The project must assign a staff who is responsible for operating and monitoring grievance redress from national to local level, and for reporting periodically on the project progress report. The Project Steering Committee will take responsibility for ensuring grievances are addressed, through a project-level grievance mechanism, which has been included in the TOR of the PSC. As part of the stakeholder engagement process, project-affected people should be informed of processes for submitting concerns, including through the project level grievance mechanism and UNDP's Accountability Mechanism, which has two key components: 1) A Compliance Review to respond to claims that UNDP is not in compliance with applicable environmental and social policies; and 2) A Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by projects have access to appropriate grievance resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related complaints and disputes.

253. The UNDP Vietnam Country Office does not currently have a dedicated SES expert but rather a designated SES focal point who oversees and supports the preparation and implementation of SESP as well as CO's SES AWPs. The UNDP Vietnam Country Office currently oversees the project at the formulation stage only to ensure the SESP is completed at design/LPAC stage. During the project implementation, the SES activities or SEMP/SEMF are included in the AWPs and APRs but the CO's designated SES focal point does not habitually monitor this; a function that will have to be considered by the project. Regarding the SRM, The UNDP Country Office does not currently have any guidance on this. There is however a Law/Decree/Circular regarding the Grievance and Denunciations (i.e. Circular No. 07/2014/TT-TTCP, dated 31/10/2014 of the Government Inspectorate Stipulating Procedures of Settling Grievances, Denunciating Letters and Letters of Requests) which can be leveraged however. Below is a step-wise schematic demonstrating the GRM process purpose-built for the project and which aligns to those described in the SES package (see **Figure 30** below**, Annex 8a: Environmental and Social Management Framework - Section 9** and **Annex 8b: Ethnic Minority Planning Framework (EMPF)**) outlining the process undertaken during the PPG to define it).

Figure 30: Project Grievance Redress Mechanism in Seven Steps



Stakeholder engagement and south-south cooperation:

254. A comprehensive stakeholder analysis was undertaken during the PPG phase, during which the PPG team started working on the project in quarter 4 (Q4) of 2021 to consult with key stakeholders in the national level, provincial and sites level to ensure they were engaged and information provided on the project (reported in **Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan**). From November 2021 – July 2022, the PPG team conducted three main types stakeholder meetings including the inception workshop, a series of stakeholder consultation meetings / workshop(s), and validation workshop. Based on stakeholder analysis and using approach to stakeholder engagement, the PPG team has conducted a series interviews/ consultation meetings with representatives of relevant stakeholders at all levels during PPG phase, including: (i) National government, (ii) Provincial and local government, (iii) Civil society/ community-based organizations (CBOs), Non-profit organization (international and national NGOs), academy and research institutions, and development partners, and (iv) private sector. Per **Table 3 in Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan**, over 44 consultation meetings, more than 20 days site visits collectively, face-to-face interviews, focus groups with women and men mixed and/ or separate group consultations with local communities including vulnerable group and indigenous people have been held between the PPG team members and various stakeholders during the preparation of the project. Cumulatively, more than 190 entities, organizations, experts and individuals were consulted (see Appendix in **Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan**), including: 22 ministries, research and academic institutions, 11 National Parks and Nature Reserves, 6 International NGOs, 5 National NGOs, 12 staff members from Vietnam Environment Administration (NBCA), 11 subject-matter experts on issues pertaining to conservation and nature-based tourism, 14 staff from Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (12 men / 2 women), 25 members of local communities and ethnic minorities from Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (16 men / 9 women), 17 staff from Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (15 men / 2 women), 29 members of local communities and ethnic minorities from Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (14 men / 15 women). Finally, as part of the consultation and definition of FPIC procedures

25 people were consulted at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh (15 men / 10 women) and 11 people were consulted (8 men / 3 women).

255. Project implementation will involve extensive engagement with stakeholders at all levels, and particularly in the demonstration landscape. **Table 34** outlines the roles and responsibilities for various project stakeholders at all levels during project implementation, while the Stakeholder Engagement Plan describes how stakeholders will be engaged in more detail and at what junctures (see **Table 4 in Annex 7**). At a broad level, participation and representation of stakeholders will be conducted through the governance structures put in place by the project as outlined and depicted in the organogram in the Governance and Management Arrangements section (**Figure 32**). The IP will coordinate closely with other governmental and non-governmental (CSOs, NGOs, private sector) stakeholders via the existing governance structures at national, provincial and local levels, as well as the national forum and provincial platform on nature-based tourism under Outputs 1.1 and 2.1 respectively. Stakeholders will be consulted, engaged and informed throughout the project implementation phase to: (i) promote understanding of the project's outcomes; (ii) promote stakeholder ownership of the project through engagement in participatory planning, implementation and monitoring of the project interventions; (iii) build public awareness; and (iv) to maximize linkage and synergy with other ongoing projects. Engagement processes will build on existing institutional frameworks and processes at national and landscape level that have legitimacy and credibility and that take cultural norms into due consideration. Through a series of exchanges and twinning opportunities with projects and expertise in the region, the project has built in mechanisms and abundant opportunities for south-south cooperation on nature-based tourism, that will be reinforced by leveraging the capacity and subject-matter expertise of regional experts across myriad thematic areas.

256. To bring the voice of Vietnam to global and regional fora, the project will explore opportunities for meaningful participation in specific events where UNDP could support engagement with the global development discourse on nature-based tourism. The project will furthermore provide opportunities for regional cooperation with countries that are implementing initiatives on nature-based tourism in geopolitical, social and environmental contexts relevant to the proposed project in Vietnam, such as the UN South-South Galaxy knowledge-sharing platform and PANORAMA, and ASEAN / Asia-Pacific region. Based on Vietnam's existing participation in the GWP through the GEF-6 "Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam" project, the project has the opportunity to engage with national platforms that would help strengthen knowledge sharing between MAE, MOCST and NP authorities at the landscape level, and to link into GWP networks. Collaboration with the GWP will provide the opportunity for sharing ideas and lessons with other GWP project countries holistic approaches to managing poaching, illegal wildlife trade and HWC that might offer valuable lessons.

Table 34: Summary stakeholder analysis indicating main roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in the project and involvement mechanism
1) National Government		
Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) and its constituent authorities	The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) is the Government's central authority responsible for state management of biodiversity conservation and natural resource management in Viet Nam. Its mandate covers the development and implementation of national laws, strategies, plans and policies on biodiversity, forests, fisheries, land, water, marine and island resources, environment and climate change. MAE leads the planning, establishment and management of protected areas, marine protected areas, biodiversity corridors, wetlands of importance and areas of high biodiversity value, and regulates the conservation of endangered, rare and prioritized species. The Ministry is also responsible for ecosystem protection and restoration, biodiversity monitoring, inventories and data systems, access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources, invasive alien species control, and ecosystem service payment mechanisms. In natural resource management, MAE oversees sustainable use, allocation and protection of land, water, forests, fisheries, minerals and marine resources, integrates environmental and biodiversity considerations into sectoral and spatial planning, and serves as the national focal point for relevant international environmental and biodiversity conventions The Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (NBCA) has the mandate for state management of biodiversity, in accordance with biodiversity conservation provisions of the Biodiversity Law in cooperation with other ministries. Institutionally NBCA is the agency authorized for the preparation of NBSAP, biodiversity master planning, and national reporting on biodiversity. MAE is, among others, the national focal point for various multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UNFCCC, the Ramsar Convention, and the UNCCD. The VEA is now abolished and NBCA stands as a solitary body under MAE responsible for biodiversity conservation and management.	MAE is the designated national **Executing Agency (EA)** for the project. MAE will assume all duties assigned to the EA, will chair the Project Steering Committee, and assume a leading role in engaging national and local level stakeholders in implementing project activities. MAE will lead Annual Review meetings on project planning and reporting, and will appraise and approve all project related documents, including Annual Work Plans and Quarterly Work Plans. NBCA will assume the responsibility for overall project implementation as Project Owner under delegated responsibility by MAE. NBCA is also responsible for coordinating relevant stakeholders within NBCA in support of the overall implementation of the project. NBCA has past experience of managing UN Projects, including GEF funded projects. NBCA will participate in Annual Review meetings, planning and reporting. NBCA will be responsible for day-to-day coordination and management of project activities at the national level and coordination of project activities at the provincial level, financial management and reporting. **All Components**
Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism (MOCST)	The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST) participates in the management of national or internationally recognized cultural-historical-environmental forests to serve the purposes of history-cultural tourism. At the same time, the MOCST is responsible for coordinating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) to build a legal basis for tourism activities, and have a harmonized management mechanism between the Management Board of the conservation area and the Department of Tourism, avoid overlapping	MOCST will collaborate with the project to identify gaps and priorities in promoting NBT in national tourism areas through development policy and legislation and models, as well as advisory on certification of tourism products and services. MOCST is a co-implementing partner of the project. MOCST will nominate Institute of Tourism Development Research under mandate of VNAT to be directly responsible for implementation of the

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in the project and involvement mechanism
	procedures and have sources of compensation for forest protection, embellishment of cultural, history and environment heritages, etc. MOCST is responsible for the State administration and management of public services on culture, sports and tourism nationwide. MOCST leads national efforts for the planning and development of tourism nationwide. The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) is a subsidiary body under MOCST responsible to advise and assist the Minister of MOCST in the field of Tourism management laws and policies and overseeing their implementation. Regarding tourism, The VNAT has the task of submitting to the Minister of MOCST for submission to competent state agencies the law projects and draft resolutions of the National Assembly; Ordinance project, draft resolution of the National Assembly Standing Committee; draft resolutions and decrees of the Government on tourism and other projects and schemes as assigned by the Minister of MOCST; tourism development strategy and master plan; national tourism promotion program; national action plan on tourism; application file for recognition of a national tourist area located in two or more provincial-level administrative units, and certifies tourism certifications (i.e. Green Lotus Label, VTOS, etc.). Under VNAT, the Institute For Tourism Development Research (ITDR) has the function of researching, developing strategies, planning, mechanisms and policies for tourism management and development to serve the state management of tourism.	project activities as a key stakeholder and partner of the project. **<u>All Components</u>**
Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) - now merged with the Ministry of Finance (MOF), has been subsumed under the newly consolidated MOF.	MPI (now MOF) performs State management functions in the field of planning and investment, including the provision of general advices on strategies and plans on national socio- economic development, on mechanism and policies for general economic management and some specific fields, on domestic and foreign investment, etc.	MPI (now MOF) will be a beneficiary of the project results, specifically capacity building, training and policy advice on how to integrate natural resources use and nature-based tourism considerations into national and provincial planning procedures, strategies, and plans. **<u>Component 3</u>**
2) Provincial and Local Government		
Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) in pilot National Park	PPCs are headed by a Chairperson and supported by Vice-Chairmen for each major sector including a Vice Chairman for Natural Resources & Environment. Under Vietnam's decentralization policies, PPCs play a major role in provincial development and sector planning and implementation, including on environmental management and biodiversity conservation. PPCs also have an important role in ensuring that biodiversity is integrated into sectoral plans and programs at the local level. Specifically, they are responsible for coordinating the biodiversity conservation activities of various line departments at the provincial (and city) level. PPCs currently have	The PPCs in pilot NPs and their subsidiary agencies at the provincial level will participate in project implementation, providing information, support and co-financial contributions. The PPCs will coordinate and oversee implementation, management and monitoring of project activities in the respective NPs, including: (i) review work plans and approve budgets of the respective NPs; and (ii) preside over inter-agency coordination meetings including communal authorities as well as sectoral stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in the project and involvement mechanism
	management responsibility for those PAs – SUFs, Integrated Water Management and MPAs - that lie entirely within their provincial territory.	**<u>Component 2</u>**
Provincial specialized departments	At the provincial level, national line ministries usually have specialized departments that mirror their parent ministries in administrative structure and function. These departments receive technical instructions from their national line ministries but are accountable to the PPCs. Department of Agriculture and Environment (DAE) is the provincial representative of MAE and the thus responsible for managing natural resources and environment at the provincial level. Responsibilities also include land administration, pollution monitoring. DAE plays an increasing role in supporting biodiversity management and as such in assisting PPCs in managing BRs. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is the provincial representative of MARD – now merged with respective DONREs to become consolidated DAEs - assigned responsibilities for agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture. Consolidated DAE now has considerable experience of managing PAs, MPAs and IWM across Vietnam. Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism (DOCST) is the provincial representative of MOCST, assigned to implement its mandate at the province level, including on provincial level tourism development, and certifying tourism certification within provincial tourism activities. Department of Planning (DPI) was the provincial representative of MPI prior to the 2025 ministerial merger, assigned for executing the mandate of MPI, which includes socio-economic planning. With MPI merged with the MOF to become a consolidated MOF, above functions are assumed under MOF and local agencies of MOF are Departments of Finance (DOF).	DAE is the primary technical government partner of this project at the pilot NP level, with key partner support being provided by DOCST/DOT.. DAE and, DOCST/DOTwill participate in the NP MB, and as such in development of an integrated vision, mapping of natural resources and detailed planning of project activities, including HCV set-aside areas, forest restoration areas, EIA, guiding sustainable livelihood activities, including tourism. DOCST will support tourism related initiatives, including certification, private-partnerships, and models for sustainable tourism practices. DOF will be beneficiary of project results, specifically related to integrated vision on land and natural resources use, sectoral responsibilities to mainstream biodiversity into strategies and planning in line with the BR concept. **<u>Component 2 and 3</u>**
National Park Management Boards (NP MBs)	NP MBs are designated authorities responsible for the management of national park, including Special-Use Forests under forest protection and development regulations, Marine protected areas under fisheries regulations, and nature reserves under provincial regulations.	Within the two NPs, NP MBs will be directly involved with the planning, implementation and monitoring of project activities in their respective NPs, through providing information, identifying priority issues at each site, and participating in priority interventions on nature-based tourism in the national park and buffer zone area, including through targeted livelihood activities as relevant. NP MBs will also support strengthening conservation activities in identified HCV landscapes in buffer zones. **<u>All Components</u>**
Commune People's Committees (DPCs/CPCs)	Commune PCs play a key role in supporting local socio-economic development. Being the closest state organization to local communities, they play an	CPCs will be key project partners at the two national park site level, particularly in relation to implementing activities

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in the project and involvement mechanism
	important role in overseeing and supporting development activities in their communes. Thus, CPCs have a key role to play in terms of ensuring environmental sustainability and avoiding overexploitation, particularly in relation to activities such as agriculture (including rice and other forms of agricultural production), fishing, aquaculture, as well as tourism activities.	targeting at reducing threats to biodiversity arising from current economic development and livelihood practices, and tourism. CPCs particularly will participate in the commune conservation planning process and implementation of activities targeted at improving conservation outcomes as well as improved nature-based tourism, and livelihood in selected communes and households. **<u>Component 2</u>**
3) Civil society/ community-based organizations, Non-profit organization (international and national NGOs), Academy and research institutions, and development partners		
Civil society/ community-based organizations (CBOs), e.g., Farmers Unions, Fisheries Associations, Women's Unions, Youth Unions	Civil society/ community-based organizations are custodians, primary users and managers of the landscape resources and key target groups for all components of the project. They are engaged in fisheries and eco-tourism activities, NTFP collection, agricultural and pastoral activities, etc. within the NPs.	Local communities, including CBOs, will participate in the implementation of project activities and be direct beneficiaries of project investments in the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and in sustainable forest management in NPs. Appropriate eco-tourism and natural resources regulations in different zones of the NPs will be formulated with their full participation and agreement, to ensure both continuation of income from traditional or suitable alternative livelihood and ecotourism activities in combination with strengthened consideration for biodiversity conservation. Specifically, they will engage in (i) preparation of commune ecotourism plans, including mapping of commune resources, identifying threats and responses to threats, identifying conservation, ecotourism and livelihood activities, (ii) the implementation of commune ecotourism and conservation plans, including though relevant community groups and micro-revolving funds, (iii) training programs aimed at improving resource use, ecotourism and livelihood development, etc. **<u>Components 2 and 3</u>**
Ethnic minority groups	Ethnic minorities include indigenous groups living for many generations in NPs, each having a different history, traditions, and diverse material lives. Mainly they rely on natural resources, especially forests, for their livelihoods, and as such are one group linked to the degradation of natural resources and biodiversity. In many areas, poverty rates are significant.	Ethnic minorities will directly participate in NP decision making processes, development of commune ecotourism and conservation plans, implementation of ecotourism and livelihood and in benefit sharing. Specific investment for households of ethnic minorities will be instituted through the OCOP (one commune on product) process to ensure

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in the project and involvement mechanism
		strengthening their current livelihood and sustainable resources use practices. Reference is made to the FPIC section below and articulation of the individual Outputs and Activities where the project must obtain FPIC from ethnic minority communities that have the potential to be affected **<u>Components 2 and 3</u>**
National and international NGOs	NGOs (WWF, FFI, WCS, Traffic, IUCN, SWV[184], etc.) play an important role in a variety of sectors like biodiversity conservation; sustainable natural resources use, minimizing impacts from development, pollution abatement, improving rural livelihoods, as well as otherwise addressing the needs of local communities, including on themes like policy and legislation, research, education and awareness raising. Relevant local, national and international NGO active in the project-relevant fields of protected area management, sustainable livelihood support with links to the project's thematic and/or spatial focus include IUCN, WWF, Fauna and Flora International (FFI)	Project collaborating partner, project technical support, project capacity building beneficiary, member of the provincial project working group. Potential executing partner and advisor to the provincial project working group. Provide technical support in all policy and planning related to SEA, biodiversity conservation and threat reduction aspects of human and wildlife conflict, wildlife tourism development (component 2). Appropriate partner organizations will be identified during project implementation. The project will build on and collaborate with relevant initiatives conducted by local and international NGOs in relevant conservation, monitoring, livelihood development, community-based natural resources management, benefit sharing and other related activities. They will also get involved in capacity building programs such as SMART training and monitoring, nature-based tourism training (component 3) and knowledge sharing (component 3). From an engagement perspective, the GEF-7 Nature-Based Tourism Project will not engage with USAID directly per se as it is the donor, but rather will ensure frequent coordination and communication at the operational level with the WWF team implementing it. During the years in which the two projects overlap, the Project Management Unit will ensure that it is plugged into the annual work planning of the USAID Biodiversity Conservation and Demand Reduction Program and vice versa. Seeing that the areas and landscapes in which the two will operate in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park will be different and that there is no presence

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Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in the project and involvement mechanism
		at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park, the risk of overlap and duplication of efforts is negligible. The benefits of coordination however will be to ensure that the SMART patrolling framework is improved over time based on the data collected and to modify priority areas based where high-risk areas are located through evidence of illegal hunting and poaching incidents. **Components 2 and 3**
Academic research institutions	A number of institutes at national and landscape level have strong environment research units with knowledge and experience relevant to this project. The Vietnam Academy of Natural Science & Technology (VAST), conducting multi-disciplinary studies in socio-economic development, ecology and environmental management, policy analysis, culture. Three VAST Institutes are of particular relevance to this project, namely the Institutes of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR), Institute of Marine Environment and Resources (IMER) in Nha Trang, and Southern Institute of Ecology (SIE). The Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) now Vietnam Institute for Culture, Arts, Sports and Tourism (VICAST) is functioned to conduct research on developing tourism strategies, planning, policies for state management in tourism; provide research and consultancy services.	Appropriate partner organizations will be identified during project implementation, as relevant and in line with their thematic focus and experience. ITDR will be a co-implementing partner. Other research institutions will be involved in consultancy activities, including on legal-regulatory framework, field studies on mapping and inventory, biodiversity monitoring for the benefit of formulating informed recommendations to the project and its national and local government partners. **All Components**
Development Partners (DPs)	A number of development partners, including USAID, GIZ, have on-going projects either in the NPs or covering themes of interest to the project and its NP management focus.	Relevant DPs will be engaged as partners to facilitate coordination and collaboration at national and NP landscape levels, to ensure convergence of ongoing programs. The Project Management Board (PMB) and UNDP will maintain close relations with all relevant development partners (DPs), as appropriate; provide them with observer status participants during Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings. **All Components**
5) Private Sector	There are many private tourism companies are operating in and cooperating with both national parks: In PN-KB, Quang Tri Province: Oxalis Adventure Jungle Boss Company Private Commercial and Tourism Company Viet Hung Truong Thinh Company Moc Nam Company Phong Nha Heritage Company In Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh, Khanh Hoa Province Chu Lam Tour Company Beehive Adventure Company	The project will engage private sector as much as possible. The investors will involve in the development and implementation of project at site level. The private sector will collaborate in implementation of and support to responsible tourism initiatives, specifically certification and models for sustainable tourism products and services. The private sector will also be project technical support, project capacity building beneficiary, member of provincial project working group.

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in the project and involvement mechanism
	FDI South of Nui Chua Management Company Gia Viet Company Ninh Thuan Solar Power Company Phat Hoang Long Company Son Long Thuan Company They are collaborating partner, involve in the development of tourism products and testing of sustainable financing mechanism and long-term partnership development.	Advice to provincial project working group on biodiversity conservation, public awareness raising project sites. Public outreach and education campaign on mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism delivered to tourism industry, CSOs, and domestic and international tourists and knowledge exchange during the project implementation. **Components 2 and 3**

FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) Approach

257. The FPIC process will be tailored to specific indigenous communities (depending on the demonstration experience) based on the standards defined by UNDP and as dictated by the communities themselves. The process will take place upon Project inception, with the indigenous organizations present at each site. The Project's objectives, their actions and expected outcomes will be presented, as well as the information mechanisms that the Project will utilize, for the purpose of allowing EMs to make a decision about their participation in an informed manner. To achieve this, and depending on the characteristics of each EM group or organization present therein, at least the following actions will be carried out (to be refined as needed to meet the communities' requirements):

    a) Contact the authorities of each indigenous organization present within the site where the Project's demonstration experiences will be carried out.
    b) Come to an agreement with the authorities on a Project Presentation Workshop (a different method can be used if necessary or if it is more pertinent for a particular indigenous organization), for the purpose of informing these organizations of the Project's objectives, activities and expected outcomes, especially those activities in which indigenous individuals or organizations might participate. The other reason for these workshops is to get to know the potential participants' visions, suggestions, opinions and proposals, to validate and strengthen the action measures the Project is proposing so that these can be adjusted to their needs and that they benefit from its outcomes.
    c) This presentation must be carried out considering the protocols of each organization itself (and each one will be consulted) and in language appropriate to ensure complete understanding. In addition, in this instance, doubts which might arise can be clarified, and agreements will be reached about the steps to be taken. One of these steps might be internal deliberations in each organization regarding the contents of the presentation, and therefore a second instance should be agreed upon for the organization to present to the Project the results of their deliberations.
    d) If during the Presentation Workshop the organization decides to be part of the Project, a Participation Agreement will be drawn up where the parties establish their commitment and form of participation, as well as who the person or people will be to act as the respective counterpart for communications between the Project and the EM organization. This will serve as a reference framework during Project execution, and can be modified by mutual agreement.
    e) If the organization decides to hold an internal deliberation process following the Presentation Workshop, a second workshop will be held where the organization will present the results of their deliberations to the Project. Once this is done and if their decision is affirmative regarding participation in the Project, a Participation Agreement will also be drawn up where the parties establish their commitment and form of participation, as well as who the person or people will be to act as the respective counterpart for communications between the Project and the organization.
    f) Once the Agreement is drawn up, Project implementation will begin, or the involvement of the indigenous organizations in the Project will commence, as appropriate.

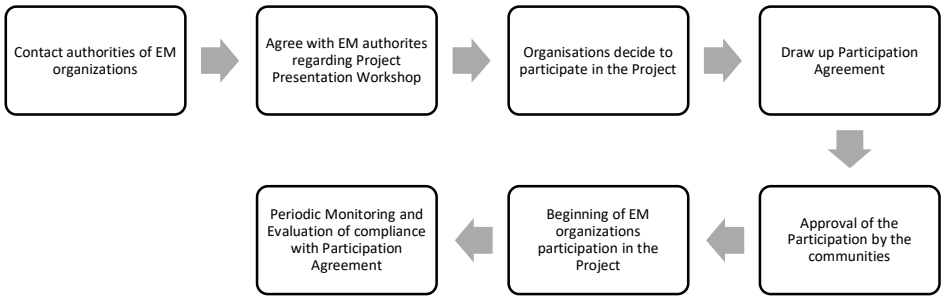
g) Follow-up and evaluation of compliance with the Agreement will be carried out periodically, as well as the Project activities in which the indigenous organizations are committed, for assessing their compliance and adjusting if required. Through this monitoring and evaluation action, what is sought is full, effective and significant participation of the indigenous peoples in all the areas of the Project that they have concerns about.

h) The Project National Coordinator will be responsible for contacting the EM organizations that participate in the Project, or whoever he/she should designate for this purpose.

i) In carrying out studies, consultancies or other Project actions involving EMs, efforts will be made to ensure that the technical teams in charge have experience in working with EMs.

258. All the above process, as well as actions deriving from it, will be duly recorded and documented, both as a safeguard of due process and as a line of Project knowledge management. The above considerations summarized in **Figure 31** seek to guarantee that the actions implemented are carried out in a spirit of collaboration, with full and effective participation of the indigenous population, and with the objective to ensure their involvement in the Project and in the benefits derived from it.

Figure 31: Involvement of indigenous communities in the Project



259. The following procedure applies to the consultation of ethnic groups in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Parks. The consultation process was carried out according to the following steps:

260. Consultation during project preparation:

- Consultations were conducted with vulnerable groups (including EMs) on project activities at project sites. The objective was to ensure that all proposed project activities would receive broad support from the communities of people who may be affected by the project activities and judgements.
- The social experts conducting the consultation identified potential impacts on the EM communities. Randomly selected discussion groups, including EM women, discussed the project's impacts on EM people, community wishes/expectations to improve living standards, and guidelines to ensure continued access to the proximity of their communities.

i. Consultation with key informants: Before the commencing of the consultation with EMs, the PPG team member consulted with key informants (CPCs, village head, especially patriarch) to understand the baseline of socio-economic conditions of the EM groups as well as their culture, language, knowledge, and ethnicity. Based on the provided information, the consultations were tailored to overcome barriers (language, crop season, gender, location, time, etc.) with the EMs to participate freely in the consultation process.

  - Contact commune authorities and village elders in the areas where project activities occur.

- Agree with the commune and village localities on the project presentation discussion to inform local indigenous people about the project's objectives, activities, and expected results.
- Assist the project by capturing the suggestions and opinions of potential participants to validate and strengthen the project so that it can be tailored to the needs of the affected stakeholders.
- Structure the discussion per each locality's cultural and linguistic characteristics. Separate internal discussions were held to clarify project issues involving indigenous people.

ii. Consultation with EMs groups: Consultations were carried out through focus group discussions with a small sample size of 5 to 10 EMs. The participants were selected randomly, combined with purposeful sampling, to collect more points of view. Group discussion was an effective means of consultation because it encouraged sharing views and ideas related to the proposed project. To ensure the full participation of EM, including women, the defined schedules and locations were made according to their schedule and availability (culture houses in the village for their ease of access). During this initial round of consultations, the projects objectives, timeline and outputs were discussed. A key aspect of this initial consultation including informing EMs of their rights under UNDP SES and establishing a procedure for undertaking FPIC during project inception/implementation that was agreeable and culturally sensitive.

261. Consultation during project implementation with EM people:

- While preliminary consultation with EMs and their representatives was undertaken during the PPG stage, this did not equate to obtaining FPIC. As such, the project team will be required to undertake the steps outlined in **Figure 31** during project implementation, and before any of the activities listed in Section 8.2.3 of this EMPF begin commencement (i.e. 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 1.2.6, 1.3.3, 1.4.3, 1.4.5, 1.4.7, 1.5.4, 1.5.5, 2.1.3, 2.1.5, Output 2.2, Output 2.3, 2.4.3, 2.4.5, 2.4.8, 2.4.9, 2.4.10, Output 2.5 (all activities), activity 2.6.2, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 4.1.3, 4.3.4).
- During project inception/implementation, and as specific sites and activities are more clearly defined, certain consultations and engagement process with EMS will be required to take place:

i. During the project implementation phase, EMs will need to be consulted in all project activities that may have potential positive or negative impacts on them (see list of activities requiring FPIC in Section 8.5.1).

ii. The Provincial Project Management Unit (PPMU), with technical support from an implementation partner equipped with safeguard experts (environment, ethnic minorities, gender), will be responsible for ensuring community participation through Commune People's Committees, community groups/associations, local and ethnic leaders, women's unions and fatherland fronts, and local agencies. It will be essential to invite local people to meetings, including one-on-one meetings with women, to get their views on project activities and identify positive and negative impacts on their lives.

iii. PPMUs shall continue to hold regular meetings with the CPC, women's unions, village heads and local communities to ensure that all relevant people are fully aware and understand the contents of the project. In addition, the consultation is for all EMs affected by the project to have full information on the project components, project activities, mitigation and compensation measures, and mechanisms. It is set up to deal with complaints. These meetings will be scheduled, and PPMUs will coordinate with the EMRC at the provincial level or/and the EM officers in the commune to ensure that all impacts are identified and addressed.

iv. Through the consultation process, PPMUs will notify the EM people of their rights (under both host country regulation and UNDP SES 6 requirements), the project's scale, and the potential impacts on livelihoods, the environment, and natural resources. When a difference or conflict between EMs and the project implementing agencies emerges, PPMUs will need to establish a mediation and negotiation approach to resolve those differences.

v. FPIC evidence that will be required during the inception and implementation of the project includes calls for printed announcements, radio clips etc., a list and signature of participants/attendees (including women representatives), photos, a summary of the discussions, concerns posed, and alternatives that align to local aspirations.

vi. EMs will be afforded the right to withhold or withdraw their consent for any project activities that may impact them

vii. Methods of suitable communication/media for culture and gender will be used to eliminate communication barriers. This may include translating documents into ethnic languages, using interpreters in community meetings, greater use of communication methods with virtual aids in EM communities with high illiteracy or low educational qualifications, and holding separate meetings for women and men according to local cultural traditions.

262. Any project activity that contributes to the achievement of the outcomes listed below must obtain FPIC from ethnic minority communities that have the potential to be affected:

- **Activity 1.2.2**: Develop national carrying capacity guidelines for PAs and high-value biodiversity areas and at designated national tourism areas. Guidelines will leverage both national studies and assessments undertaken in Activity 1.2.1, as well as international best practice
- **Activity 1.2.4**: Finalize national tourism area planning criteria and guidelines and operational mechanisms such as landscape zoning and protection of high-biodiversity and tourism value habitats in PAs and in designated national tourism and heritage areas. This will include (i) endorsement of criteria and guidelines by inter-agency partnership and coordination platform; (ii) printing of guidelines and making them available to key stakeholders, in both hard and digital formats; (iii) leverage guidelines for the development of capacity and training modules (to be used as part of Output 3.5) and supporting awareness materials; and (iv) integrating them into the tourism impact management, compliance and monitoring framework
- **Activity 1.3.3**: Develop and seek approval for priority programs and projects addressing current legislative gaps and operational needs while also considering species conservation goals and priorities in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, not just in PAs, but also in nature reserves, national tourism areas, wetlands, Ramsar sites, KBAs and marine areas, in order to reorient the current regulatory framework and Vietnam's national tourism strategy towards promoting biodiversity conservation and operationalizing nature-based tourism with a sustainable longer term vision.
- **Activity 1.4.3**: Develop guidelines on mobilizing participation from the private sector and communities, and how to incentivize biodiversity-friendly conservation priorities in tourism investment and benefit sharing to local communities.
- **Activity 1.4.7**: Develop national policy on PPP and community participation in nature-based tourism based on testing of and experiences with guidelines
- **Activity 1.5.4**: Develop and submit for approval a mechanism to unify and harmonize the SEA/EIA methodologies used by line ministries and provide streamlined guidance for their application at PAs.
- **Activity 2.1.5**: Undertake and coordinate consultations of key project deliverables for trialing at the provincial level. It is anticipated that draft versions of the deliverables, guidance, criteria and studies developed under the first component will undergo a formal review and vetting process by the provincial multi-stakeholder platform to ensure these reflect and are tailored to the nuances of and reflect the needs of the provincial and local context.

263. **Output 2.2**: (including all sub activities): Integrated nature-based tourism programs designed in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks.

- **Output 2.3**: (including all sub-activities): Improved monitoring of status of key biodiversity resources to assess effectiveness of PA management, illegal wildlife threat management and biodiversity conservation outcomes of nature-based tourism
- **Activity 2.4.3**: Capacity building for improved protected area management at the landscape level. This activity will focus on the removal of capacity barriers at the site level preventing the enabling ecological conditions for nature-based tourism from thriving, including soft skills and tourism knowledge to serve tourists. Interventions will be designed to improve basic PA tourism and management capacities where required, and will also enhance the management and business planning skills of PA managers, to enable the PA system to maximise revenue-generation and to streamline costs. This component will also demonstrate increased management effectiveness at the site level, through improved institutional and technical management capacities of sub-national PA network and guided by the national criteria and guidelines on ecological limits and carrying capacity
- **Activity 2.5.3**: Set up and operationalization of benefit sharing mechanisms, supported by training and awareness of equal benefits.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

264. Over the years, Vietnam has made efforts and commitments to implement and promote gender equality in all areas of social life. Notably, the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality (GE) in 2006 and effective since 2007, stipulates gender equality in eight areas of economic, labor, political, cultural, educational, and social life. association, culture - physical training - sport, and family have confirmed the Government's determination in promoting comprehensive gender equality in national development. The formation of the state management apparatus on GE (GE Department, MOLISA) and domestic violence prevention (Department of Family, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) as well as the development and implementation of a series of National Strategies and Programs The study on GE and the advancement of women in the 2000-2010 period, and in the 2011-2020 period, demonstrated the government's continued efforts in promoting and implementing GE.
265. Notwithstanding, **Vietnamese women still face many barriers** to participating in the implementation of GE. Women **still have less access to land and productive resources than men**. In addition, in Vietnam, only 9% of women own farms; Women are mainly engaged in small-scale and household agricultural production, and they have less access to land than men due to the gender stereotypes about women's lack of entrepreneurial ability, such as the proportion of men in the red book is higher than that of women.
266. Women of all age groups, ethnicities, urban or rural areas, **perform more unpaid care work than men**. Women spend 105 minutes more per day than men doing non-nursery care, which equates to 275 minutes per day (4.5 hours), 32 hours per week and 207 days per year. This means that each year, each woman contributes almost 7 months to unpaid care work and much of it is not recognized or shared with husbands, children, sons and other family and community members.
267. The proportion of women in the political system has increased in recent years, but the proportion of women in top management positions remains low and remains much lower than that of men. For the 2016-2020 term, female Politburo members account for 15.78%. The number of women holding positions of responsibility in the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee has not changed much over the congresses, with around 10% per term. The number of female deputies holding important positions in agencies of the National Assembly has increased in recent years, the percentage of Vietnamese women participating in the National Assembly in the 2016-2021 term reached 26.8%, an increase of 26%; 2.4% higher than the previous term. However, the above rate has not yet reached the target set out in the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the 2011-2020 period of over 35%.
268. **Female members of the People's Council** has increased significantly at the commune level, from 16.1% for the 2001-2005 term to 26.6% for the 2016-2020 term. However, up to now, this indicator is still very low, **not meeting the requirements set out in the National Strategy on Gender Equality** for the 2011-2020 period (from 35% or more for the 2016-2020 term).

269. The proportion of women named in the land use right certificate accounts for only 20%, much lower than that of men named in the land use right certificate (62%). The results also show that 18% of women jointly own land use rights. The fact that women have fewer rights to land has hindered their access to credit sources, limited rights related to disposition, mortgage, etc.

270. Both female and male employed workers increased in the period 2015-2018; however, the **average annual employment growth rate of men is nearly 4 times higher than that of women**. In 2018, employed female workers were 25.92 million people, accounting for 69.7% of the population aged 15 and over; while this rate for men is 80.0%. The proportion of female workers in industry and construction accounted for only 21.7% compared with 29.3% for men (GSO 2017). This gender imbalance needs to be improved in order to promote employment opportunities and participate in the inclusive development of women in Vietnam.

271. The **average income of women is always lower than that of men and the gender pay gap index is almost unchanged, at around 0.9**. In the period 2015-2018, the annual income growth rate of women was slower than that of men (7.30% per year for women and 7.87% per year for men). There is a difference in the average income of women and men when considering urban-rural areas, economic and occupational areas, etc.

272. **Gender Analysis:** During the PPG phase, a gender analysis was conducted to use as a baseline to assess the gender situation in the demonstration area (Annex X). The gender analysis was segmented by landscape (see Sections 3.1 and 3.2 in **Annex 9: Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan**) and conducted at the commune level at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks in Khanh Hoa and Quang Tri provinces respectively, and consultations were also conducted at national level. The findings of the analysis revealed a lack of gender awareness in stakeholders as well as startling gender inequality in the communities. As a starting point for the gender analysis, differences between men and women's reproductive[185] and production roles in tourism related tasks, time use, and wages demonstrate an uneven sharing of benefits. In general, in the areas of the two national parks:

- Women often do simple jobs, housework, and have a little voice in the community. They participate a lot in family care activities (caring for the elderly, children, other family members; cleaning; preparing meals, etc.). They have a very limited role in making decisions about livelihood options for their families. It seems that they rarely participate in local meetings, so they have limited access to information and knowledge;
- For sustainable tourism development, based on nature, women can effectively participate in many jobs, but they need to be trained to have the necessary knowledge and skills for: participating in singing groups, playing music, using ethnic tools; preparing traditional meals and act as hosts for traditional accommodations; participating in tour guides; taking photos for guests; rowing boats; driving canoes; selling souvenirs to tourists; etc. Therefore, the project should create job opportunities and income for local communities, especially female workers;
- The implementation of the project will include activities to promote wildlife conservation and protection of natural resources that may affect people's livelihoods due to the ban on logging and firewood; fishing; and encroachment on forest land. This requires a solution to stabilize the lives of households and individuals lawfully living in the NR, including men and women;
- Men and women in the core/buffer zone of the NR mainly rely on agro-forestry production with differences in division of labor and experience in carrying out different livelihood activities. Due to the lack of knowledge and experience in production and the heavy influence of the traditional conception of women's roles associated with the responsibilities of taking care of children and housework, women have few opportunities to access off-farm livelihood opportunities outside the community like men. Women's productive activities bring lower economic efficiency than men, making their role, position and voice in the family not properly recognized. Ethnic minority women have very limited use of the Vietnamese language, lack of knowledge and experience in production;
- Practice shows that women, especially ethnic minority women and rural women are rarely allowed to participate in community meetings to gather opinions. Men have more opportunities to attend meetings than women because they are the head of the household and the stereotype is that men know more than

[185] A reproductive role is a role that is associated with the responsibilities of child care and domestic tasks required to ensure the maintenance and reproduction of labor regarding the continuity of the family.

women, the husband is the breadwinner and has a more important role in representing the families to discuss, participate in decision making, community affairs. Women also have difficulty using Vietnamese and are not as fluent as men's. When participating in community meetings, women often express less opinions. The main reason is that women lack confidence, are often afraid to express their opinions in public, especially ethnic minority women. Even when women are allowed to express their opinions;

- Limited training is also a barrier for female workers to access jobs as female workers are not yet well-trained will not have a stable job when participating in activities for the development of nature-based tourism. The COVID-19 epidemic is also making them face problems with professional and technical qualifications;
- Persistence of gender stereotypes about women's roles and capacity at work, career development and leadership continue to be a challenge for female workers in search of decent work and higher income. Employers often assume that men are healthy and flexible when going to the beach, as well as going to the forest with guests. And women often serve in hotels, restaurants or on fish rafts; or they participate in ticket sales, sales, customer service. Ethnic minority female workers face more difficulties and disadvantages due to the dual limitations of "gender" and "ethnicity" in the labor market. The ability of female ethnic minority workers to have a "wage job" is much lower than that of Kinh and Hoa women.

Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

273. In alignment with the gender analysis, a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (see **Section 5.2 in Annex 9: Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan**) was formulated for this project based on the GEF Gender Policy's Guiding Principles for mainstreaming gender and promoting the empowerment of women, addressing gender-related issues in GEF-Financed activities, refraining from exacerbating existing gender inequalities, ensuring gender different knowledge, needs, roles and interests of women and men are addressed, applying a gender-responsive approach and identifying gender gaps to achieve global environmental benefits. The project will mainstream gender into the GEF Project and Programme Cycle, Monitoring, Learning and Capacity Development, Agency Policies, Procedures and Capabilities and Compliance. Therefore, the project design has ensured that indicators, activities, monitoring and evaluation, and learning are gender responsive. In correlation with this gender-responsive approach, the project budget includes resources to support its integration into the project activities.

274. The SESP, the gender analysis and gender mainstreaming strategy have provided a foundation for the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan (see **Annex 9**), which provides comprehensive and systematic guidance for project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Project evaluations and reporting (e.g. the PIR) will monitor the progress of the project on gender equality and women's empowerment and evaluate its performance. Routine sex-disaggregated records of participants in all activities will be an important tool to track women's participation in the project. Lastly, there will be a dedicated Gender Specialist consultant monitoring gender mainstreaming and auditing activities at intermittent points throughout the project cycle. Knowledge management and development of good practices will incorporate a dedicated section on women's role in biodiversity tourism such as differences in male and female local biodiversity wisdom and how they adapt and repackage this into tourism products. Case studies and stories of women leaders in biodiversity tourism will also create an impact to a wider audience.

Table 35: Proposed gender mainstreaming actions for project implementation

Outcome/ Output	Responsible	Gender Mainstreaming Actions
COMPONENT 1: ENABLING FRAMEWORK TO HARMONIZE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WITH NATURE CONSERVATION		
Output 1.1: An effective national BES platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services established for multi-level planning on nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to support the effective coordination and implementation of the NBSAP, tourism law and national tourism strategies.	MAE	Actively involve women and clearly define their roles/responsibilities in working groups and committees involved in policy planning and review (MAE, MOCST,, MOET, MOHA)

Outcome/ Output	Responsible	Gender Mainstreaming Actions
Output 1.2: Biodiversity conservation standards, criteria and guidelines for sustainable tourism development, management and operations in high-value biodiversity areas developed and adopted, supported by a monitoring, verification and reporting system.	MAE	Based on a comprehensive review of relevant indicator systems, criteria and guidelines, develop an indicator system, including gender mainstreaming criteria, to monitor and evaluate progress toward goals of gender equality and women's empowerment.
Output 1.3: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism policy, regulations and master planning for development of national nature-based tourism and integration in PA management policies.	MAE	Actively include women and clearly define their roles/responsibilities in working groups and committees related to policy and regulatory review. Report on implementation of nature-based tourism route with consideration of gender factor
Output 1.4: Guidelines for operationalizing nature-based tourism strengthened, in particular for promotion of: (i) public-private partnerships in nature-based tourism; and (ii) community participation and benefit sharing from nature-based tourism that ensure biodiversity conservation improvement to inform a clear policy.	MAE	Provide targeted training courses for groups of women Facilitate new and enhanced partnerships between business enterprises and local communities by facilitating the strengthening of institutions in society (e.g., cooperatives, societies, etc.) women, etc., raising awareness of existing financial opportunities, etc.
Output 1.5: Practical and standardized methodologies for ecological and social impact assessments developed for nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to minimize impacts on wildlife, habitats, environment and local culture and lifestyles and standards to ensure compliance.	MAE	Integrating gender factors in the manuals
Output 1.6: Enabling national policy and clear legal framework underpinning the promotion and application of payment for ecosystem services from marine ecosystems (PMES) and wetlands applied in project sites and replicated.	MAE	Promoting women's participation in policy revision groups; participate in the assessment of ecosystem service plans at the local level and at NPs.
COMPONENT 2: NATURE-BASED TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS BENEFITTING COMMUNITIES, WILDLIFE AND HABITATS AT NUI CHUA - PHUOC BINH AND PHONG NHA-KE BANG NATIONAL PARKS		
Output 2.1: Provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform established to support coordinated action and investment across government and private sector for promotion of nature-based tourism development and biodiversity conservation in Quang Tri and Khanh Hoa provinces.	MAE	Participation of the Provincial Women's Union and female officials at provincial-level departments and agencies in the plan to establish the Provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform
Output 2.2: Integrated nature-based tourism programs designed in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks.	MAE	Identifying training needs considering gender factors Program development and implementation of participatory training There is gender balance in training courses
Output 2.3: Improved monitoring of status of key biodiversity resources to assess effectiveness of PA management, illegal wildlife threat management and	MAE	Women at NPs are involved in the management and operation of SMART software

Outcome/ Output	Responsible	Gender Mainstreaming Actions
biodiversity conservation outcomes of nature-based tourism.		
Output 2.4: Institutional capacity for improving biodiversity conservation and management of PAs and effective monitoring, surveillance and prevention of illegal wildlife activities.	MAE	Women participate and contribute to in workshops on: improved conservation planning and management at the landscape level tourism knowledge and soft skills SMART patrol and surveillance techniques Illegal trade in wild animals co-management mechanism
Output 2.5: Implementation of community-based biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing programs from nature-based tourism and related products and services that provide new and innovative income generation activities.	MAE	Actively involve women in related capacity development activities
Output 2.6: Demonstration of PMES in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and surrounding landscape.	MAE	N/A
Output 2.7: Distillation of results from the piloting / evidence-based application of guidelines, criteria at local level as a feedback loop for refinement	MAE	Develop recommendations, lessons learned with consideration of gender factors
COMPONENT 3: CAPACITY BUILDING AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF VALUE OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM AND WILDLIFE AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION		
Output 3.1: Advocacy with travel and tourism sector to encourage promotion of nature-based tourism and biodiversity conservation.	MAE	Focus on incentive mechanisms to place gender equality in codes of conduct.
Output 3.2: Targeted social and behavioral change communications and initiatives for domestic and international tourists aiming to influence the purchase, use and trafficking of illegal wildlife products and promote more positive attitudes towards wildlife and nature conservation.	MAE	Provide targeted training courses for gender-considered domestic and international tourist groups
Output 3.3: Community outreach at the two PAs and buffer zones to shift attitudes and create social pressures for deterred involvement in poaching and trafficking of wildlife and increased awareness of the benefits of nature-based tourism, and payment for environmental services.	MAE	Design and build capacity for local beneficiaries, including women, to enhance sustainable livelihoods (skills training, implementation plans, financial management, learning by doing, etc.)
Output 3.4: Tourism and related enterprises integrate biodiversity-friendly practices to enhance biodiversity protection, improve visitor awareness and behavior change and participation in actions that protect biodiversity at the two PAs.	MAE	Conduct a gender-sensitive training need assessment on products, services or activities of participatory tourism. Develop relevant courses in the products, services or activities of participatory tourism Review the results of the impact assessment on behavior change by gender

Outcome/ Output	Responsible	Gender Mainstreaming Actions
Output 3.5: Institutional capacity building and training of national stakeholders to integrate and mainstream biodiversity in nature-based tourism planning, monitoring, implementation and enforcement.	MAE	Women who are national and provincial government officials, industry planners, judges, prosecutors, police officers are trained and consulted on related issues.
COMPONENT 4: MARKETING, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND M&E		
Output 4.1: Marketing strategies and informational materials for promoting the quality and diversity of nature- based tourism at demonstration PAs developed and disseminated across tourism platforms in Vietnam and abroad.	MAE/UNDP	Requirements for gender disaggregated information to design communication strategies and awareness campaigns Organize advocacy and awareness campaigns that focus on specific topics and target defined audiences, e.g, farmers, women's groups, government agencies, businesses and the public, through the methods identified in the knowledge management action plan, e.g. social networks, print media, local and provincial radio, television, etc.
Output 4.2: Knowledge exchange platform developed for sharing of experiences for replication of nature-based tourism planning and management models.	MAE/UNDP	Establish and maintain a system for sharing project information and knowledge, including internet platforms, social media, etc. with the active contribution of the Gender-Safety Expert. Requirements for sex-disaggregated information on wildlife harvesting and trade including needs aspects Actively pay attention to lessons learned about gender roles
Output 4.3: M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management.	MAE/UNDP	The Gender Action Plan is operated and implemented with the support of gender experts. Develop and start the implementation of the project's sustainability plan with the active contribution of the Gender Protection Specialist. Requirement for gender disaggregated information for appropriate indicators in the M&E Plan Specific monitoring of gender mainstreaming progress during project implementation Hold annual stakeholder meetings as part of the preparation of the annual work plan with full representation of women. Prepare final project report, final assessment report including gender aspects. Carry out regular monitoring, evaluation and updating of the gender action plan, SESP and stakeholder engagement plan. Share learning and/or adaptive lessons on gender mainstreaming, particular in wildlife/biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism.

Innovativeness, Sustainability and Potential for Scaling Up:

275. **Innovation:** The project is based on the concept of nature-based tourism, which is relatively new in Vietnam, and which has been identified as a viable concept to pull together the different threads of the government policy baseline on tourism – arresting unsustainable tourism impacts, generating enhanced tourism revenue, building community-level tourism, advancing the GoV's National Tourism Strategy, and acts as a spearhead for the economy – in an innovative way that maximizes alignment with government policy directions and will engage a range of partners. The project will seek to build off existing international and national best practices for tourism impact monitoring and adapt these into a Nature-Based Tourism Management and Planning Information system that can be practically and consistently implemented by protected areas and site managers across Vietnam once it is scaled. Opportunities to provide guidance for monitoring social impacts/benefits and incorporating climate change adaptation and mitigation into tourism planning, development and operation will also be explored – these are emerging issues where more guidance is needed. Where practical, the project will also leverage technology such as mobile applications to support tourism impact monitoring, marketing and the development of a multi-vendor marketplace to connect tourists and community providers of nature-based experiences and

products. It is also innovative in its approach to reducing negative impacts from fast and unsustainable tourism development by creating "green' jobs and livelihoods, mobilizing participation of the private sector, and contributing to biodiversity conservation. In addition, the project will specifically look at replacing the current destructive activities of poaching and trade in wildlife products by providing alternative and more socially acceptable community revenue generation opportunities through nature-based tourism ventures, the success of which depends on the change of community attitudes that favor the conservation of species and habitats.

276. Specific innovations being planned through the project are the following: first, the project will support the development of policy and regulations for Payment of Wetland and Marine Ecosystem Services (PMES) to generate revenues for biodiversity conservation and local communities based on the already successful Payment of Forest Ecosystem Services (PFES) and its trialing in the project. It will also strengthen the national framework and guidelines on public-private partnerships to realize the innovative potential in terms of recovering and enhancing opportunities for green job creation recognizing the key role and contribution of business and private sector to job creation. Further, the project will work with the social impact business sector to create multi-stakeholder platforms to promote sustainable business models that benefit the environment and society. It will also explore potential opportunities offered by nature-based tourism for enhancing learning and coordination across the country, and the region. Importantly, the business model innovation will be demonstrated through support to local business entrepreneurs within the demonstration landscapes for model nature-based tourism products and services that have the potential for long-term financial returns and high social and environmental benefits. Through these, the plan is to test and expand PPP models – eco-lodges, homestay, adventure and nature exploration - to promote an authentic local and Vietnamese experience and by fostering an appreciation for unique cultural heritage, which has high regard to its surrounding environment, nature, culture, custom and deep-rooted belief system. The project will help support a transition from current models based around local homestays to integrated landscape-scale programmes of nature-based tourism that cluster products and experiences and help transform socio-economic landscapes for human-wildlife coexistence. These innovations will help to reduce threats to biodiversity both in PAs and in the wider landscape in ways that have not been done to date and are urgently needed. Finally, through engagement with the private financial sector in activity 2.2.5, the project will work to ensure that local communities - and especially women and vulnerable groups – have access to tools and access to access microcredit to start and investing nature-based tourism enterprises.

277. **Sustainability**: An important contribution to sustainability will be through significant investments in capacity building under Output 2.4 (institutional capacity building at the landscape level) and Component 3, for all the national and local stakeholders (government, community, and private sector) and Project Steering Committee and PMU team who are involved in some way in project delivery. The investment in these individuals is expected to give long-lasting benefits on the ground, well beyond the end of the project.

278. *Social sustainability* will be enhanced through fostering a deeper appreciation of biodiversity and wildlife among local and ethnical communities in the project landscapes, as well as improving human-wildlife co-existence by nurturing and further developing a nature-based tourism economy through nature-based tourism and therefore improving livelihoods, and reducing human-wildlife conflicts that currently have impacts on livelihoods and on harnessing nature's tourism potential. A gender mainstreaming approach will contribute to social sustainability and resilience, and social risks will be monitored through the project's SESP and the Gender Action Plan. The integrated set of business plans, nature-based tourism plans, visitor management plans and environment management and protection plans for natural heritage plans under Output 2.2 will also collectively include opportunities for livelihood enhancement of communities so that community resilience is enhanced through the creation of employment and incomes to local communities from the enterprises to manage different nature-based tourism products and services and gender safeguards. Importantly, the project's focus on employment and income generation will target diversified and resilient livelihoods that acknowledge the impacts of COVID-19 (and future risks) on the tourism sector. The project design has adopted recommendations from recent socio-economic assessment of the tourism sector by expanding existing and new potential revenue streams for tourism-related businesses, including from domestic tourism and virtual tourism; linking tourism value chains with other sectors; focussing on economic development from sustainable use of biodiversity beyond its role in supporting tourism; and supporting the development of a COVID-proof tourism sector as international tourism continues to reopen.

279. *Environmental sustainability* is integral to the project objective and will be supported by all project outcomes. Landscape-scale biodiversity conservation that contributes to reduced threats from poaching, the illegal wildlife trade and HWC, and which generates new funds for biodiversity conservation both inside and outside protected areas, are all crucial elements for building environmental sustainability. These include landscape monitoring and habitat enrichment of flagship wildlife species through captive breeding, and support for HWC management and anti-poaching activities. Resilience will be enhanced through the support of multiple stakeholders, strong public participation and effective monitoring and evaluation. The several guidelines that the project will support for the development and management of nature-based tourism will ensure that appropriate standards and safeguards are adopted in tourism product and service development and operation. The project will support environmental sustainability by preventing and mitigating potential impacts of infrastructure development on high-value biodiversity areas flagged for tourism investment and growth, through the construction of low-impact, ecologically-sensitive and climate-proofed tourism infrastructure. This will include application of ecologically-sensitive design for infrastructure development and adherence to strict environmental safeguards. The project will apply feasibility/risk assessments (including climate-related risks and vulnerabilities) and targeted impact screening through amendments to SEA and EIA guidelines to identify, prevent and mitigate potential impacts on ecologically sensitive habitats through the construction process or ongoing use. The capacity for strategic nature-based tourism planning, a nature-based economy prioritizing conservation and the intactness of ecosystem goods and services, as well as for overall mainstreaming of biodiversity at strategic as well as local levels is expected to ensure environmental sustainability during and beyond the project period.*Financial and institutional sustainability* will be achieved by working through existing government agencies and community groups and strengthening existing multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms to secure the engagement of policy-makers and decision-makers across multiple government agencies. The project has been purposely designed to dovetail with government policy directions for tourism development and bring together the mandates of different Ministries in an integrated fashion. This alignment will support the institutional sustainability of the project as its mainstreaming focus will help embed the project approaches and nature-based tourism within a roadmap for future tourism policy and anchored to Vietnam's National Tourism Policy under Decision No. 147/2020/QD-TTg. The provision of operational guidelines, criteria, standards, and requirements, as well as and capacity development programmes will strengthen awareness and ownership for nature-based tourism at national, provincial, and local level. The project aims to establish nature-based tourism at the community level as a viable, sustainable livelihood for local communities. Providing this employment and income generation for local communities and connecting them with domestic and foreign tourists – and tourists with high-quality, standardized visitor experiences – will support the ongoing development of nature-based tourism and also the financial sustainability of local enterprises supported. Financial sustainability will be further supported by identification of pathways for enhancing opportunities for sustainable financing, improving revenue generation and the share of revenue earmarked for biodiversity and conservation schemes from fees and other revenue tools that increase efficiency in biodiversity management in the project landscape. Financial sustainability will further be achieved through supporting the government (at national, provincial and commune levels) to develop and demonstrate new sustainable financial mechanisms (such as PMES and PWES), as well as streamline, close gaps and improve the transparency of existing financial mechanisms (such as PFES) to generate new flows of funding for biodiversity conservation from the tourism sector via PPP opportunities such as concessions, minimising the need for international or governmental financing in the long term. Through the labour market the private sector will play a critical role in absorbing local communities, ethnic minorities and women into tourism operations in parallel to the livelihood generation activities built into the results hierarchy. The project's sustainability will be highlighted in the replication / upscaling strategy as part of Output 4.2.

280. **Scaling up:** Through its approach of testing and refinement, the project will demonstrate nature-based tourism at provincial/site level that can be scaled up to other sites at national level. For example, the project demonstration of nature-based tourism under Component 2 will develop a replicable model for how nature-based tourism can be integrated into tourism and land use planning and development within tourism destinations, offering potential replication across other destinations in Vietnam and the ASEAN region. The project's focus at national level on development operational policies and guidelines facilitating nature-based tourism development – in combination with demonstration at landscape level – will support scaling up and replication of project lessons and best practices across Vietnam, and lessons learned will be captured and

integrated into final guidelines and standards that can be applied nationally through relevant Ministries and tourist associations, tourism clubs and NGOs administering tourism labels and certifications. The project is designed to focus on community-based tourism to align with the strong government priority given to this area. Active engagement with tourism associations (see **Annex 18: Tourism Landscape Report**) and management will provide an opportunity to integrate biodiversity conservation and criteria into existing tourism bodies to support replication, as well as sustainability. The project will establish knowledge management platforms and mechanisms that support the transfer of project experiences and knowledge between sites and Ministries, and with other GEF projects focused on mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism and nature-based tourism, including projects under the GWP (in which Vietnam already participates).

V. PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal (s): Primary SDGs: SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 14 (Life Under Water) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). **Other SDGs:** SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Sustainable tourism has been identified as contributing to all SDGs by the UN World Tourism Organization and Global Sustainable Tourism Council

This project will contribute to the following country outcome (UNDAF/CPD, RPD, GPD): Country Programme Document for Vietnam (2022-2026): Outcome area 1: Shared prosperity through sustainable economic transformation (Output 1.1); Outcome area 2: Climate change, disaster resilience and environmental sustainability (Output 2.2).

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
Project Objective: To promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods through innovative solutions of nature-based tourism	**Mandatory** Indicator 1: *(GEF-7 Core indicator 1.2)* Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (see **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles**) **Total hectares** (a) (Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park) (b) (Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park) (c) METT score Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (d) METT score Phong Nha-Ke Bang *Specific METT item related to be able to improve sustainable PAs management are: PA Design and planning (item 5, 7a); Training/education awareness (item 10, 13, 14, 18, 20); Conservation habitat & management (item 21a, 21b, 22.); Local communities & commercial tourism operator involvement (item 24, 24a., 24b.); economic benefit (item 25, 27, 28, 29)*	**145,414 hectares** (a) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park: 22,088 hectares (b) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park: 123,326 hectares (c) Baseline METT score Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 48 (d) Baseline METT score Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 50	**145,414 hectares** (a) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park: 22,088 hectares (b) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park: 123,326 hectares (c) Baseline METT score Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 48 (d) Baseline METT score Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 50	**145,414 hectares** (a) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park: 22,088 hectares (b) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park: 123,326 hectares (c) Baseline METT score Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park =54 (d) Baseline METT score Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 56

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	Mandatory Indicator 2: *(GEF-7 Core indicator 2.2)* Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (see **Annex 17: Demonstration Landscape Profiles**) (a) Total hectares (b) METT score total *Specific METT item related to be able to improve sustainable marine PAs management are: PA Design and planning (item 5, 6, 7, 7a-c and 9); Training/education awareness (item 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20); Conservation habitat & management (item 21a, 21b, 22); Local communities & commercial tourism operator involvement (item 24, 24a., 24b.); economic benefit (item 25, 27, 28, 29)*	(a) 7,352 hectares (b) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (METT Score = 48	(a) 7,352 hectares (b) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (METT Score = 48	(a) 7,352 hectares (b) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (METT Score = 54
	Mandatory Indicator 3: *(GEF-7 Core indicator 4.1)* Area of **landscapes under improved practices** (excluding protected areas) (Hectares) **Total hectares** (a) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (terrestrial buffer zone) (b) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (terrestrial buffer zone)	**Total hectares (terrestrial): 0 ha** (a) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (protection forest): 0 ha (b) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (terrestrial buffer zone): 0 ha	**Total hectares (terrestrial): 22,900 ha** (a) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (protection forest): 900 ha (b) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (terrestrial buffer zone): 22,000 ha	**Total hectares (terrestrial): 45,802 ha** (a) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (protection forest): 1,802 ha (b) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (terrestrial buffer zone): 44,000 ha

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	Mandatory Indicator 4: *(GEF-7 Core Indicator 6)* Greenhouse gas emission mitigated (tCO2-e)	0	0	-15,704,236
	Mandatory Indicator 5: *(GEF-7 Core indicator 11)* # of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment **Total** (a)	**0 people**	**1,799 people (1,009 male / 790 female)**	**3,000 people (1,681 male / 1,319 female)**
PROJECT COMPONENT 1	**ENABLING FRAMEWORK TO HARMONIZE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WITH NATURE CONSERVATION**			
Project Outcome 1 Strengthened and harmonized policy, regulatory and incentive framework for promotion of nature-based tourism while reducing threats to wildlife and habitats	*Outcome 1, Indicator 6:* Nature conservation and biodiversity requirements and guidelines incorporated into tourism and sectoral policies, regulatory and incentive frameworks and master plans, as well as integrated into the work plans of coordinating agencies	1. There are no guidelines or action plans on integrating the requirements of nature conservation and biodiversity in national and provincial tourism planning/plans, as well as sustainable development of nature-based tourism in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan - up to 2030, vision 2050 (NBSAP) (Decision 149/2022/QD-TTg dated 28 January 2022)	1.Draft national guidelines on integrating the requirements of nature conservation and biodiversity in tourism planning/plans as well as sustainable development of nature-based tourism at National and provincial/site levels are developed and ready to pilot at target demonstration sites	1(i) Adoption of the guidelines on integrating the requirements of nature conservation and biodiversity in tourism planning/plans as well as sustainable development of nature-based tourism at National and provincial/site levels; and (ii) Approved planning requirements for nature conservation and biodiversity are integrated into at least 4 tourism plans at national, provincial and site level

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
		2. Lack of technical guidlines for nature/biodiversity conservation in tourism at high-value biodiversity areas at designated national tourism sites 3. There is no performance-based incentive framework at national or provincial level to minimize the negative impacts of tourism development in high-value biodiversity areas	2. Draft set of technical guidelines for nature/biodiversity conservation in tourism at high-value biodiversity areas at designated national tourism sites 3. Draft framework, guidelines and governance for a performance-based incentive mechanism developed to minimize the negative impacts of tourism development in high-biodiversity areas and improving quality of life of the local communities	2 (i) Technical guidelines for nature/biodiversity conservation in tourism at high-value biodiversity areas at designated national tourism sites adopted and being applied to at least the tourism and infrastructure sectors; and (ii) Nature conservation guidelines being applied by at least **2** at national (MAE, MoCST) and by **3** provincial departments (DAE,, DoCST, DoPAM, 3. A performance-based incentive framework refined and operationalized to minimize the negative impacts of tourism development in high-biodiversity areas and improve the quality of life of local communities
	Outcome 1, Indicator 7: Improved institutional capacity for nature-based tourism development, as measured by UNDP capacity development scorecard (a) Capacity development score for MAE (b) Capacity development score for MOCST	(a) MAE = 28 (44.4%) (b) MOCST = 23 (36.5%)	(a) MAE = 28 (44.4%) (b) MOCST = 23 (36.5%)	(a) MAE = 47.5 (75.4%) (b) MOCST = 50 (79.4%)

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	(c) Capacity development score at provincial level for Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (d) Capacity development score at provincial level for Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park	(c) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 15 (23.8%) (d) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 20 (31.7%)	(c) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 15 (23.8%) (d) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 20 (31.7%)	(c) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 45 (75.4%) (d) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 49 (77.8%)
	Outcome 1, Indicator 8: (a) Number of methodologies and guidelines to support monitoring efforts of nature-based tourism developed and operationalized for promotion of effective protected area / biosphere reserve / world heritage site management (b) Improved connectivity planning at the landscape level	(a) (i) The content on biodiversity and wildlife conservation within Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is very limited, not specific, with no guidelines for implementation; (ii) No standardized guidelines and criteria to define visitor load / carrying capacity in high-value biodiversity areas in PAs; and (iii) There is no set of standard criteria or system to monitor, evaluate the effectiveness and enforce compliance of biodiversity conservation in nature-based tourism development in high-value biodiversity areas in protected areas, nature reserves or natural heritage sites	(a) (i) Wildlife / biodiversity provisions and considerations included into the EIA and SEA framework and adopted by MAE; (ii) Standardization of monitoring guidelines are drafted in the two project provinces, including load limits and carrying capacity defined and approved by each of the 2 targeted provinces; and (iii) Development of a Nature-Based Tourism Management and Planning Information System to monitor, report on and evaluate the effectiveness and compliance with guidelines developed for management of national parks, nature reserves and natural heritage sites, that is driven by a stakeholder needs assessment, documented requirements and a conceptual data and application design approved through Joint Application Design sessions	(a) (i) Wildlife and biodiversity provisions operationalized in EIA and SEA assessed and refined; (ii and iii) Compliance mechanism on biodiversity conservation in nature-based tourism development guidelines in high-value biodiversity areas operationalized through a national monitoring, reporting and verification information system and institutionalized at 2 targeted provinces

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
		(b) Absence of clear guidelines and criteria for landscape zoning and protection in natural heritage sites, including at biosphere reserves	(b) Guidelines and criteria developed and ready for piloting for landscape zoning and protection in natural heritage sites at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Parks	(b) Guidelines and criteria developed and ready to be adopted for landscape zoning and protection in natural heritage sites nationally
	Outcome 1, Indicator 9: National policy and legislative framework for PMES and PWES (payment for marine and wetland ecosystem services)	No guidance on implementation of PMES and PWES in either at the national or provincial level	Draft Technical Guidelines on PMES and PWES developed	Technical guidelines on PMES and PWES to be submitted to competent authorities
	Outcome 1, Indicator 10: # of tourism certifications, codes of conduct and stewardship designations integrating biodiversity conservation The project will pursue appropriate options: • GSTC Sustainability Criteria and their recognized schemes • ASEAN Homestay Standards in Vietnam • Blue Sail Ecolabel for tourist cruise boats in Ha Long Bay • Biosphere tourism label in Kien Giang Province • Sets of Green Tourism criteria for Quang Nam Province	Apart from a theoretical biosphere tourism scheme in Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve, the remaining certifications do not adequately include criteria encouraging biodiversity conservation. Local livelihood opportunities (an important approach to biodiversity conservation) reflected in many schemes. Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Sustainability Criteria and their recognized/ authorized schemes and the Green Tourism Criteria for Quang Nam province can provide good criteria frameworks for updating/ developing the certification schemes in Vietnam in such	At least 2 provincial certifications modified/ developed to include biodiversity conservation and local livelihood opportunities and 2 certification schemes piloted at targeted demonstration sites	At least 1 national and 2 provincial certifications modified/ developed to include biodiversity conservation and local livelihood opportunities and 4 certification schemes being implemented at targeted demonstration sites.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	• Vietnam National Parks and Protected Areas Association (VNPPA)	a way that effectively integrates biodiversity and livelihood opportunities.		
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1	**Output 1.1:** An effective national BES platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services established for multi-level planning on nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to support the effective coordination and implementation of the NBSAP, tourism law and national tourism strategies. **Output 1.2:** Biodiversity conservation standards, criteria and guidelines for sustainable tourism development, management and operations in high-value biodiversity areas developed and adopted, supported by a monitoring, verification and reporting system. **Output 1.3:** Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism policy, regulations and master planning for development of national nature-based tourism and integration in PA management policies. **Output 1.4:** Guidelines for operationalizing nature-based tourism strengthened, in particular for promotion of: (i) public-private partnerships in nature-based tourism; and (ii) community participation and benefit sharing from nature-based tourism, that ensures biodiversity conservation improvement and informs a clear policy. **Output 1.5:** Practical and standardized methodologies for ecological and social impact assessments developed for nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to minimize impacts on wildlife, habitats and local culture and lifestyles and standards to ensure compliance. **Output 1.6:** Enabling national policy and clear legal framework underpinning the promotion and application of payment for ecosystem services from marine ecosystems (PMES) and wetlands applied in project sites and replicated.			
PROJECT COMPONENT 2	**NATURE-BASED TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS BENEFITTING COMMUNITIES, WILDLIFE AND HABITATS AT NUI CHUA - PHUOC BINH AND PHONG NHA-KE BANG NATIONAL PARKS**			
Outcome 2 Strengthened public-private partnerships for nature-based tourism enhance local livelihoods, increase PA revenue generation, improve	*Outcome 2, Indicator 11:* Visitor / tourism management and business plans including nature-based tourism and livelihood considerations finalized for project sites	The main strategic directions and targets for ecotourism development and management are set in the two important	The following business plans and agreements drafted at each demonstration site: (i) At least one forest	• 4 plans (a business plan and visitor / tourism management plan) **finalized and under**

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
tourism management, and reduce threats in PAs from poaching, illegal activities and related impacts		legislative documents, namely Forest Sustainable Management Plan up to 2030 and the Project Proposals for Ecotourism Development in the National Parks (the one for the PNKB NP is underway). These documents outline important midterm plans and mechanism for ecotourism development in the parks, including key tourist market segments, tourism products and services, tourism investment projects and land use, mechanisms on forest environmental and leasing services. The business units of the parks (the Ecotourism and Environmental Education Center) are mainly engaged in collecting entrance fees and tour guiding services under relatively subsidized and controlled mechanisms, having low level of business planning. The advantage of this mechanism is to avoid over-commercialization of their services but detrimental to forest protection and biodiversity conservation.	environmental service/ leasing contract with a new business partner/ investor; (ii) At least one annual work plan of the business unit of the national park (NB: Visitor impact management, biodiversity conservation and local livelihood opportunity considerations must be integrated in the reviewing and consultation processes.)	**<u>implementation</u>** at each national park • A guideline for business planning for ecotourism development in national parks: case studies of PNKB and NCPB NPs developed • A policy handbook for forest environmental service/ leasing contracts is developed

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	Outcome 2, Indicator 12: Reduced threats in PAs: (a) Illegal activities as shown in SMART monthly patrolling reports (b) Increased detection rate (c) % of violations prosecuted in court (d) Improved landscape connectivity through planning of landscape corridors	(a) No SMART patrols in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh / inadequate patrols Phong Nha-Ke Bang (b) Detection rate = 22 administrative cases in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh; 12 administrative cases and 2 criminal cases in Phong Nha-Ke Bang in 2021 (c) 0% in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh (only criminal cases are prosecuted in court) and 50% in Phong Nha-Bang in 2021 (d) 0 ha	(a) 250 SMART patrols in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and 2900 SMART patrols in Phong Nha-Ke Bang (b) 30 administrative cases and 2 criminal cases in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh; 20 administrative cases and 4 criminal cases in Phong Nha-Ke Bang (c) at least 50% of criminal cases in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and 70% of criminal cases in Phong Nha-Ke Bang prosecuted in court (d) 0 ha	(a) 500 SMART patrols in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and 3400 SMART patrols in Phong Nha-Ke Bang (b) 40 administrative and 4 criminals cases in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh; 25 administrative and 5 criminal cases in Phong Nha-Ke Bang (c) 70% of criminal cases in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and 80% of criminal cases in Phong Nha-Ke Bang prosecuted in court (d) 2 new corridors totaling 2,841 ha planned for approval by the end of the project based on application of approved national guidelines and criteria, including 1 new corridor at each National Park (1802 ha at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and 1039 ha at Phong Nha-Ke Bang)
	Outcome 2, Indicator 13: Multi-indicator biodiversity health assessment at tourism sites covering:			

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	Terrestrial species: (a) # of Silver-backed Chevrotain (mouse deer) (*Tragulus versicolor*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (b) # HWC incidents with black-shanked douc – (*Pygathrix nigripes*) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (c) Conservation status of Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus siki*) (d) # HWC incidents with Black Hatinh Langur (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis / hatinhensis ebenus*) **Bird species:** (e) # "Crested argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*)" at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park **Reptile species:** (f) # Cao Van Sung bent-toed gecko (*Cyrtodactylus caovansungi*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh	**Terrestrial species:** (a) # of Silver-backed Chevrotain (mouse deer) (*Tragulus versicolor*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 40 (b) # HWC incidents with black-shanked douc - *Pygathrix nigripes* = 5 (c) # of Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus siki*) = 250 (d) # HWC incidents with Black Hatinh Langur (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis / hatinhensis ebenus*) = 6 **Bird species:** (e) # "Crested argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*)" at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 20 **Reptile species:** (f) # Cao Van Sung bent-toed gecko (*Cyrtodactylus caovansungi*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh = 500 **Marine species:**	**Terrestrial species:** (a) # of Silver-backed Chevrotain (mouse deer) (*Tragulus versicolor*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 45 (b) # HWC incidents with black-shanked douc - *Pygathrix nigripes* = 0 (c) # of Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus siki*) = 250 (d) # HWC incidents with Black Hatinh Langur (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis / hatinhensis ebenus*) = 0 **Bird species:** (e) # "Crested argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*)" at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 20 **Reptile species:** (f) Cao Van Sung bent-toed gecko (*Cyrtodactylus caovansungi*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh = 600 **Marine species:**	**Terrestrial species:** (a) # of Silver-backed Chevrotain (mouse deer) (*Tragulus versicolor*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 50 (b) # HWC incidents with black-shanked douc – *Pygathrix nigripes* = 0 (c) # of Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus siki*) = 300 (d) # HWC incidents with Black Hatinh Langur (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis / hatinhensis ebenus*) = 0 **Bird species:** (e) # "Crested argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*)" at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 30 **Reptile species:** (f) # Cao Van Sung bent-toed gecko (*Cyrtodactylus caovansungi*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh = 700 **Marine species:**

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	Marine species: (g) # Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park during nesting season (h) reduced threats to sea turtles at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park through use of innovation and technologies	(g) # Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park during nesting season=20 (h) reduced threats to sea turtles at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park	(g) # Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park during nesting season = 25 (h) reduced threats to sea turtles at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = application of turtle excluder device (TED) for 50% of local fishermen's nets	(g) # Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park during nesting season = 30 (h) reduced threats to sea turtles at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = application of turtle excluder device (TED) for 70% of local fishermen's nets
	Outcome 2, Indicator 14: Number of households benefiting from PMES, and related economic activities in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and surrounding landscape (a) # of provincial ecosystem services plans with guidance on PMES, (b) # of national park ecosystem services plans including guidance on PMES (c) # of households benefiting from PMES	(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0	(a) Draft Provincial Ecosystem services Plan developed (b) 0 (c) 0	(a) 1 Provincial Ecosystem services Plan (b) 1 National Park Ecosystem Services Plan is implemented (c) Final target on number of households to be determined at mid-term
	Outcome 2, Indicator 15: (a) # of new and/or existing recovered/stable 'green' employment and/or community-based livelihood opportunities created in the 2 PAs (b) # of new and/or existing recovered/stable 'green' employment and/or community-based	(a) 1,100 (of which 70% female) (b) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 400 (of which 70% female) (c) Phong Nha-Ke Bang	(a) 1,600 (of which 70% female) (b) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 700 (of which 70% female) (c) Phong Nha-Ke Bang	(a) Two national parks = 1,800 (of which 70% female) (b) Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park = 800 (of which 70% female)

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	livelihood opportunities created at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh National Park (c) # of new and/or existing recovered/stable 'green' employment and/or community-based livelihood opportunities created at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park	National Park = 700 (of which 70% female)	National Park = 900 (of which 70% female)	(c) Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park = 1,000 (of which 70% female)
Outputs to achieve Outcome 2	**Output 2.1:** Provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform established to support coordinated action and investment across government and private sector for promotion of nature-based tourism development and biodiversity conservation in Quang Tri and Khanh Hoa provinces. **Output 2.2:** Integrated nature-based tourism programs designed in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks. **Output 2.3:** Improved monitoring of status of key biodiversity resources to assess effectiveness of PA management, illegal wildlife threat management and biodiversity conservation outcomes of nature-based tourism. **Output 2.4:** Institutional capacity for improving biodiversity conservation and management of PAs and effective monitoring, surveillance and prevention of illegal wildlife activities. **Output 2.5:** Implementation of community-based biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing programs from nature-based tourism and related products and services that provide new and innovative income generation activities. **Output 2.6:** Demonstration of PMES in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and surrounding landscape. **Output 2.7:** Distillation of results from the piloting / evidence-based application of guidelines, criteria at local level as a feedback loop for refinement.			
PROJECT COMPONENT 3	**CAPACITY BUILDING AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF VALUE OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM AND WILDLIFE AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION**			
Outcome 3 Change in social norms and behavior promote society's acceptance of a more sustainable approach to	*Outcome 3, Indicator 16:* Number of hotels and tourist operations within the 2 National Parks functioning in accordance with biodiversity-friendly best practice	(a) hotels and resorts (1 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 1 in PNKB NP) (b) tour operators (1 in Nui	(a) hotels and resorts (10 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 10 in PNKB NP) (b) tour operators (5 in Nui	(a) hotels and resorts (15 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 15 in PNKB NP) (b) tour operators (10 in

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
nature-based tourism that protects wildlife		Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 4 in PNKB NP) (c) botanical and fruit gardens (10 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 1 in PNKB NP)	Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 10 in PNKB NP) (c) botanical and fruit gardens (50 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 10 in PNKB NP)	Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 15 in PNKB NP) (c) botanical and fruit gardens (50 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 20 in PNKB NP)
	Outcome 3, Indicator 17: Improved attitudes and awareness of tourists (domestic and international) and communities within the two National Parks towards wildlife and its protection, measured by KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) survey	Baseline to be determined in Y1 through deployment of KAP survey	The KAP survey questionnaire is developed and tested. Data collected and analyzed in Year 1 and Year 3 from the survey targeting the following stakeholder groups: • 2 policy and decision makers at the national level; • 2 Local government agencies at the project sites; • 10 Private Sector, NGOs, CSOs; • 10 universities, schools, research organizations • 4 Local communities, Community-based Tourism (CBT), local conservation groups The midterm survey report is produced, compiled and presented.	Data collected and analyzed in Year 5 from the survey targeting the following stakeholder groups: • 4 policy and decision makers at the national level; • 4 Local government agencies at the project sites; • 20 Private Sector, NGOs, CSOs; • 10 universities, schools, research organizations • 8 Local communities, Community-based Tourism (CBT), local conservation groups The final survey report is produced, compiled and presented.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	Outcome 3, Indicator 18: Number of tour guide certificate courses / accreditations in Vietnam issued with biodiversity conservation components as part of curriculum (a) certificate courses / accreditations (b) new graduates / cohorts benefiting from enhanced biodiversity conservation elements in curriculum	a) 2 tour guide skill training and/ or refresher courses conducted in 2021 (1 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 1 in PNKB NP) b) A total of 60 certified tour guides (25 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 35 in PNKB NP)	a) A total of 6 tour guide skill training and/ or refresher courses conducted (at least 1 course per annum in both Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP and PNKB NP) b) A total of 175 certified tour guides (75 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 100 in PNKB NP)	a) A total of 10 tour guide skill training and/ or refresher courses conducted (at least 1 course per annum in both Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP and PNKB NP) b) A total of 295 certified tour guides (120 net new from MTR = 50 in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh NP; 70 in PNKB NP)
Outputs to achieve Outcome 3	**Output 3.1:** Advocacy with travel and tourism sector to encourage promotion of responsible nature-based tourism and biodiversity conservation. **Output 3.2:** Targeted social and behavioral change communications and initiatives for domestic and international tourists aiming to influence the purchase, use and trafficking of illegal wildlife products and promote more positive attitudes towards wildlife and nature conservation. **Output 3.3:** Community outreach to shift attitudes and create social pressures for deterred involvement in poaching and trafficking of wildlife and increased awareness of the benefits of nature-based tourism, and payment for environmental services. **Output 3.4:** Tourism and related enterprises integrate biodiversity-friendly practices to enhance biodiversity protection, improve visitor awareness and behavior change and participation in actions that protect biodiversity. **Output 3.5:** Institutional capacity building and training of national and local stakeholders to integrate and mainstream biodiversity in nature-based tourism planning, monitoring, implementation and enforcement.			
PROJECT COMPONENT 4	**MARKETING, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND M&E**			
Outcome 4	*Outcome 4, Indicator 19:*		(a) 10%	

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
Up scaling and replication of nature-based tourism in Vietnam is supported by effective marketing, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation of results	(a) # of nature-based tourism featured products on Vietnam tourism, websites, online travel agents' platform and tour operators' itineraries **(b) # of tourists in Vietnam:** (b1) international (b2) domestic **(c) average nightly stay (commercial only):** (c1) international (c2) domestic **(d) average spending per day** (d1) international (d2) domestic (d3) total leisure spending	(a) <5% of websites offering and/or featuring nature-based tourism products and services in Vietnamese national parks (b1) international = 3.8 million (b2) domestic = 113 million (c1) international = 8 days (c2) domestic = 3.6 days (d1) international = USD 117 per day (d2) domestic = 1.15 million VND per day (d3) total leisure spending = USD 9.5M	(b1) international = 10 million (b2) domestic = 116 million (c1) international = 9 days (c2) domestic = 4.5 days (d1) international = USD 130 per day (d2) domestic = 1.25 million VND per day (d3) total leisure spending = USD 12M	(a) 20% (1 in 5 websites offering and/or featuring nature-based tourism products and services in Vietnamese national parks (b1) international = 20 million (b2) domestic = 124 million (c1) international = 10 days (c2) domestic = 5 days (d1) international = USD 150 per day (d2) domestic = 1.30 million VND per day (d3) total leisure spending = USD 20M
	Outcome 4, Indicator 20: Project best practices and lessons learned developed, disseminated and used, including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits of nature-based tourism (a) Best practices and lessons learned developed and disseminated (b) Manuals and handbooks	(a) 0 (b) 0	(a) 2 (b) 1	(a) 6 (including at minimum 1 horizon scan and 1 submission to PANORAMA platform) (b) 4

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2022)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target
	Outcome 4, Indicator 21: (a) Replication strategy developed and disseminated based on lessons from the project (b) The set of indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the management of target protected areas is also piloted at additional national parks, nature reserves and natural heritage sites.	(a) 0 (b) 0	(a) 0 (b) 1	(a) 2 (b) 5
Outputs to achieve Outcome 4	**Output 4.1**: Marketing strategies and informational materials for promoting the quality and diversity of nature- based tourism at demonstration PAs developed and disseminated across tourism platforms in Vietnam and abroad. **Output 4.2:** Knowledge exchange platform developed for sharing of experiences for replication of nature-based tourism planning and management models. **Output 4.3:** M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management.			

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) PLAN

281. The project results, corresponding indicators and mid-term and end-of-project targets in the project results framework will be monitored annually and evaluated periodically during project implementation. If baseline data for some of the results indicators is not yet available, it will be collected during the first year of project implementation. The Monitoring Plan included in **Annex 27** details the roles, responsibilities, and frequency of monitoring project results.

282. Project-level monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken in compliance with UNDP requirements as outlined in the UNDP POPP (including guidance on GEF project revisions) and UNDP Evaluation Policy **The UNDP Country Office is responsible for ensuring full compliance with all UNDP project M&E requirements including project monitoring, UNDP quality assurance requirements, quarterly risk management, and evaluation requirements.**

283. Additional mandatory GEF-specific M&E requirements will be undertaken in accordance with the GEF Monitoring Policy and the GEF Evaluation Policy and other relevant GEF policies[186]. The Monitoring plan and budget in Annex 27 will guide the GEF-specific M&E activities to be undertaken by this project.

284. In addition to these mandatory UNDP and GEF M&E requirements, other M&E activities deemed necessary to support project-level adaptive management will be agreed - including during the Project Inception Workshop - and will be detailed in the Inception Report.

Minimum project monitoring and reporting requirements as required by the GEF:

285. **Inception Workshop and Report:** A project inception workshop will be held within 2 months from the first disbursement date, with the aim to:

    a. Familiarize key stakeholders with the detailed project strategy and discuss any changes that may have taken place in the overall context since the project idea was initially conceptualized that may influence its strategy and implementation.
    b. Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the project team, including reporting lines, stakeholder engagement strategies and conflict resolution mechanisms.
    c. Review the results framework and monitoring plan.
    d. Discuss reporting, monitoring and evaluation roles and responsibilities and finalize the M&E budget; identify national/regional institutes to be involved in project-level M&E; discuss the role of the GEF OFP and other stakeholders in project-level M&E.
    e. Update and review responsibilities for monitoring project strategies, including the risk log; SESP report, Social and Environmental Management Framework (where relevant) and other safeguard requirements; project grievance mechanisms; gender strategy; knowledge management strategy, and other relevant management strategies.
    f. Review financial reporting procedures and budget monitoring and other mandatory requirements and agree on the arrangements for the annual audit.
    g. Plan and schedule Project Board meetings and finalize the first-year annual work plan. Finalize the TOR of the Project Board.
    h. Formally launch the Project.

286. **GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR):** The annual GEF PIR covering the reporting period July (previous year) to June (current year) will be completed for each year of project implementation. UNDP will undertake quality assurance of the PIR before submission to the GEF. The PIR submitted to the GEF will be shared with the Project Board. UNDP will conduct a quality review of the PIR, and this quality review and feedback will be used to inform the preparation of the subsequent annual PIR.

287. **GEF Core Indicators:** The GEF Core indicators included as **Annex 11** will be used to monitor global environmental benefits and will be updated for reporting to the GEF prior to MTR and TE. Note that the project team is responsible for updating the indicator status. The updated monitoring data should be shared with MTR/TE consultants prior to required evaluation missions, so these can be used for subsequent ground truthing. The

[186] See https://www.thegef.org/gef/policies_guidelines

methodologies to be used in data collection have been defined by the GEF and are available on the GEF. The required Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METTs) has been prepared and the scores included in the GEF Core Indicators.

288. **Independent Mid-term Review (MTR)**: An independent mid-term review (MTR) will be completed by the mid-point of the project. The terms of reference, the MTR process and the final MTR report will follow the standard templates and MTR guidance for UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects available on the UNDP Evaluation Resource Center. The MTR must be submitted to the GEF by the mid-point of the project but no later than 48 months after CEO Endorsement. To meet the submission deadline, final MTR reports must be completed and submitted to BPPS NCE team no later than 2 months in advance of the submission deadline to allow sufficient time for internal review/clearance that is required prior to submission.

    Provisions must be taken to complete and submit the MTR within the submission deadline. Therefore, the MTR process must start no later than 8 months before expected date of submission of the MTR.

289. The MTR will be 'independent, impartial and rigorous'. The evaluator(s) that UNDP will hire to undertake the assignment will be independent from organizations that were involved in designing, executing or advising on the project to be reviewed. Equally, the evaluators should not be in a position where there may be the possibility of future contracts regarding the project under review.

290. The GEF Operational Focal Point and other stakeholders will be actively involved and consulted during the MTR process. Additional quality assurance support is available from the BPPS/NCE.

291. The final MTR report will be publicly available in English and will be posted on the UNDP ERC by the MTR submission date included on cover page of this project document. A management response to MTR recommendations will be posted in the ERC within six weeks of the MTR report's submission to the GEF.

292. **Terminal Evaluation (TE)**: An independent terminal evaluation (TE) will take place upon completion of all major project outputs and activities. The terms of reference, the evaluation process and the final TE report will follow the standard templates and TE guidance for UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects available on the UNDP Evaluation Resource Center. TE must be submitted to the GEF no later than 6 months after the Completion Date. This is a hard deadline that, if not met, can only be extended through a formal extension request. To meet the submission deadline, final TE reports must be completed and submitted to BPPS NCE team no later than 2 months in advance of the deadline to allow sufficient time for internal review/clearance that is required prior to submission.

    Provisions must be taken to complete and submit the TE within the submission deadline. Therefore, TE must start no later than 8 months before the expected date of submission of the TE (or 11 months prior to the estimated operational closure date).

293. The evaluation will be 'independent, impartial and rigorous'. The evaluator(s) that UNDP will hire to undertake the assignment will be independent from organizations that were involved in designing, executing or advising on the project to be evaluated. Equally, the evaluators should not be in a position where there may be the possibility of future contracts regarding the project being evaluated.

294. The GEF Operational Focal Point and other stakeholders will be actively involved and consulted during the terminal evaluation process. Additional quality assurance support is available from BPPS NCE.

    The final TE report will be publicly available in English and posted on the UNDP ERC by the TE submission date included on cover page of this project document. A management response to the TE recommendations will be posted to the ERC within six weeks of the TE report submission to the GEF.

    Per the GEF Terminal Evaluation requirements, for cancelled full-sized projects, Terminal Evaluations are required if the GEF grant expenditure exceeds more than US$ 2 million.

295. **Final Report**: The project's final GEF PIR along with the terminal evaluation (TE) report and corresponding management response will serve as the final project report package. The final project report package shall be discussed with the Project Board during an end-of-project review meeting to discuss lesson learned and opportunities for scaling up.

296. Agreement on intellectual property rights and use of logo on the project's deliverables and disclosure of information**:** To accord proper acknowledgement to the GEF for providing grant funding, the GEF logo will appear together with the MAE, NBCA logo and the UNDP logo on all promotional materials, other written materials like publications developed by the project, and project hardware. Any citation on publications regarding projects funded by the GEF will also accord proper acknowledgement to the GEF. Information will be disclosed in accordance with relevant current policies and regulations of Vietnam, relevant policies notably the UNDP Disclosure Policy[187] and the GEF policy on public involvement[188].

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation plans**.**

297. **Monitoring Plan**: The project results, corresponding indicators and mid-term and end-of-project targets in the project results framework will be monitored by the Project Management Unit annually, and will be reported in the GEF PIR every year, and will be evaluated periodically during project implementation. If baseline data for some of the results indicators is not yet available, it will be collected during the first year of project implementation. Project risks, as outlined in the risk register, will be monitored quarterly (see **Annex 27: Monitoring Plan**).

Table 36: Monitoring and evaluation Budget for project execution

GEF M&E requirements to be undertaken by Project Management Unit (PMU)	Indicative costs (US$)	Timeframe
Inception Workshop and Report (including consultant costs and travel)	23,240[189]	Inception Workshop within 2 months of the First Disbursement
M&E of GEF core indicators and project results framework (during implementation)	32,093[190]	Annually and at mid-point and closure.
GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)	None. To be covered by PMC	Annually typically between June-August
Risk Monitoring (Safeguards, Enterprise, and Risk Register)	To be covered by PMC	On-going
Monitoring of project safeguards management frameworks and/or plans and gender action plans	55,200[191]	On-going
Supervision missions	None[192]	Annually
Oversight/ troubleshooting missions	None	Troubleshooting as needed
Independent Mid-term Review (MTR)	39,760[193]	June 2026
Completion of METT and other required Tracking Tools (to be updated at the MTR/TE stage)	14,207[194]	Before evaluation takes place

[189] Workshop costs (Budget note#36)
[190] Contractual services individual to support the monitoring of project implementation - Technical and M&E officer with duration 55 months. Includes cost of updating monitoring framework, travel and workshop/meeting costs (50% to M&E cost).
[191] M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and social and environmental safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management. This includes cost of a national SESA/ESIA/IPP Specialist ($13,440), an international SESA/ESIA/EMPP specialist ($39,975), and contingency ($1,785)
[192] The costs of UNDP CO and UNDP-GEF Unit's participation and time are charged to the GEF Agency Fee.
[193] Includes cost of IC ($24,000), NC ($5,760), review METT and Capacity scorecard ($3,840), and travel costs ($6,160).
[194] Includes the Core cost of two NCs to compile the METT and CD Scorecard results prior to the start of the TE.

GEF M&E requirements to be undertaken by Project Management Unit (PMU)	Indicative costs (US$)	Timeframe
Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE)	50,000[195]	September 2028
TOTAL indicative COST	**214,500**	Note: provided as a separate section in the TBWP

[195]Includes cost of IC ($24,000), NC ($5,760),review METT and Capacity scorecard ($3,840), and travel costs ($6,160) & TE meeting ($10,240)

VII. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Section 1: Roles and responsibilities of the project's governance mechanism:

298. Implementing Partner: The Implementing Partner (IP) for this project is the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (NBCA) of Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE). The IP is the equivalent of the NIP (National Implementing Partner) as defined in the Vietnam – United Nations Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guidelines (HPPMG).

299. The Implementing Partner is the entity to which the UNDP Administrator has entrusted the implementation of UNDP assistance specified in this signed project document along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources and the delivery of outputs, as set forth in this document.

300. The Implementing Partner is responsible for executing this project. Specific tasks include:

- Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. The Implementing Partner will strive to ensure project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems.
- Overseeing the management of project risks as included in this project document and new risks that may emerge during project implementation.
- Procurement of goods and services, including human resources.
- Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets.
- Approving and signing the multi-year workplan.
- Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year; and,
- Signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures.

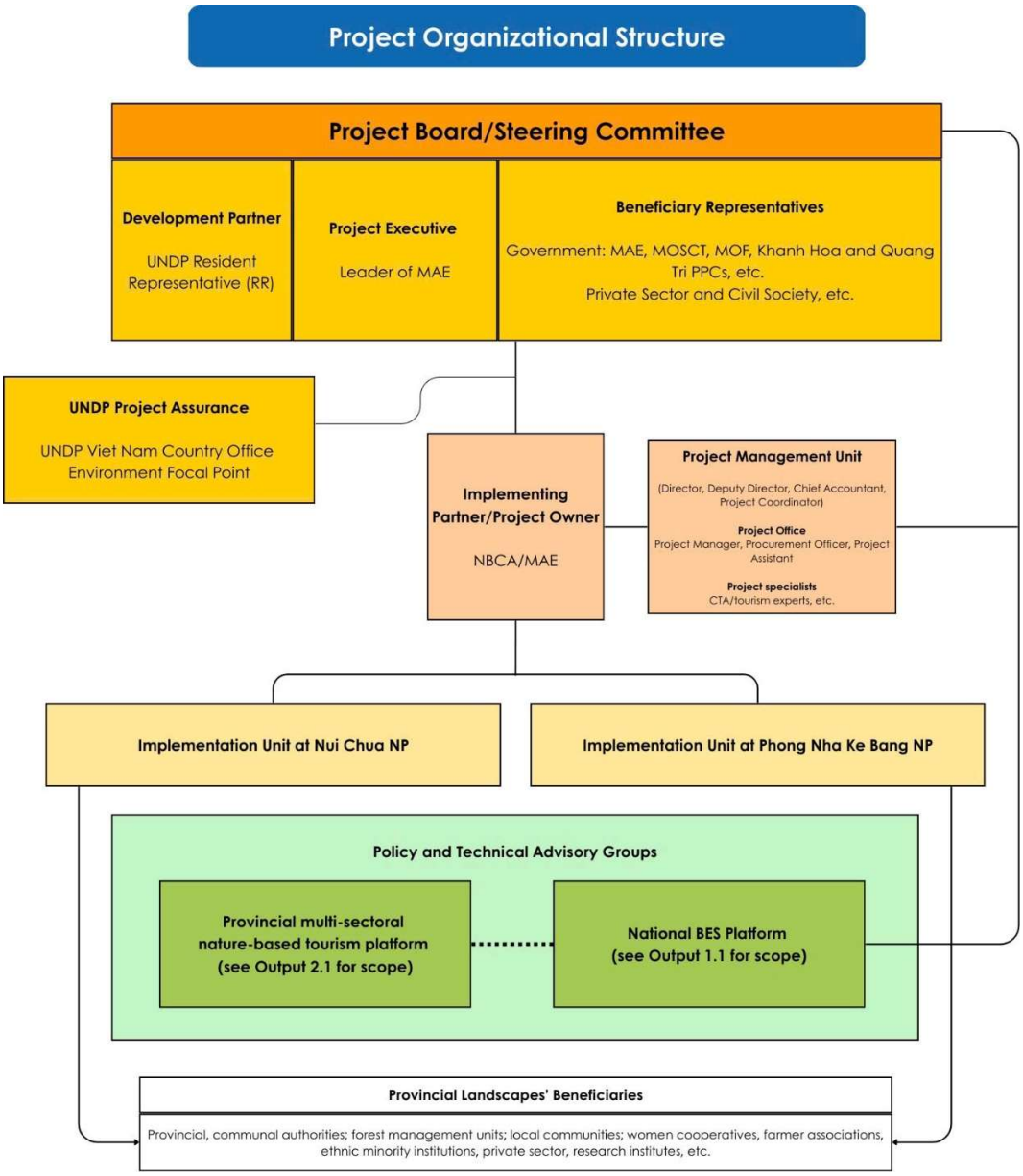
301. Responsible Parties: There are no responsible parties assigned for the project.

302. Project stakeholders and target groups: Reference is made to **Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan**, list of stakeholders in **Table 34** of the ProDoc indicating the main roles and responsibilities, as well as sections detailing stakeholder engagement and south-south cooperation herein.

303. UNDP: UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes overseeing project execution undertaken by the Implementing Partner to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and procedures and the standards and provisions outlined in the Delegation of Authority (DOA) letter for this project. **The UNDP GEF Executive Coordinator, in consultation with UNDP Bureau and the Implementing Partner, retains the right to revoke the project DOA, suspend or cancel this GEF project**. UNDP is responsible for the Project Assurance function in the project governance structure and presents to the Project Board and attends Project Board meetings as a non-voting member.

Section 2: Project organization structure:

Figure 32: Project Organizational Chart



Second line of defense: (i) Regional Bureau oversees RR and Country Office compliance at portfolio level; (ii) BPPS RTA oversees technical quality assurance and GEF Compliance. BPPS PTA oversees RTA function; (iii) UNDP GEF Executive Coordinator and Regional Bureau Deputy Director can revoke DOA/cancel/suspend project of provide enhanced oversight**.**

Acronyms: MAE – Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, ; PPC-Provincial People's Committee, MOCST-Ministry of Culture, Sport &Tourism; MOF - Ministry of Finance;. NBCA – Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency under MAE.

304. The UNDP Resident Representative assumes full responsibility and accountability for oversight and quality assurance of this Project and ensures its timely implementation in compliance with the GEF-specific requirements and UNDP's Program and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP), its Financial Regulations and Rules and Internal Control Framework. A representative of the UNDP Country Office will assume the assurance role and will present assurance findings to the Project Board, and therefore attends Project Board meetings as a non-voting member.

Section 3: Segregation of duties and firewalls vis-à-vis UNDP representation on the project board

305. As noted in the Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Partner Agencies, in cases where a GEF Partner Agency (i.e. UNDP) carries out both implementation oversight and execution of a project, the GEF Partner Agency (i.e. UNDP) must separate its project implementation oversight and execution duties, and describe in the relevant project document a: 1) Satisfactory institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation oversight and executing functions in different departments of the GEF Partner Agency; and 2) Clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the GEF Partner Agency between the project implementation oversight and execution functions.

306. In this case, UNDP is only performing an implementation oversight role in this project vis-à-vis our role in the project board and in the project assurance function and therefore a full separation of project implementation oversight and execution duties has been assured.

Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities of the Project Organization Structure

307. a) **Project Board:** All UNDP projects must be governed by a multi-stakeholder board or committee established to review performance based on monitoring and evaluation, and implementation issues to ensure quality delivery of results. The Project Board (also called the Project Steering Committee) is the most senior, dedicated oversight body for a project.

308. The two main (mandatory) roles of the project board are as follows:

a) **High-level oversight of the execution of the project by the Implementing Partner** (as explained in the "Provide Oversight" section of the POPP). This is the primary function of the project board and includes annual (and as-needed) assessments of any major risks to the project, and decisions/agreements on any management actions or remedial measures to address them effectively. The Project Board reviews evidence of project performance based on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including progress reports, evaluations, risk logs and the combined delivery report. The Project Board is responsible for taking corrective action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results.

b) **Approval of strategic project execution decisions of the Implementing Partner** with a view to assess and manage risks, monitor and ensure the overall achievement of projected results and impacts and ensure long term sustainability of project execution decisions of the Implementing Partner (as explained in the "Manage Change" section of the POPP).

309. The requirements to serve on the Project Board are as follows:

a) Agree to the Terms of Reference of the Board and the rules on protocols, quorum and minuting.

b) Meet annually; **at least once**.

c) Disclose any conflict of interest in performing the functions of a Project Board member and take all measures to avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest. This disclosure must be documented and kept on record by UNDP.

d) Discharge the functions of the Project Board in accordance with UNDP policies and procedures.

e) Ensure highest levels of transparency and ensure Project Board meeting minutes are recorded and shared with project stakeholders.

310. Responsibilities of the Project Board:

a) Consensus decision making:

- The project board provides overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints, and providing overall oversight of the project implementation.
- Review project performance based on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including progress reports, risk logs and the combined delivery report;
- The project board is responsible for making management decisions by consensus.
- In order to ensure UNDP's ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition.
- In case consensus cannot be reached within the Board, the UNDP representative on the board will mediate to find consensus and, if this cannot be found, will take the final decision to ensure project implementation is not unduly delayed.

b) Oversee project execution:

- Agree on project director's tolerances as required, within the parameters outlined in the project document, and provide direction and advice for exceptional situations when the project manager's tolerances are exceeded.
- Appraise annual work plans prepared by the Implementing Partner for the Project; review combined delivery reports prior to certification by the implementing partner;
- Address any high-level project issues as raised by the Project Director and project assurance;
- Advise on major and minor amendments to the project within the parameters set by UNDP and the donor and refer such proposed major and minor amendments to the UNDP BPPS Nature, Climate and Energy Executive Coordinator (and the GEF, as required by GEF policies);
- Provide high-level direction and recommendations to the project management unit to ensure that the agreed deliverables are produced satisfactorily and according to plans.
- Track and monitor co-financed activities and realisation of co-financing amounts of this project.
- Approve the Inception Report, GEF annual project implementation reports, mid-term review and terminal evaluation reports.
- Ensure commitment of human resources to support project implementation, arbitrating any issues within the project.

c) Risk Management:

- Provide guidance on evolving or materialized project risks and agree on possible mitigation and management actions to address specific risks.
- Review and update the project risk register and associated management plans based on the information prepared by the Implementing Partner. This includes risks related that can be directly managed by this project, as well as contextual risks that may affect project delivery or continued UNDP compliance and reputation but are outside of the control of the project. For example, social and environmental risks associated with co-financed activities or activities taking place in the project's area of influence that have implications for the project.
- Address project-level grievances.

d) Coordination:

- Ensure coordination between various donor and government-funded projects and programmes.

- Ensure coordination with various government agencies and their participation in project activities.

311. **Composition of the Project Board:** The composition of the Project Board must include individuals assigned to the following three roles:

1. **Project Executive:** This is an individual who represents ownership of the project and chairs (or co-chairs) the Project Board. The Executive usually is the senior national counterpart for nationally implemented projects (typically from the same entity as the Implementing Partner). The Project Executive is a Senior Representative from MAE. The name and the title will be determined prior to the project inception workshop.
2. **Beneficiary Representative(s):** Individuals or groups representing the interests of those groups of stakeholders who will ultimately benefit from the project. Their primary function within the board is to ensure the realization of project results from the perspective of project beneficiaries. Often representatives from civil society, industry associations, or other government entities benefiting from the project can fulfil this role. There can be multiple beneficiary representatives in a Project Board. The Beneficiary representatives are:

   (i) Provincial Authority Representative(s): Provincial People's Committees of Khanh Hoa and Quang Tri; (ii) Representatives from MOCST; (iii) Representatives from other Ministries (MOF, etc.); (iv) Representatives from the Civil Society Organizations and Non-for-profit organizations, and other representatives are to be determined prior to the project inception workshop.

   Through a low-value grant modality, assistances will be provided, through a low-value grant modality, to local community groups for implementing innovative practices on community-based eco-tourism. The administration of the low-value grants will be required to adhere to the UNDP On-Granting Provisions described in **Annex 32.**

3. **Development Partner(s):** Individuals or groups representing the interests of the parties concerned that provide funding, strategic guidance and/or technical expertise to the project. The Development Partner(s) is/are UNDP (Represented by UNDP Resident Representative).

312. **b) Project Assurance**: Project assurance is the responsibility of each project board member; however, UNDP has a distinct assurance role for all UNDP projects in carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. UNDP performs quality assurance and supports the Project Board (and Project Management Unit) by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions, including compliance with the risk management and social and environmental standards of UNDP. The Project Board cannot delegate any of its quality assurance responsibilities to the Project Director. Project assurance is totally independent of project execution.

313. A designated representative of UNDP playing the project assurance role is expected to attend all board meetings and support board processes as a non-voting representative. It should be noted that while in certain cases UNDP's project assurance role across the project may encompass activities happening at several levels, at least one UNDP representative playing that function must, as part of their duties, specifically attend board meeting and provide board members with the required documentation required to perform their duties. The UNDP representative playing the main project assurance function is the UNDP Country Office Environmental Focal Point.

314. **Project Management – Execution of the Project:** The Project Director (PD) is the senior most representative of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and is responsible for the overall day-to-day management of the project on behalf of the Implementing Partner, including the mobilization of all project inputs, supervision over project staff, responsible parties, consultants and sub-contractors. The Project Director typically presents key deliverables and documents to the board for their review and approval, including progress reports, annual work plans, adjustments to tolerance levels and risk registers.

315. A designated representative of the PMU is expected to attend all board meetings and support board processes as a non-voting representative.

316. The primary PMU representative attending board meetings is: Project Director (name to be confirmed during the project inception workshop)

317. **Provincial Implementing partners (Responsible Parties)**: The provincial Implementing partners' primary responsibility is to provide technical leadership and ensure that the project produces the results specified in the project document, to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost. The Project Implementing partners will inform the national implementing partner and the Project Assurance of any delays or difficulties as they arise during implementation so that appropriate support and corrective measures can be adopted. The Provincial implementing partners will establish provincial management team(s) (Provincial PMU), that are appropriate with the provincial context and requirements. To ensure the implementation of the project in the project, each province will have one technical coordinator. Specific responsibilities of provincial technical coordinators include:

    a) Manage the overall coordination and guidance of the technical aspects of the project, in particular the alignment of national guidelines, criteria, requirements with the provincial context, monitoring plans and oversee the implementation of technical aspects related to PA management, threat reduction to wildlife, training of field staff, community management and community protocols.

    b) Incubate and act as ambassadors to the nurturing of nature-based tourism in the project landscapes.

    c) Overseeing and coordination of the technical inputs from the international and national consultants, as well as the private sector.

318. Support, where relevant and requested by the national PMU, the development and delivery of capacity building and training programs for all relevant provincial, and commune agencies, ethnic minorities and local communities.

    d) Support the conduct of technical consultations and workshops to develop guidelines, tool kits and manuals for facilitating of planning at Provincial PMU levels, rules and regulations for financial mechanism for conservation of biodiversity, etc.

    e) Development and organization of awareness and publicity programs and materials.

    f) Support plans and protocols for inter-agency coordination during the preparation of business and visitor / tourism management plans that integrated biodiversity.

    g) Ensure that experiences and lessons from testing of national guidelines, criteria and requirements at the provincial level are clearly documented and recommendations for refinement are made, per Output 2.7, in order to inform policy directions, development and approval.

    h) Plan the activities of the project and monitor progress against the approved work plan.

    i) Monitor events as determined in the project monitoring plan, and updated plan as required.

    j) Provide support for completion of assessments required by UNDP, spot checks and audits.

    k) Monitor progress watch for plan deviations and make course corrections when needed within project board-agreed tolerances to achieve results.

    l) Ensure that changes to scope, budget and timelines are controlled and problems addressed through a uniform change control process.

    m) Perform regular progress reporting to the project board as agreed with the board, including measures to address challenges and opportunities.

    n) Manage and monitor the project risks – including social and environmental risks - initially identified and submit new risks to the Project Board for consideration and decision on possible actions if required; update the status of these risks by maintaining the project risks log;

    o) Capture lessons learned during project implementation to support MTR and TE.

p) Participate in and prepare revisions to the multi-year work plan, as needed, as well as annual and quarterly plans if required.

q) Prepare the inception report no later than one month after the inception workshop.

r) Ensure that the indicators included in the project results framework is monitored annually in advance of the GEF PIR submission deadline so that progress can be reported in the GEF PIR.

s) Assess major and minor amendments to the project within the parameters set by UNDP-GEF.

t) Monitor implementation plans including the gender action plan, stakeholder engagement plan, and any environmental and social management plans.

u) Monitor and track progress against the GEF Core indicators.

v) Support the Mid-term and Terminal Evaluation process.

VIII. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

319. The total cost and budget envelope of the project is USD 98,920,062. This is financed through a GEF grant of USD 7,150,000 administered by UNDP and additional support of USD 91,770,062 below. UNDP, as the GEF Implementing Agency, is responsible for the oversight of the GEF resources and the cash co-financing transferred to UNDP bank account only (if any).

320. **Co-financing**: The actual realization of project co-financing amounts will be monitored by the UNDP Country Office and PMU on an annual basis in the GEF PIR and will be reported to the GEF during the mid-term review and terminal evaluation process as follows:

Table 37: Co-financing Summary Table

Co-financing source	Co-financing type	Co-financing amount
Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE)	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	2,500,000.00
	Cash (Recurrent Expenditures)	291,918.00
Quang Tri Provincial People's Committee (QB PPC)	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	4,562,672.00
	Public investment (Investment Mobilized)	54,130,409.00
	Other (Investment Mobilized)	299,299.00
Khanh Hoa Provincial People's Committee (NT PPC)	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	1,737,725.00
	Public investment (Investment Mobilized)	28,048,039.00
United Nation Development Programme (UNDP)-Vietnam Country Office	In-kind (Recurrent Expenditures)	200,000.00
TOTAL USD		**91,770,062**

321. **Budget Revision and Tolerance**: As per UNDP POPP, the project board may agree on a budget tolerance level for each detailed plan under the overall multi-year work plan. The agreed tolerances should be written in the project document or approved project board meeting minutes. It should normally not exceed 10 percent of the agreed annual budget at the activity level, but within the overall approved multi-year workplan at the activity level. Within the agreed tolerances, the Project Director can operate without intervention from the project board. Restrictions apply as follows:

322. Should the following deviations occur, the Project Director and UNDP Country Office will seek the approval of the BPPS/NCE-VF team to ensure accurate reporting to the GEF. It is **strongly encouraged** to maintain the expenditures within the approved budget at the budgetary account and at the component level:

    a) Budget reallocations must prove that the suggested changes in the budget will not lead to material changes in the results to be achieved by the project. A strong justification is required and will be approved on an exceptional basis. Budget re-allocations among the components (including PMC) of the approved Total Budget and Work Plans (TBWP) that represent a value greater than 10% of the total GEF grant.
    b) Introduction of new outputs/activities (i.e., budget items) that were not part of the agreed project document and TBWP that represent a value greater than 5% of the total GEF grant. The new budget items must be eligible as per the GEF and UNDP policies.
    c) Project management cost (PMC): budget under PMC component is capped and cannot be increased.

323. UNDP is not in a position to increase the total budget above the amount approved by the donor, therefore any over-expenditure would have to be absorbed from non-GEF resources by the Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity)

324. **Project extensions:** The UNDP-BPPS-NCE team Executive Coordinator must approve all requests for extension of the Project Completion Date and for other milestone extensions with hard deadlines. All extensions impose additional time and cost burdens at all levels and the GEF project budget cannot be increased beyond its originally approved amount. A single extension may be granted on an exceptional basis and subject to the conditions and maximum durations set out in the UNDP POPP. The project management costs during the extension period must remain within the originally approved amount, and any increase in PMC costs shall be covered by non-GEF resources; the additional UNDP oversight costs during the extension period must be covered by non-GEF resources, in accordance with UNDP's policy as set out in UNDP POPP.

    For any extension request, UNDP CO and IP will consult and jointly present a clear plan indicating how and from which specific sources the additional oversight costs that will be incurred by UNDP will be covered during the extended period. The BPPS-NCE Executive Coordinator will consult the Regional Bureaux (RBX) and may reject the extension request if no (external co-financing by the IP or internal UNDP CO resources) can be identified.

    All extension requests, along with all supporting documentation, shall be submitted by the IP to the UNDP CO in line with the requirements and within the deadlines set out in the UNDP SOPs and policies in UNDP POPP.

325. **Audit**: The project will be audited as per UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules and applicable audit policies. Audit cycle and process must be discussed during the Inception workshop. If the Implementing Partner is an UN Agency, the project will be audited according to that Agencies applicable audit policies.

326. **Transfer or disposal of assets**: In consultation with the Implementing Partner and other parties of the project, UNDP is responsible for deciding on the transfer or other disposal of assets. Transfer or disposal of assets is recommended to be reviewed and endorsed by the project board following UNDP rules and regulations. Assets may be transferred to the government for project activities managed by a national institution at any time during the life of a project, however **must be done before the operational closure date**. In all cases of transfer, a transfer document must be prepared and kept on file[196]. The transfer should be done before Project Management Unit complete their assignments.

327. **Completion Date:** The project completion date is the date of Project Document Signature plus project duration. This date can only be extended through a formal extension request. Prior to completion date, all UNDP-financed inputs must be provided and related activities for the Project completed. No activities, except for the final clearance of the Terminal Evaluation Report and the corresponding management response and the end-of-project review Project Board Meeting should take place after the Completion Date.

328. **Project Closure**: Project closure will be conducted as per UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP POPP. All costs incurred to close the project must be included in the project closure budget and reported as final project commitments presented to the Project Board during the final project review. The only costs a project may incur following the final project review are those included in the project closure budget.

- **Operational Closure**: **Operational closure must happen within 9 months from project completion date.** Prior to operational closure, the Terminal Evaluation must have been submitted and the corresponding TE management response and the end-of-project review Project Board meeting must have been completed. The Implementing Partner through a Project Board decision will notify the UNDP Country Office when operational closure has been completed. Before Operational Closure, the project must have completed the transfer or disposal of any equipment that is still the property of UNDP.
- **Financial Closure: Financial closure must happen within 6 months of operational closure or after the date of cancellation.** The project will be financially closed when the following conditions have

[196] See https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Project%20Management_Closing.docx&action=default.

been met: a) the project is operationally completed or has been cancelled; b) the Implementing Partner has reported all financial transactions to UNDP; c) UNDP has closed the accounts for the project; d) UNDP and the Implementing Partner have certified a final Combined Delivery Report (which serves as final budget revision).

Between operational and financial closure, the implementing partner will identify and settle all financial obligations and prepare a final expenditure report. The UNDP Country Office will send the final signed closure documents including confirmation of final cumulative expenditure and unspent balance to BPPS/NCE for confirmation before the project will be financially closed in Quantum by the UNDP Country Office.

329. **Cancellation and Suspension:** All projects considering going through cancellation or suspension must follow UNDP and GEF requirements. Guidance can be found in the UNDP POPP (SOPs for management actions of Vertical Fund projects escalated to the Executive Coordinator and Guidance for GEF project revisions).

330. **Refund to GEF:** Should a refund of unspent funds to the GEF be necessary, this will be managed directly by the BPPS/NCE team Directorate in New York. No action is required by the UNDP Country Office on the actual refund from UNDP project to the GEF. Unspent project balance is not permitted to be transferred to any other projects.

IX. TOTAL BUDGET AND WORK PLAN

Total Budget and Work Plan			
Quantum Business Unit	UNDP-VNM		
Quantum Project ID:	01001683	Quantum Project Title:	Promote Wildlife Conservation and Responsible Nature-Based Tourism for Sustainable Development in Vietnam
Quantum Award ID:	1215252	Quantum Award Title:	Promote Wildlife Conservation and Responsible Nature-Based Tourism for Sustainable Development in Vietnam
UNDP-GEF PIMS No.	6377		
Implementing Partner	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (NBCA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE)		

Quantum Outcome (GEF Component)	**Quantum Output/Activity (GEF Outcome)**	**Quantum Responsible Party**	**Quantum Fund ID**	**Quantum Donor ID**	**Quantum Budgetary Account Code**	**Quantum Budget Account Description**	**Amount Year 1 (USD)**	**Amount Year 2 (USD)**	**Amount Year 3 (USD)**	**Amount Year 4 (USD)**	**Amount Year 5 (USD)**	**Total (USD)**	**See Budget Note:**
Component 1: Enabling framework to harmonize tourism development with nature conservation	*Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policy, regulatory and incentive framework for promotion of nature-based tourism while reducing threats to wildlife and habitats*	*MAE*	*62000*	*010003*	*71200*	*International Consultants*	51,350	127,075	36,075	-	19,500	234,000	1
					71300	*National Consultant*	125,692	306,538	259,882	7,680	36,480	736,272	2
					71600	*Travel*	33,000	35,670	19,990	1,400	3,500	93,560	3
					71800	*Contractual Serv - Ind*	6,481	6,483	6,483	6,483	6,483	32,413	4
					72100	*Contractual Services-Companies*	50,000	165,000	115,000	-	-	330,000	5
					74200	*Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs*	7,161	14,518	2,839	420	564	25,502	6
					75700	*Workshop/ Training*	52,622	101,165	43,665	3,000	22,188	222,640	7

		Total MAE					**326,306**	**756,449**	**483,934**	**18,983**	**88,715**	**1,674,387**	
	Total Outcome 1						**326,306**	**756,449**	**483,934**	**18,983**	**88,715**	**1,674,387**	
Total Component 1							**326,306**	**756,449**	**483,934**	**18,983**	**88,715**	**1,674,387**	
Component 2: *Nature-based tourism partnerships benefitting communities, wildlife and habitats at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks*	*Outcome 2: Strengthened public-private partnerships for nature-based tourism enhance local livelihoods, increase PA revenue generation, improve tourism management, and reduce threats in PAs from poaching, illegal activities and related impacts.*	*MAE*	*62000*	*010003*	*71200*	*International Consultants*	9,100	61,100	53,300	9,750	13,000	146,250	8
					71300	*National Consultant*	78,048	165,818	140,378	36,524	18,240	439,008	9
					71600	*Travel*	19,107	37,262	26,045	10,580	-	92,994	11
					71800	*Contractual Serv - Ind*	53,551	53,553	53,553	53,553	53,553	267,763	10
					72100	*Contractual Services-Companies*	69,962	565,886	680,450	279,526	60,000	1,655,824	12
					72200	*Equipment*	10,500	-	-	-	-	10,500	13
					72600	*Grant*	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	-	500,000	14
					74200	*Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs*	2,226	4,563	4,087	3,237	-	14,113	15
					75700	*Workshop/ Training*	25,188	82,775	99,021	61,938	12,480	281,402	16
		Total MAE					**392,682**	**1,095,957**	**1,181,834**	**580,108**	**157,273**	**3,407,854**	
	Total Outcome 2						**392,682**	**1,095,957**	**1,181,834**	**580,108**	**157,273**	**3,407,854**	
Total Component 2							**392,682**	**1,095,957**	**1,181,834**	**580,108**	**157,273**	**3,407,854**	
Component 3: *Capacity building and behavior change for acceptance of value of nature-based tourism and wildlife and biodiversity protection*	*Outcome 3: Change in social norms and behavior promote society's acceptance of a more sustainable approach to nature-based tourism that protects wildlife*	*MAE*	*62000*	*010003*	*71200*	*International Consultants*	2,600	10,400	6,500	-	-	19,500	17
					71300	*National Consultant*	3,072	42,720	44,352	50,364	19,164	159,672	18
					71600	*Travel*	352	31,850	35,355	43,060	8,612	119,229	19
					71800	*Contractual Serv - Ind*	5,839	5,841	5,841	5,841	5,841	29,203	20
					72100	*Contractual Services-Companies*	49,000	187,688	264,009	151,033	30,000	681,730	21
					74200	*Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs*	-	-	906	2,631	576	4,113	22

					75700	*Workshop/ Training*	7,200	51,800	41,490	69,990	28,500	198,980	23
		Total MAE					**68,063**	**330,299**	**398,453**	**322,919**	**92,693**	**1,212,427**	
	Total Outcome 3						**68,063**	**330,299**	**398,453**	**322,919**	**92,693**	**1,212,427**	
Total Component 3							**68,063**	**330,299**	**398,453**	**322,919**	**92,693**	**1,212,427**	
Component 4: *Marketing, knowledge management*	*Outcome 4: Up scaling and replication of nature-based tourism in Vietnam is supported by effective marketing, knowledge management*	*MAE*	*62000*	*010003*	*71200*	*International Consultants*	-	-	3,250	-	-	3,250	24
					71300	*National Consultant*	13,440	20,694	33,612	11,190	9,600	88,536	25
					71600	*Travel*	2,482	2,842	5,120	7,962	400	18,806	26
					72100	*Contractual Services-Companies*	-	25,000	20,000	10,000	-	55,000	27
					72300	*'Materials & Goods*	-	10,000	-	-	-	10,000	28
					74200	*Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs*	-	4,480	4,354	1,580	-	10,414	29
					75700	*Workshop/ Training*	5,000	22,500	54,800	23,000	9,052	114,352	30
		Total MAE					**20,922**	**85,516**	**121,136**	**53,732**	**19,052**	**300,358**	
	Total Outcome 4						**20,922**	**85,516**	**121,136**	**53,732**	**19,052**	**300,358**	
Total Component 4							**20,922**	**85,516**	**121,136**	**53,732**	**19,052**	**300,358**	
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	*M&E*	*UNDP*	*62000*	*010003*	*71200*	*International Consultants*	10,000	20,000	33,975	-	24,000	87,975	31
					71300	*National Consultant*	18,064	5,376	9,600	-	9,600	42,640	32
					71600	*Travel*	-	-	10,000	-	10,000	20,000	33
		Total UNDP					**28,064**	**25,376**	**53,575**	**-**	**43,600**	**150,615**	
		MAE	*62000*	*010003*	*71600*	*Travel*	3,785	-	2,384	-	2,384	8,552	33
					71800	*Contractual Serv - Ind*	6,418	6,419	6,419	6,419	6,418	32,093	34
					75700	*Workshop/ Training*	13,000	-	-	-	10,240	23,240	35

		Total MAE					**23,203**	**6,419**	**8,803**	**6,419**	**19,042**	**63,885**	
Total M&E							**51,267**	**31,795**	**62,378**	**6,419**	**62,642**	**214,500**	
Project Management Cost (PMC)	*PMC*	*UNDP*	*62000*	*010003*	*74100*	*Professional Services*	24,400	8,000	8,000	8,000	10,400	58,800	39
		Total UNDP					**24,400**	**8,000**	**8,000**	**8,000**	**10,400**	**58,800**	
		MAE	*62000*	*010003*	*71600*	*Travel*	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	18,000	37
					71800	*Contractual Serv - Ind*	42,395	42,395	42,396	42,396	42,396	211,978	36
					72500	*Supplies*	10,300	10,349	10,349	10,349	10,349	51,696	38
		Total MAE					**56,295**	**56,344**	**56,345**	**56,345**	**56,345**	**281,674**	
Total Project Management Cost							**80,695**	**64,344**	**64,345**	**64,345**	**66,745**	**340,474**	
Total Project Grant							**939,935**	**2,364,360**	**2,312,080**	**1,046,506**	**487,120**	**7,150,000**	

Budget Notes:

Number	Budget Note Description
1	**International Consultants - $234,000** (a) CTA cum International Nature-based Tourism Specialist: 230 days at $650/day = $149,500. (b) International PA and Biodiversity Expert - 130 days at $650/day = $84,500.
2	**Local consultants - $736,272** a) National Policy Expert: to support implementation of policy-related tasks in Component 1, to cover for Activities 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3,1.1.4; 1.3.4; 1.4.7; 1.6.1; 1.6.2; 1.6.3, 1.6.4: 820 days at $192/day = $157,440 b) National Consultant for technical support officer for BES platform (Act 1.1.2): $500/month for 36 months = $18,000. c) National PA Management Expert: support Activity 1.2.7: 600 days at $192 = $115,200 d) National Biodiversity, Tourism and Planning Expert: to support Activities 1.2.3; 1.2.; 1.3.1; 1.3.3 and 1.5.5: 545 days at $192 days = $104,640. e) National Sustainable Tourism Standards Expert: to support Activities 1.4.2 and 1.4.6: 315 days at $192/day = $60,480. f) National EIA/SEA Expert: to support Activities 1.5.1; 1.5.2; 1.5.3 and 1.5.4: 292 days at $192/day = $56,064 g) National PPP Expert: to support Activities 1.4.1; 1.4.3; 1.4.4 and 1.4.5: 307 days at $192/day = $58,944 h) Other experts: i) Assess and develop national carrying capacity guidelines for PAs, high-value biodiversity areas and at designated national tourism areas, including spatial analysis and carrying capacity assessment: 750 days at $192 = $144,000; and ii) Impact assessment of tourism activities on wildlife, biodiversity and natural heritage: 112 days at $192 = $21,504.
3	**Travel = $93,560** Lump sum travel costs for international and national consultants, officers from MAE, MOCST, provincial staff for implementation, monitoring, workshops and training etc. (Component 1)
4	Cost of contractual services individuals to support the project implementation **= $32,413** (component 1) including: - Project Manager: the allocated budget is USD19,579 (22% of total budget of this position) for 5 years - Technical and M&E officer: the allocated budget is $12,834 (20% of total budget of this position) for 5 years
5	**Contractual Services –Companies = $330,000** (a) Design and develop a comprehensive information system / dashboard for monitoring, compliance and reporting of tourism operations (to be piloted as in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang NPs under Component 2) against national requirements - $230,000 (Output 1.2) (b) Review and contribution to a national policy amendment to strengthen and enable a greater share of tourism revenue to be earmarked and directly re-invested for biodiversity conservation or shared with local communities - $100,000 (Output 1.3)
6	**Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs = $25,502** Consists of interpretation, translation of documents, printing .etc.. for activities under component 1

Number	Budget Note Description
7	**Training workshops and conferences = $222,640** (a) Meetings, consultation workshops related to the national BES platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services established for multi-level planning on nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to support implementation of the NBSAP under Decision 149/2022/QD-TTg dated 28 January 2022 and contribute to the effective coordination and implementation of national biodiversity, tourism law and national tourism strategies = $38,310 (Output 1.1) (b) Workshops, technical meetings on biodiversity conservation standards, criteria and guidelines for sustainable tourism development, management and operations in high-value biodiversity areas developed and adopted, supported by a monitoring, verification and reporting system = $76,500 (Output 1.2) (c) Technical meetings for Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism policy, regulations and master planning for development of national nature-based tourism and integration in PA management policies = $22,500 (Output 1.3) (d) Meetings, workshops Guidelines for operationalizing nature-based tourism strengthened, in particular for promotion of: (i) public-private partnerships in nature-based tourism; and (ii) community participation and benefit sharing from nature-based tourism, that ensures biodiversity conservation improvement and informs a clear policy - $22,830 (Output 1.4) (e) Meetings, consultation workshops relating to Practical and standardized methodologies for ecological and social impact assessments developed for nature-based tourism in high-value biodiversity areas to minimize impacts on wildlife, habitats and local culture and lifestyles and standards to ensure compliance - $28,500 (Output 1.5) (f) Workshops on enabling national policy and clear legal framework underpinning the promotion and application of payment for ecosystem services from marine ecosystems (PMES) and wetlands applied in project sites and replicated - $34,000 (Output 1.6)
8	**International Consultant - $146,250** a) CTA cum International Nature-based Tourism Specialist: 175 days at $650/day = $ 113,750 b) International PA and Biodiversity Expert: 50 days at $650/day = $ 32,500
9	**Local consultants- $439,008** a) Community Engagement and KAP Expert: 50 days at $192/day = $9,600. b) Economic Analyst / Valuation Expert: 435 days at $192/day = $83,520. c) National landscape monitoring and PA expert: 200 days at $192/day = $38,400. d) National Sustainable Tourism Standards Expert: 80 days at $192/day = $15,360. e) PA Management Expert: 55 days at $192/day = $10,560. f) Other experts: i) For Output 2.1: 221.5 days at $192/day = $42,528; For Output 2.2: 480 days at $192/day = $92,160; For Output 2.3: 190 days at $192/day = $36,480; For Output 2.4: 165 days at $192/day = $31,680; For Output 2.5: 250 days at $192/day = $48,000; For Output 2.6: 45 days at $192/day = $8,640; and For Output 2.7: 115 days at $192/day = $22,080.
10	**Contractual services individuals to support the project implementation = $267,763** (component 2) including: - Project Manager: the allocated budget is $19,579 (equivalent to 22% of total budget of this position) for 5 years - Technical and M&E officer: the allocated budget is $9,628 (15% of total budget of this position) for 5 years - Technical consultants for two sites: the allocated budget $152,400 for 5 years - Admin officer for two sites: the allocated budget is $86,156 for 5 years
11	**Travel - $92,994** Lump sum travel costs for international and national consultants, national, provincial staff for workshops, implementation, monitoring as well as the international travel to attend wks on wildlife etc. (Component 2)

Number	Budget Note Description
12	**Contractual Services – Companies - $1,655,824** (a) Firm to identify, catalogue, design, demonstrate and test innovative investment models, instruments, tools and resources that can be applied to both national parks and for the tourism sector to underpin feasibility studies, cost-benefit / Return on Investment (ROI) analyses, investment opportunities, business case development and planning of nature-based tourism programs and to also assist with the definition of tangible and intangible benefits to biodiversity in order to help refine current and future programming / tourism offerings - $220,000 (Output 2.2) (b) Firm to support surveys and field monitoring under activity 2.3.1, as well as for mobile app development and integration with the NBT Management and Planning Information System - $756,854 (Output 2.3) (c) (i) Firm to renovate and/or set up visitor and education and rescue center, as well as nature and cultural interpretation center facilities in the core / administrative zones of each national park (ii) Firm to support establishment of SMART patrols including leveraging autonomous flightpath monitoring using drones - $576,400 (Output 2.4) (d) Firm for social marketing and to elicit behavior change among local communities and ethnic minorities - $102,570 (Output 2.5)
13	**Equipment $10,500** for project implementation of 3 Responsible parties
14	Cost under the Low Value Grant (LVG) agreement for establishment of a community-based revolving fund, as well as other mechanisms/tools to be explored and developed by the project, to catalyse new and existing nature-based tourism enterprises. - **$500,000** (Act 2.2.5); Grant activity will follow UNDP Low-Value Grants Policies
15	**Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs = $14,113** Consists of interpretation, translation of documents, printing, etc.. for activities under Component 2
16	**Workshops, training and conferences - $281,402** (a) Technical meetings, consultation workshop for provincial multi-sectoral nature-based tourism platform established to support coordinated action and investment across government and private sector for promotion of nature-based tourism development and biodiversity conservation in Quang Tri and Khanh Hoa provinces - $39,796 (Output 2.1) (b) Consultation workshops for Integrated nature-based tourism programs designed in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh and Phong Nha-Ke Bang national parks - $42,408 (Output 2.2) (c) Workshops, training courses for the improved monitoring of status of key biodiversity resources to assess effectiveness of PA management, illegal wildlife threat management and biodiversity conservation outcomes of nature-based tourism - $59,740 (Output 2.3) (d) Training courses for institutional capacity for improving biodiversity conservation and management of PAs and effective monitoring, surveillance and prevention of illegal wildlife activities - $39,598 (Output 2.4) (e) Workshops and Training courses for implementation of community-based biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing programs from nature-based tourism and related products and services that provide new and innovative income generation activities - $34,860 (Output 2.5) (f) Workshops for Demonstration of PMES in Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park and surrounding landscape - $65,000 (Output 2.6)
17	**International Consultant - $19,500** (a) CTA cum International Nature-based Tourism Specialist: 10 days at $650/day = $6,500 (b) International Wildlife= Enforcement Specialist: 20 days at $650/day = $13,000
18	**Local consultants- $159,672** (a) Community Engagement and KAP Expert: 90 days at $192/day = $17,280 (b) Economic Analyst / Valuation Expert: 60 days at $192/day = $11,520 (c) National Policy Expert: 50 days at $192/day = $9,600 (d) National Sustainable Tourism Standards Expert: 50 days at $192/day = $9,600 (e) PA Management Expert: 65 days at $192/day = $12,480 (f) Other experts: i) For Output 3.1: 40 days at $192/day = $7,680; ii) For Output 3.3: National Consultant on network management of information provider: 36 months at $718/month = $25,848; iii) For Output 3.4: 100 days at $192/day = $19,200; and iv) For Output 3.5: 242 days $192/day = $46,464
19	**Travel = $119,229** Lump sum travel costs for international and national consultants, national, provincial staff for workshops, implementation, monitoring and oversea trips (Component 3)

Number	Budget Note Description
20	**Contractual services individuals to support the project implementation = $29,203** (Component 3) including: - Project Manager: the allocated budget is USD19,579 (equivalent to 22% of total budget of this position) for 5 years - Technical and M&E officer: the allocated budget is $9,624(15% of total budget of this position) for 5 years
21	**Contractual Services – Companies - $681,730** (a) Firms under output 3.1: (i) Expansion of awareness of and training of responsible tourism principles to cover all of Vietnam, with an explicit focus on incrementally establishing a green tourism network of a responsible-minded travel and tourism sector stakeholders that prioritize nature-based tourism and wildlife / biodiversity conservation - $39,952 (Act.3.1.2) ; (ii) Establish consensus on code of conduct and guidelines through engagement with Vietnam tourism association – and different branches under their umbrella, as well as provincial departments of tourism, culture and sport - $35,000 (Act.3.1.3); (iii) Piloting of PPP and community engagement and incentive mechanism developed under Component 1 for behaviour change among tour enterprises at national level - $30,066 (Act.3.1.4) (b) Firms under output 3.2: (i) Survey and assessment on consumptive habits and purchases to establish a baseline on consumer insights in the context of the illegal wildlife trade chain to inform and underpin messaging and awareness campaigns - $70,000 (Act.3.2.1) ; (ii) Creation and installation of signboards, especially in sensitive marine environments at Nui Chua - Phuoc Binh national park, at airports, hotels and within communities in buffer zones with activities under Output 2.3 (activity 2.3.4) and Output 2.4 (activity 2.4.7) - $30,000 (Act.3.2.5); (iii) Development and implementation of communication material and campaigns (radio, commercials) and Photo, drawing, poem, play competition among communities, organizations - $110,000 (Act.3.2.6; 3.2.7) (c) Firm to engage and work with local communities and rangers at the two targeted PAs to raise awareness on the laws and penalties regarding poaching and trafficking of illegal wildlife - $120,000 (Act.3.3.1) (d) Institutional capacity building and training of national and local stakeholders including: (i) Design and deliver an awareness raising program among tourism stakeholders on the importance of biodiversity and different ecosystems to tourism industry and the roles of protected area - $86,000 (Act.3.5.1); (ii) Training national and provincial stakeholders within different sectors on the interpretation of guidelines, criteria and requirements, as well as how to use EIA / SEA in sectoral, development and tourism planning - $32,000 (Act.3.5.2); (iii) Communication and raising public awareness about nature-based tourism or biodiversity-based tourism - $100,000 (Act.3.5.3); (iv) Training to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of protected area management - $28,712 (Act.3.5.4)
22	**Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs = $4,113** Consists of interpretation, translation of documents, printing, etc. for activities under Output 3.2, 3.4.
23	**Training workshops and conferences = $198,980** (a) Meetings, consultation workshops related to advocacy with travel and tourism sector to encourage promotion of responsible nature-based tourism and biodiversity conservation = $18,000 (Output 3.1) (b) Workshops on targeted social and behavioral change communications and initiatives for domestic and international tourists aiming to influence the purchase, use and trafficking of illegal wildlife products and promote more positive attitudes towards wildlife and nature conservation = $57,000 (Output 3.2) (c) Meeting, workshop on community outreach to shift attitudes and create social pressures for deterred involvement in poaching and trafficking of wildlife and increased awareness of the benefits of nature-based tourism, and payment for environmental services = $60,980 (Output 3.3) (d) Meetings, workshops Guidelines for operationalizing nature-based tourism strengthened, in particular for promotion of: (i) public-private partnerships in nature-based tourism; and (ii) community participation and benefit sharing from nature-based tourism, that ensures biodiversity conservation improvement and informs a clear policy - $48,000 (Output 3.4) (e) Institutional capacity building and training of national and local stakeholders to integrate and mainstream biodiversity in nature-based tourism planning, monitoring, implementation and enforcement - $15,000 (Output 3.5)
24	**International Consultant** for travel writer - 05 days at $650/day = **$3,250** (Output 4.1)

Number	Budget Note Description
25	**Local consultants- $88,536** (a) For Output 4.1: 165 days at $192/day = $31,680 and 120 days at $117/days = 14,040 (b) For Output 4.2: 103 days at $192/day = $19,776 (c) For Output 4.3: 120 days at $192/day = $23,040
26	**Travel = $18,806** Lump sum travel costs for international and national consultants, national, provincial staff for workshops, implementation, monitoring (component 4)
27	**Contractual Services – Companies - $55,000** (a) Integrate biodiversity-based tourism products and activities into local tour operator itineraries, by organizing familiarization workshops/trips for tour operators , major hotels in the project landscapes. Establishing a Greentour network/system and promoting tourist attractions - $20,000 (Output 4.1/ Act.4.1.3) (b) Establish an online virtual tour platform, to collect revenues from virtual experiences and allocate to biodiversity-based tourism products in the project landscape - $20,000 (Output 4.1/ Act.4.1.5) (c) Develop a Knowledge Management Plan and Communications Strategy and. disseminate lessons via awareness materials from the demonstration landscape, including through different digital channels and databases both provincially, nationally and within the region - $15,000 (Output 4.2/ Act4.2.1)
28	**Materials & Goods - $10,000** Consists of materials and seeds (Output 4.2/ Act4.2.2)
29	**Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs = $10,414** Consists of interpretation, translation of documents, printing, etc. for activities under Component 4
30	**Training workshops and conferences = $114,352** (a) Workshop relating to marketing strategies and informational materials for promoting the quality and diversity of nature- based tourism at demonstration PAs developed and disseminated across tourism platforms in Vietnam and abroad = $24,000 (Output 4.1) (b) Workshops on Knowledge exchange platform developed for sharing of experiences for replication of nature-based tourism planning and management models = $73,800 (Output 4.2) (c) Annual work plan preparation and monitoring of indicators in project results framework for adaptive management including annual lesson learning session among project stakeholders = $16,552 (Output 4.3)
31	**International Consultant - $87,975** (a) International SESA/ESIA/IPP Specialist (role will work with the national ESIA/ESMP and IPP specialist to produce - SESA, ESIA, ESMP, IPP) – 61.5 days at $650/day = $39,975 (M&E) (b) MTR Team Leader - 30 days at $800/day = $24,000 (M&E) (c) TE Team Leader - 30 days at $800/day = $24,000 (M&E)
32	**Local consultants- $42,640** (a) Convene project inception workshop and develop Inception Report - $10,000 (M&E) (b) National SESA/ESIA/IPP Specialist (role will work with the national ESIA/ESMP and IPP specialist to produce - SESA, ESIA, ESMP, IPP) - 70 days at $192/day = $13,440 (M&E) (c) MTR Team Leader - 30 days at $192/day = $5,760 (M&E) (d) TE Team Leader - 30 days at $192/day = $5,760 (M&E) (e) Review and update METT and Capacity Development Scorecard with identified national ministries and with PAs at project start, at Mid-term (Year 3) and end of project (Year 5) - 40 days at $192/day = $7,680 (M&E)
33	**Travel = $28,552** in which $20,000 implemented by UNDP and $8,552 by MAE Lump sum travel costs for international and national consultants on SES, MTR (M&E)
34	Contractual services individuals for Technical and M&E officer **= $32,093** (M&E) (50% of budget for this position)
35	Inception workshop and technical meetings for TE evaluation = **$23,240** (M&E)
36	**Contractual services individuals = $211,978 (PMC),** including: - Project Manager duration 5 years (34% of budget for this position) = $30,253 - Project Accountant duration 5 years = $66,600 - Project Administrative Officer duration 5 years = $50,940 - Procurement officer duration 5 years = $64,185

Number	Budget Note Description
37	Travel = **$18,000** (PMC) Lump sum travel costs for PMB staff
38	Cost of stationery & other office supplies for PMB and provincial PMU duration 5 years. Estimated as **$51,696**
39	**Micro assessment and Audit = $58,800 (PMC)**, including: Micro Assessments; Audits; Spot checks

X. LEGAL CONTEXT

331. This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Vietnam and UNDP, signed on 15 May 1978. All references in the SBAA to "Executing Agency" shall be deemed to refer to "Implementing Partner."

332. This project will be implemented by Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (NBCA) of Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) ("Implementing Partner") in accordance with its financial regulations, rules, practices and procedures only to the extent that they do not contravene the principles of the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNDP. Where the financial governance of an Implementing Partner does not provide the required guidance to ensure best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency, and effective international competition, the financial governance of UNDP shall apply.

XI. RISK MANAGEMENT

333. Consistent with the Article III of the SBAA, the responsibility for the safety and security of the Implementing Partner and its personnel and property, and of UNDP's property, and of UNDP's property in the Implementing Partner's custody, rests with the Implementing Partner. To this end, the Implementing Partner shall:

    a) put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the project is being carried;

    b) assume all risks and liabilities related to the Implementing Partner's security, and the full implementation of the security plan.

334. UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of the Implementing Partner's obligations under this Project Document.

335. The Implementing Partner agrees to undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that no UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism and that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List, and that no UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used for money laundering activities. The United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List can be accessed via https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list.

336. The Implementing Partner acknowledges and agrees that UNDP will not tolerate sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse of anyone by the Implementing Partner, and each of its responsible parties, their respective sub-recipients and other entities involved in Project implementation, either as contractors or subcontractors and their personnel, and any individuals performing services for them under the Project Document.

    a) In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, the Implementing Partner, and each of its sub-parties referred to above, shall comply with the standards of conduct set forth in the Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003, concerning "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" ("SEA").

    b) Moreover, and without limitation to the application of other regulations, rules, policies and procedures bearing upon the performance of the activities under this Project Document, in the implementation of activities, the Implementing Partner, and each of its sub-parties referred to above, shall not engage in any form of sexual harassment ("SH"). SH is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. SH may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, SH may take the form of a

single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct shall be considered.

337. a) In the performance of the activities under this Project Document, the Implementing Partner shall (with respect to its own activities), and shall require from its sub-parties referred to in paragraph 4 (with respect to their activities) that they, have minimum standards and procedures in place, or a plan to develop and/or improve such standards and procedures in order to be able to take effective preventive and investigative action. These should include: policies on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse; policies on whistleblowing/protection against retaliation; and complaints, disciplinary and investigative mechanisms. In line with this, the Implementing Partner will and will require that such sub-parties will take all appropriate measures to:

    i. Prevent its employees, agents or any other persons engaged to perform any services under this Project Document, from engaging in SH or SEA;
    ii. Offer employees and associated personnel training on prevention and response to SH and SEA, where the Implementing Partner and its sub-parties referred to in paragraph 4 have not put in place its own training regarding the prevention of SH and SEA, the Implementing Partner and its sub-parties may use the training material available at UNDP;
    iii. Report and monitor allegations of SH and SEA of which the Implementing Partner and its sub-parties referred to in paragraph 4 have been informed or have otherwise become aware, and status thereof;
    iv. Refer victims/survivors of SH and SEA to safe and confidential victim assistance; and
    v. Promptly and confidentially, record and investigate any allegations credible enough to warrant an investigation of SH or SEA. The Implementing Partner shall advise UNDP of any such allegations received and investigations being conducted by itself or any of its sub-parties referred to in paragraph 4 with respect to their activities under the Project Document, and shall keep UNDP informed during the investigation by it or any of such sub-parties, to the extent that such notification (i) does not jeopardize the conduct of the investigation, including but not limited to the safety or security of persons, and/or (ii) is not in contravention of any laws applicable to it. Following the investigation, the Implementing Partner shall advise UNDP of any actions taken by it or any of the other entities further to the investigation.

b) The Implementing Partner shall establish that it has complied with the foregoing, to the satisfaction of UNDP, when requested by UNDP or any party acting on its behalf to provide such confirmation. Failure of the Implementing Partner, and each of its sub-parties referred to in paragraph 4, to comply of the foregoing, as determined by UNDP, shall be considered grounds for suspension or termination of the Project.

338. Social and environmental sustainability will be enhanced through application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (http://www.undp.org/ses) and related Accountability Mechanism (http://www.undp.org/secu-srm).

339. The Implementing Partner shall: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.

340. All signatories to the Project Document shall cooperate in good faith with any exercise to evaluate any programme or project-related commitments or compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. This includes providing access to project sites, relevant personnel, information, and documentation.

341. The Implementing Partner will take appropriate steps to prevent misuse of funds, fraud or corruption, by its officials, consultants, responsible parties, subcontractors and sub-recipients in implementing the project or using UNDP funds.

342. In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, UNDP places reasonable reliance upon the Implementing Partner for it to apply its laws, regulations and processes, and applicable international laws regarding anti money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, to ensure consistency with the principles of then in force the UNDP Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy.

343. The Implementing Partner will ensure that its financial management, anti-corruption, anti-fraud and anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism policies are in place and enforced for all funding received from or through UNDP.

344. The requirements of the following documents, then in force at the time of signature of the Project Document, apply to the Implementing Partner: (a) UNDP Policy on Fraud and other Corrupt Practices and (b) UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations Investigation Guidelines. The Implementing Partner agrees to the requirements of the above documents, which are an integral part of this Project Document and are available online at www.undp.org.

345. In the event that an investigation is required, UNDP has the obligation to conduct investigations relating to any aspect of UNDP projects and programmes in accordance with UNDP's regulations, rules, policies and procedures. The Implementing Partner shall provide its full cooperation, including making available personnel, relevant documentation, and granting access to the Implementing Partner's (and its consultants', responsible parties', subcontractors' and sub-recipients') premises, for such purposes at reasonable times and on reasonable conditions as may be required for the purpose of an investigation. Should there be a limitation in meeting this obligation, UNDP shall consult with the Implementing Partner to find a solution.

346. The signatories to this Project Document will promptly inform one another in case of any incidence of inappropriate use of funds, or credible allegation of fraud or corruption with due confidentiality.

    Where the Implementing Partner becomes aware that a UNDP project or activity, in whole or in part, is the focus of investigation for alleged fraud/corruption, the Implementing Partner will inform the UNDP Resident Representative/Head of Office, who will promptly inform UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI). The Implementing Partner shall provide regular updates to the head of UNDP in the country and OAI of the status of, and actions relating to, such investigation.

347. UNDP shall be entitled to a refund from the Implementing Partner of any funds provided that have been used inappropriately, including through fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document. Such amount may be deducted by UNDP from any payment due to the Implementing Partner under this or any other agreement. Recovery of such amount by UNDP shall not diminish or curtail the Implementing Partner's obligations under this Project Document.

    Where such funds have not been refunded to UNDP, the Implementing Partner agrees that donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities under this Project Document, may seek recourse to the Implementing Partner for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

    Note: The term "Project Document" as used in this clause shall be deemed to include any relevant subsidiary agreement further to the Project Document, including those with responsible parties, subcontractors and sub-recipients.

348. Each contract issued by the Implementing Partner in connection with this Project Document shall include a provision representing that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions or other payments, other than those shown in the proposal, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution, and that the recipient of funds from the Implementing Partner shall cooperate with any and all investigations and post-payment audits.

349. Should UNDP refer to the relevant national authorities for appropriate legal action any alleged wrongdoing relating to the project, the Government will ensure that the relevant national authorities shall actively

investigate the same and take appropriate legal action against all individuals found to have participated in the wrongdoing, recover and return any recovered funds to UNDP.

350. The Implementing Partner shall ensure that all of its obligations set forth under this section entitled "Risk Management" are passed on to each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient and that all the clauses under this section entitled "Risk Management Standard Clauses" are included, mutatis mutandis, in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into further to this Project Document.

XII. ANNEXES

Mandatory Annexes (Annexes folder is **here** [197]**)**

1. GEF Budget here
2. Project Map and geospatial coordinates of the project area here
3. Multiyear Workplan here
4. UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) here
5. UNDP Risk Register here
6. Overview of technical consultancies/subcontracts here
7. Stakeholder Engagement Plan here
8. Environmental and Social Safeguards Documents (a) Environmental Social Management Framework (ESMF) here , and (b) Ethnic Minority Planning Framework (EMPF) here
9. Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan here
10. Procurement Plan – for first year of implementation here
11. GEF Core Indicators here
12. GEF 7 Taxonomy here

Project Specific Annexes

13. METT here
14. Capacity Development Report and UNDP Capacity Development Scorecards here

15a. Climate Risk Screening here

15b. GHG calculations here

16. Policy Baseline Analysis here
17. Demonstration Landscape Profile Report here
18. Nature-Based Tourism Landscape and Baseline Analysis Report here
19. Current Tourism Operations within the Demonstration Landscapes here
20. Private Sector Analysis here
21. Payment for Marine Ecosystem Services Baseline Analysis here
22. Status of EIA and SEA in Vietnam here
23. Nature-Based Tourism Management and Planning Information System Business Requirements Document here
24. Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Framework here
25. Vietnam COVID-19 Analysis and Action Framework here
26. Lessons learned here
27. Monitoring Plan here
28. Co-financing letters package here
29. (a) Partners Capacity Assessment Tool here and (b) HACT assessment here
30. GEF Audit Checklist here
31. UNDP Project Quality Assurance Report here
32. On-Granting Provisions Applicable to the Implementing Partner here
33. Supplementary Baseline Data and Tables here

[197] Individual links are also provided for each file