



Mangroves for the Future
INVESTING IN COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

REVIEW OF MFF PHASE 3

Small Grant Facility Projects



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations





Mangroves, Thailand. © 2016 Siriporn Sriaram / MFF Thailand

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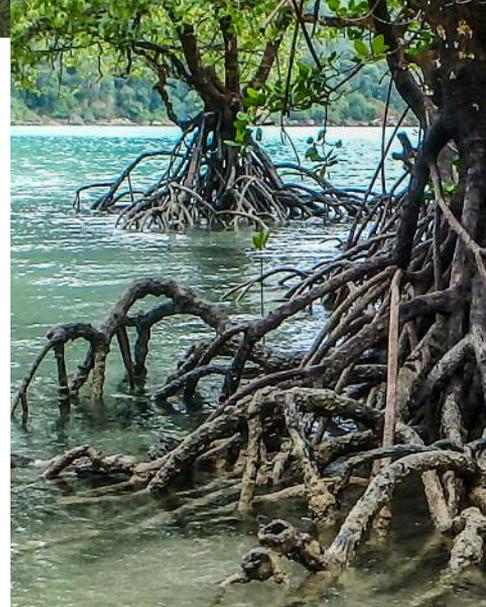
Author: Tom Blomley (Acacia Natural Resource Consultants Ltd) in collaboration with Mangroves for the Future.

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Available from: Mangroves for the Future
63 Sukhumvit Soi 39
Bangkok 10110 Thailand
Tel: +662 662 4029
Fax: +662 662 4389

www.mangrovesforthefuture.org





Executive Summary

Introduction and aims of the study

Mangroves for the Future (MFF) is a partnership-based regional initiative which promotes investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development. MFF focuses on the role that healthy, well-managed coastal ecosystems play in building the resilience of ecosystem-dependent coastal communities in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. A key delivery mechanism for the programme is the use of Small Grant Facility (SGF) projects. In this phase of programme implementation, small grants are directed to specific geographic areas and a 'resilience analysis' is undertaken to identify specific opportunities, barriers and problems that confront coastal communities and ecosystems within these targeted areas. This study, commissioned by the MFF programme reviews the SGF project portfolio funded during Phase 3 of the MFF programme, assesses how the portfolio has contributed to the programme outcome and objectives and identifies emergent lessons learned. Four countries were reviewed in this study – India, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and Thailand.

The resilience concept and its application

Overall, evidence from the four countries suggests that the resilience concept has been well understood and internalized at a national level through the NCBs. As one would expect, differing interpretations of resilience have emerged in different countries, with varying emphasis on resilience to different external threats. In all four countries visited, resilience analyses were conducted within a focused geographic area selected based on a number of pre-determined criteria. The priority themes identified in the RAP were then used to identify and select projects under the SGF. One aspect of the resilience analysis and its application that was evident in all four countries was that the priority themes identified represent a relatively small sub-set of the overall set of

social, economic and environmental issues identified during the RAP process. The process used to prioritise which themes to retain and which to drop varied from country to country, but in large part was driven by those problems that could realistically be addressed through the SGF. Problems of a more structural, long-term, governance or policy-related nature were largely put to one side, in preference for those problems that could realistically be addressed within the limits of small grants (namely a 12 month period and relatively limited budget). The implication of this finding is that small grants may only be suited to addressing relatively “quick-wins” but are unlikely to address underlying problems and causes created as a result of power imbalance, governance failures or policy barriers. These more systemic problems – often at the heart of coastal resilience – must therefore be addressed through other channels, either within MFF or outside.

SGF projects are used as a tool to implement the findings of the resilience analysis. This review has identified two different theories of change that underpin the application of SGF projects:

- The resilience approach allows a clustering of small projects within a defined geographic area, delivering a range of complementary actions that together support the wider goal of resilience (which it itself, is multi-faceted). Linkages and synergies between projects create benefits and results that are greater than the sum of the individual parts.
- Small grants provide opportunities to test, experiment with, develop, validate and communicate new and innovative solutions to addressing coastal resilience, which can then go on to inform policy processes, address specific knowledge or practice gaps or be scaled up and replicated through external bodies such as government and donor-funded projects.

Perhaps in reality, SGF projects aim to achieve a mix of these two models, with some aspects being emphasized more in some contexts than others. However, if either of these two pathways are to be achieved, a more deliberate process is needed of linking projects both with each other and to local or national government agencies, supporting communication processes and engaging more directly in longer term governance or government-lead planning activities.

Upcycling: Green Rhinos learn how to transform household plastic waste – like candy and biscuit wrappers – into baskets and sitting mats. © 2016 MFF India



Small Grant Facility - Outcomes

While the contributions of Cycle 5 small grants to **coastal governance processes** have been limited, examples from Thailand and Viet Nam demonstrate that small grants can be used to facilitate fishery co-management processes, when government agencies are fully engaged and supportive. Evidence gathered from beneficiary groups in the two sub-districts supported in Trat Province indicate that agreements reached on protection and management of inland fishery resources have resulted in increased catches for local fishers, longer fishing seasons for selected species, the return of certain species that had largely disappeared due to over-fishing.

In terms of **environmental improvements**, good progress was observed in Thailand and Viet Nam. In Thailand, the waste management project had generated a number of catalytic ‘spread-effects’ including a Thai Baht 10 million private sector investment in plastic recycling within one community and increasing adoption of waste sorting by local residents. Peer pressure and strong local government involvement has facilitated almost 100% adoption of waste sorting by local residents. In Viet Nam, support from MFF to the Cu Lao Cham MPA have resulted in good outcomes in terms of recovery of both coral reefs and highly targeted species. Regulations developed by the MPA to restrict harvest of species such as such as giant clam, lobster, abalone, and pen shell, to within sustainable off-take levels have allowed populations to recover since 2015. Re-seeding and restoration of coral beds has also received support from MFF Cycle 5 small grants. 2,000 square metres of coral beds have been successfully reseeded with MFF support and a further 4,000 square metres have been added with MPA internal funding.

Huong village, Cu Lao Cham Marine Protected Area. © 2016, Nguyen Van Vu / MFF Viet Nam



Improved livelihoods have been well supported in three of the four countries visited. In India, one small grant has been supporting climate resilient agriculture. Although it is working at a micro-level (with 33 farmers being supported to adopt climate-smart rice cultivation), it has been able to demonstrate new and workable innovations to rain-fed rice agriculture that reduce costs, water requirements and deliver higher harvest, while using local varieties of rice seeds. Beneficiaries report rice production increases of up to 25%, from 18-20 quintals/acre to around 20-25 quintals/acre. Water use had gone down by around half, due to the reduced number of seedlings per unit area. Furthermore, seed costs had reduced by over a half due to change from seed broadcasting to use of nurseries. In Sri Lanka, a national NGO (Aaruthal) have provided support to poor households with small-scale income generating projects, through cash-based and material donations. Female-headed households were a core focus of the project and activities were selected that were by their very nature, pro-poor and gender sensitive. The RAP process does not currently include market analysis or any means to assess the suitability and profitability of economic interventions designed to diversify and strengthen livelihoods.

Although **food and water security** are core programme level objectives identified as being important for strengthening resilience in coastal communities overall, there was relatively limited contributions of SGF projects to these two areas. Exceptions to this rule are found in India - where climate resilient agriculture and home gardening has increased food production among poor households and in Sri Lanka, where water catchment, drip irrigation and water source rehabilitation have all been supported.

With regard to **access and use of knowledge**, this was a strong feature in three of the four countries visited. Environmental education in secondary schools was supported in India, Viet Nam and Thailand. In India, the Green Rhino project has proven an effective tool in building leadership skills in school-age children. Given the gender differences faced by women and girls, an important aspect of this (and other similar projects in Viet Nam and Thailand) has been support provided to girls in terms of building their confidence and leadership skills. Research has been a feature of projects in India and Sri Lanka. While all projects generated useful knowledge, dissemination and policy impacts have been minimal due to budget constraints and such activities not being included in project work-plans.

Gender considerations have been well integrated into SGF projects across all four countries. In some projects (for example the 'Greening of bare land project' in Sri Lanka and the 'Building resilience' project in India), female-headed households were deliberately targeted in recognition of their marginalised status. In Viet Nam, the Women's Union was the delivery partner for a project designed to support home-stay tourism and women were the primary beneficiaries. Again in Viet Nam, the University of Da Nang took special measures to engage women in local planning, despite initial resistance from women to participate who appeared to doubt the value of their own contributions. In India, gender integration was supported through a gender mainstreaming study, which unfortunately took place after the last cycle of grants were completed. The study demonstrated that the situation of women in Odisha state is less favourable than in other parts of India and as such specific gender actions are required if women are to be sufficiently empowered.

If small grants are to be effective and efficient, justifying the significant costs incurred by the MFF programme in identification, screening, selection and supervision, they must deliver benefits and impacts beyond their relatively modest target groups. Currently small grants directed to community or household levels operate at a 'micro-level' with beneficiary numbers typically numbering between 10 – 50 households. The total number of households within the landscapes being targeted varies but is up to 250,000 in some cases (for example, Rajnagar Block in Kendrapara District, Odisha State). For projects to have any real



Ms Lek collecting mussels in Trat province, Thailand. © 2016 Ana Grillo / MFF Thailand

meaning, value or significance, scaling up is essential. This can happen through a number of different pathways but can be related to influencing policies within government institutions, or through successfully promoting new and innovative approaches for adoption by external institutions. Of the 24 Cycle 5 SGF projects funded across the 4 countries visited during this review only a relatively small number can be said to have generated (or appear likely to generate) scaling impacts through adoption of project-generated models or approaches. Direct policy impacts of SGF projects are difficult to assess. In reality policy influence, particularly at national level, tends to be more diffuse and not linked to specific, individual projects, but achieved more indirectly, for example by NCB members engaged in policy processes outside individual SGF project activities.

Recommendations

Key recommendations to emerge from this study are presented below:

- Clarify the theory of change for SGF projects in each country – and then develop broader strategies to ensure that the more strategic, catalytic aspects of projects are delivered through projects, or supported through IUCN staff, NCB members or complementary, cross-cutting medium sized projects.
- Support larger projects with longer duration. Projects should to be encouraged, or required to identify opportunities for impacts beyond immediate target group – either through policy influence, or wider adoption and scaling. Plans and budgets within proposals will need to be allocated to this.
- Consider including local governments as recipients of SGF projects as a means to test and validate new approaches with a view to scaling up through their own budgets and work-plans.

- Where economic activities are highlighted in RAPs as potential strategies to strengthen resilience and diversify livelihoods, there should be a basic assessment of market potential and feasibility to guide the development of future projects and avoid the risk of failures.
- Consider developing a 'local NCB', with local government representatives – as a means to support wider adoption and up-scaling of SGPs within selected landscapes. National NCBs can be more focused on policy guidance and support and learning from project experiences, while local NCBs can be more involved on operational aspects and identifying opportunities for up-scaling.
- Engage MFF staff in supporting local-level, area-based planning exercises, including local government development planning, environmentally sensitive area planning, land-use plans, investment plans or coastal zone planning. This review has identified a number of opportunities in the landscapes that are being supported, but currently MFF has limited resources or tools with which to do this.
- Ensure that monitoring systems are sufficiently robust to be able to monitor changes in resilience within programme areas. Currently the RAP analysis does not provide sufficient detail and data for a resilience baseline against which future changes can be assessed. Either this needs to be strengthened in future RAP analyses, or alternative, area-based monitoring systems need to be established

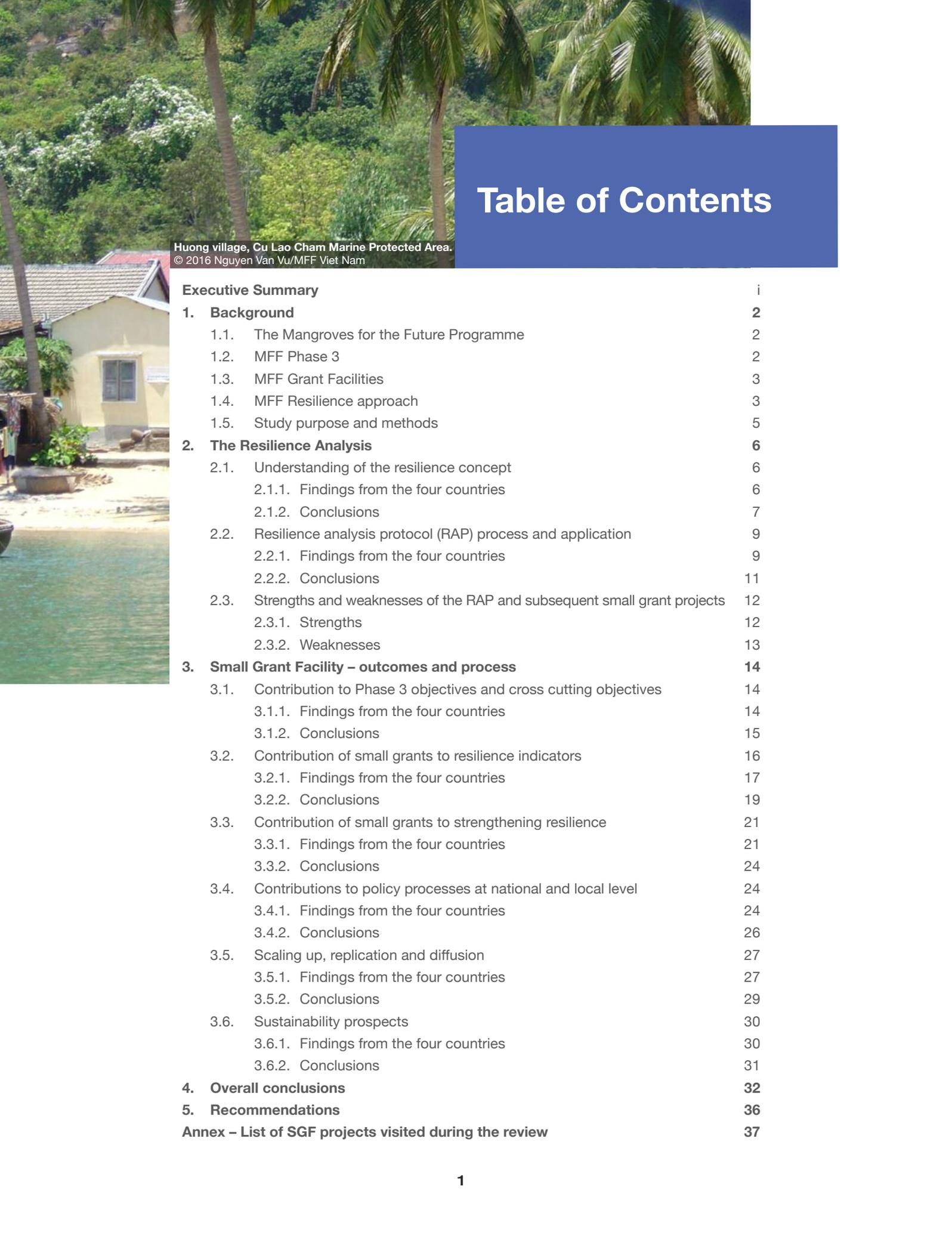


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Huong village, Cu Lao Cham Marine Protected Area.
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A boardwalk among the mangroves, Thailand. © 2016 Ana Grillo / MFF Thailand

1. Background

1.1 The Mangroves for the Future Programme

Mangroves for the Future (MFF) is a partnership-based regional initiative which promotes investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development. MFF focuses on the role that healthy, well-managed coastal ecosystems play in building the resilience of ecosystem-dependent coastal communities in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. The initiative uses mangroves as a flagship ecosystem, but MFF is inclusive of all types of coastal ecosystem, such as coral reefs, estuaries, lagoons, sandy beaches, sea grasses and wetlands. MFF is co-chaired by IUCN and UNDP, and is funded by Sida, Norad, Danida and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Thailand.

1.2 MFF Phase 3

MFF is currently in its third phase of implementation. Its main objectives and outputs are presented below.

Outcome Objective: Resilience of ecosystem-dependent coastal communities strengthened

- **Output Objective 1:** Knowledge generated, disseminated and applied for sustainable management of coastal ecosystems
 - Strengthening information base
 - Enhancing access to and sharing of knowledge at national and regional levels
 - Promoting effective use of knowledge including best practices



- **Output Objective 2:** Key stakeholders empowered to engage in decision-making in support of sustainable management of coastal ecosystems
 - Building awareness and capacity of civil society and private sector
 - Supporting multi-stakeholder fora
 - Promoting sustainable livelihoods

- **Output Objective 3:** Coastal governance enhanced to promote integrated and inclusive management
 - Strengthening capacity of national and regional governance institutions for integrated coastal management
 - Engaging with key business sectors to promote sustainable business practices
 - Promoting co-management and similar participatory natural resource management mechanisms

1.3 MFF Grant Facilities

The MFF programme introduced the Grant Facilities in 2007 as the main vehicle to deliver on-the-ground results for the well-being of coastal ecosystems and coastal resource-dependent communities. Although different granting modalities exist, the principle approach used to date has been small grants, which are promoted through the Small Grant Facility (SGF). The main aim of the Small Grant Facility (SGF) is to finance small projects to support strategic and tailor-made local community action for management of coastal ecosystems and their use on a sustainable basis. Small Grants primarily support local organisations (NGOs, Community based organisations), which are often best positioned to work with local communities and which have a good understanding of local ecological and social-institutional conditions. During Phase 3, April 2014 to December 2018, MFF has invested in 136 SGF projects in the 11 member countries. Each project investment is no more than USD 25,000, and 12-18 months in duration.

1.4 MFF Resilience approach

A key characteristic of Phase 3 of the MFF programme has been its adoption of the ‘resilience approach’. In the context of MFF, the term “resilience” refers to the dynamics between the socio-economic and ecological systems that characterize ecosystem-dependent coastal communities, which include exposure to a number of anthropogenic stresses on both the human (social) and natural (ecological) systems, including population pressure and overexploitation of coastal resources, in addition to threats from extreme weather events and climate change.

In the MFF context, the Resilience Framework serves first of all to facilitate a more strategic delivery of the MFF Grant Facilities with regards to the most effective geographical and thematic distribution of interventions. This provides a better opportunity to demonstrate how the benefits from the interventions will, together, contribute to community resilience. And secondly, clustering of project interventions is aimed to reduce transaction costs for monitoring and horizontal learning. The NSAP guides selection of intervention areas in each MFF country. To assure a consistent approach in all countries, therefore, the NSAPs are structured according to the MFF objectives and priority thematic areas that are most consistent with national priorities. When the intervention areas have been identified, specific site assessments using Resilience Analysis (RA) are conducted to provide baseline information and to identify gaps in resilience and potential areas for interventions. Again, for consistency the RA are structured according to the MFF objectives and priority thematic areas most relevant to local issues.

The application of the resilience approach within priority geographic coastal areas is designed to achieve a strategic and programmatic set of outcomes. Resilience analyses (RA) have been conducted in MFF programme priority sites in all partner countries. The RA is designed to develop a baseline regarding the social and environmental resilience of the area, while formulating strategic interventions to strengthen resilience. Based on the resilience analysis, MFF member countries issue a call for concept notes against key strategic opportunities for action identified. Selection, supervision and co-ordination of small grants in each country is the responsibility of the National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs). NCBs are composed of representatives from different government agencies, civil society and the private sector, all of whom have interests and expertise in the management of coastal zone resources.

As an overarching principle, small projects should respond to needs or issues identified in Resilience Analyses undertaken by MFF and shall remain grounded and linked with the realities and needs of local



communities. In addition, SGF projects are expected to also offer tangible ‘models’ to inspire policy-making and they should include concrete measures to ensure a participatory approach, promote gender equality and secure livelihoods for marginalized groups. In this way, SGF projects will help in linking the household and community level to the dynamics of policy and decision-making about coastal area planning and investment.

1.5 Study purpose and methods

The objective of this assignment is to provide an analysis of the SGF project portfolio during Phase 3, how the portfolio has contributed to the programme outcome and objectives and identify emergent lessons learned. Of particular interest is an assessment of how effective the resilience analysis has been and the degree to which adoption of resilience as a core programme principle has increased the strategic and programmatic nature of SGF outcomes. The assessment was undertaken between October and December 2018. Following a review of available programme documents and literature, as well as briefings with regional secretariat staff in Bangkok, visits were undertaken to four countries (India, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam) and in each country, meetings were held with IUCN programme and country office staff, representatives of NCBs, small grant implementing agencies (grantees), project beneficiaries and local governments. In all four sites, field visits were undertaken to observe and discuss the outcomes of small grant projects implemented during Phase 3 as well as assess the impacts of the application of the resilience approach. Where possible, round-table discussions or focus group discussions were held, to encourage exchange of views and experience. For example, in Sri Lanka a half-day mini-workshop was organized with the participation of grantees, IUCN staff and local government representatives.

The assessment was constrained by a number of external factors, which place limitations on the robustness of the overall findings and conclusions. Firstly, it is important to note that in all MFF countries, budget constraints have restricted the number of small grants that have been funded. To date, only one cycle of small grants have been supported in line with the new resilience guidelines. The expectation was that a number of cycles would be needed before informed conclusions could be drawn regarding the effectiveness and outcomes of the new approach. Furthermore, assessing wider policy impacts is a complex task. Policy impacts have been created in a number of MFF countries, but these impacts are often a result of the programme as a whole, rather than one part of it, namely the SGF. Separating out the specific contributions of the SGF and in particular, just once cycle of the SGF has proven to be methodologically very challenging and as such, any results presented in this area are provisional only.



2. The Resilience Analysis

A local fisherman hauls in his catch.
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2.1 Understanding of the resilience concept

2.1.1 Findings from the four countries

In **Thailand**, NCB members expressed their concerns over a lack of real understanding of the resilience concept. In part, this was due to language and the availability of a suitable Thai translation. However, there was a degree of uncertainty regarding ‘resilience to what’? – was the primary focus on resilience to climate change impacts, or to wider factors such as the over-exploitation of coastal and marine resources more generally. Concerns were also expressed regarding the geographic focus of the programme – which now focuses only on two sub-districts. It was felt by those NCB members consulted that the environmental problems of Trat bay can only be addressed through an approach that engages stakeholders in all four sub-districts within the Trat Bay landscape. Without this, actions risk being partial and incomplete. Beyond MFF staff and the NCB, there was little local knowledge of or understanding of the resilience concept or resilience analysis that took place in 2015.

There was an initial resistance to the concept and application of the resilience approach in **India**, including the need for geographic clustering in one focal area. NCB members consulted noted an initial preference to retain the geographic and thematic flexibility within the programme. However, with time, it appears that there has been a growing acceptance of both the concept and geographic clustering that accompanies the MFF resilience approach. In terms of the concept, some NCB members felt that resilience related to the impacts of climate change, that are particularly acute in the Cycle 5 focal area, while others felt that resilience was indeed a broader concept that relates to the inter-dependence of rural communities with natural resources and ecological systems. The strong focus in India on biodiversity



and conservation to some degree explains and justifies the selection of the focal area around the Bhitarkanika national park – containing high diversity of both mangrove and bird species. However, other factors played an important role in determining site selection. For example, MFF staff mapped the vulnerability of coastal districts with regard to their exposure to cyclones, storms and floods. This led to the selection of Kendrapara district in Odisha. Within this district, Rajnagar has been identified through the Integrated Coastal Zone Management project (World Bank) as amongst the most vulnerable blocks to climate induced natural disasters, in part due to its close proximity to the sea. The block hosting the Bhitarkanika mangroves, lies within the delta and floodplain of major rivers including the Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhubri, Mahanandi and Salandi, and hence is vulnerable to flooding, cyclones and storm surges. Beyond MFF staff and the NCB, there was little local knowledge of or understanding of the resilience concept or resilience analysis that took place in 2015 in large part due to the changes in government officials at state, district and local levels.

In **Viet Nam**, despite the challenges of translation, there is a clear understanding of resilience, which appears to have been internalized by NCB members. Resilience is articulated as the ability of both ecosystems and livelihoods to withstand external shocks and recover effectively after such events. Furthermore, there was an appreciation of the intrinsic linkages between ecological and socio-economic resilience of natural resource-dependent coastal communities. There was widespread agreement among NCB members (as well as grantees) as to the added value of geographic clustering and the benefits this delivers.

In **Sri Lanka**, as with Viet Nam, resilience was seen as an ability to recover from external shocks – but in this case it was seen primarily from a livelihoods perspective. The Jaffna peninsular was selected as a focal area for the Cycle 5 SGF interventions given the impact of the civil war on communities in this area and in recognition of the support that is needed if these communities are to recover from these impacts. New opportunities are being created by the establishment of tourism in the region, but it was recognized that to date, these benefits have yet to be captured by local people.

2.1.2 Conclusions

Overall, evidence from the four countries suggests that the resilience concept has been well understood and internalized at a national level through the NCB. Differing interpretations of resilience have emerged in different countries, with varying emphasis on resilience to different external threats – such as ecological and biodiversity threats (India), over-exploitation of marine natural resources (Thailand and Viet Nam), solid waste (Thailand), limited livelihood opportunities (Sri Lanka and India) and climate change impacts (India

and Viet Nam) (See Table 1). At a local level, understanding is very limited, but this is perhaps unsurprising as the resilience analysis took place back in 2015 and beyond some consultations, participation of local stakeholders (such as NGOs) was limited.

Table 1: Varying interpretations of resilience in the four countries visited

Country	Resilience of who or what?	Resilience against what?
Thailand	Coastal communities	Declines in fish stocks from over-fishing Conflicts between large and small-scale fishers
	Natural habitats	Biodiversity and habitat loss (endangered species and mangroves in particular)
	Marine environment	Inadequate disposal of municipal waste and threats to local ecosystems
India	Natural habitats Coastal communities	Biodiversity loss and threats from human action Impacts of climate change, mostly manifested through increased incidence of storms
	Coastal communities	Impacts of increased biodiversity protection measures on livelihoods
Vietnam	Marine environment	Over-use and destruction of marine ecosystems (coral reefs and specific, high value marine species)
	Natural habitats	Environmental change and climate change.
	Coastal communities	Loss of public green spaces due to conversion into private tourism sites Changing economic opportunities – including engagement with community based tourism (homestays etc)
Sri Lanka	Coastal communities	Sustainable livelihoods and livelihood diversification (away from dependence on fishing), including agriculture and tourism)
		Mapping and restoration of ponds and water-sources Promotion of water resource management (including rainwater harvesting and drip-irrigation)
	Marine environment	Pollution management in the Jaffna lagoon



2.2 Resilience analysis protocol (RAP) process and application

2.2.1 Findings from the four countries

In **Thailand**, the RAP process was led by a consultant with relatively limited involvement of either IUCN or NCB staff. There was some limited consultation with local organisations as well as local government representatives. The analysis identified a range of environmental and social problems relating to resilience, including decline in fishery resources due to over-fishing, conflicts between large trawlers (including push-nets) and small scale fishers, destruction of mangroves, the impact of fishing methods on selected endangered species such as dugong and turtles, coastal erosion from storms, poor monitoring of fish catches and poor solid waste disposal in urban areas and the impacts that this has on marine and coastal ecosystems.

In identifying those actions that could potentially be addressed through small grants, the analysis categorized problems into two types – those that could be addressed within a relatively short term period and within the control of local stakeholders, and those problems that require longer term investments and/or external support or engagement (for example, through changed governance or modified laws). Those problems that fell into the first cluster provided five “priority actions” that then formed the basis for the call for proposals under the SGF.

The report does not provide sufficient detail to act as a baseline, against which any broader changes can be assessed (as was anticipated in the original design of the RAP), but it does comprehensively set out the range of social and environmental issues facing the two selected sub-districts, including a filtered set of actions which could potentially be addressed through the medium or small grants.

In **India**, there was extensive discussion within the NCB regarding the selection of the focal area for implementation of the resilience approach. India is a huge country with 9 coastal states and enormously varied conditions across each state. A process was undertaken of identifying which of the coastal states were most impacted by storms and other climate-change impacts, and this correlated with areas of high biodiversity under threat. Odisha state was selected following these considerations, and the Bhitarkanuka National Park was identified as the core area around which interventions would be directed, due to its high biodiversity status, vulnerability to climate change impacts in the coastal communities adjacent to this area and the growing demand for tourist investments.

The RAP process was undertaken by MFF staff in conjunction with an external consultant. A thorough process of consulting with local communities, resource persons and local governments ensured that issues identified were locally relevant and important. Seven villages were identified for detailed consultations, including focal group discussions with different groups – including women. These local inputs were supplemented by a comprehensive review of literature and compilation of relevant data. Over 50 social and environmental issues were identified in the RAP, ranging from governance failures, declining soil fertility and agricultural productivity, human-wildlife conflicts, decrease in fish and crab populations, saline incursion into freshwater sources, clearance of forest for prawn farming and agricultural expansion, out-migration of male household heads and coastal erosion from storms. Four priority themes were identified from these multiple problems relating to diversification of livelihoods, increasing knowledge and capacity, strengthening participation in local management of natural resources and improving disaster risk reduction. These priority themes were then presented to the NCB for discussion and approval, and subsequently used as the basis for the SGF call for proposals. A number of issues were identified that were not considered relevant or

suitable to MFF support, including for example sanitation and water supplies, reproductive health and lack of electricity supplies. These were presented and discussed with local government, but excluded from the priority themes as they were outside the core MFF objectives and goal.

The NCB in **Viet Nam** recognised the need to concentrate impacts within a smaller geographic area. The Hoi An area was ultimately selected against other areas due to its threats from uncontrolled tourism, over-exploitation of marine resources, exposure to threats from climate change (including storms and coastal erosion) and the fact that other key donors (such as Danida) were not supporting this particular area. A further consideration was the openness and engagement of local government officials at city and commune levels. Earlier investments from MFF had demonstrated strong engagement from local government and an interest to continue the relationship with MFF.

The resilience analysis was undertaken by a four-person core team drawn from MFF, IUCN, the NCB and an officer from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in the Hoi An City Peoples Committee. As with other countries, a range of key problems were identified, covering a wide range of issues such as governance, policy, spatial planning, as well as more direct issues relating to tourism impacts and over-exploitation of marine resources. Again, a sub-set of priorities were then extracted based on the potential of small grants to be able to address these problems. For example, coastal erosion was identified as a key threat, but realistically this would require large-scale infrastructural investments, which is well beyond the scope and budget of the MFF programme. Lack of effective enforcement of fisheries regulations was likewise identified at community level as a key underlying problem, but this was considered beyond the scope and control of MFF grants, implemented by NGOs and research institutes.



Community based tourism infrastructure developed during a MFF SGF project, Delft Island, Sri Lanka.

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In **Sri Lanka**, the selection of the Jaffna peninsular was in recognition of its special needs as a post-conflict area and the cessation of hostilities offered new opportunities to support vulnerable communities in this area. Civil society organisations have a limited presence and it was recognised that there was a pressing need to bring NGOs back into this area to support government's reconstruction efforts. Earlier investments made by MFF in the Jaffna area had delivered good results and as such the area was selected for further support under Cycle 5.

The model adopted for the RAP was similar to that used in Viet Nam. The team was composed mostly of MFF and IUCN Sri Lanka staff (including the Country Representative) and supported by the regional secretariat in Bangkok. One NCB member also participated, together with the divisional secretary of Delft Island. The team made concerted efforts to compile the limited information and data available on the social and environmental conditions in northern Sri Lanka. As with other countries, a wealth of issues were identified, many of which were outside the scope and remit of the MFF programme. Finally, four priority themes were identified relating to livelihood diversification, rain-water management for agriculture, livestock and drinking and pollution management.

2.2.2 Conclusions

In all four countries visited, resilience analyses were conducted within a geographic area selected based on a number of pre-determined criteria. The priority themes identified in the RAP were then used to identify



and select projects under the SGF. One aspect of the resilience analysis and its application that was evident in all four countries was that the priority themes identified represent a relatively small sub-set of the overall set of social, economic and environmental issues identified during the RAP process. The process used to prioritise which themes to retain and which to drop varied from country to country, but in large part were driven by those problems that could realistically be addressed through the SGF. Problems of a more structural, governance or policy-related nature were largely put to one side, in preference for those problems that could realistically be addressed within the limits of small grants (namely a 12 month period and relatively limited budget). The implication of this finding is that small grants may only be suited to addressing relatively “quick-wins” but are unlikely to address underlying causes created as a result of power imbalance, governance failures or policy barriers. These more systemic problems – often at the heart of coastal resilience – must therefore be addressed through other channels, either within MFF or outside.

2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the RAP and subsequent small grant projects

2.3.1 Strengths

- A review of the RAP process and subsequent cycle of small grant projects in the four countries studied highlighted the following strengths of the current approach:
- Allows for a more integrated, programmatic and strategic focusing of small grants within a geographically defined area
- Resilience analysis is based on review of available literature, reports and data, but also builds on local perceptions, views and interests



- Resilience analysis provides a reference document for other agencies engaging in local level planning processes. Takes stock of available knowledge and local views, and presents these in an easily accessible manner
- Ensures that grants are aligned with local needs, opportunities and context – strengthening chances for sustainability and wider adoption.
- Engages with local NGOs and helps to build local civil society capacity
- Has facilitated strengthened linkages to local government bodies, increasing opportunities for up-scaling and sustainability

2.3.2 Weaknesses

The review highlighted the following weaknesses:

- The nature of small grants restricts the range of problems that can realistically be addressed to those that are relatively easily addressed without engaging in more complex, structural issues relating to policy and governance barriers.
- Environmental rehabilitation and restoration is a long-term endeavour and requires support beyond the scope of 12-month projects if tangible impacts are to be seen
- RAPs do not contain any real assessment of market potential for any of the interventions described as potential solutions or strategies with which to address resilience. As such, there is a risk that specific economic activities are proposed but with limited knowledge relating to their marketability.
- Current resilience analyses do not provide a realistic baseline for assessing wider impacts and outcomes
- One cycle of projects is insufficient to demonstrate broader impacts.
- Limited engagement of the MFF programme in area-based planning or governance processes, which would provide a wider framework in which small grant investments could be situated and sustained.



3. Small Grant Facility – Outcomes and Process

A farmer implements climate smart agriculture techniques, Odisha, India.
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3.1 Contribution to Phase 3 objectives and cross cutting objectives

In this section, the contribution of Cycle 5 small grants to the three output objectives of MFF Phase 3 are assessed, with particular reference to the four countries visited as part of this review. Furthermore, the degree to which grants addressed the cross cutting objectives of gender mainstreaming and rights based approaches is also reviewed.

3.1.1 Findings from the four countries

Table 2, below, provides a summary assessment of the contributions to small grants to programme objectives and cross-cutting areas. A simple scale of “good” (marked in green), “medium” (marked in orange) or “limited” (marked in yellow) is provided as a simple (and subjective) score. Scoring takes account not only of specific projects that have targeted these aspects, but also the degree to which implementation delivered against stated objectives.

A short note on the first output objective: For the purpose of this review the first objective is primarily focused on the undertaking of applied research with which to drive informed decision making. However, it is also appreciated that this includes wider aspects of awareness creation, training, environmental education and capacity building, which have been important cross-cutting aspects of many projects.



Table 2: Contribution of Cycle 5 Small Grants to programme objectives and cross-cutting themes in the four countries visited

Output objectives	Thailand	India	Viet Nam	Sri Lanka
Knowledge generated, disseminated and applied for sustainable management of coastal ecosystems	Limited. One study undertaken by Kasetsart University, but results have been of limited value. Information dissemination and awareness key parts of the waste management and education projects.	Good. Two research projects delivered important information on water flows and marine mammals	Medium: No specific “knowledge”- related project, although the ‘My village, my story’ project did aim to communicate local concerns and knowledge to others. Information management and awareness integrated into projects on targeted species and education	Good: Pond restoration project was based on solid hydrological assessment that provided important data for local government in terms of allocating funding to pond restoration in other parts of the island
Key stakeholders empowered to engage in decision-making in support of sustainable management of coastal ecosystems	Good. In all projects there was a strong sense of empowerment and a feeling of collective action	Medium: Projects tended to operate at an individual level. Insufficient time or resources available to build effective, community-based institutions. Farmer field school (FFS) established in climate-resilient agriculture project	Good. Community planning project demonstrated the effectiveness and value of engaging community members in urban planning processes. Marine protected area projects engaged strongly with local fishers on planning and decision-making	Limited. Projects worked mostly at individual or household level. Limited work at institutional level in terms of capacity building of local institutions. One project, which was targeted at group level (the cabana project), did not engage sufficiently with the fishers co-operative and as a result the project’s long-term viability currently is threatened.
Coastal governance enhanced to promote integrated and inclusive management	Medium. Evidence in some projects of working across villages on addressing issues such as conflicts between different fisher stakeholder groups, and creating improved fisheries management. However, there is some evidence of conflicts and competition between the two MFF-supported NGOs working on this area.	Limited. No area-wide or inter-village work undertaken. Despite the very strong governance challenges faced in the area, this did not emerge from project applications.	Good. Building on earlier small grant work on co-management of marine PA, communities have engaged in restoration of coral and the introduction of regulations governing harvest of key targeted seafood species.	Limited. Limited engagement with government or support to community members on coastal management or governance. Main focus is on addressing immediate livelihood needs such as water, income from agriculture and eco-tourism opportunities

Output objectives	Thailand	India	Viet Nam	Sri Lanka
Cross-cutting areas				
Gender mainstreaming	Good. Evidence of women in key roles within almost all projects and implementing institutions.	Good: Challenging local norms restrict gender empowerment. However, the Green Rhino project has empowered young girls to overcome gender barriers.	Good. Strong efforts to engage women – particularly in community planning project, where women initially were reluctant to engage, but were able to secure better participation after follow up and direct engagement	Good: Strong participation of women in a number of projects. Greening of bare land project had strong focus on female headed households and poorer members of the community.
Rights-based approaches	Medium. Work on fisheries co-management has strengthened local participation in decision making	Limited. No real integration of RBA, governance or appreciation of power differences.	Limited: Planning process has increased voice and participation in governance and decision-making. However, lack of action by government on regulation of external fishing boats has undermined impacts	Limited. No real integration of RBA, other than a strong focus on poorer and more marginalized households in one of the projects (Greening of bare land)

3.1.2 Conclusions

There is no consistent pattern regarding the degree to which specific objectives have been achieved or supported by the last round of small grant projects, other than the finding that in general, the third objective on strengthening local governance has been less effectively supported than the other two objectives on empowerment and knowledge. This may relate to the finding presented in 2.2.2, which indicated that small grants were less likely to address more complex, long-term and structural issues relating to marine and coastal governance.

MFF has four cross-cutting themes – namely gender; property rights and resource tenure; conflict sensitivity and climate change. Rights based approaches was also included in this analysis following a specific request from MFF. With regard to **gender**, there is good evidence of gender mainstreaming into many SGF projects across all four countries. In some projects (for example the ‘Greening of bare land project’ in Sri Lanka and the ‘Building resilience’ project in India), female headed households were deliberately targeted in recognition of their marginalised status. In Viet Nam, the Women’s Union was the delivery partner for a project designed to support home-stay tourism and women were the primary beneficiaries. Again in Viet Nam, the University of Da Nang took special measures to engage women in local planning, despite initial resistance from women to participate who appeared to doubt the value of their own contributions. In India, gender integration was supported through a gender mainstreaming study, which unfortunately took place after the last cycle of grants were completed. The study demonstrated that the situation of women in Odisha state is less favourable than in other parts of India and as such specific gender actions are required if women are to be sufficiently empowered. Furthermore, the heavy dependence of women on natural resources – particularly for household and domestic needs makes women more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men. The report calls for gender analysis prior to implementing projects and other measures to mainstream gender in design, implementation and evaluation of small grant projects.

With regard to the remaining cross-cutting themes, **property rights and tenure** has not been a major focus of SGF projects in Cycle 5, although fishery co-management rules and regulations have been a focus of



discussion in both Viet Nam (Cu Lao Cham MPA) and Thailand (Trat Bay). As discussed elsewhere in this report, property rights and tenure are long-term challenges with legal and policy implications, requiring extensive multi-stakeholder consultation, which is generally beyond the means and duration of a typical SGF project. With regards to **conflict sensitivity**, this has also been a relatively minor focus, apart perhaps from Sri Lanka, where the Jaffna peninsular was deliberately selected due to its long history of conflict and civil war. **Climate change** has been a strong focus in almost all countries. This has been manifested through the selection of coastal areas that are increasingly prone to climate change impacts (India, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam in particular), and to the implementation of activities that support climate change adaptation (through projects such as climate resilient agriculture in India and diversification of livelihoods (Sri Lanka and India).

Apart from gender, the integration of **rights based approaches** is limited across all four countries. Procedural rights (such as the right to participate in decision making) has been an aspect of some projects (such as in the context of the Cu Lao Cham marine protected area), where local communities have been involved in making and enforcing rules around off-take of targeted species such as crab and lobster. However, unlike gender, this has not been a deliberate and conscious aspect of projects. For example, despite the challenges in governance and limited accountability between coastal communities and government agencies (for example with regard to fisheries enforcement in the Cu Lao Cham MPA in Viet Nam), this has not been the focus of specific small grant projects. In Sri Lanka, efforts have been made to work with local government offices to identify poorer and more marginalised households, which has ensured a strong poverty focus, in line with RBA objectives.

3.2 Contribution of small grants to resilience indicators

3.2.1 Findings from the four countries

In this section, the contribution of the Cycle 5 small grant projects are reviewed against the seven resilience indicators as specified in the MFF Monitoring, Learning and Learning Toolkit. General findings are presented below in Table 3, using the same three-way scoring system presented in Table 2. Where indicators match with programme objectives, the reader is simply referred to the findings presented in Table 2.

Table 3: Contribution of Cycle 5 Small Grants to resilience indicators in the four countries visited

Indicator / outcome	Thailand	India	Viet Nam	Sri Lanka
1. Improved coastal resources governance	Medium. (See Table 2).	Limited. (See Table 2)	Good. (See Table 2)	Limited. (See Table 2)
2. Environmental Improvement/ Ecosystem structure & function (mangrove, wetland, coral, sea grass, wetland, other)	Good: Limited investment in mangrove restoration, but improvements in fisheries management are reported to be delivering benefits in terms of increased catches and longer fishing season for key fish and crab species. Improvements in solid waste management	Medium: Previous SGF rounds have focused on mangrove restoration and planting, but limited focus in this current round. Climate resilient agriculture is promoting interventions that use less water	Good: Restoration of Nipa Palm area, increased health of coral ecosystems through restoration, increased diversity and populations of shellfish.	Limited: Most activities have focused on livelihoods. One project (Greening of bare land) had a goal of creating alternative livelihoods and reducing pressures on a <i>Casuarina</i> forest, with the creation of a forest user group – but these outputs were not delivered.
3. Improved livelihoods (livelihoods diversification, income generation, access to market)	Good: Beneficiaries reported improvements in fish catch, increased numbers of small scale fishers engaging in sector and longer fishing season, as a result of small project interventions	Good: Although limited number of farmers have been reached, improvements in livelihoods noted, particularly with regard to the climate-resilient agriculture.	Limited. Some benefits from community tourism, but these are at a very limited scale as yet. No projects with specific livelihood goals.	Good. Clear livelihood benefits from three of the four projects – responding to felt needs in terms of increasing local incomes, and improving access to and management of water.
4. Increased food security (access to affordable protein, agricultural / home gardening products, other)	Limited. Food security has not been an explicit focus of Cycle 5 projects, although mangrove and fisheries restoration is likely to have food security spin-off benefits	Medium: Good results for direct beneficiaries - although limited overall number of beneficiaries in the climate resilient agriculture project	Limited. Food security has not been an explicit focus of Cycle 5 projects, although restoration of sea food populations may have positive food security impacts	Good. Home and school gardening (through drip irrigation) project delivered improved food security for a number of households.
5. Increased water security (improved access to potable water for household use, improved access to water for irrigation, other)	Limited: No known impacts from MFF investments in this area	Medium: Reduced water requirements of rice in rain-fed agriculture systems. Research project reviewed salination of fresh-water supplies	Limited. Not a focus of the Viet Nam projects	Good. A key focus of two projects addressed local water security issues – households, community and in school.
6. Improved access to and use of knowledge and information (applied research, education & awareness, training)	Good: Environmental education and training has been provided through a number of projects	Good: Green Rhino project had strong focus on education and awareness. Two applied research projects supported on whale shark conservation and development – conservation trade-offs.	Medium. Environmental education supported through the Live and Learn project. Limited focus on applied research.	Good. University worked on assessing hydrological situation of ponds on Delft island, providing a useful resource for future local government investments
7. Gender responsive development	Good: See Table 2	Good: See Table 2	Good: See Table 2	Good: See Table 2



Coastal resources education materials developed during an SGF project. © 2016 Alex McWilliam/MFF

3.2.2 Conclusions

As discussed in section 3.2.1, contributions of Cycle 5 small grants to **coastal governance processes** (indicator 1) have been limited, although examples from Thailand and Viet Nam demonstrate that small grants can be used to facilitate fishery co-management processes, when government agencies are fully engaged and supportive. Evidence gathered from beneficiary groups in the two sub-districts supported in Trat Province indicate that agreements reached on protection and management of inland fishery resources have resulted in increased catches for local fishers, longer fishing seasons for selected species, the return of certain species that had largely disappeared due to over-fishing. Interestingly, the fact that agreements on no-take and restricted fishing zones have only been negotiated in two sub-districts was reported to be resulting in influxes of fishers from neighbouring sub-districts, where such agreements had not been negotiated. This reinforces the need for co-management agreements to cover larger areas if they are to be effective.

In terms of **environmental improvements** (indicator 2), good progress was observed in Thailand and Viet Nam. In Thailand, the waste management project had generated a number of catalytic ‘spread-effects’ including a Thai Baht 10 million private sector investment in plastic recycling within one community and increasing adoption of waste sorting by local residents. Peer pressure and strong local government involvement has facilitated almost 100% adoption of waste sorting by local residents. Anecdotal evidence collected during this review indicates that at the start of this project, around 200 kg of solid waste was collected and recycled a month. This figure has now risen to 30 tonnes. Furthermore, increasing public knowledge and awareness on solid waste (some of which can be attributed to the MFF small grant) local government has increased investments in solid waste management including a large land-fill which is currently under construction. In Viet Nam, support from MFF to the Cu Lao Cham MPA have resulted in good outcomes in terms of recovery of both coral reefs and highly targeted species. Regulations developed by the MPA to restrict harvest of species such as such as giant clam, lobster, abalone, and pen shell, to within sustainable off-take levels have allowed populations to recover since 2015. Re-seeding and restoration of coral beds has also received support from MFF Cycle 5 small grants. 2,000 square metres

of coral beds have been successfully reseeded with MFF support and a further 4,000 square metres have been added with MPA internal funding. At baseline, coral cover was observed to be 30% and by 2018, this had increased to 55% following reseeded and protection.

Improved livelihoods (indicator 3) have been well supported in three of the four countries visited. In India, one small grant has been supporting climate resilient agriculture. Although it is working at a micro-level (with 33 farmers being supported to adopt climate-smart rice cultivation), it has been able to demonstrate new and workable innovations to rain-fed rice agriculture that reduce costs, water requirements and deliver higher harvest, while using local varieties of rice seeds. Beneficiaries report increases of up to 25% in rice production, from 18-20 quintals/acre to around 20-25 quintals/acre. Water use had gone down by around half, due to the reduced number of seedlings per unit area. Furthermore, seed costs had reduced by over a half due to change from seed broadcasting to use of nurseries. In Sri Lanka, a national NGO (Aaruthal) have provided support to poor households with small scale income generating projects, through cash-based and material donations. Female headed households were a core focus of the project and activities were selected that were by their very nature, pro-poor and gender sensitive. In all cases, support was given to households who had been engaged in specific income generating activities (such as onion production, fish vending, food production and sale and chicken rearing for eggs and meat. Investments were provided that allowed individuals to increase incomes, in some cases by several times. For example, onion producers met during this evaluation spoke of how they had expanded onion production by up to six times following project support. Blight, which occurred during last years growing season due to the very heavy rains, did result in significant losses, but did not prevent farmers from storing sufficient seed stock for next years planting. A limitation of the RAP process, as currently designed is the lack of market analysis relating to any specific interventions that are identified as a means to diversify livelihoods. Understanding the risks associated with specific interventions (such as disease or pest attacks) are an important aspect of selecting suitable economic interventions for adoption at household level.



Food security (indicator 4) has not been a priority area other than in India, where climate resilient agriculture and home gardening has increased food production among poor households.

Increased water security (indicator 5) has not been a major focus of support across the four countries, other than in Sri Lanka. Water security is a major challenge on Delft island, being dependent on rain-fed water supplies, but located on a highly porous, coral bedrock. Over-extraction of ground water has resulted in saline intrusion. The University of Jaffna has implemented activities that now provides water for households use (through a rehabilitated well), livestock (through a small reservoir) and agriculture (through an expanded pond). This has generated important impacts in terms of extending the growing season for horticultural crops such as onions and other vegetables. An agricultural group living in the area (who grow chilli, onions, tomatoes, aubergines and spinach) are now able to extend their growing season from three months (under previous conditions) to 5 months with the extension of the pond.

With regard to **access and use of knowledge**, (indicator 6) this was a strong feature in three of the countries visited. Environmental education in secondary schools was supported in India, Viet Nam and Thailand. In India, the Green Rhino project has proven an effective tool in building leadership skills in school-age children. Given the gender differences faced by women and girls, an important aspect of this (and other similar projects in Viet Nam and Thailand) has been support provided to girls in terms of building their confidence and leadership skills. Research has been a feature of projects in India (on assessing the range of whale sharks and other marine mega-fauna as well as assessing trade-offs between extraction of water from rivers for economic development and restricting water extraction for mangrove protection). In Sri Lanka, research into the extent and composition of ponds and water sources was conducted on Delft island by the University of Jaffna. While all projects generated useful knowledge, dissemination and policy impacts have been minimal due to budget constraints and such activities not being included in project work-plans.

Gender-responsive development (indicator 7) have been good across all four countries as discussed in Section 3.2.1

3.3 Contribution of small grants to strengthening resilience

3.3.1 Findings from the four countries

As indicated in section 2.2.2, participating countries identified a limited number of themes from the findings of the resilience analysis, which formed the basis for the subsequent call for concept notes under Cycle 5 of the SGF. These themes varied strongly from country to country in recognition of the very different priorities, concerns and opportunities identified within the specific geographic area in question. In this section, an assessment is made regarding the degree to which small grants in the four countries contributed to these country-specific themes. The assessments given are somewhat subjective and based on limited field time. Furthermore, the overall assessment scores (good, medium or limited) are based not only on the number of approved project applications that contributed to specific themes or objectives, but also the degree to which these projects delivered results.

In **Thailand** (Table 4), good results were seen with regard to fishery resource rehabilitation (theme 1) and municipal waste management (theme 6). No applications of a sufficient quality were received covering themes 2 and 4, and in general, local stakeholders reported that these two themes were less urgent than other four listed. Progress has been made with regard to introducing more sustainable fisheries

management, through the establishment of co-management agreements (themes 3 and 5). However, the fact that these agreements were only brokered in two of the five sub-districts in the bay area mean that conflicts between fishers continue. Furthermore, limited action by government to control push-net and trawler fishers continues to create conflict between these fishers and local people.

Table 4: Contribution of Cycle 5 Small Grants to resilience objectives in Thailand

RAP Objectives (Thailand)	Assessment
1. Ecosystems and fishery resources rehabilitation	Good. Establishment of no-take / protection zones, artificial reefs and crab banks. Evidence from fishers of improved fishing conditions within and around managed zones
2. Database development for collecting knowledge assisting marine and coastal ecosystem conservation	Limited. The Kasetsart University project aimed to generate a data base on the Trat Bay area, but outputs from this project have been limited.
3. Conflict management between artisanal fishery and large scale fishery	Medium. Fishing zoning undertaken in two-sub-districts has reduced conflicts, although weak law enforcement by government means that problems persist.
4. Marine endangered species conservation	Limited. No Cycle 5 projects were selected by the NCB in response to this objective
5. Integration of sustainable communities and natural resources	Medium. Community based knowledge project has attempted to bring together different stakeholder groups and build knowledge across target area – but not yet translated into agreed and recognized management plan or management actions
6. Municipal waste management	Good. Results of Waste Management project have been documented elsewhere in this report

In **India** (Table 5), good progress was demonstrated in the first two resilience themes, both of which can be relatively easily addressed within the budget and time constraints imposed by small grant funding arrangements. Climate smart innovations were found to be valuable and with low risk, increasing crop outputs while reducing water demands as well as labour and seed inputs. Establishment and maintenance of fish farming projects by poor households was challenging due to the costs of pond creation, the investments required in terms of fish fingerlings and feed, but were generating good returns in those households able to sustain the investments. The Green Rhino project was very popular among school children and building leadership and confidence among both boys and girls, and creating new environment champions of the future. Given the challenges and complexities of fishery resource co-management, and

Table 5: Contribution of Cycle 5 Small Grants to resilience objectives in India

RAP Objectives (Thailand)	Assessment
1. Diversifying and building on existing livelihoods with a view to enhancing financial and food security of coastal communities in Rajnagar	Good. Key focus of two projects has been livelihood diversification and improving productivity and climate-smart nature of farming. Improved rice cultivation, fish farming, crab fattening and vegetable home gardening.
2. Increasing capacity and education of women and youth	Good: Green Rhino project is a model on how to empower the youth. Excellent results for both boys and girls
3. Strengthen participation of local communities and community institutions in management of natural resources	Limited: No Cycle 5 projects were selected by the NCB in response to this objective
4. Improving disaster-risk reduction capability of communities and community institutions	Medium: Some adaptation work, through introduction of climate-smart agriculture.

the inherent limitations of the SGF, no projects were funded in this area (theme 3). Arguably theme 4 is an outcome of theme 1, and as such the results of the climate-smart agriculture project are already captured under this first objective.

In general, the first three themes have been well supported, although the number of beneficiaries in the Women’s Union community tourism project are low. For example, the project targeted 18 families in support of homestay development, but only three have initiated homestay improvements and investments. As discussed elsewhere in the report, good progress has been seen in the projects supporting the MPA of Cu Lao Cham, both in terms of rehabilitating corals and targeted sea-food species but also in terms of engaging with local fishers in the setting and enforcement of rules and regulations (theme 3). Benefit sharing mechanisms (theme 4) are likely to take time to agree and formalise and therefore unlikely to be funded through the SGF. Early warning information (theme 5) has featured in the ‘My village, my story’ project included reference to climate impacts such as storms and coastal erosion and the “I learn, I play and I am safe” project that also communicated about natural disaster preparedness and early warning. Theme 6 has been a characteristic of some of the projects, which have triggered wider adoption, but these have been captured under themes 1 – 3.

Table 6: Contribution of Cycle 5 Small Grants to resilience objectives in Viet Nam

RAP Objectives (Thailand)	Assessment
1. Rehabilitation and renovation of marine and coastal ecosystems ecosystem	Good. MPA project has worked on protecting 6 targeted species within the marine
2. Introducing and developing climate-resilient livelihoods for coastal communities	Good. Project working on promoting community based tourism has addressed diversification of livelihoods (traditionally based on fishing) to engaging with tourism
3. Demonstration of co-management schemes for marine and coastal ecosystem conservation	Good. MPA project has strengthened links between MPA and local fishing communities living within the marine MPA
4. Introduction of benefit sharing mechanisms for local communities from eco-tourism activities	Limited. No new agreements or mechanisms negotiated although homestay project aims to increase local benefits from tourism. Number of direct beneficiaries are limited and progress is relatively slow.
5. Enhancing access, dissemination of information and early warning about natural disasters for local communities	Medium. One of the films in ‘My village, my story’ project relates to communicating climate impacts through storms and coastal erosion although impacts have been rather limited. The “I learn, I play and I am safe” project provided local youth with knowledge and information about natural disaster using a card toolkit.
6. Replicating and scaling up good practices in the management conservation and use of marine and coastal resources	Limited. Limited scaling up of NGO projects, although MPA is replicating work on coral restoration from earlier SGP cycle

In **Sri Lanka**, the primary focus of resilience projects has been on supporting livelihoods of those families impacted by civil war, poverty and the effects of climate change (themes 1 – 3). Projects have been well targeted to addressing some of the key livelihood problems being faced in the area (particularly Delft island), namely limited income generating opportunities and the absence of secure supplies of water for agriculture, farming and domestic consumption. Due to a range of unfortunate circumstances, the project targeting community tourism has not been a success. The specific focus of the resilience themes has meant that there has been limited focus on ecological restoration (for example, mangrove restoration or coastal fisheries management) as the social and economic needs of local communities were considered to be a priority.

Table 7: Contribution of Cycle 5 Small Grants to resilience objectives in Sri Lanka

RAP Objectives (Thailand)	Assessment
1. Introduction of sustainable livelihood options (other than fishing) for coastal resource-dependent communities with a view to building economic resilience and reducing pressures on coastal resources	Good. Three projects included specific support at household level. While the cabana project has not been successful in delivering long-term benefits to the local fishing association (see above) the other two projects have supported livelihoods of coastal communities within the focal area.
2. Mapping and ecological restoration of ponds /water holes including improvements to surrounding habitat and livelihoods of communities	Good. The pond restoration project mapped all ponds and water holes on the island and undertook restoration of one site.
3. Promotion of water resources management that will alleviate water-shortage related issues of coastal communities and livelihoods	Good. The rain-water harvesting project has been instrumental in supporting rainwater harvesting and drip irrigation activities within the main secondary school on Delft Island and with 30 households.
4. Determining the extent of pollution in the Jaffna Lagoon and adoption of pollution management practice/s	Limited. No specific project has been supported to date with a focus on pollution. Elements of solid waste management have been included in two of the projects but these measures have not been sustained after project funding ended

3.3.2 Conclusions

Given that only one cycle of grants has been issued since the resilience analysis was carried out and that in general, countries opted to fund between four to five projects, it is perhaps unsurprising that some of the country-defined resilience objectives have not been met. This was in some cases due to the fact that no suitable proposals were received for certain themes, or because the themes themselves did not lend themselves to being addressed through small projects within limited funding and duration. Furthermore, in some countries there was a deliberate decision within the NCB to focus on selected themes during cycle 5, in the expectation that further support could be provided to other themes in subsequent rounds of support.

3.4 Contributions to policy processes at national and local level

s discussed in Section 1.5, assessing the specific policy contributions of individual small grant projects to policy processes at national or local level is challenging, given the fact that such policy processes have been supported through a range of mechanisms at the disposal of the MFF programme. This has included medium sized projects, NCB-specific activities and direct assistance provided (on request) to countries addressing policy reforms.

3.4.1 Findings from the four countries

In **Thailand**, most policy influence as a direct result of MFF small grants has taken place at local government level. Evidence for this can be seen with regard to the increasing investment and recognition by the Mai Rood sub-district government on solid waste management. An investment of Thai Baht 50 million was made by the sub-district into land-fill and environmentally friendly solid waste management. At provincial level, there has been limited impact, despite the increase importance of the provincial marine and coastal committees which have now been established under the 2015 Marine and Coastal Act. Opportunities exist to present models, lessons and approaches emerging from the small grants as well as promoting specific policy recommendations through such committees, although to date, such opportunities

have not been taken. The absence of operational projects and a small grants co-ordinator means that these opportunities are currently not being pursued. At a national level, policy influence has been achieved, but this has been through earlier phases of support. The 2015 Marine and Coastal Act has strongly embraced collaborative and multi-stakeholder approaches in the management of natural resources and former MFF grantees were strongly involved in arguing for these changes. Earlier rounds of MFF grants have effectively demonstrated the value and benefits of co-management, which in turn fed into policy processes relating to this legal reform.

In **India**, as in Thailand, policy impacts have been modest. The World Bank funded Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme works at state level to channel investments in support of resilience within the coastal zone. The programme works through local NGOs to deliver local level investments and the programme is currently designing a second phase of support and have expressed interest in adopting a number of the models developed through MFF small grants such as integrated family gardening, aquaculture and improved rice cultivation as alternatives to environmentally damaging shrimp and prawn farming. Opportunities for developing turtle-based tourism in Orrisa state have been outlined and presented to policy makers by the Wildlife Trust of India – although concerns exist about the carrying capacity of eco-tourism based on nesting of endangered turtles due to the risk of disturbance and increased development. The study on water trade-offs, conducted by the Institute for Economic Growth generated important findings including key policy recommendations to state government on the impacts of increased water abstraction by industry on down-stream biodiversity. However, the implementing agency, itself a government institution, is unable to lobby or advocate for any particular position due to its legal status and organizational constitution. At a national level, the government of India has released a national policy on marine fisheries (2017). A number of the NCB members were engaged on the national committee to draft the policy for ministerial approval. Learning and models from MFF have been picked up in this new policy, through a process of osmosis and diffusion. A key element of the new policy is the importance attached to collaborative stakeholder engagement, something that has long been at the core of MFF approaches and interventions.

In **Viet Nam**, a number of local level policy impacts can be observed, in large part due to the close relationship developed between IUCN, implementing organisations (grantees) and champions within the MPA, commune and city peoples committees. For example, the ‘My village, my story’ project produced a short film on coastal erosion, and which argued strongly for the need to construct a dyke to protect coastal communities. After the film was produced and viewed by the city authorities, the city peoples committee decided to construct the dyke for that particular coastal area. Although many external factors contributed to this, the film appears to have played an important role in capturing interest and imaginations. The community planning project has generated great interest in the city council, but it is clear that planning processes are still subject to prevailing methods of limited consultation and a limited interest in consulting locally. More effort is needed to profile the outcomes of this project, including its outcomes, costs and benefits) if more lasting changes are to be made on urban planning practice and regulations. Collaboration between MFF, the IUCN country office and other IUCN projects resulted in a workshop in April 2017 with the aim of negotiating an expansion of the sub MPA to a larger area within the MPA¹. Small grant projects and NCB have provided entry point for policy influence in earlier Cycles of support – and IUCN is now considered a close partner to government at national level. A number of direct policy influences have been achieved, including specific technical inputs to the 2015 Law on Seas, Island Resources and Environment. However, these changes were effected through the NCB members and not through the results or influence of any particular small grant project.

1. <https://www.iucn.org/news/viet-nam/201805/iuu-fishing-cu-lao-cham-mpa-how-deal-it>

In **Sri Lanka**, projects have been largely focused at community and household levels and policy related issues at this level are minimal. Although local government has been engaged in supporting the small grant projects, engagement between implementing organisations and the divisional secretary have been limited. The deliberate focus of MFF in the Jaffna area, however, has increased the profile of this part of the country among key national agencies and decision makers – an area that otherwise has been somewhat neglected by central government. For example, in 2017 the Biodiversity Secretariat in the Ministry of Environment undertook a biodiversity assessment of Delft Island and northern Jaffna and two of the NCB members were involved in this assessment. The assessment identified areas of biodiversity importance as well as potential tourism opportunities. This was then followed by the Tourism Development Board undertaking a more detailed tourism development plan for the area, taking account of areas of environmental importance.

3.4.2 Conclusions

The specific policy impacts of Cycle 5 small grants has been relatively limited, local in nature (mostly through local government bodies, indirect and often unplanned). It is unrealistic to expect that projects with a life-span of 12 months and budgets of around USD 15,000 will deliver on policy impacts. Furthermore, project proponents are not required in their application process to plan for and deliver policy impacts. In reality, projects struggle to deliver specific outputs within the target group they have identified and within the time and budget constraints that they face. Where MFF has generated national-level policy impacts this has in general taken place through the medium of the NCB and through the informal networks that NCB members have with wider policy-related processes.

Applied research projects are undertaken to generate robust information around key policy-related knowledge gaps. Evidence collected during this review indicates that while projects have in general been able to do this (with some notable exceptions), there is insufficient budget, or resources allocated to communicating the findings of this research to those who are likely to be able to influence policy. This reduces any opportunity for wider influence and policy-level impacts.

Community members participate in consultations with local government, Trat, Thailand. © 2016 Siriporn Sriaram/MFF Thailand



3.5 Scaling up, replication and diffusion

In this section, an assessment is made regarding the degree to which small grant projects have a ‘transformative’ potential, triggering wider catalytic effects beyond the immediate reach of project interventions that relate to the replication or adoption of project-generated interventions through other means – thereby increasing impact and efficiency.

3.5.1 Findings from the four countries

Evidence collected from **Thailand** indicates that a number of small grant projects have empowered local people and created a ‘spark’ that has built opportunities for wider impact. However, the short-term nature of the small grant projects means that the pathway for this wider impact, scaling and adoption is not clear. Without follow-on investments to communicate and transfer lessons and models to potential ‘scaling agencies’ such as neighbouring local governments, scaling up is likely to be limited and by chance rather than by design. One clear exception to this general finding is the solid waste management project which appears to have triggered a range of follow-on actions such as private sector investment in waste management, growing peer pressure on residents to sort and recycle waste and local government investments in land-fill and solid waste disposal. The project was in effect the ‘spark’ that triggered these spontaneous and largely unplanned events, increasing effectiveness and impacts.

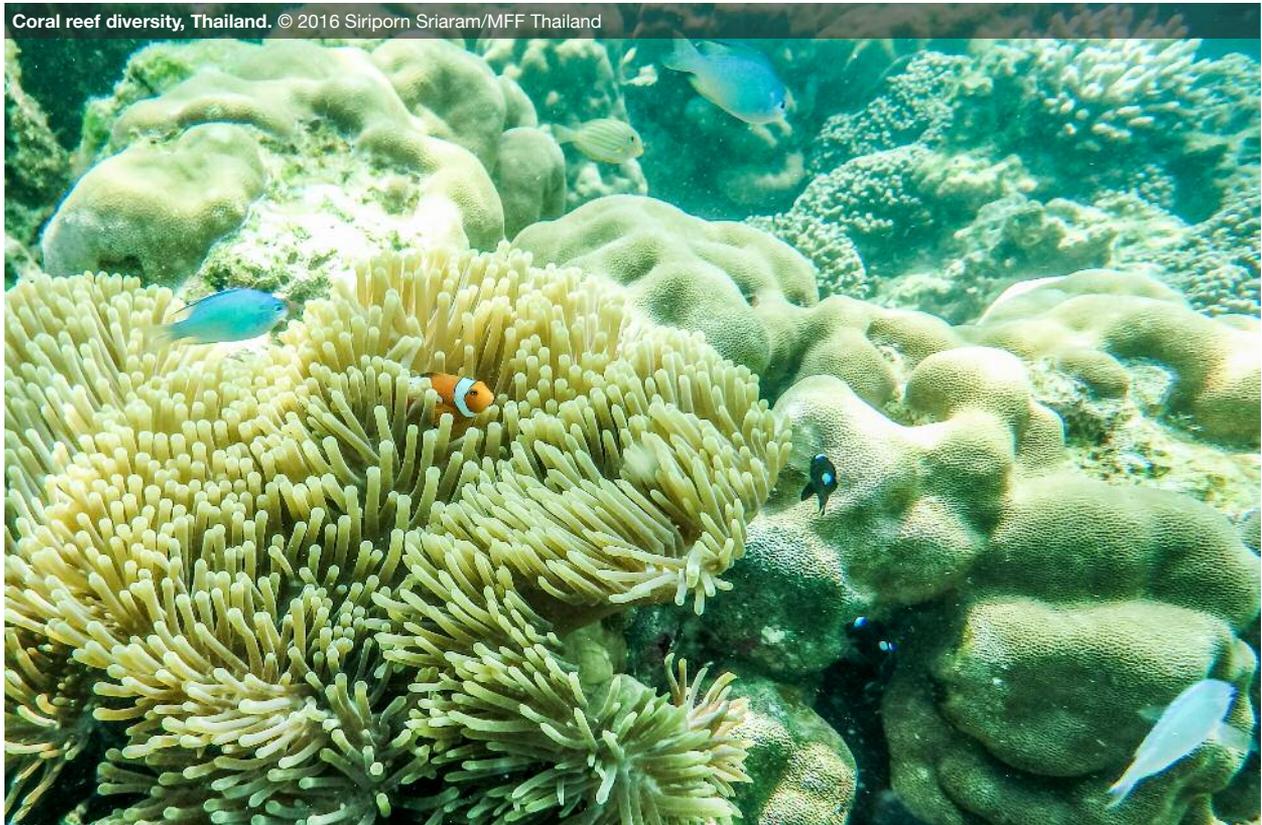
In **India**, small grant projects have been instrumental in identifying, testing and validating new low-cost and low-risk innovations to climate smart agriculture. However, the coverage of these interventions under project support is confined to a limited number of households. While wider interest appears to exist, it is not clear if or how these innovations can be up-scaled. Furthermore, a number of deep-seated governance challenges exist in the Bhitarkanika National Park buffer zone relating to competing interests (and power) over land use decision-making. If climate and environmentally-friendly actions are to be scaled up at a landscape level, such governance challenges will need to be addressed – which is currently unlikely through individual small grants.

Potentially the second phase of the World Bank ICZMP may offer one such pathway for up-scaling, but the programme is currently going through a design and appraisal exercise and as such it is uncertain the degree to which this might happen. One of the NCB members works with the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, is supporting the design of this second phase of the programme. Specifically, they are working to integrate some of the Cycle 5 MFF models on Sustainable Aquaculture and Climate smart farming. State government is planning to embark on a planning process in the Bhitarkanika Environmentally Sensitive Zone (ESZ), which will engage state agencies and will provide opportunities for up-scaling of SGF project models from Cycle 5 and earlier. Applied research projects, as discussed in section 3.4.1 have also insufficient budget (as well as capacity or mandate) to communicate and advocate the findings of these research initiatives in ways that could generate wider, catalytic impacts.

Evidence from **Viet Nam** indicates that when projects have been implemented through or with the close involvement of government agencies or universities, opportunities for up-scaling have been realised. In contrast NGO projects have tended to generate important local-level impacts but have struggled to create wider impacts or adoption. For example, actions that were funded through the MPA Board have been fully mainstreamed within MPA operations. The expanding budget of the MPA (which in turn is financed through a share of the growing tourist revenues) is able to finance the expansion of work related to coral rehabilitation and protection of key targeted species. The Faculty of Architecture at Da Nang University

has recently secured funding for the establishment of a Community Engagement Centre, which aims to build links to the city council and promote more inclusive approaches to urban planning. Already, the Faculty is engaging with the City Council around the design of a 'green village' in Da Nang city. Private sector is already lobbying hard regarding the conversion of a 20,000 hectare forested area that is an important habitat for the endangered red-shanked douc langur. Following engagement from the university, planning decisions given by the city council were reviewed and some key planning officers suspended due to evidence of foul play. There have been some examples of NGOs replicating approaches from MFF SGF projects – such as Live and Learn who have replicated communication activities within their own network of schools who are engaged in communicating around natural disasters. However, in general, NGO projects have had insufficient contacts and linkages with local government and insufficient time or resources to effectively communicate the outcomes of field-level implementation. As such, important models and concepts have been tested and validated but are unlikely to be up-scaled without further project funding.

On Delft island in northern **Sri Lanka** there are some indications of project interventions being multiplied and replicated through local government investments. The irrigation department within the Department of Agrarian Development (DAD) has indicated that they have made provisions in the 2019 government budget to undertake the rehabilitation of two or three ponds and water sources on the island. Site selection will be made using the data and recommendations generated through the University of Jaffna study. Furthermore, the DAD irrigation department also plans to finance the introduction of drip irrigation technology to 500 households on the island, which will be channelled through the Divisional Secretary (DS). In both cases, evidence of the effectiveness of these interventions (demonstrated through MFF small grants) played an important role in catalysing these investments. The completion workshop, which was conducted on Delft Island in 2016 (in the DS offices), provided an opportunity to profile the projects locally. But if local government is to be engaged more effectively, a longer-term relationship will be needed. For example,



local government is now embarking on a five-year development plan for the island, which is being lead by a new DS. He has expressed interest (through the mini-workshop conducted as part of this review) to engage more directly with MFF in terms of accessing project reports and the RAP analysis and is specifically interested in being supported in the development of the area plan. This is an example of an opportunity that could lead to a more direct integration and up scaling of project supported interventions.

3.5.2 Conclusions

Evidence from the four countries suggests that while projects have in a number of cases been able to test and ‘prove’ the effectiveness of specific innovations, approaches and models, projects have rarely had the time, resources or capacity to identify and promote opportunities for scaling up, replication and diffusion. Where this has happened, it has often been unintended (without deliberate efforts to communicate specific innovations) or it has been where government agencies (such as local governments) have been closely involved with implementation and assessment of overall performance. Many of the countries where MFF works are middle-income economies, with increasing funding available to government agencies. There is a widespread interest in providing government funding to low-cost, effective approaches to strengthening resilience among coastal communities. However for this to happen, deliberate actions need to be taken by project implementers or MFF to identify potential scaling agents, opportunities for such up-scaling and communicate effectively.

Of the projects visited in the four countries, Table 8 presents a summary of those that can be characterised as “transformational” in terms of their demonstrated ability to generate additional and wider impacts beyond their immediate target area, either in terms of policy impacts or in terms of adoption and scaling up by other agencies such as local or provincial government. Across the four countries, 24 Cycle 5 projects were funded². Of these, 5 (20%) were found to have generated (or in the case of two projects in Sri Lanka and India appear likely to generate) scaling impacts (Table 8)

Table 8: Cycle 5 small grant projects that have generated (or appear likely to generate) scaling impacts

Country	Project	Scaling agent(s)	Nature of scaling impact
Sri Lanka	Mapping of water holes and ponds	Department of Agrarian Development	Replication of pond and water source rehabilitation in 2 -3 additional areas on Delft Island (Planned)
Viet Nam	Community planning in Cu Lao Cham	Da Nang University	Creation of Centre for Community Engagement will support continued and expanded promotion of community engagement in urban planning
Viet Nam	Conservation and restoration of targeted marine species	Cu Lao Cham MPA Board	Mainstreaming of coral rehabilitation and conservation of targeted species within MPA workplan and budget
Thailand	Waste management of coastal communities	Mai Rood Sub District Private sector investor	Investment in land-fill Investment in plastic recycling
India	Building resilience of coastal communities	Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme – Phase II	Inclusion of project innovations in budget and workplan of World Bank project – Phase 2 (Planned)

2. India – 5 projects, Sri Lanka – 4 projects, Viet Nam – 6 projects, Thailand – 9 projects

3.6 Sustainability prospects

3.6.1 Findings from the four countries

Sustainability prospects in **Thailand** across the projects supported in Cycle 5 appear to be good. Empowerment of local organisations and ensuring that the objectives of small grant projects are well aligned with local interests has meant that there is sufficient momentum for change to ensure continuation of project activities beyond the life of the project. This is particularly the case where problems being addressed through project interventions are within the reach and capacity of project beneficiaries to address and do not depend on the actions of external actors or processes over which they have limited control. Site visits conducted in Mai Rood sub-district suggest that fishing rules negotiated in 2016 still hold and continue to generate benefits in terms of improved local fish catches. As indicated elsewhere in this report, evidence from coastal villages in Mai Rood suggest that not only have local efforts to sort and recycle sold waste been sustained, they have expanded since the completion of the project.

In **India** and within those projects that are working at community level on innovations relating to climate smart agriculture, sustainability prospects appear good. The clear benefit and added value that these innovations deliver creates sufficient incentives for farmers to sustain specific innovations such as improved rice husbandry. Farmer field schools, established through the project continue to meet and exchange knowledge and experiences. Community extension workers supported by the project are also continuing to operate with small stipends paid by government. As indicated earlier in this report, sustaining aquaculture investments has proven difficult for some resource-poor households who have insufficient savings or cash flow to maintain activities until mature fish can be sold. The Green Rhinos project faces challenges relating to sustainability, as the implementing organisation (the Association for Social and Environmental Development) does not have sufficient resources to provide the level of support to Eco-clubs in participating schools (in terms of investments, training and mentoring) without project funding.

Local stakeholders participate in a consultation during the Resilience Assessment for Delft Island, Sri Lanka.
© 2015 Kumudini Ekaratne/MFF Sri Lanka



In **Viet Nam**, sustainability of projects is good – particularly those working with the MPA, which has already demonstrated an interest, commitment and capacity to continue project promoted activities with internal funding. The Live and Learn project that supported environmental education and home gardening has faced the same challenges of maintaining support to participating schools as seen in India (see above). The community planning project has proven sustainable in that decisions taken on the public park have been adopted by the city council and will form the basis for future planning of developments in this area. Activities implemented by the University of Da Nang after the project was completed indicate that community based planning principles will continue to be promoted in the area with a view to influencing top-down government planning procedures and regulations.

In **Sri Lanka**, three of the four projects funded continue to provide local benefits to users two years after they finished. This is in large part due to the fact that the projects were well targeted to the needs, circumstances and interests of beneficiaries. For example, the pond restoration project was focused on an area that was highly suited, hydrologically, to expansion and restoration and where local people were highly dependent on the pond for domestic, agricultural and livestock uses. The secondary school which was selected for the rainwater harvesting project was well selected as its water use was high (due to the feeding programme that was operating in the school, funded by World Food Programme and CIDA). Household selection in other projects was undertaken with the support and guidance from the divisional secretary's office who had a good understanding of those households that were specifically engaged in certain activities (such as small scale horticulture or petty trade) as well as those households who were poor and in need of direct assistance. The only project, which is not delivering benefits two years on, is the cabana project, which failed to engage sufficiently with the beneficiary organization during project design, and failed to provide sufficient organizational development and leadership training to the organization to sustain and manage the project to the benefit of the group members. A key lesson, therefore is that targeting and relevance are two key criteria be promoted if chances of sustainability are to be increased.

3.6.2 Conclusions

Evidence from the four countries suggests that sustainability of projects that are implemented at community or household level is in general high, in large part due to the fact that projects are targeting problems that are locally relevant and of a high priority. This reflects well on the resilience analysis, which were focused on identifying and prioritising local priorities which then went on to form the basis for project selection and implementation. Secondly, the findings from the field suggests that where local government agencies have been strongly involved in implementation, sustainability prospects increase, through the possibility of injection of funds with which to sustain project activities. Projects that support environmental education, while proving highly successful, have been challenging to maintain, due to the on-going support costs which have proven challenging to cover once project funding ends.



4. Overall Conclusions

Aerial view of mangroves,
Krabi, Thailand.
© 2017 Siriporn Sriaram/MFF Thailand

Overall, evidence from the four countries suggests that the resilience concept has been well understood and internalized at a national level through the NCBs. As one would expect, differing interpretations of resilience have emerged in different countries, with varying emphasis on resilience to different external threats. In all four countries visited, resilience analyses were conducted within a focused geographic area selected based on a number of pre-determined criteria. The priority themes identified in the RAP were then used to identify and select projects under the SGF. One aspect of the resilience analysis and its application that was evident in all four countries was that the priority themes identified represent a relatively small sub-set of the overall set of social, economic and environmental issues identified during the RAP process. The process used to prioritise which themes to retain and which to drop varied from country to country, but in large part were driven by those problems that could realistically be addressed through the SGF. Problems of a more structural, governance or policy-related nature were largely put to one side, in preference for those problems that could realistically be addressed within the limits of small grants (namely a 12 month period and relatively limited budget). The implication of this finding is that small grants may only be suited to addressing relatively “quick-wins” but are unlikely to address underlying causes created as a result of power imbalance, governance failures or policy barriers. These more systemic problems – often at the heart of coastal resilience – must therefore be addressed through other channels, either within MFF or outside.

While the contributions of Cycle 5 small grants to coastal governance processes have been limited, examples from Thailand and Viet Nam demonstrate that small grants can be used to facilitate fishery co-management processes, when government agencies are fully engaged and supportive. Evidence gathered from beneficiary groups in the two sub-districts supported in Trat Province indicate that agreements reached on protection and management of inland fishery resources



have resulted in increased catches for local fishers, longer fishing seasons for selected species, the return of certain species that had largely disappeared due to over-fishing.

In terms of environmental improvements, good progress was observed in Thailand and Viet Nam. In Thailand, the waste management project had generated a number of catalytic ‘spread-effects’ including a Thai Baht 10 million private sector investment in plastic recycling within one community and increasing adoption of waste sorting by local residents. Peer pressure and strong local government involvement has facilitated almost 100% adoption of waste sorting by local residents. In Viet Nam, support from MFF to the Cu Lao Cham MPA have resulted in good outcomes in terms of recovery of both coral reefs and highly targeted species. Regulations developed by the MPA on species such as giant clam, lobster, abalone and pen shell, designed to restrict harvest of these species to within sustainable off-take levels have shown strong recovery from 2015 onwards when these new regulations. Re-seeding and restoration of coral beds has also received support from MFF Cycle 5 small grants. 2,000 square metres of coral beds have been successfully reseeded with MFF support and a further 4,000 square metres have been added with MPA internal funding.

Improved livelihoods have been well supported in three of the four countries visited. In India, one small grant has been supporting climate resilient agriculture. Although it is working at a micro-level (with 33 farmers being supported to adopt climate-smart rice cultivation), it has been able to demonstrate new and workable innovations to rain-fed rice agriculture that reduce costs, water requirements and deliver higher harvest, while using local varieties of rice seeds. Beneficiaries report rice production increases of up to 25%, from 18-20 quintals/acre to around 20-25 quintals/acre. Water use had gone down by around half, due to the reduced number of seedlings per unit area. Furthermore, seed costs had reduced by over a half due to change from seed broadcasting to use of nurseries. In Sri Lanka, a national NGO (Aaruthal) have provided support to poor households with small-scale income generating projects, through cash-based and material donations. Female-headed households were a core focus of the project and activities were selected that were by their very nature, pro-poor and gender sensitive. The RAP process does not currently include market analysis or any means to assess the suitability and profitability of economic interventions designed to diversify and strengthen livelihoods.

Although food and water security are core programme level objectives identified as being important for strengthening resilience in coastal communities overall, there was relatively limited contributions of SGF projects to these two areas. Exceptions to this rule are found in In India - where climate resilient agriculture and home gardening has increased food production among poor households and in Sri Lanka, where water catchment, drip irrigation and water source rehabilitation have all been supported.

With regard to access and use of knowledge, this was a strong feature in three of the four countries visited. Environmental education in secondary schools was supported in India, Viet Nam and Thailand. In India,

the Green Rhino project has proven an effective tool in building leadership skills in school-age children. Given the gender differences faced by women and girls, an important aspect of this (and other similar projects in Viet Nam and Thailand) has been support provided to girls in terms of building their confidence and leadership skills. Research has been a feature of projects in India (on assessing the range of whale sharks and other marine mega-fauna as well as assessing trade-offs between extraction of water from rivers for economic development and restricting water extraction for mangrove protection). In Sri Lanka, research into the extent and composition of ponds and water sources was conducted on Delft island by the University of Jaffna. While all projects generated useful knowledge, dissemination and policy impacts have been minimal due to budget constraints and such activities not being included in project work-plans.

With regard to cross-cutting issues, it appears that gender has been well integrated into SGF projects across all four countries. In some projects (for example the 'Greening of bare land project' in Sri Lanka and the 'Building resilience' project in India), female-headed households were deliberately targeted in recognition of their marginalised status. In Viet Nam, the Women's Union was the delivery partner for a project designed to support home-stay tourism and women were the primary beneficiaries. Again in Viet Nam, the University of Da Nang took special measures to engage women in local planning, despite initial resistance from women to participate who appeared to doubt the value of their own contributions. In India, gender integration was supported through a gender mainstreaming study, which unfortunately took place after the last cycle of grants were completed. The study demonstrated that the situation of women in Odisha state is less favourable than in other parts of India and as such specific gender actions are required if women are to be sufficiently empowered. While the MFF Grant Guidelines specify that to be eligible for support, proposals must explicitly integrate the four cross cutting themes, there is no established mechanism ensuring that these are well incorporated into all phases of project implementation and reporting.



If small grants are to be effective and efficient, justifying the significant costs incurred by the MFF programme in identification, screening, selection and supervision, they must deliver benefits and impacts beyond their relatively modest target groups. Currently small grants directed to community or household levels operate at a 'micro-level' with beneficiary numbers typically numbering between 10 – 50 households. The total number of households within the landscapes being targeted varies but is up to 250,000 in some cases (for example, Rajnagar Block in Kendrapara District, Odisha State). For projects to have any real meaning or significance, scaling up is essential. This can happen through a number of different pathways but can be related to influencing policies within government institutions, or through successfully promoting new and innovative approaches for adoption by external institutions with the funds and resources to scale them up. Of the 24 Cycle 5 SGF projects funded across the 4 countries visited during this review only a relatively small number can be said to have generated (or appear likely to generate) scaling impacts through adoption of project-generated models or approaches. Direct policy impacts of SGF projects are difficult to assess. In reality policy influence, particularly at national level, tends to be more diffuse and not linked to specific, individual projects, but achieved more indirectly, for example by NCB members engaged in policy processes outside SGF project activities.

Associated with this finding is a question that relates to the underlying theory of change that underpins SGF projects. Broadly, two different models were presented by programme staff and NCB members:

- The resilience approach allows a clustering of small projects within a defined geographic area, delivering a range of complementary actions that together support the wider goal of resilience (which it itself, is multi-faceted). Linkages and synergies between projects creates benefits and results that are greater than the sum of the individual parts.
- Small grants provide opportunities to test, experiment with, develop, validate and communicate new and innovative solutions to addressing coastal resilience, which can then go on to inform policy processes, address specific knowledge or practice gaps or be scaled up and replicated through external bodies such as government and donor-funded projects.

Perhaps in reality, SGF projects aim to achieve a mix of these two models, with some aspects being emphasized more in some contexts than others. However, if either of these two pathways are to be achieved, a more deliberate process is needed of linking projects both with each other and to local or national government agencies, supporting communication processes and engaging more directly in longer term governance or government-lead planning activities.

5. Recommendations

Mangrove saplings, Bangkeao, Thailand. © Elaine Mumford/IUCN

The conclusions from this review point to a number of recommendations, which are presented below for consideration by the MFF programme in future phases of support:

- Clarify the theory of change for SGF projects in each country – and then develop broader strategies to ensure that the more strategic, catalytic aspects of projects are delivered through projects, or supported through IUCN staff, NCB members or complementary, cross-cutting medium sized projects.
- Support larger projects with longer duration. Projects should to be encouraged, or required to identify opportunities for impacts beyond immediate target group – either through policy influence, or wider adoption and scaling. Plans and budgets within proposals will need to be allocated to this.
- Consider including local governments as recipients of SGF projects as a means to test and validate new approaches with a view to scaling up through their own budgets and work-plans.
- Where economic activities are highlighted in RAPs as potential strategies to strengthen resilience and diversify livelihoods, there should be a basic assessment of market potential and feasibility to guide the development of future projects and avoid the risk of failures.
- Develop institutional systems at programme and country level for ensuring cross-cutting issues are incorporated into project proposals as well as in implementation and reporting.
- Consider developing a ‘local NCB’, with local government representatives – as a means to support wider adoption and up-scaling of SGPs within selected landscapes. National NCBs can be more focused on policy guidance and support and learning from project experiences, while local NCBs can be more involved on operational aspects and identifying opportunities for up-scaling.
- Engage MFF staff in supporting local-level, area-based planning exercises, including local government development planning, environmentally sensitive area planning, land-use plans, investment plans or coastal zone planning. This review has identified a number of opportunities in the landscapes that are being supported, but currently MFF has limited resources or tools with which to do this.
- Ensure that monitoring systems are sufficiently robust to be able to monitor changes in resilience within programme areas. Currently the RAP analysis does not provide sufficient detail and data for a resilience baseline against which future changes can be assessed. Either this needs to be strengthened in future RAP analyses, or alternative, area-based monitoring systems need to be established

Annex – List of SGF projects included in the review

Country	Project Title	Project Location	Grantee
India	Creating Youth Nature Leaders in Rajnagar, Odisha	Rajnagar Block, Kendrapara district, Odisha	Association for Social and Environment Development (ASED)
India	Assessing the impact of upstream mining and industrial activities on mangroves and ecological diversity of Bhitarkanika National Park	Rajnagar Block, Kendrapara district, Odisha	Institute for Economic Growth (IEG)
India	Integrated Aqua-farming in Inundated Coastal Areas of Odisha towards Alternative Livelihood and Climate Adaptive Community Conservation Program	Rajnagar Block, Kendrapara district, Odisha	South Asia Forum for Environment (SAFE)
India	Study of whale shark and marine megafaunal distribution along Odisha, and potential for marine and coastal species-based tourism	Rajnagar Block, Kendrapara district, Odisha	Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)
India	Building resilience of coastal communities of Bhitarkanika, Odisha through increased livelihood security	Rajnagar Block, Kendrapara district, Odisha	Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS)
Sri Lanka	Mapping of ponds / waterholes and restoration of a selected pond in the Delft Island	Delft Island	Dept of Fisheries, Univ. of Jaffna
Sri Lanka	Greening of bare land and income generation for the selected community members in Manalkadu and the coastal area of Delft East of Jaffna District	Jaffna & Delft Island	Aaruthal Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka	Installation of an efficient model of water management and novel home garden system at the Delft Island	Delft Island	Jaffna Science Association
Sri Lanka	Building economic resilience of returned coastal communities through sustainable management of ecosystems	Delft Island	Sevalanka Foundation
Thailand	Community of resources conservation	Moo 2, 3 and 10, Laemklad sub-district, Muang District	The Artisanal fishery group of Moo 10
Thailand	Mangrove and coastal ecosystem restoration	Moo 5, 6 and 9, Laemklad sub-district, Muang District	the Artisanal fishery community network of Baan Klong Son
Thailand	Community Learning Center for Sustainable Restoration of Marine and Coastal Resources	Moo 1, Laemklad sub-district, Muang District, Trat Province	Artisanal fishery conservation group of park Klong Ao Rawa
Thailand	Waste Management of Coastal communities	6 Villages in Mairood sub-district, Klong Yai District, Trat Province	Community Organization Council
Thailand	Integrated Coastal Management in Laem Klad and Mairood	Mairood sub-district, Klong Yai District and Laem Klad sub-district, Muang District, Trat Province	Kasetsart University

Country	Project Title	Project Location	Grantee
Thailand	Community based knowledge for sustainable coastal and marine resources management	Laem Klad Sub-District in Muang District, Mai Rood Sub-District in Klong Yai District and 5 Sub-districts in Ao Trad.	Sustainable Development Foundation [SDF]
Thailand	Mairood Mangrove Conservation Partnership	Mai Rood Sub-District, Klong Yai District	Mai Rood School
Thailand	Networking for the conservation of environment and natural resources	Mai Rood Sub-District, Klong Yai District	Klongmanao school
Thailand	Strengthening Collaboration between Artisanal Fishery and Large Scale Fishery	6 Communities in Mai Rood Sub-District, Klong Yai District	Mai Rood Fishery Cooperatives
Viet Nam	Students and community conserve coastal ecosystem and biodiversity through school gardens	Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province	ACCD
Viet Nam	Develop homestay village in Cam Thanh eco-tour commune	Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province	Cam Thanh Women's Union
Viet Nam	Improve community role and capacity in planning process of Cu Lao Cham	Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province	Da Nang Architecture University
Viet Nam	Study on conservation and restoration solutions for some target resources (lobster, cellana, abalone, scallop, tridacnidae)	Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province	Cù Lao Chàm MPA
Viet Nam	My village – my story	Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province	Hoi An Women's Union -Simple A Ltd.
Viet Nam	I play, I learn and I am safe	Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province	Live & Learn

About Mangroves for the Future

Mangroves for the Future (MFF) is a unique partner-led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development. Co-chaired by IUCN and UNDP, MFF provides a platform for collaboration among the many different agencies, sectors and countries which are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues. The goal is to promote an integrated ocean-wide approach to coastal management and to building the resilience of ecosystem-dependent coastal communities.

MFF builds on a history of coastal management interventions before and after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. It initially focused on the countries that were worst affected by the tsunami – India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Thailand. More recently it has expanded to include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Viet Nam.

Mangroves are the flagship of the initiative, but MFF is inclusive of all types of coastal ecosystem, such as coral reefs, estuaries, lagoons, sandy beaches, sea grasses and wetlands.

The MFF grants facility offers small, medium and regional grants to support initiatives that provide practical, hands-on demonstrations of effective coastal management in action. Each country manages its own MFF programme through a National Coordinating Body which includes representation from government, NGOs and the private sector.

MFF addresses priorities for long-term sustainable coastal ecosystem management which include, among others: climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, promotion of ecosystem health, development of sustainable livelihoods, and active engagement of the private sector in developing sustainable business practices. The emphasis is on generating knowledge, empowering local communities and advocating for policy solutions that will support best practice in integrated coastal management.

Moving forward, MFF will increasingly focus on building resilience of ecosystem-dependent coastal communities by promoting nature based solutions and by showcasing the climate change adaptation and mitigation benefits that can be achieved with healthy mangrove forests and other types of coastal vegetation.

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Learn more at: www.mangrovesforthefuture.org

