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I am delighted to have the opportunity to write this preface to the 2017 annual report of IUCN's Vietnam Country Program. 2017 was another excellent year in terms of impacts at both the field and policy levels, notably IUCN's contribution to the Mekong Delta Conference in Can Tho in September 2017 and the Prime Minister's Resolution 120 that sets a new direction for land and water management in the Mekong Delta.

2017 also saw the start of a major collaboration with the Stimson Center, a Washington, DC-based think tank, on energy futures in the Mekong and how new power generation technologies combined with increased energy efficiency and regional power trade could allow countries to achieve energy security at much lower impact on fisheries, food security, and biodiversity.

IUCN's program in Vietnam remains focused on relatively few areas

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IUCN Viet Nam in numbers

www.iucn.org/vietnam

1993

MoU signed between IUCN and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Viet Nam

1980s

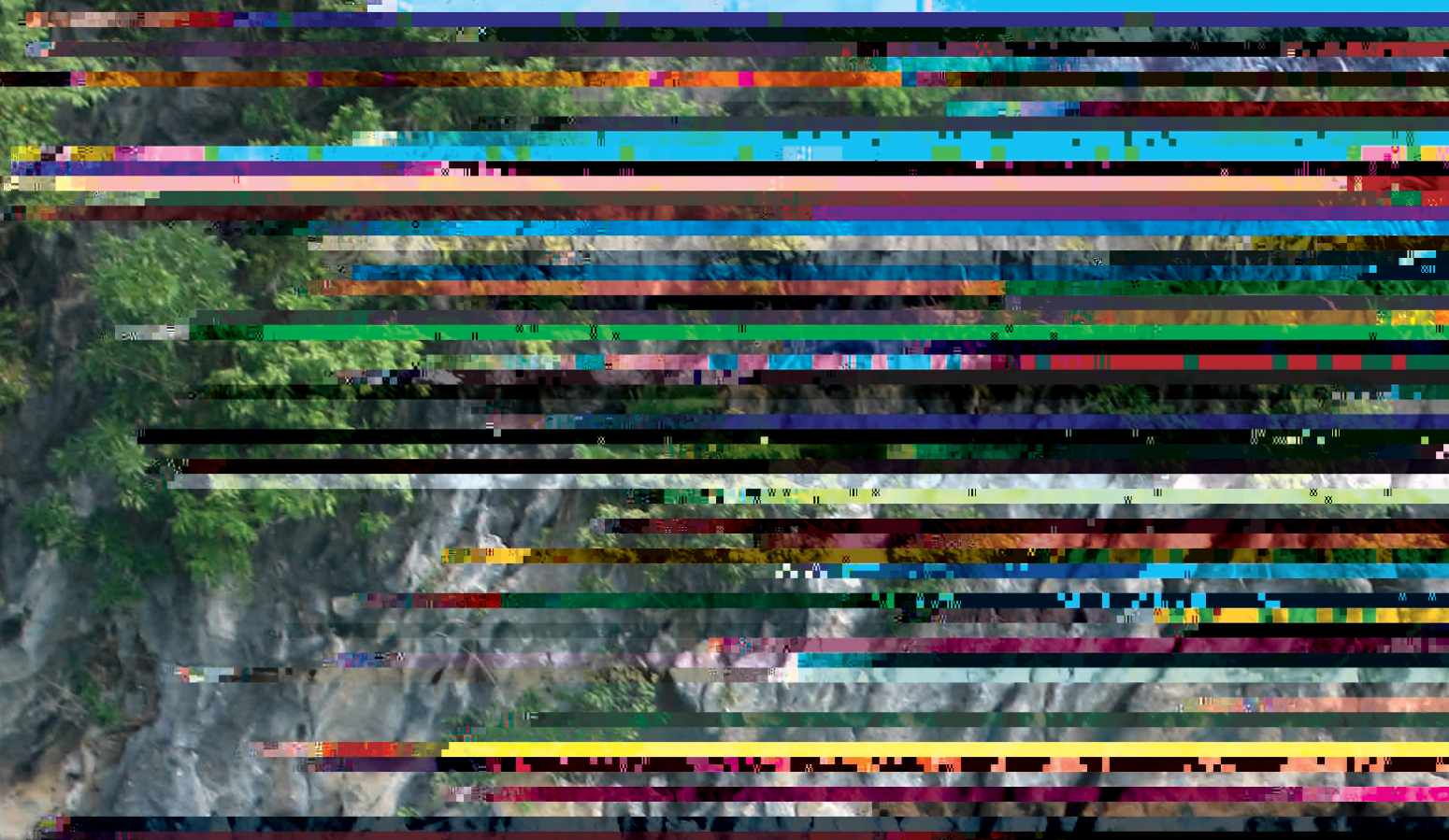
IUCN started working in Viet Nam



Membership

IUCN Viet Nam has the total of seven members including one state member and six local NGOs/ research institutes:

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Highlights

Marine and Coastal Conservation



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In addition, *IUCN also worked with guides and tour operators to conduct a second training on biodiversity.*



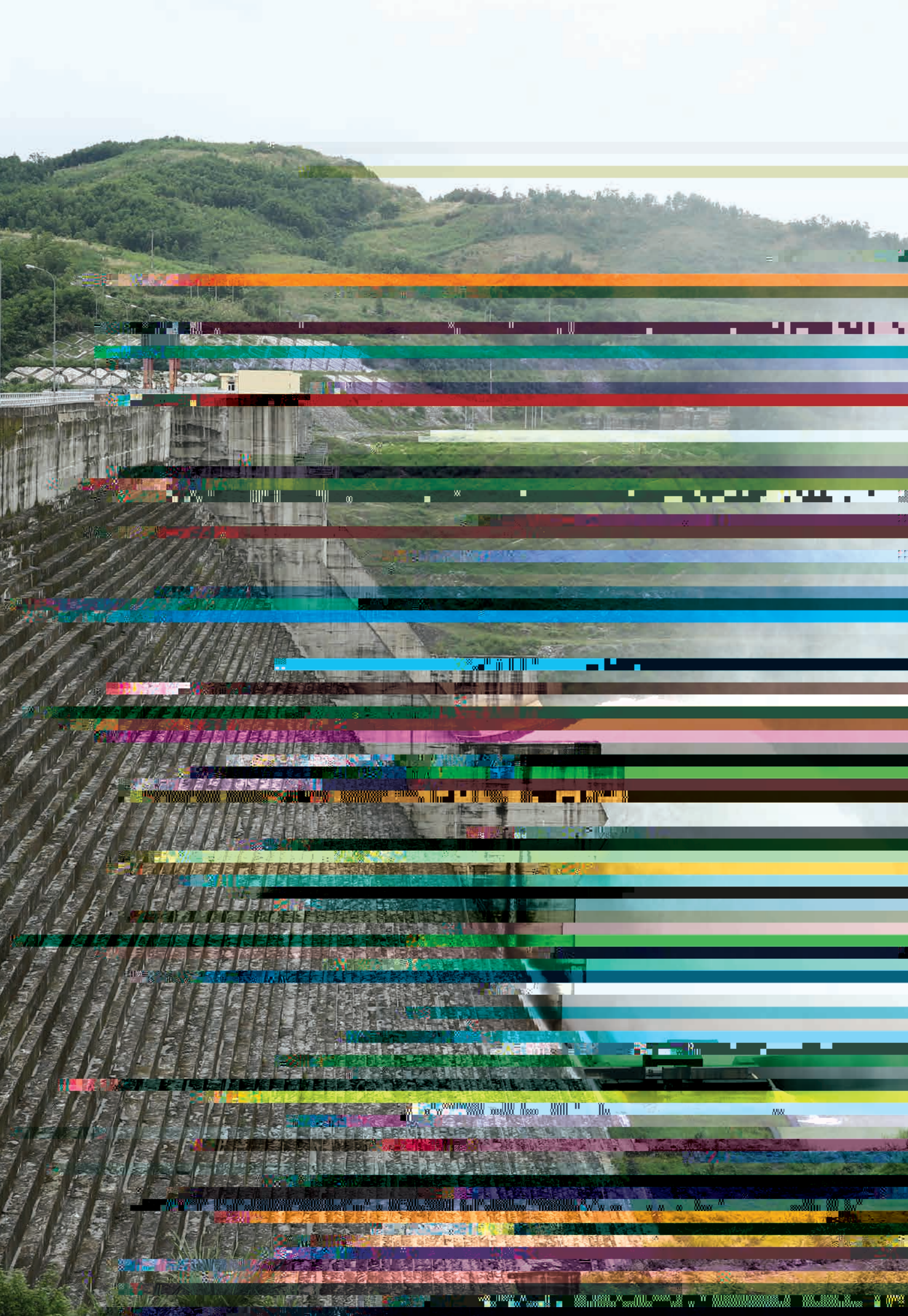
Water and Wetlands Management

IUCN representative attended the annual IP planning meeting in Bogota/Cartagena, Columbia with staff from ELC, IUCN ROSA, and GPAP. Planning for the fourth and final year of the project was discussed with a focus on deliverables on a timeline for the next year.

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As part of BRIDGE in February, IUCN, Stimson, and the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam organised a workshop in Hanoi. Opened by the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Ambassador, this was the first of a series of workshops to build government understanding and support of a



Vietnam - Xe Kong

IUCN organised the launch workshop and first technical advisory group meeting of the 3S nexus assessment in Hanoi in Mar, together with project partners ICEM and IWWI. A key result was recognition of the importance, with the completion of the Lower Sesan 2 dam, of the Xe Kong, which is now the last major free-flowing tributary of the Mekong. *Now that the Sre Pok and Se San have been blocked, there are reports of increased passage of migratory fish through the Xe Kong, which therefore becomes of critical importance to regional fisheries and food security.* IUCN, ICEM and IWWI met the MRC CEO in Vientiane to discuss how best to cooperate.

On March 20, IUCN team met Greg Thomas, Executive Director of the Natural Heritage Institute, in Vientiane. Greg is advising the Lao government on hydropower options in the Xe Kong. *Five dams are planned on the river; the lowest one is owned by the Vietnamese company Hoang Anh-Gia Lai and would cut the river in two. Of key relevance to Vietnam is the fact that the Xe Kong supplies about 20% of the sediment/nutrient to the Mekong Delta.*

<https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/lao-pdr/nexus-trade-of-s-3s-river-basins>

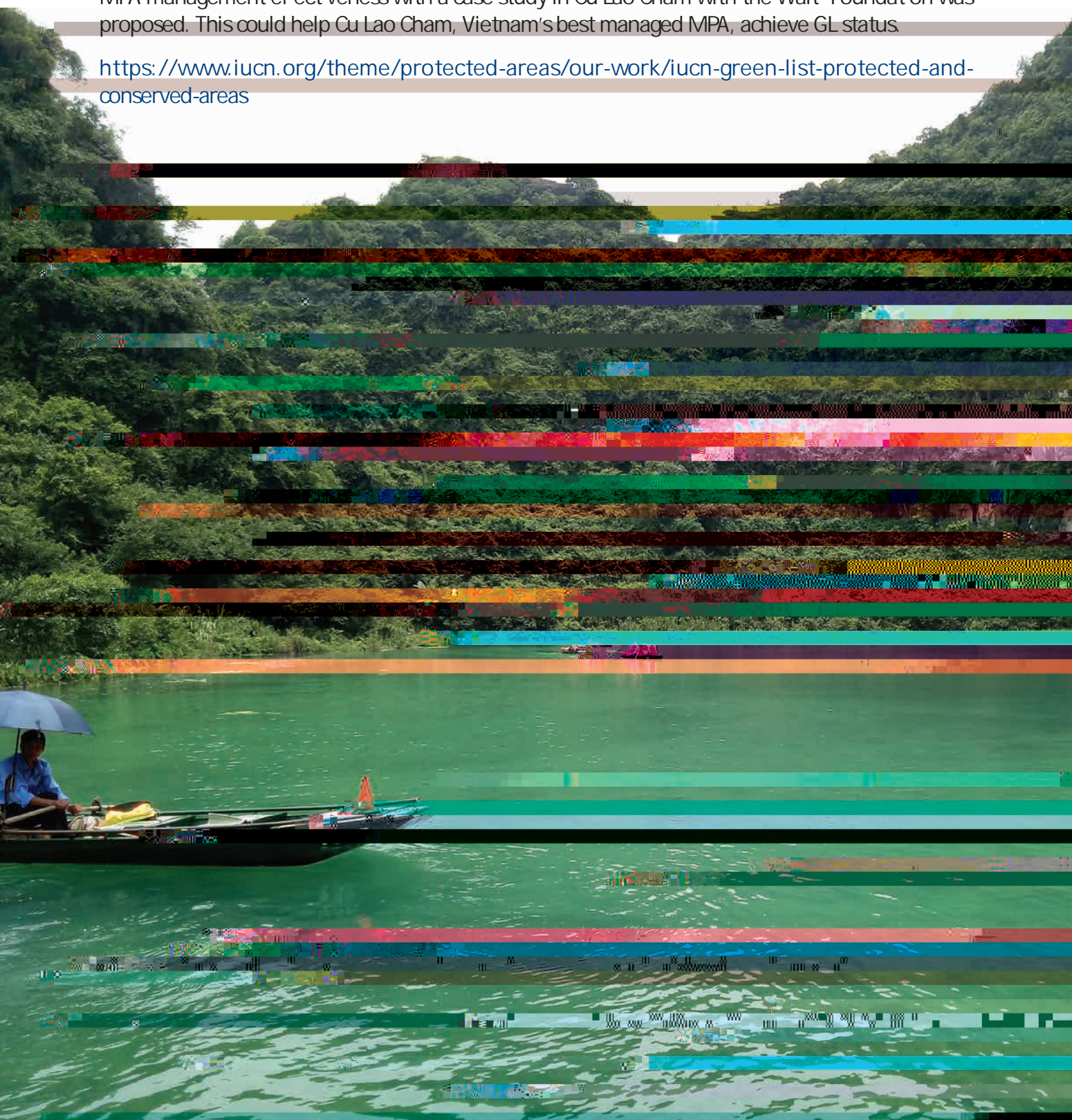


Under Green List (GL) project, IUCN organised a roundtable with potential National Expert Assessment Group for Green List (EAGL) members, and visited Van Long Wetland Nature Reserve and Ha Long Bay, two candidates of Green List sites.

In May, IUCN worked with MARD officials and Cat Tien National Park to introduce the IUCN GL Programme to park managers. Cat Tien will be the second GL site in Vietnam after Van Long Nature Reserve, stronghold of the CR Delacour's langur.

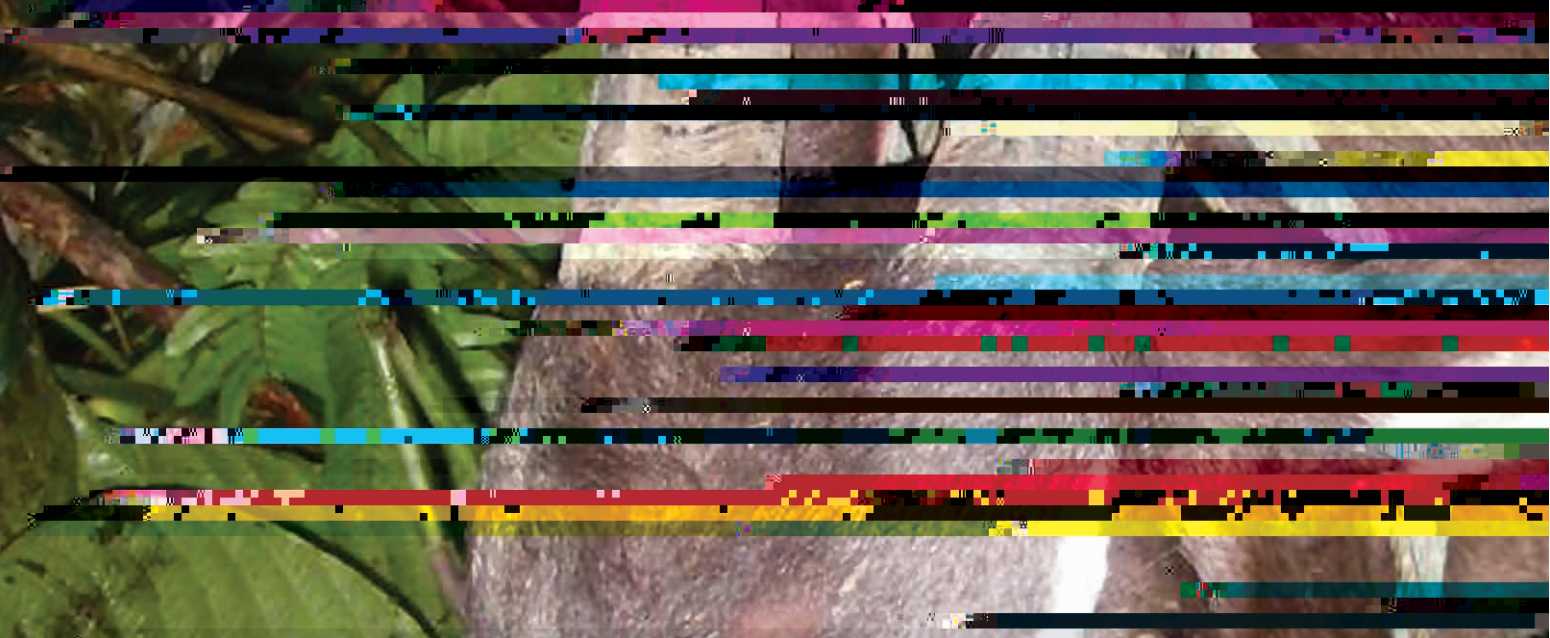
IUCN team also joined the Global Protected Area Programme (GPAP) team at a GL workshop and 4 International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC4) in Chile. At IMPAC4, a proposal on MPA management effectiveness with a case study in Cu Lao Cham with the Wait Foundation was proposed. This could help Cu Lao Cham, Vietnam's best managed MPA, achieve GL status.

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/iucn-green-list-protected-and-conserved-areas>





Forest Conservation



7 Outlook

IUCN team and consultants worked on the ROAM assessment for Quang Tri. The team developed a series of maps that identify Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) priorities based on slope, location upstream of reservoirs, forest degradation, and expansion of protected areas. *IUCN is developing a standardized technical approach for three on-going ROAM assessments in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar.*

The ROAM assessment for Quang Tri included a visit to Quang Tri on May 15-18 to meet the provincial government, forestry research center, and local farmers to discuss FLR options. The greatest challenge is the massive expansion of 4-year cycle acacia (for wood chip), often intercropped with cassava on steep slopes. These cause soil erosion, have no biodiversity value, and the acacia monocultures are increasingly vulnerable to disease. Even though native species bring higher profit over a 20-year cycle, the short-term cash that acacia generates makes it very attractive to poor farmers.



Policy advocacy

In June, IUCN Director General sent the Prime Minister a letter about poorly planned and environmentally destructive tourism development in Son Tra, stronghold of the EN Red-shanked duoc langur, near Da Nang in central Vietnam. In September, the party leaders of Da Nang were fired and in November the Prime Minister ordered an audit of all investment projects in Son Tra, which is now underway. CEPF grantee and an IUCN member - GreenViet - played a major role in putting public pressure on the government to take action.



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