



Mangroves for the Future
INVESTING IN COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS
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SHORT-TERM INTERVENTIONS, LONG-TERM IMPACTS

Results *and* Lessons Learned *from* Small Grant Facility (2011– 2013)

MFF Viet Nam



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ACRONYMS

CCRD	Centre for Community Research and Development
CPC	Commune People's Committee
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
EU	European Union
FA	Fishing Association
GXCEC	Giao Xuan Community-based Ecotourism Cooperative
HUAF	Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LIF	Local Initiative Fund
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MCC	Mangrove Conservation Club
MCMNP	Mui Ca Mau National Park
MERD	Mangrove Ecosystem Research Division
MFF	Mangroves for the Future
MG	Marine Gifts Social Enterprise
MLE	Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NCB	National Coordinating Body
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSAP	National Strategy and Action Plan
PCM	Project Cycle Management
POW	Programme of Work
PTP	Phu Thoi Pagoda
QNFA	Quang Nam Fishing Association
QTCEMT	Quang Tri Centre for Environment Monitoring and Technology
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
SGF	Small Grant Facility
VASI	Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands
VUFO - NGO	The Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization - Non Governmental Organizations
XTNP	Xuan Thuy National Park

PREFACE

This document summarizes results and lessons learned during MFF Viet Nam's implementation of the Small Grant Facility (SGF) during 2011-2013. The nine SGF projects under this phase focused on improving coastal ecosystem management by sharing knowledge, engaging civil society in mangroves conservation, enhancing the value of coastal ecosystems and promoting sustainable livelihoods for coastal communities.

Both stories of success and failure, gleaned from these SGF projects, are shared with the hope that good practices will be replicated and failures mitigated in future SGF cycles. Information contained herein was collected from project progress reports, site visits and direct communications with grantees at the SGF mid-term review and final workshops. Although the nine projects have been implemented for only a short period of time, they show potential to deliver long-term impacts and to be replicated and scaled up across the country. When implemented by strong partners, such projects can create lasting outcomes and contribute to MFF's goals.

MFF Viet Nam would like to acknowledge the support from grantees in providing relevant project information used to compile this document. We also would like to extend our gratitude to the MFF Secretariat, especially Dr. Ranjith Mahindapala, MFF Programme Manager and Mrs. Maeve Nightingale, MFF Capacity Development Manager for their kind instructions and edits during the writing process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Mangroves for the Future Initiative

A response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, Mangroves for the Future (MFF) was established as a partnership-based initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystems for sustainable development. Supported by national governments, the United Nations, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donor agencies, and the private sector, MFF provides a unique regional platform for concerted action in support of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM).

MFF has adopted mangroves as its flagship ecosystem in recognition of the important role that mangrove forests played in reducing the impact of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and the severe effect on coastal livelihoods caused by the loss and degradation of mangroves. However MFF embraces all coastal ecosystems, including coral reefs, estuaries, lagoons, wetlands, beaches and sea grass beds.

The mission of MFF is to promote healthy coastal ecosystems through a partnership-based, people-focused, policy-relevant and investment-orientated approach, which builds and applies knowledge, empowers communities and other stakeholders, enhances governance, secures livelihoods, and increases resilience to natural hazards and climate change.

After a first phase (MFF I: 2007–2009), MFF is now in its second phase (MFF II:

2010–2013). MFF is now being implemented in 10 member countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Viet Nam became a full member of MFF in January 2010. While not affected by the 2004 tsunami, Vietnam's long and densely populated coast is vulnerable to storms, flooding, and other natural disasters. It also has significant experience preparing for and responding to natural disasters, including large-scale mangroves replanting.

The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) and the National Coordinating Body (NCB) oversee MFF implementation in Viet Nam. These bodies ensure accountability and transparency to MFF's donors and stakeholders. The RSC provides overall direction and guidance to the programme and the NCB provides national level direction and coordination. In Viet Nam, the National Steering Committee is the NCB.

The project facilities initiated in 2008 have been the principal means for implementing the MFF Programmes of Work and for achieving meaningful on-the-ground results at the coastal community level that address national priorities, as described in the MFF National Strategy and Action Plan (NSAP).

MFF presently has three categories of project funding: Small Grant Facility, Medium Grant Facility and Regional Grant Facility. All MFF projects will contribute to 15 programmes of work (POW) with climate change, gender and communications as cross-cutting themes.¹

1.2. MFF Viet Nam

In Vietnam, MFF activities are overseen by the National Coordinating Body (NCB), which is chaired by the Deputy Administrator of Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands (VASI), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE). The Director of Planning and Finance Department, Forestry Administration, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) serves as the MFF Vice Chair.

MFF Viet Nam supports management of all coastal ecosystems, using mangroves as a flagship ecosystem given the wide range of supporting, provisioning, regulating and cultural ecosystem services they provide. The importance of mangroves has been increasingly recognized in recent years, with growing attention paid to their

¹ Mangroves for the Future website <http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/who-we-are/about/who-we-are/>

climate change adaptation and mitigation potential.

In its NSAP, MFF Viet Nam identified seven priority POWs. Three POWs are identified for national level interventions and will be supported through MFF operations and policy advocacy. These include knowledge for coastal management (POW 1), sustainable financing (POW10) and ICM (POW 11). Coastal rehabilitation (POW 2); sustainable livelihoods (POW 8); community resilience (POW 9); and adaptive management (POW 14) are the four prioritized POWs for local interventions.

The box below shows the list of 15 POWs, which are categorized under the 3 major objectives of MFF: Knowledge, Empowerment and Governance. Seven out of 15 POWs have been identified as priorities for Viet Nam

Programmes of Work

Climate Change, Gender & Communications are Cross Cutting

Knowledge	Empowerment	Governance
1. Knowledge base for coastal management	6. Civil society awareness and participation in decision-making	11. National integrated coastal management programmes
2. Ecologically and socio-economically sound rehabilitation	7. Building capacity of coastal managers	12. Environmental and social safeguards in land use planning
3. 'Reef-to-ridge' approaches	8. Environmentally sustainable livelihoods	13. Marine and coastal protected areas
4. Ecosystem valuation	9. Community resilience to natural disasters	14. Adaptive coastal management
5. Environmental evaluation of post-tsunami response.	10. Sustainable financing mechanisms	15. Environmentally sound business practices

Box 1: Fifteen POWs of MFF Viet Nam.
Of these, seven are identified as priorities for Viet Nam



2. SGF PROCESS IN VIET NAM

The main aim of the Small Grant Facility (SGF) is to support strategic and locally responsive community actions for management and use of coastal ecosystems on a sustainable basis. Small projects are provided with grants of up to US\$ 25,000 to address local community issues. Local NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), research centers, and educational institutions are identified as the main recipients of small grants as they are often in the best position to work with local communities as well as have a good understanding of local ecological and social-institutional conditions.

Joining MFF in Phase 2, SGF Viet Nam learned lessons from other member countries experience in implementing their SGF in Phase 1. The compilation of SGF lessons learned from Sri Lanka, “For the People, By the People – Results and Lessons from a Small Grant Programme”², was used as a reference.

The SGF process was undertaken in a participatory manner at all steps to ensure transparency. Decisions on project proposal selection and implementation were made based on open discussions and consultations among the MFF Viet Nam team members, NCB members and external experts (when necessary).

² Mahindapala, Ranjith and Kumudini Ekaratne (2010). For the People, By the People: Results and Lessons from a Small Grants Programme. IUCN Sri Lanka Country Office, Colombo. viii + 109pp

2.1. Issues and priorities identification for Viet Nam

The 7th MFF Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting (November 2010) decided to allocate an initial US\$100,000 to Viet Nam for an SGF. An additional tranche of US\$50,000 was allocated upon successful disbursement of the initial tranche.

MFF Viet Nam launched its SGF implementation in March 2011. SGF has so far been the principal means for implementing the prioritized MFF POWs and for achieving meaningful on-the-ground results at the coastal community level that also address national priorities, as described in the MFF NSAP.

Using mangroves as a flagship ecosystem, in 2011 SGF Viet Nam initially supported local community action for the conservation of coastal ecosystems, with a focus on mangrove forests. Projects with practical models to influence policy-making, thereby linking the household and community levels to coastal area management and policy-making, were an initial priority of SGF Viet Nam.

On 13 January 2011, an NCB meeting was held to discuss the SGF criteria, selection process and management issues. All decisions on SGF thematic/geographical priorities, calls for proposals, evaluation and selection were made by the full NCB.

NCB Viet Nam decided that SGF (2011–2012) would mainly support community-based mangrove conservation projects that can help in one or more of the following areas:

- Build local capacity to implement sustainable development strategies
- Create public awareness on environmental issues
- Address livelihood, income, and equality and gender concerns
- Demonstrate potential for replication or scaling-up, and cob financing
- Create an impact on local level policy

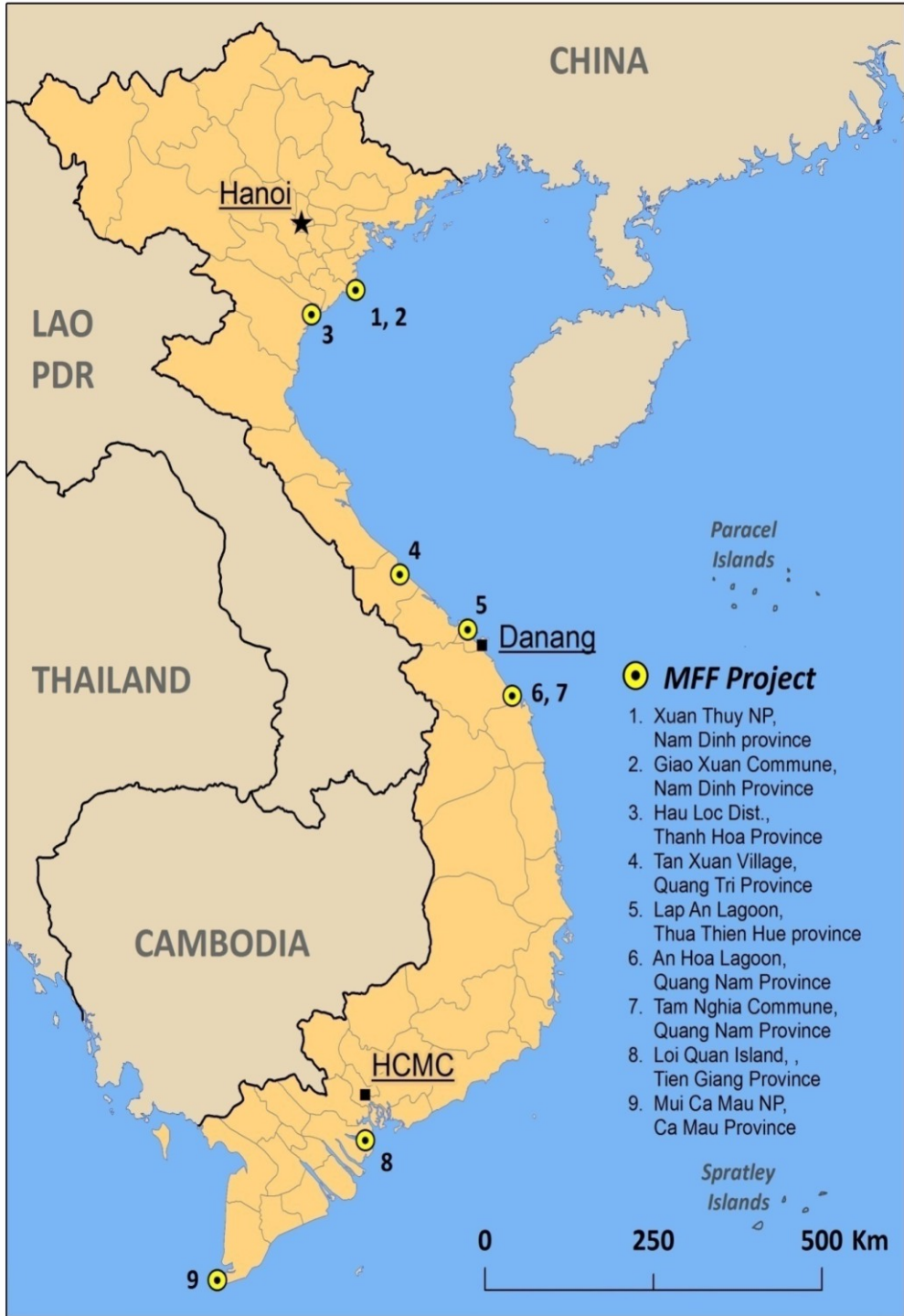
NSAP does not recommend specific provinces but presents key criteria for selecting priority provinces for site-based interventions³ as shown in table 1, below.

³ Mangroves for the Future Phase II, Vietnam National Strategy and Action Plan(2011-2013), IUCN Viet Nam Country Office

Criterion	Justification
1. Representative-ness	Pilot site representative of typical environmental and socio-economic contexts of wider region; demonstration model suitable for replication and up-scaling
2. Investment gap	Targeting important sites neglected by other (larger) investors and interventions; avoid duplication/competition with bigger programmes/projects
3. Co-financing	Targeting sites where significant and necessary added value can be demonstrated through <i>supporting</i> existing interventions
4. Accessibility	Ease of access for pilot demonstration and monitoring and evaluation purposes
5. Climate change vulnerability	Targeting sites with high climate change vulnerability (high need), but where long-term impacts can still be addressed

Table 1: Criteria for site identification and selection

As of June 2013, two overlapping cycles with 9 projects were implemented: 4 projects in Cycle 1 and 5 projects in Cycle 2. The map below represents SGF project locations.



2.2. Announcement

Cycle 1

In order to ensure transparency in the selection of grantees, the NCB decided to give maximum publicity to the programme. Accordingly, the following procedure was adopted:

- Advertisements calling for pre-proposals were placed in English (*Vietnam News*); in Vietnamese (*Nong Thon Ngay Nay* and *Tai Nguyen va Moi Truong*),⁴ two publications of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, between 21–24 March 2011.
- The SGF announcement was sent to various governmental and non-governmental agencies, the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization – Non Governmental Organizations (VUFO - NGO) Resource Centre, and NGO climate change mailing lists and related networks.
- The SGF announcement was posted on the IUCN Viet Nam website.

By the deadline on 8 April 2011, 40 pre-proposals were received, including 1 ineligible pre-proposal focused on a mountainous project site.

Cycle 2

The second round SGF call for proposals was widely advertised in early December 2011, in both English and Vietnamese, through different channels to maximize the publicity. These channels included three of the most popular newspapers in Viet Nam (*Vietnam News*, *Tuoi Tre Ho Chi Minh*, *Lao Dong*), VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, IUCN Viet Nam website, and to SGF first round applicants. Upon the call for proposals, 43 pre-proposals were received by the 23 December 2011 deadline.

In total, a combined 82 pre-proposals were received during cycles 1 and 2.

2.3. Selection of pre-proposals

The selection process was characterized by a high degree of agreement among NCB members. NCB approved the working groups to review the pre-proposals and full proposals. Each working group was made up of representatives from the overall NCB, IUCN staff and an external member (when necessary).

The working groups evaluated each pre-proposal according to its (1) relevance and (2) likely feasibility using a 1 (poor, not worth considering), 2 (average, probably not worth considering), and 3 (strong, maybe worth considering) and 4 (very strong, definitely worth

⁴ *Nong Thon Ngay Nay* ("Rural Area Today"); *Tai Nguyen Va Moi Truong* ("Natural Resources and Environment")

considering) scoring system for both criteria. Scorings and the recommendations of the working groups were documented and reported back to the full NCB for review and approval.

Eight out of 39 pre-proposals from Cycle 1 and 7 out of 43 pre-proposals from Cycle 2 were shortlisted to be developed into full proposals for further consideration. These decisions were endorsed by the full NCB.

2.4. Development of full proposals

Short-listed proponents were provided with a training course on Project Cycle Management (PCM) on 9-11 June 2011 in Cycle 1 and on 14-15 March 2012. Applicants were trained on writing full proposals with a results-based approach as well as preparing budgets in accordance with MFF guidelines. The Programme Manager of the MFF Regional Secretariat was the lead trainer and the event was facilitated by the SGF Manager of MFF Viet Nam. Topics covered at the training included:

- MFF Overview and course introduction
- Project Cycle Management
- The Logical Framework Analysis
- Situation analysis and problem identification
- General MFF Template for Small Grants Proposal
- Gender equality perspective
- Integrating climate change
- Project reporting and communications
- Monitoring, learning and evaluation
- LFA practices and presentations by participants

At the end of the PCM trainings, participants were requested to fill in an evaluation form on the course, the results of which showed positive feedback. All of the participants (100%) responded that the training workshop was worthwhile in helping them develop better project proposals. They considered the workshop as good to excellent. No one rated the workshop as average, poor or very poor.

PCM training was also an opportunity for the SGF Manager to learn about the proponents' capacity and whether the project concepts come from the real needs of the project site or from their own organizational priorities. From the proponents' perspective, PCM training not only enhanced their knowledge but also provided them with opportunities to form a network of organizations interested in coastal

issues. After the PCM trainings, proponents were requested to complete and submit their full proposals for NCB's review.

2.5. Evaluation of full proposals

Full proposals were scored by working groups, using an EU evaluation matrix (see Annex 1), which looks into three aspects and assigns a score of 1-5: 1 (very poor), 2 (poor), 3 (adequate), 4 (good) and 5 (very good), based on:

- Effectiveness and feasibility of the action
- Sustainability of the action
- Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action

The scores and recommendations were presented at an NCB meeting for open discussion. All NCB members voted when selecting full proposals for grant award.

For Cycle 1, the NCB endorsed the voting results from NCB members to accept 4 out of 8 proposals for funding.

On 8 May 2012, NCB met and approved funding for 5 out of the 7 received full proposals of Cycle 2. Learning from Cycle 1, the working group recommended that apart from the evaluation grids, site visits should be made to the 4 new project sites from Cycle 2 before the full NCB approval meeting. Although proponents proposed project budgets up to US\$25,000 (as announced in the call for proposals), when undertaking site visits and reviewing the full proposals the working group managed to reduce the proposed budgets by focusing more on the core identified project problems. For example: the lowest budgeted project, awarded to Quang Nam Fishing Association (FA), was US\$5,000 instead of the initially proposed amount of US\$25,000.

Letters of grant award were sent to the selected proponents with requests for revision. The SGF Manager worked closely with the proponents to revise their project's logical framework, work plan, and budgeting to be more focused on core proposal concepts.

The table below summarizes the number of pre-proposals, proposals and grants awarded for SGF Cycle 1 and Cycle 2:

Cycle	Number of pre-proposals received	Number of shortlisted pre-proposals	Number of proposals approved
Cycle 1	39	8	4
Cycle 2	43	7	5
Total	82	15	9

Following is the list of approved grants for both Cycles

No.	Name of grantee	Project title	Approved grant (VND)	Approved grant (USD)
Cycle 1				
1.	Xuan Thuy National Park (XTNP)	Sustainable use of mangroves to benefit poor women through a co-management pilot in the core zone of XTNP	345,050,000	16,589
2.	Mangrove Ecosystem Research Division (MERD)	“For the Green of Mangroves” Clubs – Communication Model for Lower Secondary School Students in Thanh Hoa province	482,650,000	23,204
3.	Centre for Community Research and Development (CCRD)	Community-based restoration and management of mangrove in Lap An Lagoon, Thua Thien Hue	468,000,000	22,500
4.	Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF)	Integrating sustainable livelihood improvement into mangrove restoration and conservation in An Hoa Lagoon, Quang Nam Province	375,340,000	18,045

Cycle 2				
5.	Giao Xuan Community-based Ecotourism Cooperative (GXCEC)	Develop a model of cooperative women producing and selling souvenirs as an additional livelihood to reduce mangrove overexploitation in Giao Xuan Commune – the buffer zone of XTNP, Nam Dinh Province and replicate it in mangrove areas of Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam province and Tan Phu Dong District, Tien Giang Province	423,240,000	20,348
6.	Quang Nam Fishing Association (QNFA)	Developing Nipa Palm community-based management mechanism in Tich Tay Village, Tam Nghia Commune, Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam Province	107,482,000	5,167
7.	Phu Thoi Pagoda (PTP)	Participation of Buddhist community in conservation and development of mangroves in Loi Quan Island in Tien Giang Province	299,900,000	14,418
8.	Quang Tri Centre for Environment Monitoring and	Environment improvement and restoration and sustainable development of traditional livelihoods in Gio Viet Commune, Gio Linh District, Ben Hai Downstream	324,140,000	15,584
9.	Mui Ca Mau National Park (MCMNP)	Capacity building in management and conservation of mangroves ecosystem in a community participatory approach in MCMNP	294,020,000	14,136

In Cycle 1, the project duration is up to 18 months with exceptional cases of extension up to 24 months. However, it was restricted to 12 months in Cycle 2 to be more suitable with the small financial allocation awarded.

2.6. Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation

The aim of monitoring, learning and evaluation (MLE) is to keep track of progress of the work under the grant being implemented by grantees. By reviewing and assessing project implementation against project design, the MLE team could make recommendations on improving project implementation when necessary. This included proposing corrective measures or in exceptional cases changes to the project design.

Accordingly, MLEs for SGF projects in Vietnam were conducted using different tools, including reporting, site visits, workshops and web news stories.

2.6.1. Reporting

Before the projects were implemented, the SGF Manager sent out financial guidelines, reporting templates and MFF Identity Guidelines to all grantees to make sure that they would comply with these guidelines.

Grantees were requested to submit technical and financial progress reports on a quarterly basis. Two weeks before reports submission deadline, a reminder email was sent by the SGF Manager to each grantee to ensure that they submit the reports on time.

2.6.2. Site visits

During the project implementation, each project was visited at least twice. The MLE team is made up of NCB members with relevant expertise on the projects and the Small Grants Officer or/and National Coordinator.

On each trip, NCB members worked with grantees adopting an appreciative inquiry approach to learn about project progress as well as their issues and difficulties. Where required, the MLE teams were willing to provide them with substantial technical support, which was highly appreciated by grantees, e.g.: mangrove planting guidelines, mangrove-based aquaculture techniques for local communities, and assistance with formulating the Mui Ca Mau National Park

(MCMNP) management plan.

During the visits, NCB also met with other local stakeholders such as Commune People's Committees (CPC) and local households benefitting from the projects. Listening to them enabled the team to extract accurate information and to recommend grantees on how the project can be implemented to address the local communities' needs rather than just based on the grantees' volition.

In addition, MLE visits created opportunities for the team to capture lessons learned (both lessons of successes and failures) to share with other grantees and across the MFF region. MLE was also conducted after project completion in order to review the sustainability and long-term impacts the projects brought about.

In total, 19 MLE trips, including site visits before and after project implementation, were undertaken during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2.

No.	Destination	Dates
1	CCRD's project in Lap An Lagoon, Thua Thien Hue, as part of a UNDEF/CIFOR/MFF-funded training course for environmental journalists	29 Mar 2012
2	An Hoa Lagoon in Quang Nam (HUAF's project) in combination with field visit to evaluate SGF Cycle 2 full proposal	19 Apr 2012
3	PTP's project in Tien Giang	18 Apr 2012
4	QTCEMT's project in Quang Tri	17 Apr 2012
5	XTNP's project in Nam Dinh, in combination with a visit for PES decision formulation	12 May 2012
6	Da Loc school, Hau Loc Province, Thanh Hoa (MERD) to attend mangrove knowledge contest	20 May 2012
7	Mid-term review team to XTNP and GXCEC	2-3 Oct 2012
8	An Hoa Lagoon (HUAF) and Tam Nghia Commune (QNFA)	2-3 Oct 2012
9	PTP in Tien Giang for opening ceremony of small library on Buddhism and the Environment	3 Nov 2012
10	Mid-term review team to XTNP and GXCEC	5 Nov 2012
11	PTP in Tien Giang to attend ceremony to award prize winners of mangrove painting competition and Buddhist community mangrove planting event	18–20 Jan 2013
12	XTNP to attend final project workshop	26 Feb 2013
13	Lap An Lagoon (CCRD) to participate in a mangrove planting event	25–26 Mar 2013
14	MCMNP in Ca Mau for MLE and deliver training on participatory management planning to the park's staff	26–29 Mar 2013
15	Hau Loc District, Thanh Hoa province to attend MERD's final event among three secondary schools	26–29 Mar 2013
16	Gio Linh District, Quang Tri province to attend QTCEMT's mangrove replantation in abandoned shrimp ponds	16–18 Apr 2013
17	MCMNP in Ca Mau to meet with 5 local community forest protection groups and attend workshop on the management plan	28–30 Jun 2013
18	An Hoa Lagoon (HUAF) to meet with local households and discuss the failure of crab aquaculture models	11 Jul 2013
19	Post project MLE to SGF sites (QTCEMT, CCRD) in Thua Thien Hue and Quang Tri	18-22 Nov 2013

2.6.3. Workshops

A mid-term review workshop was organized on 19 July in Nha Trang. At the workshop four grantees from Cycle 1 reported their project progress to NCB members and the MFF Secretariat representative. Following the grantee presentations, comments and feedback on project progress, expenditures, constraints and lessons learned during the mid-term review workshop were documented and shared with NCB members for their endorsement.

A lessons learned workshop was held on 23 July 2013. Participants at the workshop included NCB members, project grantees (project managers), and local beneficiaries. The workshop was an opportunity for project grantees and beneficiaries to share their experiences about both successes and failures during the project implementation. After each grantee presented their project, feedback from a representative of NCB, project grantee, and local beneficiaries was documented. Results of the workshop were documented and a web news story on MFF SGF projects 2011-2013 was produced and shared on the MFF and IUCN websites⁵

2.6.4. Web news stories

Interesting stories were written and uploaded on MFF and IUCN websites after the MLE trips. In total, 5 web stories have been produced within the framework of SGF Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. (See Annex 2 for web links of the full stories).

⁵ See the web news stories at <http://mangrovesforthefuture.org/news-and-media/news/viet-nam/2013/stories-of-conflicts-a-review-of-mff-small-grant-projects-2011-2013/> or http://www.iucn.org/news_homepage/news_by_date/?13536/Stories-of-conflicts-a-review-of-MFF-Small-Grant-Projects-2011-2013



3. SGF RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

3.1. Sustainable use of mangroves to benefit poor women through a co-management pilot project in the core zone of Xuan Thuy National Park

- *Grantee: Xuan Thuy National Park Management Board*
- *Project location: Giao Thien Commune, Giao Thuy District, Nam Dinh Province*
- *Project duration: 1 October 2011 to 28 February 2013 (17 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 373,050,000 (US\$16,589)*

3.1.1. Background

XTNP is located in the estuary of the Red River in Nam Dinh province, about 150 km southeast of Hanoi, Viet Nam. The area was declared the country's first Ramsar site by the Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in January 1989. Since then the Government of Vietnam has worked to preserve the value of this area through the establishment of new laws, policies and investments. In 2003 it was upgraded from its status as a nature reserve and approved as a national park by the Prime Minister, and was also included as part of the Red River Delta World Biosphere Heritage Site by UNESCO in October 2004.

XTNP is a vast wetland, which covers an area of about 7,100 ha of the core zone, and 8,000 ha of the buffer zone. Endowed with rich alluvium, the park boasts a unique wetland habitat with diversified species of flora and fauna, especially migratory birds. XTNP is the home for a total of 219 bird species belonging to 41 families and 13 orders, of which nine have been recorded as endangered species on the IUCN Red List. During the migratory season, XTNP can attract 30–40 thousand birds, and hundreds of bird watchers from all over the world come to the site.

XTNP is divided into a core and buffer zone, in accordance to National laws for national parks in Viet Nam. Management guidelines were specified for each zone: the core zone is a strictly protected area without any human activity allowed; the buffer zone, adjacent to the core zone, acts as a transition area where activities are restricted to reduce adverse human impacts on the park.



Poor fisherwomen are the most common group involving in harvesting aquatic and mangrove-dependent resources in Xuan Thuy National Park

Based on observations, current activities are not in compliance with the regulations. Hundreds of people have been continuously exploiting the natural resources (mostly aquatic animals) under the mangrove canopy in the core zone. The locals rely heavily on the wetlands for their livelihoods and income. Consequently, the management board of XTNP faces a dilemma. They can neither officially accept the presence of people in the restricted area, nor strictly follow the official laws barring human activity in the core zone. Thus, the park officers and authorities cannot

implement any permanent actions to solve conflicts among different fisher groups, ask for their cooperation to protect the mangroves, or request a stop to destructive fishing methods. As a result, the mangrove ecosystem is degraded, the park management has lost effective control, and the local people have become more vulnerable due to decreasing natural resources.

In these urgent circumstances, the park's management board proposed to pilot new co-management policies and mechanisms for protecting the mangroves in the core zone. This pilot project is based on good experiences in co-management mechanisms for mangroves in the buffer zone as well as clam nursery areas, at the mouth of the Red River. In these co-management models, the park is the key stakeholder, bringing various other stakeholders on board and officially recognizing human needs and livelihood requirements in these protected areas. If fully implemented, the local authorities would be able to make a checklist of targeted groups, to solve conflicts among them, to stop unsustainable practices, and to be able to collect an "ecosystem service fee" from the local people (who benefit from the natural resources), which would help local managers to fund activities working toward nature conservation and local wellbeing. These case-studies illustrate that co-management practices can be replicated (are feasible) in the core zone as long as there is more participation, cooperation, and a strong commitment from the government authorities and local people to support the wise use of wetland resources.

3.1.2. Interventions

The main interventions the park has undertaken are as follows:

- Hold participatory consultations with local authorities and people to identify gaps in the existing co-management models
- Undertake a socio-economic assessment to update the existing information about mangrove management and surveys on local sustainable practices in mangroves to establish a socio-economic profile of the targeted group and produce a handbook to guide local communities to wisely and sustainably use fishery resources in XTNP
- Conduct participatory consultations with all stakeholders to revise the co-management policy in the buffer zone and apply this to the core zone
- Set up a local committee to monitor the pilot policy implementation including 15 representatives from the park, local authorities, and communities

- Organize aquatic resource gatherers into 5 self-management teams (185 members) in the 3 communes in the buffer zone. These teams would undertake peer-monitoring of harvest activities in the park when piloting the co-management policy in the core zone
- Establish and operate a local initiative fund (LIF) for fisherwomen. On a rotational basis, they can access small loans of US\$100 to improve their livelihoods. The first round of 25 fisherwomen have been given loans
- Raise local awareness about mangrove resources and sustainable fishing activities through broadcasts on local public speakers, handbooks, and leaflets
- Hold a continuation workshop to propose national authorities to consider the project as a solid case-study for completing regulations on benefits-sharing in the core zone of Viet Nam's national parks

3.1.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- **Enhance participation of local communities and stakeholders to harmonize natural resources and community development policies**

Nearly 200 local people, most of whom are women, participated in pilot policy making and monitoring of policy enforcement. The co-management policy has been legalized, which will help reduce conflicts among local groups and park staff. The park now officially accepts the presence of fisherwomen in the core zone by a mutual agreement between the park and each local individual with the endorsement of the local government. Also, they are involved in preparing and enforcing regulations over what species can be collected, how (no mechanical devices), where, and when (no harvesting in reproductive season). By working with the fisherwomen, the park can provide some oversight of resource use activities through a peer monitoring system of self-management teams. In addition to being encouraged to practice sustainable fishing methods, fisherwomen are entitled to small loans from LIF to improve livelihoods as a way to reduce pressure on natural resources.



Fisherwomen participating in the management process in © Xuan Thuy National Park

- **Contribute to policy making and enforcement**

At the local level, local authorities, functional agencies and communities have closely collaborated in formulating and enforcing regulations in order to reduce non-sustainable exploitation of mangrove resources.

In February 2012, the Prime Minister issued Decision 126 on piloting benefit sharing in the management, protection, and sustainable development of protected areas. With its experience in piloting co-management mechanisms, XTNP was chosen as one of two sites to implement the decision. In line with the decision, the park must implement the following five components:

- A. Sustainable use of clam seed bed resources in frequently flooded areas in the Red River Estuary and around Lu and Ngan Islands.
- B. Sustainable local community use of aquatic resources inside the mangrove forests in the core zone of the park.
- C. Community-based mangrove management model in the park's buffer zone in Giao An, Giao Lac, and Giao Xuan Communes.
- D. Sustainable use of the clam culture areas while still protecting important bird areas in the ecological restoration zone on Lu Island.
- E. Sustainable collection of medical plants in the *Casuarinas* forests on Lu Island.

This SGF project fits in the pilot implementation of Component B of Decision 126. Therefore, at the national level, the success of the pilot co-management policy in the core zone of XTNP will provide a solid basis for other protected areas and national parks

to replicate a community-based management model to wisely use mangrove resources.

- **Changes in local community's awareness and actions**

According to local fisherwomen, public awareness of local people, especially those directly collecting aquatic resources from the wild, has improved remarkably. This has been achieved by disseminating information through a variety of communication channels, including 15 local public speakers, 10 dialogues with fisherwomen, production and dissemination of 500 handbooks and 2,000 leaflets on wise use of mangrove resources and sustainable fishing techniques. Change in local community's awareness has resulted into change in their actions. It was reported by the monitoring committee that there has been no violation of regulations set forth by the project.



Radio broadcaster (r) and meeting participants disseminating information on sustainable fisheries practices (l) © Xuan Thuy National Park

- **Strengthen capacity of both local community and national park officers**

Apart from participating in formulating and enforcing regulations for improved resource management, local fisherwomen's capacity to directly operate and manage the LIF fund was enhanced. The park initiated the LIF fund and then transferred it the commune Women's Union for management. Head of the self-management team is a member of the fund management team who, based on the votes of local fisherwomen, select households to give loans.

The project also created good opportunities for about 20 officers of XTNP to become familiar with the co-management approach as well as to improve their skills in communicating and working with local people. For a long time, the park has applied

a top down management approach. Therefore, fisherwomen often tried to avoid meeting with the park's staff because they were afraid that what they collected from the core zone of the park would be confiscated by the park. To initiate the process, park officials communicated with each woman about the co-management model and how it would bring benefits to them. Once they were on board, they themselves have become the park's active communicators to the other local fisherwomen.



The park staff communicating with each local fisherwoman to get information
© Xuan Thuy National Park

- **Empowering women**

Eighty percent of aquatic resource gatherers are poor fisherwomen. The project has provided them with equal opportunities to raise their voice in consultations, dialogues, and to develop and implement the pilot co-management of mangrove resources. They also are key players in monitoring policy implementation as well as running the LIF fund.

3.1.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

While the capacity of XTNP Management Board is not sufficient to control a vast area of wetland resources, the pilot policy has proved that enhancing local community ownership results in positive change awareness and can help shift behaviour towards improved management of coastal resources. Selected lessons and recommendations are listed below.

- Women initially thought that there were only two options: exploitation of natural resources in the usual manner (exploitative), or complete ban (no exploitation of resources allowed). The women who were initially resistant to the project, because they thought that they would be completely banned from resource exploitation. However, they learned that there is a win-win solution under which they could still exploit resources, but in a more sustainable manner while also gaining access to other benefits such as the fund for livelihood development.

- Fisherwomen's sources of livelihood and family food security depend heavily on aquatic resources. As such, they should be the most active advocates in protecting mangroves, once they are brought on board and empowered.
- “Co-management” is not clearly defined, even by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). XTNP staff believe what they have achieved so far is on-the-ground co-management and that the local people are empowered with rights and obligations/ responsibilities. Co-management means not only the participation of the community, but also giving rights to local people in making decisions and managing and monitoring activities. It was suggested that the project should analyze mechanisms for the allocation of property rights and to ensure that local community has the capacity to manage resources under this model.
- The project has applied an integrated approach in benefit sharing and wise use of wetland resources of the park following the recommendations of the Ramsar Convention. However, there was concern about allowing people to collect resources in the core zone of the park. Further work is needed to ensure that pilot regulations in XTNP are in accordance with national law, or can help influence and improve national laws to better reflect-on-the-ground management requirements. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that benefits-sharing not only requires users to pay a small fee to access the core zone, but also follow sustainable practices. Although other national parks do not allow exploitation in the core zone, both MARD and Nam Dinh Provincial People's Committee approved XTNP to pilot such a model of benefits sharing from clam seed beds at the mouth of the Red River, which falls within the core zone of XTNP. However, even wise use of resources in the core zone, including limiting fishing to simple gear, can still negatively impact the core zone. The project should have strict controls and a long term monitoring system should be implemented (e.g., tracking total catch per unit time) to illustrate the project's impacts on reducing overexploitation of the park's natural resources.
- To sustain the project results and stop illegal exploitation in the core zone of the park, the project has set up a community-based monitoring system. The park is now proposing to collect a fee of VND 50,000 (US\$2)/collector/month to cover the operational costs of the monitoring committee and to contribute to the livelihood fund. Ten percent of the revenue is to cover costs of monitoring activities. Based on Decision No. 126 of the Prime Minister, the Park is allowed to collect and manage this fee. There is a detailed regulation on how to spend this money. The proposal process should involve and consult with the local community and should be followed up at a later step in order to have the fee collection approved and enforced.

3.2. Cooperative women producing souvenirs in Giao Xuan Commune – the buffer zone of XuanThuy National Park

- *Grantee: Giao Xuan Community-based Eco-Tourism Cooperative (GXCEC) in collaboration with Marine Gifts Social Enterprise (MG)*
- *Project location: Giao Xuan Commune, Giao Thuy District, Nam Dinh Province*
- *Project duration: 1 Jul 2012 to 30 June 2013 (12 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 423,240,000 (US\$20,248)*

3.2.1. Background

Giao Xuan Commune is one of five communes in the buffer zone of XTNP with a population of more than 10,000 people. A majority of the local people here depend on coastal resources such as clam farming and fishing. Mangrove resources in Viet Nam in general and XTNP in particular are being unsustainably exploited, often by local people living in poverty. In an effort to reduce resource overexploitation, stakeholders have implemented different types of alternative livelihoods for the community, including community-based ecotourism.

Since 2007, the Giao Xuan community-based ecotourism model in Giao Xuan Commune has received a lot of attention and visitors from other coastal communities, marine protected areas, and other NGOs who are interested in replicating the success of this model. Annually, they receive thousands of visitors, including long-term volunteers, who help with community development activities. Income from tourism, together with other activities such as awareness raising, enforcement of legislation, development of community treaties, etc., has helped reduce violations in the use of natural resources in the Ramsar site. Most participants in this community-based tourism model are women and do not have many opportunities to earn additional income for their family. However, the income from this community-based tourism model remains low. Although the number of visitors is increasing, few souvenirs are available for purchase. If available, these products could generate income, positively contribute to nature conservation, and raise awareness about Xuan Thuy National Park when given to their friends back home.

The project seeks to fill this gap by aiming to establish a “marine gifts” model which produces souvenirs for women to earn additional income in Giao Xuan Commune (buffer zone of XTNP). Materials used to produce souvenirs are by-products (clam shells, snail shells, dead tree branches) and environmentally

friendly materials. Local people will collect such by-products as a way to clear dead branches out of mangrove areas and select the useable parts to produce souvenirs. Participating in the model are 35 women who are otherwise unpaid housewives and have a commitment to conserve mangroves resources in the area. The project also will document the model experience and share it with other coastal areas, including Quang Nam and Tien Giang, two other SGF project sites.

3.2.2. Interventions

GXCEC, in cooperation with MG, which provides technical advice in designing and marketing souvenir products, has implemented the following activities:

- Create a set of sample products with typical materials collected from mangrove areas based on primary surveys of typical mangrove ecosystems in Viet Nam
- Establish a model of “Handicraft marine gifts” in Giao Xuan Commune, buffer zone of XTNP, which includes:
 - Organize meetings with communities to introduce the project and select at least 35 women to join.
 - Set up management, finance and benefit sharing mechanisms, etc.
 - Vocational training to make sample product handicrafts.
 - Soft skills trainings for women: financial management, communication skills, leadership, etc.
 - Organize teamwork activities, raise awareness on natural resources protection and formulate regulations on mangrove protection.
 - Build sales and distribution channels (via community shops and homestay program, etc.)
 - Introduce the model through MG’s advertising channels.
 - Collect and sell 50% of the product through MG sales channels.
- Produce a set of materials on “best practices”, drawing experience from the GXCEC model and share it with at least two communities living in surrounding mangrove areas in Quang Nam and Tien Giang provinces.
 - Hold an evaluation meeting on the results of the pilot model in Giao Xuan and produce a “best practices” manual.
 - Hold a training workshop for at least two other communities to introduce the model and give instructions on building similar models.
- Share experiences and train at least 30 people, living in or around two other mangrove areas in Viet Nam, on souvenir production.

3.2.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- A set of 10 souvenirs have been designed by MG and then produced by cooperative women using local materials from mangrove areas.
- 35 cooperative members were provided with trainings and are capable of producing souvenirs, as per the design. They were also trained on soft skills in products sales, communication with customers, customer information management and customer service.



Training on souvenir production and soft skills provided to cooperative members

© Xuan Thuy National Park

- MG has provided technical guidance for cooperative participants to produce souvenirs and also promote and sell these products through different channels. 12 product display shelves are located in home-stays, tourism centres, and the show room of MG in Hanoi. New products are also regularly updated on MG's website, social networks, and newsletters.



Customer bag making use of marine by-products

© Marine Gift

- At the end of the project, each cooperative member has earned an additional income of VND 500,000 (US\$25) per month (equivalent to 30% of a household's average income) while still undertaking their regular housework. Part of the profits from sales revenue (5%) has been reinvested in production skills enhancement (trainings on the new products) for the cooperative members after the project is completed.



Souvenir products using clam shells © Marine Gift

- Trainings in souvenir production were also provided to two other extension areas in Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam Province and Tan Phu Dong District, Tien Giang Province.
- A manual on replicating the model has been published and shared with interested community groups in other coastal areas in Cu Lao Cham MPA, Nha Trang MPA, Nui Thanh, Tra Nhieu Village in Hoi An, Tan Phu Dong District, and Can Gio Biosphere Reserve. Other project grantees under MFF have also expressed their interest in replicating the model in their project sites (Ben Tre, Tra Vinh, Thanh Hoa, Ca Mau, Quang Nam).



Manual on souvenir production by Marine Gift © Marine Gift

3.2.4. *Lessons learned and recommendations*

- The project has produced a variety of impressive souvenirs from mangrove by-products, which help women to utilize free time to increase their income.
- While participating in the souvenir-making model, women spend less time exploiting other mangrove resources, hence contributing to reduction in mangrove overexploitation. However, the project would gain more impact on mangrove conservation if awareness raising activities in mangrove values and the needs for sustainable mangrove exploitation are integrated into the model.
- Although the project has helped increase the income for cooperative members, it remains an additional, rather than an alternative, livelihood because the local women have not been able to produce highly-detailed and exquisite souvenirs. Involving women in product design and innovation process must be a critical step if women are to develop the full potential of this livelihood possibility over time. The project should continue enhancing their skills so that they can become a professional production group and the job will become their main livelihood.
- Along with enhancing the production skills, the market for the products need to be further developed to reach more customers and help sustain the project. According to the grantee, the initial products using by-products did not meet the expected standards and have not been purchased by a sufficient number of customers. It will be quite difficult to maintain the model if professional skills do not meet market requirements. The project has adapted quickly by producing marine style products like embroidered fish and turtles which received more positive responses from customers. The lesson learned here is alternative livelihoods should be defined based on the capacity and needs of the local community, because not all ideas are implementable. Capacity and needs

assessment and participatory planning to identify possible alternative local livelihood opportunities must be part of project planning process.

- To maintain project results, local communities must become more and more involved in managerial work and gradually transition to running their own business instead of depending on MG's support.
- Several trainings were held for local women in Quang Nam and Tien Giang provinces, two other SGF sites with the hope that the model could be replicated in these areas. In Quang Nam, the community needed more time and financial resources to process Nipa Palm leaves for making souvenirs. In Tien Giang, there is a potential for making juice from *Sonneratia* fruits. However, if it is not a well-planned process, collecting mangrove by-products may lead to adverse effects as people can switch to cutting trees instead.

3.3. "For the Green of Mangroves" Clubs - Communication Model for Lower Secondary School Students in Thanh Hoa Province

- *Grantee: Mangrove Ecosystem Research Division (MERD)*
- *Project location: Da Loc, Minh Loc and Hai Loc Commune, Hau Loc District, Thanh Hoa Province*
- *Project duration: 1 October 2011 to 31 March 2013 (18 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 482,650,000 (US\$23,204)*

3.3.1. Background

As an important ecosystem in coastal zones, mangrove forests in Viet Nam have been effectively contributing to the economy and help protect natural resources and the environment. In addition to their biological significance, mangrove ecosystems have been proven to minimize impacts associated with climate change, thanks to their vital role in coastal shoreline stabilization, sediment accretion and carbon capture and storage (carbon sequestration); mangroves are "a green wall" which help decrease damages from waves, storms, high tides, sea level rise and other natural hazards.

After a long period of habitat degradation, large areas of mangroves in many localities of the country have recently been rehabilitated, contributing significantly to the socio-economic life of local people in coastal areas.

However, knowledge about the multiple and 'bundled' values or services that mangrove ecosystems provide to local communities is very limited; similarly local people are not aware of the need for mangrove protection and rehabilitation. In some localities, mangrove destruction and conversion of land to shrimp farming, residential areas, and sea-dyke construction is still being observed.

In order to promote mangrove forest rehabilitation it is necessary to prioritize pragmatic, non-technical aspects of projects, action plans, and strategies, in addition to purely technical interventions. Examples include solutions that incorporate awareness raising, capacity building, knowledge improvement, communication, education and other similar topics.

Community-based natural resources management and community-based disaster risk reduction are effective approaches applied worldwide, especially in coastal areas. It is realized that the community groups living in the coastal areas play important roles in sustainable coastal development.

Many studies show that students can play a very significant function in the rebuilding and reconstruction of the nation. However, this can only happen if their potential is properly channelled. At the age of 11 to 14, lower secondary school students are mature enough to receive and assess complex information, knowledge and changes in their surrounding environment. They can effectively select and transmit this information and knowledge to other groups.

It is said that “the students of today are the citizens of tomorrow”. Let them feel their responsibility towards society and the nation, so that they can become good citizens throughout their lives. This is the main reason to formulate the proposed project “For the Green of Mangroves Clubs – Communication Model for Lower Secondary School Students in Thanh Hoa province” as an innovative methodology in sustainable mangrove ecosystem management and development in coastal provinces of Vietnam.

About 30 years ago, mangroves existed in four coastal communes of Xuan Loc, Hai Loc, Hoa Loc and Da Loc. Mangroves grew best in two communes of Xuan Loc and Hoa Loc, followed by Da Loc and Hai Hoa communes. However, most of the mangroves in Xuan Loc, Hoa Loc and Hai Loc were destroyed because of sea-dyke construction, land use conversion from mangroves to rice plantations, and construction of shrimp ponds.

Since 1980, international organizations such as Save the Children UK, the

Japanese Red Cross, Action for Mangroves Japan, and CARE international have supported the rehabilitation of 464 ha of mangroves, of which 224 ha of *Kandelia obovata*, 170 ha of *Kandelia obovata* (newly-planted) and 74 ha of *Sonnertia caseolaris* were planted.

In 2005, typhoon Damrey caused severe damage to Hau Loc District, Thanh Hoa Province. Of the 5 km sea-dyke forming the perimeter of the district, housing and property was destroyed along the 3.7 km without mangrove habitat, whereas those behind the remaining 1.3 km with intact mangrove habitat were protected. After this event local communities started realizing the importance of mangroves.

From 2010-2015, the Central Viet Nam Calamities Relief Fund will invest VND 20 billion for planting 200 ha of mangroves in the three communes of Minh Loc, Hai Loc and Da Loc. This will need strong commitment from the communities to conduct post-planting care and protect replanted mangroves to sustain the investment. Environmental education to the young generation as the “citizens of tomorrow” is essential to secure mangrove protection and conservation in these communes.

Based on a feasibility study, MERD proposed to implement the project by focusing on informal education activities on mangroves for students and teachers in three lower secondary schools in these three communes.

3.3.2. Interventions

- Establish “For the Green of Mangroves” clubs at three lower secondary schools, namely Minh Loc, Hai Loc and Da Loc. The club members formulate operational regulations and work plans for their own clubs. These clubs are advertised to all school students, teachers, parents and the CPC.
- Develop a set of educational materials on mangrove ecosystems and climate change for lower secondary school students and teachers.
- Organize a series of awareness and capacity building activities on mangrove ecosystems and climate change for lower secondary school students and teachers, including :
 - Workshops to introduce the documents to relevant stakeholders in the province
 - Training of Trainers (TOT) for teachers on the guidelines on use of “Informal education modules on mangrove ecosystem and climate change for students”
 - Integrate relevant documents into the schools' curricula
 - Organize awareness activities on mangroves and climate change for students (competitions, a photo exhibition on “roles of women in mangroves use and

protection and climate change adaptation”, news bulletins, mangrove site visits, mangrove samples collection for biology classes, music performances, role playing, drama, fashion shows, etc.)

3.3.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- Three clubs have been established, each of which includes five teachers and thirty students, selected from all classes of the schools. These clubs are chaired by experienced and enthusiastic teachers with relevant technical knowledge. Club regulations were formulated by the club members. After the project ends, these clubs continue to be run as part of extra-curriculum activities for the school teachers and students.
- All three clubs meet each month to review the previous month's activities and prepare work plans for the following period. They have organized school events like “our fatherland's seas and islands”, “mangroves and climate change painting contest” as well as three mangrove knowledge contests jointly held among three school clubs. Knowledge and behaviour of the students have changed through their active participation in regular club activities and by participation in public campaigns and events such as “clean up coastline” and “cleaner world”, World Environment Day, and Vietnam Seas and Islands week.
- One of the three schools (Minh Loc school) was selected by the District People's Committee to host the meeting to celebrate World Environment Day (5 June 2012).



Club activities and products © IUCN Viet Nam

- Two sets of educational materials, one for students and one for teachers, were produced and used as reference materials for club activities and biology, geography and curriculum classes. This is a significant achievement to incorporate education materials into curricula as this will presumably be sustained by teaching through mainstream education system each year.



Educational materials for teachers (l) and students (r) © MERD

- Teachers are active in sharing mangrove knowledge in the provincial teaching competition as well as raising awareness on mangroves with local authorities and organizations. One teacher in Da Loc secondary school won the first prize in the province's "excellent teaching competition" for her lecture on the role of mangrove ecosystems, using teaching materials from the project.
- Both teachers and students of the three schools become active communicators for mangrove protection.

3.3.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

- Secondary school students, the next generation of the country, are a high priority target group for awareness raising activities for long-term changes to behaviours and actions.
- The project's products, such as educational materials for students and teachers, on the roles of mangroves and climate change are very useful. Teachers were active in integrating this knowledge into their lessons. This mainstreaming of education in the main school's curriculum means sustainability of education regardless of what happens to the clubs.
- Students' drawings and product exhibits were very impressive, which attracted MG (the SGF project partner of GXCEC). The enterprise would like to utilize them for souvenir production. Hence, there is a potential cooperation between MG and the schools clubs to sustain the current project results.
- Although the establishment of clubs received support from local commune authorities and schools, the sustainability to run the clubs after the project completed needs not only verbal commitments from schools in continuing the

clubs as extra-curriculum activities, but should also have concrete follow-up actions such as expanding to other local communities. Teachers should help raise awareness on the importance of mangroves or share their product exhibits with other schools in neighbouring areas or maintain them for the next generation of students to know about the project's achievements and sustain the results.

- Club activities depend on teaching schedules and the extra-curricular plans of schools, resulting in some delay during the implementation. The clubs and schools should agree on work plans in organizing activities to avoid overlapping schedules.

3.4. Environment improvement and restoration and sustainable development of traditional livelihoods in Tan Xuan Village, Gio Viet Commune, Gio Linh District, Quang Tri Province

- *Grantee: Quang Tri Center for Environment Monitoring and Technology (QTCEMT)*
- *Project location: Tan Xuan Village, Gio Viet Commune, Gio Linh District, Quang Tri Province*
- *Project duration: 1 September 2012 to 30 June 2013 (10 months)*

3.4.1. Background

The rapid expansion of shrimp farms is said to be one of the main reasons causing a significant decrease in mangrove coverage in Tan Xuan Village. At present there are 3 ha of mangroves and 4 ha of shrimp farms in the village. However, due to saline intrusion and pollution, shrimp farming has become less economically viable. Many households have abandoned their shrimp ponds, which have subsequently become the waste dumps for the whole village, threatening the remaining mangroves in the area.

Previously, a project tried to reduce solid waste pollution by establishing a landfill in one village where people from surrounding villages could dump their trash and by arranging for garbage trucks to take household waste to the landfill. However, almost all the villagers are fishermen who believe that bringing trash from other villages brings bad luck. Therefore, after the project ended the garbage trucks were not used anymore and the waste pollution remains an issue that needs a long-term solution.

QTCEMT proposed an SGF project for dealing with village waste collection and treatment as well as improving water quality in the polluted shrimp ponds by cleaning up the dumped waste and replanting mangroves around the ponds.

3.4.2. Interventions

- Raise awareness of local people on environmental protection and the importance of mangrove ecosystems for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
 - Organize trainings for local authorities on environmental protection, mangrove ecosystem conservation for combating impacts of climate change; integrate mangrove protection into local socio-economic development plans
 - Hold a communication campaign to clean the natural environment under the theme “The roles of community in environment and mangrove protection”
 - Weekly broadcast on the village’s radio system about the roles of the environment and value of mangrove protection
- Restore the environment in the remaining 7 ha of mangrove forest
 - Communications on improving the environment in mangrove forests for local people, youth union, fishery association, and others
 - Install large waste bins for the village so that local people dispose of trash in approved places
 - Arrange for the CPC to contract with an urban sanitation company to collect and transfer waste to the city every 10 days for treatment, as there are no waste collection facilities available in the commune⁶
 - Formulate one regulation on protecting the environment, managing rural wastes, and protecting mangroves in the project area
- Plant 4,000 mangroves around 2 ha of abandoned shrimp ponds, after waste is cleared, as a way to restore the water quality in the ponds.

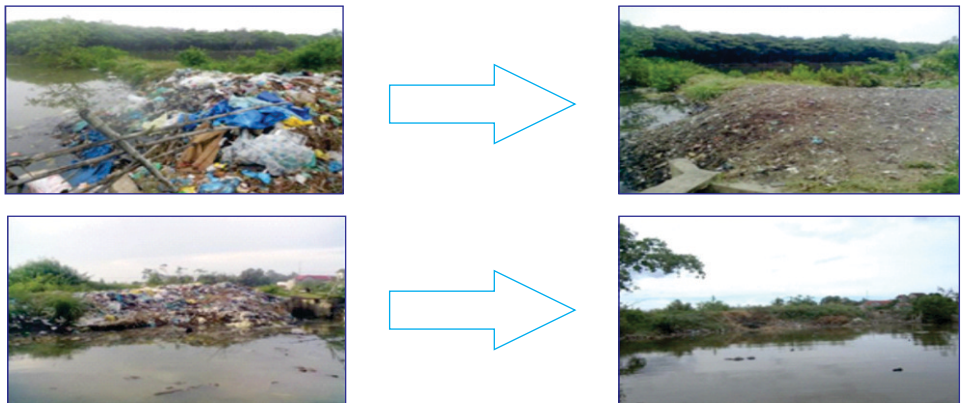
3.4.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- Awareness and behaviour of local people towards environmental protection and mangrove conservation have positively changed. They have stopped dumping waste in mangrove areas and dispose of waste in garbage bins. Abandoned shrimp ponds and mangrove areas have been cleaned up and restored.

⁶ In rural areas of Vietnam the majority of domestic waste (even plastic bags) are reused and recycled before eventually being dumped. Therefore, the waste volume of a village is much less than a garbage truck’s capacity and sanitation companies prefer to charge a set fee per trip, instead of based on the volume of waste.



Mangrove replantation in Gio Viet Commune, Gio Long District, Quang Tri Province © IUCN Viet Nam



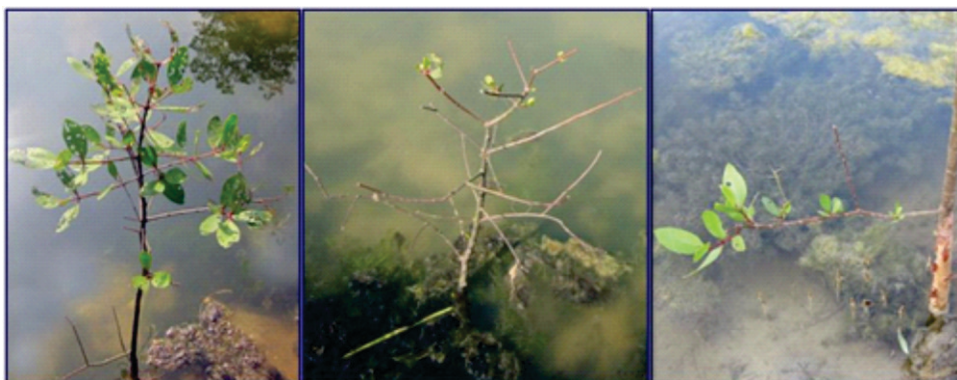
Before and after cleanup campaign @ IUCN Viet Nam

- A self-financed waste collection was successfully established when the CPC was arranged to contract with an urban company to collect waste every 10 days. Each local household is now willing to pay VND 10,000/month (US\$ 0.50) to the waste collection company. As of June 2013, two neighbouring villages also jointly pay the waste collection fees, thus reducing the amount payable per household, because the collection fee is charged per trip. This demonstrates some of the initial positive impacts of the project on neighbouring areas.



Waste collection arrangements © Quang Tri Center for Environment Monitoring and Technology

- Two hectares of replanted mangroves have created a great incentive for the owners to take care of their shrimp ponds that were previously abandoned for years as they expect that in a few years the ponds will become productive again with healthy mangrove ecosystems. The survival rate after 2.5 months was measured to be 99%. Within Quang Tri province, this was the first project using mangroves to innovatively restore abandoned shrimp ponds and, as such, created positive perceptions and good publicity despite the small scale of the replanted mangrove area.



Sonneratia growth in 25 days, 45 days and 75 days ©
Quang Tri Center for Environment Monitoring and Technology

- By the time this documentation is complete, Quang Tri Provincial People's Committee will have approved a project on environmental protection for every village and commune in the province. All activities under this project are replicated from the MFF SGF project and Tan Xuan Village is designated as a demonstration site for other villages to learn the good practices. The grantee is selected as the executing agency for this project. This is an explicit impact of a small scale project inspiring policy-making at the provincial level.

3.4.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

- At the design stage of a project, it is necessary to take into account the cultural customs of the people in the project site (e.g., bringing in garbage from other villages is considered unlucky). The application of traditional values to the project activity of establishing garbage collection points in each village contributed to greater impact in awareness and garbage collection, as compared to other larger projects. It is also important to identify who among the target groups are for and who are against the project, so as to identify suitable communication methods to get their support.

- Influential people in the community (local champions) should be the first to be contacted and involved in the project. They can be the chief of the village or a person whose voice is prestigious and respected.
- The best way to raise awareness and change behaviour of a local community is to let them witness successful models undertaken by other communities through exposure trips/ exchange trips/ peer to peer learning.
- In addition to technical consultations with experts on mangrove restoration, indigenous knowledge obtained from knowledgeable elders is also very helpful.

3.5. Community-based restoration and management of mangroves in Lap An Lagoon, Thua Thien Hue Province

- *Grantee: Centre for Community Research and Development (CCRD)*
- *Project location: Lang Co Town, Thua Thien Hue Province*
- *Project duration: 1 October 2011 to 31 March 2013 (18 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 468,000,000 (US\$22,500)*

3.5.1. Background

Lap An Lagoon is located in Lang Co Town, Thua Thien Hue province. The lagoon area is 16.17 km² with rich natural resources including mangroves.

Among 9 hamlets in Lang Co Town, local livelihood activities are related to Lap An lagoon in 5 hamlets, namely Lap An, Loan Ly, An Dong 1, An Dong 2 and Dong Duong Hamlet. Aquaculture and fishing labourers account for 30% while oysters exploiting for lime production contributes 55%. Many fishing gears, including small mesh nets, lamps, lift nets, plant brush, steel frame traps and electric traps were used by hundreds of local households, which increased pressure on the lagoon's resources. Dense and destructive fishing gears together with the expansion in aquaculture and oyster exploration for lime production caused the degradation of the lagoon's ecosystem, resulting in decreased fishery resources, hence negative impacts on the fishing community's livelihoods.

Some decades ago, there was a large area of mangrove of approximately 100 ha connected to the inter-tidal area in the western lagoon. During the 1990s, the

mangroves here were diverse and included 18 species. Due to poor management and increasing demands from aquaculture and infrastructure development, the area of mangroves has been reduced. Before the project started in 2011, only about 15 ha of mangrove remained and was considered poor quality. These mangrove fragments were classified not as “forest” but as “unused” land that could be developed for other purposes. There was therefore no legal basis for their protection. The mangroves are in danger of being completely eradicated in this area. The concern is not only for the degradation of mangrove ecosystem and associated biological values but also to put in place an effective strategy for conservation. There have been numerous studies and planning activities carried out in the region. Despite the efforts of different organizations, progress towards wetland conservation in Thua Thien Hue has been facing many difficulties. Up to 2010, no wetland conservation zones had been implemented or put into place. In response, this MFF/SGF proposal was designed to contribute to the restoration and conservation of mangroves in coastal wetland ecosystems.



Ôc hương (*Babylonia areolata*) farming around mangroves, Lap An Lagoon @ CCRD

3.5.2. Interventions

- Establish a community-based organization and task force on mangroves and fishery conservation.
- Raise awareness and build capacity of fishing association to mobilize the participation of local fishermen in mangrove conservation and management.
- Conduct a survey on the existing mangrove area and recognize them as part of a local forest protection plan so that the remaining mangroves can be legally protected.
- Establish a mangrove nursery and replant seedlings to expand the remaining mangrove areas.
- Re-locate and removing destructive fishing gears to reduce the density of fishing gears for more sustainable fishing.
- Implement pilot mangroves-based polyculture models to encourage local households to realize mangroves values and replicate sustainable aquaculture methods.



Mangrove nursery preparation in Lap An Lagoon © CCRD

3.5.3. Outcomes and potential Impacts

- Community-based mangrove management mechanism established in Lang Co town, which includes:
 - Institutionalization of Lang Co town's Fishing Association (FA) as the legal entity under the provincial FA. Members of Lang Co FA are aquatic resources users in Lap An Lagoon.
 - Task forces on mangroves and fishery resources protection set up within Lang Co FA.
- Results of the survey and categorizing of the lagoon's mangroves provided important inputs to the Provincial Forestry Sub-Agency to legally recognize 15.9 ha of mangroves in Lang Co lagoon as “forest” instead of “unused land”. The survey also helped to identify potential mangrove regeneration areas as a basis to focus investment on mangrove area expansion.
- After the survey was conducted, 10 ha of mangrove forest was allocated to 2 community groups for management by official decisions by the Phu Loc District People's Committee, which specified rights and responsibilities of the local community in mangrove protection as well as created favourable conditions for mangrove-based aquaculture and fishery resources protection. The allocation aims to create the ownership for local community and link mangroves conservation with their livelihoods. They are allowed to wisely use mangroves resources yet obliged to protect mangroves. This allocation is valid for 50 years with evaluations to be conducted every 5 years by local authorities. It is the first time in Thua Thien Hue Province to include the community's participation. At the time the project ended, there had not been any regulations on mangrove stewardship allocation to local communities, hence this pilot case in Lang Co town has the potential to facilitate or promote the development or formulation of provincial regulation in the near future.

- The project has increased the capacity of Lang Co FA in undertaking restoration and protection of mangroves, including mangrove nurseries and planting techniques. About 6,000 mangrove seedlings have been raised and 5,000 replanted, applying Farmer Field School methods to the local community. This increased the lagoon's mangrove area by 3 ha in 2012–2013.
- Six pilot sustainable aquaculture models, including 3 shrimp, blue mussel models and 3 mangroves-based crab models were undertaken, which raised the income of households by 10% upon harvest. Particularly, the 3 mangroves-based crab models conducted by the 2 communities allocated with mangroves has shown clear evidence of the mangroves' value and thus created an incentive for other households to replicate the model and protect mangroves.
- Various awareness raising activities have resulted in positive changes. Regular patrols by mangrove protection task forces mean that there are no more mangrove cutting activities or destructive fishing gear in the lagoon. A member of the FA, realizing that mangrove are linked to aquaculture benefits, has invested his own money in planting 2 ha of mangroves for a mangrove polyculture. More details of this story can be seen in Annex 2, a web story on "Planting, protecting, and sharing: three indispensable links in mangroves conservation".

3.5.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

- The case of the FA member investing his money in planting mangroves shows that once local people witness the benefits from mangrove conservation, they will be willing to protect mangroves.
- There is the potential for conflict between resource users to arise from the above investment case. Forest is allocated to a community, in particular a village. For those who can afford the initial investment in mangrove replantation and aquaculture, there are real benefits. However, they are the only ones who can benefit from the mangroves and may not have any obligations to the community. If not, this may trigger an internal conflict within the community. In this specific case there is a commitment between the man, Vinh, and other members of the village that he will return the planted forest to village management after 5 years and participate in a benefit sharing regulation approved by the Commune and Lang Co town People's Committee.
- The project achieved quite impressive results as mentioned above. However, not many women participated in project activities. Although they did participate in mangroves nursery and replantation activities, they were

not confident yet to participate in public events and social works even when the project asked them to. Therefore, more communication activities should be undertaken to call for the involvement of women in the FA.

- There is still risk of land use changes in allocated mangrove areas. Although Circular 07/2011/TTLT - BNNPTNT - BTNMT stipulates that allocating forests is accompanied by allocating forest land, in Lang Co, the community is only allocated the forest. The forest itself is under the management of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) and the land use is under the control of Chan May Lang Co Economic Zone's management board. It would be very sensitive for DONRE to officially agree to allocate forest land without the permission of the economic zone. As such, local communities do not have land tenure over their allocated forest, leading to many difficulties in protecting and managing the forest, especially in case of violations. This needs follow-up from CCRD to advocate to the provincial government to clarify the function and mandates of DONRE and Chan May Lang Co Economic Zone.

3.6. Integrating sustainable livelihood improvement into mangrove restoration and conservation in An Hoa lagoon, Quang Nam Province

- *Grantee: Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAUF)*
- *Project location: Tam Giang Commune, Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam Province*
- *Project duration: 1 October 2011 to 30 June 2013 (21 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 375,340,000 (US\$18,045)*

3.6.1. Background

The area of mangrove in An Hoa lagoon is 65.82 ha. There are 18 mangrove species here, of which 11 are true mangrove species and 7 are mangrove associate species. Although the mangrove area is not large (only 3.5% of the lagoon area), it plays a crucial role in the protection of aquatic resources for the livelihoods of more than 6,500 households living in three communes around the lagoon. Local people exploit and harvest about 1,358 tons of aquatic resources (fish, shrimp, crab, clams, oysters) from this area annually.

According to local people, in the past the mangrove area around the lagoon was hundreds of hectares and mangrove species and aquatic resources were abundant. By 2011 however, the mangrove area was reduced and aquatic resources in the lagoon fell accordingly. In comparison with 20 years ago, crab yields are reduced by 90% and shrimp yields have been reduced by 80%. This reduction was due to two main reasons:

- Local people's awareness about the role of mangroves in protecting the environment and aquatic resources is very low. Therefore, they have destroyed mangrove areas for shrimp aquaculture, overexploited resources, and fished using destructive methods.
- The local authority (CPC) is not paying sufficient attention to mangrove protection and has not yet allocated mangrove areas to the community. The mangrove management mechanism is unclear and therefore mangrove areas continue to be destroyed.

The project was carried out in Tam Giang Commune where mangrove area remains large. In this area local household incomes depend on fishery resources, thus mangroves are very important to their livelihoods.

3.6.2. Interventions

- Establish 6 Mangrove Conservation Clubs (MCC) in 6 villages around An Hoa lagoon.
- Hold 6 trainings and 1 competition on mangrove value for 6 MCCs in cooperation with the CPC and District Forest Protection Station.
- Conduct 10 pilot mangrove-based crab culture models linked with conservation and protection of mangrove areas.
- Produce and propose mangrove allocation map for the District People's Committee to facilitate pilot mangrove area allocation and protection for 6 villages.

3.6.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- Just before the project started, mangroves were completely cleared out in a village for shrimp farming, which was likely to extend to the remaining villages. The project has helped MCC members to recognize values of mangroves and the linkage between mangrove conservation and sustainable aquaculture. Mangrove clearing for shrimp farming has stopped.
- Women were very active in project activities such as chairing the 6 MCC clubs and participating in trainings or mangrove knowledge competitions. Some women voluntarily take natural propagules to plant mangroves on their land. Although there is no financial support from local authorities to run these clubs after project termination, the commune Women's Union keeps running the clubs by integrating conservation into the union's regular activities.
- The pilot mangrove-based crab culture models were not successful. All juvenile crabs died one month after being released. Despite the initial failure, local households said they would keep undertaking mangrove-based crab culture in

the next season as they believe that crabs will grow well in mangrove areas and would give good yields.

- Increase in awareness happened not only for MCC members but also for local authorities. Nui Thanh District People's Committee initiated the mobilization of other funding resources to replant mangroves in the district. In November 2012, a large project to plant 60.94 ha of mangroves in Nui Thanh District, including 44.89 ha in Tam Giang Commune, was approved with a budget of around US\$150,000. This reflects the positive impacts towards local government's commitment in development and protection of the mangrove area around An Hoa Lagoon.

3.6.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

- An MLE trip was undertaken to investigate the causes for the model failure as a lesson for future similar projects. The causes for the failure of mangrove-based crab culture models include the following:
 - The CPC delayed allowing 10 households to establish crab culture models in the mangrove areas because they wanted to check that these areas were not under dispute among households. This contributed to the failure of the crab culture because the crab seeds were dispersed in April when the water temperature was too high for survival.
 - The juvenile crabs were too small and there was a lack of technical support from HUAF due to distant project management. The grantee relied too much on the experience and knowledge of the local community. The project should have had more consultations with aquaculture experts before operating a crab culture model.
 - According to local households, the absence of a flood season during this year caused scarcity of natural juvenile crabs. Thus, they were ultimately bought from another province with a low average survival rate.
- Lessons drawn from this model's failure:
 - It is necessary to conduct a detailed and careful ex - ante situation analysis and get consensus of all stakeholders (authorities, communities) before implementing the project
 - The grantee should focus more on technical issues, taking seasonal factors into consideration and incorporate regular monitoring
 - Capacity of the grantees, such as the expertise required for project, should be carefully assessed.
 - NCB should provide grants to locally-based organizations for better monitoring and management.

3.7. Community-based management of nipa palm in Tich Tay Village, Tam Nghia Commune, Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam Province

- *Grantee: Quang Nam Fishing Association (QNFA)*
- *Project location: Tam Nghia Commune, Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam Province*
- *Project duration: 1 August 2012 to 31 January 2013 (6 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 107,482,000 (US\$5,167)*

3.7.1. Background

In Tich Tay Village , Tam Nghia Commune, Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam Province, nipa palm covers 30 ha . There are 360 households, whose livelihoods are mainly animal husbandry , fishing and aquaculture . The local community established a community -based management mechanism under their own initiative to allocate and manage the nipa palm between seven local households , who cut nipa leaves to make and sell nipa patches for house roofing in the village . Each year, these households pay a small fee (from US\$ 2.50 to US\$ 12.50) to the village, depending on the size of the allocated plots (either small or large plots without exact measurement units) . While the demand for nipa patches is increasing, there are no regulations in place to control the harvest of nipa palm . Therefore, overexploitation, leading to habitat degradation and deforestation , is a serious threat.

While nipa palm is gradually disappearing in other provinces , as coastal forests are converted to shrimp ponds or other uses , Tich Tay Village has been able to conserve 30 ha of its nipa palm forest , hence there is a strong need to protect the current area and expand it further.

3.7.2. Interventions

- Set up a community group for managing nipa palm in Tich Tay village.
- Formulate management regulations for managing the 30 ha of nipa palm and have it adopted by the CPC.
- Raise awareness of the community in Tich Tay Village on the importance of nipa palm and methods of restoring and managing nipa palm habitat through trainings and the village's knowledge competition.
- Increase awareness of regulations by broadcasting the regulation on the village's radio system.



Launch of community - based management board in Tich Tay village © Quang Nam Fishing Association

3.7.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- The setting of community-based management board has recognized and empowered the community group to protect the nipa habitat. A nipa palm community-based management board was officially established. This board has the right to give permission to local households to harvest nipa leaves and the responsibility to monitor harvesting activities. A regulation on sustainable management and harvest of nipa palm has been formulated. The frequency of nipa leaf harvest has been reduced from every 2 months to every 6 months. Instead of harvesting all the useable leaves, local households now leave at least 3 palm fronds to ensure the recovery of the nipa palm trees.
- Although this is the smallest project among nine SGF projects, it has helped to improve people's awareness on the importance of nipa palm. Local households' awareness of the value of nipa palm has been enhanced by communication activities. In addition, knowledge has been shared by a local person of Cam Thanh, where the local community has benefited from nipa palm conservation through providing tourism services in nipa forest areas. This community also makes high quality nipa patches which are sold at a much higher price than in Tich Tay Village.
- The adopted regulation has been disseminated to the local community through 12 broadcasts on the village's radio system. Local people have been informed of the regulation and responded with questions for clarification about their responsibilities of complying with it as well as their rights to harvest nipa resources.
- Instead of allocating nipa stewardship rights to 7 households, other local households participate in the monitoring of nipa resource exploitation activities and have equal chance to request nipa allocation on a rotational basis.

3.7.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

- Although the community initiated their own management mechanism, they lacked knowledge on nipa palm conservation and did not know they were overharvesting nipa leaves. The adoption of the regulations has not only created a legal basis but also guided the community to harvest nipa palm resources in a more sustainable manner. Awareness raising activities and the operation of the community-based management board should be maintained to effectively enforce the regulations.
- While demand and price of nipa patches are increasing, there are potential user conflicts if only 7 households get access to the nipa area. Equitable nipa palm allocation among local households has helped to reduce the conflicts.
- To enhance the economic value derived from nipa palm, the project also cooperated with MG to hold trainings for women to make handicrafts. MG is a project partner providing technical support for souvenir production to the women's cooperative located in the buffer zone of XTNP. However, MG is still searching for feasible products to construct out of nipa palm. There has been research on producing wine and sugar from nipa palm, but the quality was not as good as expected. This process will take more time and require investment in technology in order to produce a new product.
- To sustain the project's results, more research on efficient and sustainable use of nipa palm resources should be conducted to encourage the conservation and protection of nipa palm. Other suggested options include organizing vocational trainings for local people and diversifying aquaculture models under the forest canopy.

3.8. Participation of Buddhist community in conservation and development of mangroves in Loi Quan Island in Tien Giang Province

- *Grantee: Phu Thoi Pagoda (PTP)*
- *Project location: Loi Quan Island, Tan Phu Dong District, Tien Giang Province*
- *Project duration: 1 August 2012 to 30 June 2013 (11 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 299,900,000 (US\$14,418)*

3.8.1. Background

Mangroves in the coastal areas of Loi Quan Island, Tien Giang Province are mainly distributed in Phu Dong and Phu Tan communes, Tan Phu Dong District, Tien Giang Province. During the shrimp farming boom in the Mekong River Delta over the last several years, many mangroves were destroyed, resulting in coastal erosion, and saline water intrusion, which threatens the lives and livelihoods of many people. Local households have had to leave their houses where they used to practice aquaculture due to rapid erosion and flooding. However, under the current pressure

for economic development, mangroves continue to be cut down for shrimp farming. In this respect, it is urgent to raise awareness of local people about the importance of mangrove ecosystems and for a longer goal of restoring, conserving and developing mangrove forests.

Given Buddhism is the largest religion in this area and following the Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change by Sakyong Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche in 2009, the Tan Phu Dong District's Buddhist Association, with PTP as a focal point, propose to raise people's awareness and protect mangroves by delivering information to various audiences from different sectors, genders, and ages in order to improve the community's adaptability to climate change as well as scale up the model to all other Buddhist communities in Mekong Delta.

3.8.2. Interventions

- Enshrine nature protection in the pagoda's monthly teachings to the Buddhist community to raise people's awareness and protect mangroves. Trees or plants are considered living beings that no Buddhist should cut or damage.
- Hold various communications events on mangrove conservation and protection: drawing competition for pupils, art performances, and mangrove planting events.
- Produce publications (leaflets, booklets) on Buddhism and the environment.
- Establish a small library with books and materials on Buddhism and the environment in the pagoda so that any Buddhist can read and realize the mutual interaction between humans and ecosystems.



Monthly teachings to the Buddhist community in Tan Phu Dong, Tien Giang Province © Phu Thoi Pagoda

3.8.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- The project has applied a new approach in a conservation project, which is the involvement of religious communities. Thirteen Buddhist lectures delivered by the pagoda during the project cycle, together with other communication activities, influenced Buddhist communities, helping to raise the awareness of local people about the importance of mangroves and environmental protection.

- A mangrove planting event was organized by PTP aimed at raising awareness of the Buddhist communities on mangrove conservation, in which the monk appealed to all the participants to join efforts to conserve nature through practical action, stating “each person should plant at least one mangrove”. Buddhists were willing to contribute their resources (both financially and in-kind) to this pagoda event, which indicates their commitment towards the protection and restoration of mangroves on the island. This event was widely covered by 6 media organizations from the province.
- A small library with books on Buddhism and environment have been widely used and enriched by the Buddhists.
- A drawing competition on mangrove conservation received excellent responses, with more than 600 entries from pupils, as well as much attention by local newspapers, which featured news on the event.
- This communication model is highly recommended for replication in other areas of the country at final SGF workshop on 23 July 2013.



For the green of mangroves by Nguyen Tran Thanh Phong, Class 5/1, Duong Diem Secondary School, Chau Thanh, Tien Giang Province (l) and NCB Chair presenting awards to the winner of mangroves drawing competition (r) © MFF Viet Nam

3.8.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

- *Sonneratia* were planted, however, most of the mangroves were washed away due to strong sea waves and lack of previous experience in mangrove planting. Trees were not planted in the right season and *Sonneratia* is also not a suitable species for a sandy flat in Tan Phu Dong District. How and where to plant mangroves is a good lesson learned from the Buddhist communities project. As an education and outreach exercise, the planting event was successful because the Buddhist group stated that they would replant the mangroves at their own cost, during the appropriate season.
- This is the first project which integrates religion into mangrove conservation in the province. Since religion is a very sensitive issue in Vietnam, there were challenges in obtaining permission from local authorities to implement the project. These challenges could be avoided if the pagoda had previously informed and reported to local authorities about the project activities. This lesson is also applicable to many other projects.

- One of the project's outputs is a library with books and materials on Buddhism and environment. It will be good if the pagoda continues to research more useful materials to enrich knowledge about the relation between the environment and Buddhism, even when the project is finished.

3.9. Capacity building in management and conservation of mangrove ecosystems in a community participatory approach in Mui Ca Mau National Park

- *Grantee: MCMNP Management Board*
- *Project location: Dat Mui Commune, Ngoc Hien District, Ca Mau Province*
- *Project duration: 1 November 2012 to 30 June 2013 (8 months)*
- *Grant amount: VND 294,020,000 (US\$14,136)*

3.9.1. Background

Located on the southern tip of Viet Nam, between the East Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, Mui Ca Mau National Park (MCMNP) is a Ramsar site and encompasses over 15,000 ha of mangroves and is recognized as one of the most important wetlands in Vietnam. It is home of many rare and valuable species, some of which are endangered and listed in IUCN's global and national Red Lists. However, there are difficulties and challenges in mangrove conservation and protection.

Before the park was established in 2003, thousands of poor households lived in the core zone where they remain today. Of the four communes inside the park, Dat Mui Commune has the highest number of households, 3,900, living in the core zone. Of these, only 200 households have been allocated land. The remaining 3,700 households either have no land, or only enough for housing, because there is no more land to allocate. 819 households have less than 0.5 hectare. Since they cannot farm shrimp, and fishing is only possible from June-July when fish are plentiful, thousands of households depend on cutting mangroves and producing charcoal for a living. They run small kilns that earn households VND3,000,000 (US\$150) per month.



Poor households in the core zone of Ca Mau National Park © IUCN Viet Nam

The large area and intertwined river system make patrolling and enforcement of regulations difficult. In such a complicated situation, sustainable management of mangroves is beyond the capacity of the MCMNP management board if they do not bring the local community on board. However, the management board of the park still lacks skills in engaging community to participate in mangrove management and conservation.

3.9.2. Interventions

- Provide trainings for the national park staff on skills to work with local communities and formulating a management plan in a participatory manner.
- Organize various communication activities to raise awareness about the role of mangrove protection: leaflets, information board, broadcasts on local speakers, integrate talks into regular meetings of Women Association, Veteran Association, and Youth Union.
- Set up 5 community-based forest protection groups, who have actively communicated with local households to close down the charcoal kilns that are driving the mangrove cutting.
- Formulate mangrove management plan with community participation, including benefit-sharing mechanism in sustainable use of mangrove resources.



Local livelihoods in Ngoc Hien District, Ca Mau Province
© Mui Ca Mau National Park Management Board

3.9.3. Outcomes and potential impacts

- As a result of the active engagement of 5 forest protection groups, the number of charcoal kilns has been reduced by 30% within 6 months. Taking into account the fact that many of these kilns will quickly be rebuilt because the households have no other economic alternative, the park has worked with the CPC to provide low interest loans from the Viet Nam Bank for Social Policy to charcoal makers to invest in new livelihoods.
- Although the project has ended, the park director said that he will continue to pay for these protection groups because of their success in securing local community support for mangrove conservation.

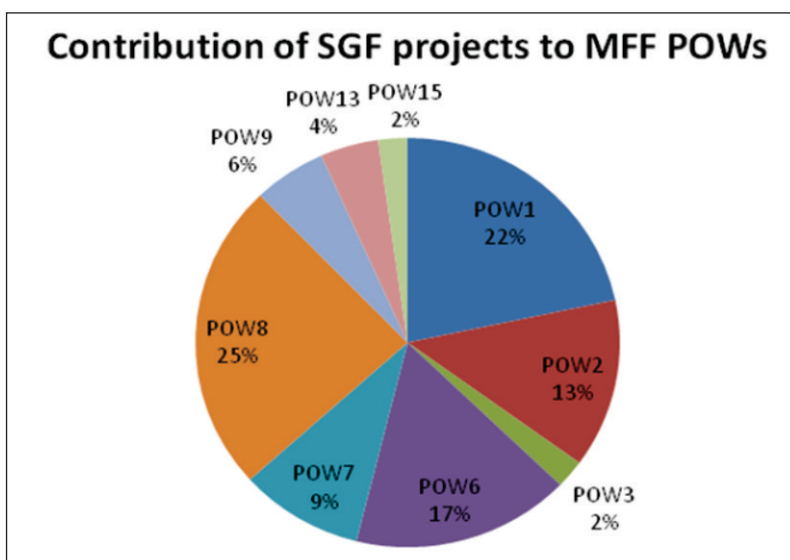
- Twenty trained staff from the park have actively participated in formulating a participatory management plan for the park, which will be integrated in the park's annual budget for implementation. The management plan emphasizes a benefit sharing mechanism, which seeks chances to diversify livelihoods for local households such as community tourism, sustainable fishing, cultivation, souvenir production (linked with MG) so as to reduce the pressure of mangrove cutting as well as to create economic incentives for mangrove conservation.

3.9.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

- Getting the local community to join the park's conservation efforts has proved effective for the enforcement of regulations on mangrove protection. The community's awareness has increased and they have become active communicators of the value of mangrove conservation. Therefore, the workload of the park has been shared with the community.
- The traditional top-down management made local people stay away from governmental agencies. The partnership established between the park and community-based forest protection groups have filled this gap and helped the park to learn how to work in a more participatory approach. This modality should be replicated in many other protected areas where the surrounding households depend on natural resources for their subsistence.
- The situation in MCMNP is similar to XTNP where there are many people access and collect aquatic resources in the core zone. The park can should learn the experience from XTNT in establishing a benefit-sharing mechanism.
- It would be “work without end” to stop poor households from cutting mangroves if they do not have alternative livelihoods. To sustain the project results, the park, together with local authorities, should take a holistic approach so as to harmonize the needs for conservation and livelihoods transition in the local community.

3.10. Contribution of SGF projects to MFF Programme of Works

The chart below summarizes Viet Nam SGF projects contributions to the implementation of MFF POWs



It can be seen from the above chart that the nine SGF projects have contributed to the following themes:

- POW1: Knowledgebase for management
- POW2: Coastal Rehabilitation
- POW3: Reef-to-ridge approaches
- POW6: Civil society engagement
- POW7: Building capacity of coastal managers and communities
- POW8: Sustainable Livelihoods
- POW9: Community resilience to natural disasters
- POW13: Marine and coastal protected areas
- POW5: Environmentally-sound business practices

The four main themes addressed by SGF include Sustainable Livelihoods, Knowledgebase for management, Civil society engagement and Coastal rehabilitation. Furthermore, four POWs (POW1, POW2, POW8, POW9) are prioritized by the NSAP, as stated in Section 1.2.

SGF projects have also addressed MFF's three cross-cutting issues: communications, gender equality and climate change.

Numerous communication activities in various forms have been carried out by the SGF projects to support and enhance the project results, as shown in the below table.

Activities/ Grantees	XTNP	MERD	CCRD	GXCEC	QNFA	PTP	CCRD	QTCEMT	MCMNP	TOTAL
Trainings		1	3	6		1	1	1	2	15
Local announcements	15					12		36	3	66
Media broadcasts (TV) + features	1									1
Publications and communication materials	1	2			1	1	1		1	7
Sknowledge competitions & events		3	1	1		1	14	3		23

Gender equality is integrated into the project by empowering women and enhancing their participation in the decision making process (XTNP) as well as increasing their access to livelihood development opportunities (GXCEC, XTNP).

Climate change issues have been mainstreamed into awareness raising activities in the SGF project sites undergoing climate change impacts. These sites include Thanh Hoa (MERD; natural disasters), Tien Giang (PTP; coastal erosion) and Quang Nam (HUAF; flooding).



4. LESSONS LEARNED IN SGF IMPLEMENTATION

The following are the key lessons learned for future implementation of SGF.

Lesson 1: Value of PCM training

PCM training not only provides good opportunities to help shortlisted proponents to formulate their full proposals and address actual problems identified but also enable the MFF Secretariat to get to know the proponents and their capacities as well as whether the project concepts come from their own imagination or from the real needs of the projectsite.

In their evaluation forms, participants highly appreciated these training opportunities, especially those participants who come from local grassroots organizations such as the Farmer's Union and the Women's Union. They said the trainings were useful to them not only in writing their full proposals but also for future grant applications.

Normally, MFF covers the costs for two participants from each organization to attend the PCM training. After some initial PCM trainings, we received inquiry from

some proponents to send more staff to join the training and they would cover all travel and accommodation costs for these extra participants. This is a good practice that we should keep up in the next phase.

Lesson 2: Need for site verification

As learned from Cycle 1 of the SGF proposals selection, all new project sites need to be visited before approving grants.

It was observed that most of the proponents, when formulating project proposals, did not undertake a thorough analysis of contexts to identify the focal problems to be addressed. As a result, the proposals were based on the proponents' viewpoints more than on the needs of the community. For the next selection process, this should be taken into consideration and the call for proposals should be made more specific.

Lesson 3: Site based project management

The SGF project aims to support on-the-ground activities targeting local communities . Locally-based organizations will be in the best position to work closely with local people during project implementation. NCB therefore should prioritize awarding grants to local organizations to avoid distant project management as well as save costs by having a local grantee assist with project monitoring.

However, there can be exceptions in case project activities do not directly work with local people and the grantees prove that they are the most capable organization to implement the project in an effective manner.

Lesson 4: Regular MLEs and coordination

Regular MLE trips to SGF project sites are very necessary to understand project progress. Grantees and local households have chances to interact with NCB members and receive technical advice on their project theme, for example: which species of mangroves can be replanted and are suitable with the existing morphologic conditions.

MLE trips also provide opportunities for grantees to report to NCB on their project

constraints and difficulties, so as to take necessary adaptive management measures.

Apart from MLE field visits, regular coordination and management from the SGF Manager, through phone calls and email, is crucial to ensure compliance from SGF grantees and timely submittal of quarterly reports (both technical and financial). If grantees are in need, the SGF Manager can mobilize NCB's expertise to provide technical support to address issues immediately.

Lesson 5: Grantees' capacity assessment

Lessons learned from the crab culture model in An Hoa Lagoon shows that technical capacity of the grantees for each project should be carefully assessed. In the case of HUAF, the grantee is from the Faculty of Forestry. The Project Coordinator did not have expertise in fisheries and could not offer technical advice on juvenile or larval crab quality. Instead, he relied on the local households' knowledge and the crab larvae suppliers. This is one of the reasons that caused the failure of the crab culture model.

Lesson 6: Careful ex-ante situation analysis before implementing the project

Poorly conducted situation analysis and lack of local authority's consensus could lead to the failure of the project.

The QTCEMT took social and cultural factors into account when implementing the project, which has helped them to avoid the failure of a past project.

PTP's project did not foresee the sensitivity of a religion-related communication project on an island and the project activities may have been stopped if they did not get the permission from the local authority. Similarly, if HUAF could have coordinated closely with the local authority to get the approval for 10 households to establish crab culture models in the mangrove area, the juvenile crabs could have been released in a timelier manner and yielded a good harvest.

Lesson 7: Mangrove conservation priority

A project cycle of 12 months is too short for coastal ecosystem restoration projects such as mangrove replanting. The failure in plantation of 500 *Sonneratia* by PTP indicated that site survey needs to be carefully conducted before planting mangrove seedlings. The mangrove seedlings also need good care for at least two years after

being planted. Therefore, SGF projects should focus on conservation of existing mangrove areas to allow natural regeneration, rather than replanting new mangroves.

Lesson 8: Project design for longer-term impacts

Knowledge management is identified as a priority POW for MFF Viet Nam and many SGF projects include awareness raising activities. However, it is not easy to measure project impacts on awareness raising within a 12 month project cycle. SGF projects should therefore target tangible project outputs that bring direct benefits to local communities, who can use them at a later stage.

With limited time and budgets, SGF can deliver good results if wisely integrated into national and provincial policies and programs. Success of SGF models can be used as case studies to inspire policy makers or contribute to the implementation of these programs and policies.

Lesson 9: Sustainability of the projects

One of the most difficult issues in implementing any project is how to sustain project results upon completion of the project. Potential exit strategies are listed below:

- The project directly involves and brings about tangible benefits to communities: sustainable livelihoods, empower local people to participate in co-management and decision-making process
- Projects are strongly supported by leadership and leadership realizes the benefits brought about by projects and commits to continue the project results
- Projects are incorporated into national and local programs and policies
- The more ownership local authorities and communities feel when undertaking a project, the more likely they will sustain the project results
- Create a self-financing mechanism for the project, e.g. livelihoods funds or leverage funds from state budget to expand or replicate a successfully completed project
- Engage the private sector in the promotion of project products and share the benefits with local households, e.g. organic seafood, mangrove honey, community-based tourism

Lesson 10: Important factors for a successful project

At the lessons learned workshop on 23 July 2013, grantees were also asked to identify the most important factors leading to success of a SGF project. The results showed that the support and participation of local communities is the prerequisite for the success of all community-based projects. The support of local authorities is also necessary to help integrate project results into policies. More importantly, acting as the bridge to connect community and local authorities, the implementing agencies should continuously follow up, maintain a sense of responsibility, and have the technical capacity to successfully deliver activities.

Lesson 11: Coastal management network

MFF should connect all SGF grantees into a network so that they can share their interests and experiences on coastal issues. While SGF projects are completed within 12 months, potential impacts are likely to be achieved at later stages. Follow-up with the previous grantees is necessary to promote the project outcomes and impacts. Also, getting them to participate in MFF experience-sharing workshops is a good idea to share their stories of success and failure.

Lesson 12: Commitment from NCB

Having committed and active NCB members is a key factor in operating MFF Viet Nam as well as running SGF. Viet Nam highly appreciates the contribution of NCB members from different sectors and institutes. They not only contribute their time, expertise and valuable inputs whenever SGF grantees seek their advice, but also help them to liaise with a network of partners to handle any issues that arise.

5. Annexes:

Annex 1: MFF SGF FULL PROPOSAL EVALUATION GRID⁷

Grid completed by _____ Date: _____

Applicant (organization):	
Title of project:	
Region(s) targeted:	
Amount requested (and % of total budget):	
Duration:	

Scoring guidelines

This evaluation grid is divided into **sections** and **subsections**. Each subsection must be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following guidelines:

Score	Meaning
1	Very poor
2	Poor
3	Adequate
4	Good
5	Very good

These scores are added to give the total score for the section concerned. The totals for each section are then listed in section 4 and added together to give the total score for the full application.

Each section contains a box for comments. These comments should address the issues covered by that section. Comments must be made on each **section**. If an evaluator gives a score of 1 (very poor), 2 (poor) or 5 (very good) to a subsection, the reasons for giving such a score must be explained in the comments box.

Extra space may be used for comments if required.

⁷ European Union (2013). Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development in Sri Lanka 2013. Guidelines for grant applicants.

II. EVALUATION GRID	
1. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action	Score
1.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	
1.2 Is the workplan clear and feasible?	
1.3 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the project? Is evaluation foreseen?	
1.4 Is the partners' level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	
Total score:	
Comments	
2. Sustainability of the action	Score
2.1 Is the project likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	
2.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the action and dissemination of information.)	
2.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financially (<i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i>) - Institutionally (<i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the project? Will there be local "ownership" of the results of the action?</i>) - At policy level (<i>what will be the structural impact of the project, e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?</i>) 	
Total score:	
Comments	
3. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	Score
3.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	
3.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? Does the project offer good value for money?	
Total score:	
Comments	
4. Total score and recommendations	Score

Annex 2: Web news stories links

1. Stories of conflicts: a review of MFF Small Grant Projects 2011-2013
<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/news-and-media/news/vietnam/2013/stories-of-conflicts-a-review-of-mff-small-grant-projects-2011-2013/>
2. Planting, protecting, and sharing: three indispensable links in mangroves conservation
<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/news-and-media/news/vietnam/2013/planting-protecting-and-sharing-three-indispensable-links-in-mangroves-conservation/>
3. Working with fisherwomen in Xuan Thuy National Park
<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/news-and-media/news/vietnam/2013/working-with-fisherwomen-in-xuan-thuy-national-park/>
4. Stopping charcoal production in Mui Ca Mau National Park: work without end
<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/news-and-media/news/vietnam/2013/stopping-charcoal-production-in-mui-ca-mau-national-park-work-without-end/>
5. Buddhist community participation in mangrove conservation in Tien Giang Province
<http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/news-and-media/news/vietnam/2013/buddhist-community-participation-in-mangrove-conservation-in-tien-giang-province/>



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, 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 large 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.

MFF is funded by Danida, Norad and Sida

Learn more at: www.mangrovesforthefuture.org

