

# **Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project**

**The World Conservation Union (IUCN)  
Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR)**

## **VIETNAM**

### **REPORT OF THE REVIEW/EVALUATION MISSION**

#### **Evaluators:**

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**October 1999**

## Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acknowledgements

A.	INTRODUCTION	1
B.	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1
C.	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	2
	1. Institutional Arrangements	2
	2. Project Management Efficiency	2
	3. STP Management Structure	2
	4. Collaboration between IUCN and ITDR	3
	5. Role of Project Steering Committee	3
D.	RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE	4
	1. The National Tourism Steering Committee	4
	2. The Ordinance on Tourism	4
	3. The State Tourism Action Programme	4
E.	PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION	5
	1. Activities and Achievements	5
	Output A. Networking and Information Sharing	5
	Output B. Research	5
	1. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	2. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	3. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	4. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	5. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	6. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	7. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	8. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	9. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	10. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	11. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	12. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	13. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	14. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	15. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	16. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	17. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	18. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	19. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	20. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	21. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	22. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	23. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	24. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	25. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	26. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	27. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	28. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	29. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	30. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	31. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	32. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	33. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	34. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	35. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	36. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	37. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	38. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	39. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	40. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	41. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	42. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	43. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	44. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	45. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	46. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	47. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	48. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	49. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5
	50. The National Tourism Steering Committee	5



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# **Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project**

## **REPORT OF THE REVIEW/EVALUATION MISSION**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This evaluation report of the Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project summarises information collected during an evaluation/ review of the project which took place at the end of the project period. The evaluation/review was performed by a review team including one national consultant and one international consultant, and took place between October 3 and 9, 1999. The evaluation team reviewed documents, and organised meetings with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) officials, Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) officials, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) officials, other major stakeholders, and representatives of appropriate donor agencies in Hanoi, Vietnam. Additionally, the review team made a field visit to Sa Pa, a Pilot Project area for community-based sustainable tourism development, and organised meetings with local government authorities and local communities. The terms of reference for the evaluation mission, the itinerary of the review team and a list of people met are included in Annexes i, ii and iii respectively.

### **B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project (STP) is one of the pioneer initiatives to raise awareness about the negative impacts of tourism and design models for community-based sustainable tourism which promote biodiversity conservation in Vietnam. The STP evolved as International NGOs working in Vietnam observed, and grew concerned about, the negative impacts of tourism on Vietnam's ethnic minority groups and biophysical environment. The negative impacts of tourism were particularly evident in Sa Pa district, Lao Cao Province, an area which had experienced rapid tourism development in the mid 1990s. The World Conservation Union (IUCN), with its counterpart the Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) were entrusted to implement the project. The STP Project budget for the first two years was US \$ 250, 305.

STP combines six different objectives into a mutually supportive and dynamic set of activities. These objectives are: (a) Networking and Information Exchange; (b) Research and Analysis; (c) Education and Training; (d) Support for a Pilot Project and (e) Advocacy.

The Project document states that:

*...“Sustainable tourism” is often equated with nature or alternative or eco-tourism; but sustainable tourism development means more than protecting the natural environment – it means proper consideration of host peoples, communities, cultures, customs, lifestyles, and social and economic system. It is tourism that truly benefits those who*

of August 1999, the STP has delivered US\$ 189,187 (76%) of the total budget to carry out various activities.

The evaluation mission also found STP's ability to raise additional funds from other sources to be impressive. In particular, STP obtained funds from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, ESCAP, SIDA and SDC totaling of US \$76 365 (30.50% of the total budget of the project).

### **3. STP Management Structure**

STP's management is led by a Project Advisor, who is supported by the Project Director and a part-time officer from ITDR. These professionals provide excellent analytical skills and administrative services, and implement STP activities effectively.

The evaluation mission found that the titles of both STP staff did not reflect their real roles and responsibilities. The Project Advisor has several roles, including overall management, coordination, project formulation and development, administration and advocacy. In reality, the Project Director acts as a project assistant. It is crucial to clearly define the specific roles of each staff member, and have a periodic review of their performance based on their responsibilities.

Given the size of project and budget, more national and local professionals need to be recruited, and the Project Director should be empowered so that he/she can conduct activities independently as well as in coordination with the Project Advisor and the other professional staff.

### **4. Collaboration between IUCN and ITDR**

The support of a part time officer from the ITDR to IUCN/STP has helped the project management coordinate activities with government counterparts. The officer acted as a 'liaison' for the government counterpart and implemented STP activities in a consultative and collaborative manner.

It is found that ITDR under the aegis of VNAT and IUCN had only one year of partnerships and their professional relationship has developed in a relatively short period of time. More collaboration is essential to develop to true "ownership" of the project where the IUCN will act solely as a technical project facilitator. This might include involving the project Steering Committee in the selection and implementation of community-based sustainable tourism pilot projects.

### **5. Role of the Project Steering Committee**





festivals; (3) Development and upgrading of tourism destinations; (4) Raising the quality of tourism services; (5) Facilitating and encouraging tourist activities; and, (6) Improving the effectiveness, organisation and management of tourism authorities.

## E. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

This section evaluates the activities undertaken by STP and assesses the impacts of those activities. Outstanding achievements are discussed to provide insight on the effects of raising awareness on sustainable tourism in Vietnam in general, and among the stakeholders in particular.

### 1. Activities and Achievements

The STP has designed and initiated a number of activities based on the 6 objectives outlined in the project document. With the few exceptions noted below, the STP management team has accomplished virtually all the activities outlined in the project document. The STP management also initiated a number of additional activities as the project evolved, but these were not completed because of budget constraints, or because it was not possible to secure funds from donors despite efforts from the Project management. Although the original project document is not clear about the specific activities to be undertaken, the activities initiated by the STP management are discussed below. Activities have been categorized according to their contribution to the programme outputs.

#### Output A: Networking and Information Exchange

S.N.	Activities	Achievements
1.	Establish the Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre (STRC)	Completed and services have been provided to tourism related students and researchers, academics and stakeholders  Internet and email: websites accessed, information included in Resource Centre and passed on to counterparts e.g.: ITDR, VNAT  Cataloguing system of the STRC library is not yet complete
2.	Compilation of sustainable tourism resource kit	Materials have been translated over a twenty month period and distributed to key stakeholders. Major stakeholders such as VNAT has highly appreciated the information exchange initiatives
3.	Subscription to journals and	Journals and newsletters have been subscribed to,

	newsletters, and obtaining memberships to tourism related groups	and memberships have been obtained from Ecotourism Society, WTO, Tourism Concern, Cultural Survival
4.	Translation and dissemination of international standard sustainable tourism publications	<p>“Ecotourism: A guide for planners and managers I” and “Beyond the Green Horizon” have been translated and widely circulated in Vietnam</p> <p>“Ecotourism: A guide for planners and managers II” is in the pipeline</p> <p>“Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas” has been translated but not published.</p>

### **Impressive Information Bank through Establishment of STRC**

The STP management team has completed all of the major tasks of this area as planned during the project period. STP demonstrated commendable flexibility in preparation of work plans. A database on key local, national, regional and international tourism stakeholders and experts has been created. This has contributed to the establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre, which networks with leading tourism organisations such as the Ecotourism Society, Tourism Concern and Cultural Survival. It also subscribed to international tourism newsletters such as the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) newsletters and Cunters. Although the project document did not explicitly mention which international organisations would be best suited for networking and information exchange, STP management felt it was necessary to link with the institutions mentioned above as those institutions generate high quality information on sustainable tourism and di 4.

## **Output B: Research and Analysis**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
1.	Conduct research on the impacts of tourism	Completed the research on "The Impact of Tourism on Ethnic Minority Inhabitants of Sa Pa District
2.	Conduct research on level of awareness and impacts of tourism among Vietnamese Tour Operators	Commissioned research by ITDR but incomplete. ITDR has made commitment to complete by November 1999

### **Study on Impact of Tourism, and Level of Awareness**

This output has been achieved to some extent with the commissioning of two research projects. First, the study on “The Impact of Tourism on Ethnic Minority Inhabitants of Sa Pa District, Lao Cai: their participation in, and attitudes toward tourism” was commissioned to the Human Geography Research Centre of the National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities of Vietnam. The report was completed on time but insufficient attention was given to the environmental

Development of a National  
Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam

to 9 September 1999 in collaboration with VNAT and ESCAP with strong contributions from internationally recognised conservationists and ecotourism experts from Nepal, Australia, Thailand and Malaysia. STP successfully managed for mobilisation of additional

		government officials, H'mong and Dao community members from three communities
4.	Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop	<p>Successfully completed the workshop with contributions from ecotourism experts from Nepal and Thailand</p> <p>Established Tourism Support Board in February 1999, which is considered to be an influence and outcome of the workshop</p>

## Selection of Appropriate Site

The project has selected Sa Pa district, a site with a lot of potential for tourism development, for implementing the Pilot Project. The Project moved steadily by mobilising the local government bodies, local communities and NGOs to initiate the Pilot Project activities. Initial activities concentrated on capacity building of the local stakeholders, including study tours, training activities and workshops both in Vietnam, and overseas.

## Innovation after Study Tours

The Sustainable Tourism Study Tour in Nepal was a fundamental component in creating awareness on sustainable tourism and translating that awareness into actions. After his visit to the Annapurna Conservation Area, and to the Langtang and Chitwan National Parks in Nepal, the Chairman of the Sa Pa People's Council, Mr. Nguyen An Toan, said that he understood how tourism can be linked with environmental conservation and socio-economic development because he had observed how trekking permit and park entry fees have greatly contributed to poverty alleviation and environmental conservation in remote Nepali villages.

After their study tour in Nepal, the Sa Pa People's Council started to charge tourism fees (see table 1) at the entrance of most frequently visited villages in the district (Ta Phin, Cat Cat and Ta Van) (see map in Annex v).

S.N.	Description	Entry Fee (VND)
1.	Tourist (adult)/person	5000
2.	Tourist (children)/person	2000
3.	Motorbike	2000
4.	Car/van > 12 persons	7000
5.	Car/van < 12 persons	10,000

Table 1: Tourism entry fees in Sa Pa District

There is, however, an immediate need to formulate a clear policy on a charge/fee system from tourism, with a coherent and systematic tourist fee system, in which the revenues from fees and hotels are used for development and conservation purposes which benefit the local people.

cultural and environmental conditions of the area prior to their visit. STP could collaborate with the local authorities and the Forest Protection Department (FPD) to establish the visitor centres. For example, a visitor centre at Cat Cat (a gateway to Nui Hoang Lien Nature Reserve and Fan Si Pan (3143m)- the highest peak in Vietnam) could be established in collaboration with the Forest Protection Department (FPD) of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

### **Expedite the Pilot Project: Sustainable Tourism in Sa Pa**

IUCN/STP in collaboration with SNV Vietnam have supported the Sa Pa District People's Council in the preparation of a project proposal developed in consultation with local stakeholders, government representatives and the Tourism Support Board (STB). The proposal is currently under review by concerned stakeholders and potential donors. The proposal is for a three-year project which has two key objectives (1) to establish mechanisms for a more equitable sharing of the benefits from tourism among a greater part of the population, and (2) to increase the capacity of local stakeholders in reducing the negative impacts of tourism. Project activities are expected to commence in the beginning of 2000.

### **Establish Strong Linkages Sustainable Tourism in Sa Pa with STP Phase II**

STP has successfully initiated training, workshops and study tours for the stakeholders of the Pilot Project in Sa Pa. The experiences and lessons learned by the STP should be integrated into the proposed Sustainable Tourism in Sa Pa plan, as STP



## **Ensure 'real' Community-based Sustainable Tourism Development**

The assistance of the IUCN and SNV in the formulation of the draft project proposal for Sa Pa District People's Committee and the residents of Sa Pa district is commendable. However, the draft project proposal does not adequately adapt a 'grassroots' approach to Community-based Sustainable Tourism (CBST) development. During meetings with local stakeholders in Sa Pa district, stakeholders expressed the need for the development of an integrated and holistic community-based sustainable tourism strategy which would benefit the local communities directly, and at the same time cater to tourism-related infrastructure development, such as drinking water, camp sites, toilet, health and sanitation, trail repair/ construction, and conservation oriented activities.

The local communities must be truly involved in the decision making process for 'ownership' of the programme and to sustain the project in the long run through community partnerships. Community-based sustainable tourism requires strategically designing a concrete plan of action with a process, yet output oriented implementation strategy. The CBST programme should support the communities' ability for marketing tourism products with strong 'backward and forward' linkages. The following is a summary of some of the suggestions for implementing a CBST programme.

- Ø Develop a long term strategy- proper tourism planning
- Ø Involve local communities as partners using the social mobilisation approach
- Ø Conduct action research on tourism impacts and marketing (backward and forward linkages- see Annex vi) for benefit sharing
- Ø Use an integrated and holistic approach to implement project activities (e.g., waste management, alternative energy, multi-purpose forest nursery, community development, income generating activities etc.) to ensure conservation of cultural heritage and biodiversity
  
- Ø Conduct acti28ated and h3

- Ø Operation of eco-friendly lodges/hotels well equipped with basic tourism infrastructure
- Ø Support more equitable distribution of income from tourism for sustainable community development activities, biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation.

### Output E: Advocacy

S.N.	Activities	Achievements
1.	Advocacy about sustainable tourism in Vietnam through participation in national and international forums	Participated in the <u>National Workshop on Participation of Local Communities in Management of Protected Areas in Vietnam</u> , organised by Vietnam National Parks and Protected Areas Sub-Association, Vietnam Forestry Science-Technology Association of the Ministry of Agriculture and

		<p>during <u>Environmental Management for Marine and Coastal Tourism Activities with ISO14001</u>, Halong Bay, Quang Ninh, October 22, 1999. Organised by the Directorate for Standards and Quality of MOSTE.</p> <p>Responded to request from the environment and natural resources section of UNDP in Hanoi to review a proposal by the World Tourism Organisation for revision of the Tourism Development Master Plan for Vietnam. IUCN STP (with input from IUCN PPA and Tourism Taskforce) made several recommendations which were all taken up by UNDP in its response to WTO.</p> <p>WTO sent a consultant with sustainable tourism credentials to Vietnam in September 1999 to rewrite the proposal.</p>
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### **Influenced on National and Local Stakeholders**

Although STP is still a young project, it has significantly influenced the national and district level stakeholders in two ways. First, through the workshops, conferences, seminars and meetings described in Outputs a to d, project results have been presented to national level senior government policy makers. The various activities of STP, especially networking and information dissemination and exchange, education and training all greatly contributed to advocacy work as envisioned in the project document. This has resulted in a greater understanding of sustainable tourism by Vietnamese government officials.

Second, district and community-level stakeholders have been influenced in initiation of community-based sustainable tourism development especially in Sa Pa district. STP has clearly demonstrated and influenced the stakeholders at the central level where the VNAT and ITDR are taking the leading role for development of the project proposal for the STP Phase II. At the district and community level, the Sa Pa People's Committee and the residents of Sa Pa district have already prepared a draft project proposal with assistance from the IUCN and SNV.

### **Produce international quality Information Booklets and Video Documentary**

The Project has made a good start in the production of booklets and video documentary, but all activities have not been completed yet. The writing and design of booklets has been completed, but due to unavailability of funds, they have not yet been produced.

The Project should prioritise and allocate budget accordingly so that the booklets and can be produced. A similar problem has occurred with respect to the production of documents, and future activities should be oriented toward more output oriented project management.



## **F. Impact of the Project**

The Project document provides ambitious goals and objectives. STP is proving

Evaluation -

## **2. Strengthen and Broaden Linkages**

For sustainability it is imperative to link STP with the State Steering Committee on Tourism so that the STP Project Steering Committee can influence the formulation of national policies on sustainable ecotourism.

## **3. Institutional Development and “Ownership”**

Ownership of the project by the counterpart/host country is key to the sustainability of the project. IUCN is making impressive progress in establishing a sense o





- c) Education & Training
- d) Support for a Pilot Project
- e) Advocacy
- f) Project Extension

The STP is funded by three organisations – the Ford Foundation, the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and Oxfam International.

The STP commenced in financial terms in

To carry out meetings in Vietnam with Vietnamese and international organisations, groups, individuals ('stakeholders') with whom STP has worked or had contact with. To liaise with the national team member and the STP Project Director to arrange meetings in Hanoi and the STP pilot project site, Sa Pa District, Lao Cai Province.

To work with the national team member to develop the schedule and evaluation criteria/methodology, and report format to be used.

Meetings in Hanoi should include at a minimum:

- Institute for Tourism Development Research;
- The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism;
- The Ministry of Science Technology and Environment (and/or its National Environment Agency) - IUCN Vietnam's official government partner;
- IUCN Councillor, Dr. Le Quy An;
- The Ford Foundation; and
- The Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV).

The review team has the discretion to arrange meetings with any (other) organisations or individuals as they see fit. Additional contacts will be provided by IUCN on request.

Two days in Sa Pa will be required

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G. Final report:

Six original signed copies are required, along with a complete copy on disc or sent by email. IUCN Vietnam will arrange translation of the report and circulate it amongst the relevant Vietnamese and international partners.

H. Fee:

Signed:

Nguyen Minh Thong  
Country Representative

Mr Hum Bahadur Gurung  
UNDP Nepal

## **Annex II List of Persons Met**

### **The World Conservation Union (IUCN)**

Mr. Nguyen Minh Thong	Country Representative
Ms. Annalisa Coeman	Project Advisor, STP
Mr. Nguyen Van Lam	Project Director, STP

### **Institute for Tourism Development (ITDR)**

Dr. Pham Trung Luong	Vice Director
Mr. Nguyen Duc Hoa Cuong	Division of Science and Economy Researcher
Dr. Nguyen Van Binh	Head of Administration and International Relations

### **Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES)**

Dr. Le Trong Cuc	Director, Ecologist
Ms. Nghiem Phuong Tuyen	Urban and Regional Planning

### **Human Geography Research Centre, National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities**

Dr. Pham Thi Mong Hoa	Deputy Director
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### **Forest Protection and Department (FPD)**

Dr. Nguyen Ba Thu	Director General
Mr. Do Quang Tung	Programme Officer

### **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**

Ms. Nguyen Thi Dao	Conservation Science & Development Officer
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### **Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT)**

Prof. Dr. Vu Tuan Canh	Vice chairman/ Director of ITDR
Dr. Nguyen Van Luu	Director, Department of International Corporation
Ms. Nguyen Thi Xuan	Officer, Department of International Corporation

### **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

Mr. Oystein Botillen	Programme Officer, Environment and Natural Resource Management Unit
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### **Oxfam Hong Kong**

Ms. Susannah Leisher	Country Representative
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### **Annex III Evaluation Mission Members**

**Hum Bahadur Gurung**, was associated with the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal from 1986 to 1996 as Conservation Officer & Officer-in-charge at ACAP Headquarters Ghandruk, and Conservation Education & Extension Officer in ACAP Pokhara. Since 1997, he is associated with the United Nations Development Programme in Nepal and involved in management of various UNDP assisted projects. He was Senior Planning Advisor and Acting Programme Advisor to Local Governance Programme till September 1997. He is now the National Programme Manager of the Sustainable Community Development Programme-designed in line with the Agenda 21 of the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio, Brazil.

Hum Bahadur Gurung received his degree of Masters of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management (Hons.) in Environmental Education from Lincoln University, New Zealand in 1993. He is widely involved in community-based tourism development/management in developing countries. He has published several articles in various newspapers and journals including book (co-author) 'Eco-tourism in the Southern Annapurna Himal'.

**Le Dong Phuong**, is a Research Fellow at National Institute for Educational Development in Vietnam. He is also associated with the Vietnam Environment and Sustainable Development Centre as Research Associate. His professional activities include organising and leading the design and implementation of

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