Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project

Interim Report

(October 1998 – October 1999)

Annalisa Koeman and Nguyen Van Lam

Hanoi 28th October 1999

ACRONYMS

ACAP    Annapurna Conservation Area Project
ACTI    Australian Conservation Training Institute
CBST    Community Based Sustainable Tourism (also CBT)
CCSI    Corporate and Community Sustainability International
CRES    Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
ESCAP   Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FF      Ford Foundation
FPD     Forest Protection Department
GOV     Government of Vietnam
ICCO    Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation
ICER    International Centre for Ecotourism Research
ICIMOD  International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ITDR    Institute for Tourism Development Research
KEEP    Kathmandu Environmental Education Project
KMTNC   King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
MARD    Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOSTE   Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
NEA     National Environment Agency
ONT     Office of National Tourism, Australia
RECOFTC Regional Community Forestry Training Centre
SDC     Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEMA    Strengthening the Environmental Management Authority Project
Foreword

The second year of the Sustainable Tourism Project (STP) was very productive. STP succeeded in building on the solid foundations of the first 12 months and extending its reach and impact amongst stakeholders.

Through networking, information sharing, participation in conferences and workshops, and via collaborative partnerships in implementing activities, the STP achieved recognition and ‘legitimacy’ amongst Vietnamese organisations. It also established a profile internationally through a constantly expanding network of professionals and organisations. The range and strength of expertise available within this network is one of STP’s most valuable resources to hand on to Vietnamese colleagues and stakeholders.

In networking, and as a source of information, the role of the STP cannot be under-estimated. Though such activities may not appear on the ‘records’, they are one of the STP’s most valuable assets.

STP managed to access supplementary funding from SDC, Sida, ESCAP and the Netherlands Embassy for some key activities. Despite this support, the general level of donor interest in ‘sustainable tourism’ remains fairly low. Attempts at engaging non-traditional IUCN Vietnam donors were largely unsuccessful (the exception was ESCAP), as were attempts to gain corporate tourism sponsorship. Further concerted efforts are required in this area, however limited resources and the time consuming nature of fund raising is a problem.

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>Sida</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
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<td>Sustainable Tourism Project</td>
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**Project Goal**

To identify and raise awareness of the negative socio-economic, cultural and ecological impacts of tourism, and contribute to the development of sustainable community-based models of tourism that can generate sustainable income for some of the country’s poorest and least advantaged communities, while at the same time helping to maintain Vietnam’s cultural and biological diversity.

**Project Objectives**

1. Networking and Information Exchange

2. Research and Analysis

3. Education and Training

4. Support for a Pilot Project

5. Advocacy (and awareness raising)
A highlight of the twelve months was the convening, with VNAT and ESCAP, of a National Workshop on Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam in September 1999. It took 18 months of perseverance and dedication to see STP’s initiative come to fruition. STP was instrumental in bringing several parties together – VNAT, ITDR, Sida and ESCAP – and in identifying key international facilitators and resource persons/presenters. The workshop was a first for the tourism sector in Vietnam as it sought to bring together a variety of stakeholders in an interactive forum in which ideas and experiences could be shared and a feeling of ‘ownership’ or ‘stake’ in the process of policy development for ecotourism generated. The workshop succeeded in outlining a framework for development of a national ecotourism strategy.

Follow up activities to the STP have been a major concern in 1999. In January 1999 the STP began collaborating with SNV Vietnam to draft a proposal for a three-year project in its pilot site of Sa Pa (Support to Sustainable Tourism In Sa Pa District, Lao Cai Province). The process involved considerable stakeholder consultation and was a logical follow up to the Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop held in December 1998.

Later in the year STP began drafting a proposal for a Sustainable Tourism Project Phase II to be implemented by ITDR and target both ITDR and VNAT with a range of capacity building activities. A noteworthy meeting in September 1999 saw VNAT and ITDR state their desire to see a Phase II, with an emphasis on policy development for sustainable tourism and implementation of pilot projects in several sensitive sites.

The current priority task of STP is to combine the ideas of ITDR and VNAT into the proposal and present to a roundtable of donors. Particular attention will be paid to linking the local (Sa Pa) support project with the national level project.

1999 has seen the STP gain credence and respect within VNAT and ITDR. Though coordination and communication between Tran Hung Dao, Ly Thuong Kiet and Quan Su has at times been weak, trust and respect have steadily grown to the level where the STP and its continuation are considered a priority. Commencement of a Phase II in the first half of 2000 will be very timely: it fits perfectly with the governments’ plans and priorities for achieving sustainable tourism, it will strengthen the new alliance between VNAT/ITDR and IUCN, and maintain the momentum of STP.

The project has been extended until March 2000 in order to complete specific activities, including a four week Ecotourism Training Course for National Parks and Protected Area Managers and Staff.

Annalisa Koeman

Project Advisor

October 27th 1999

1. NETWORKING AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Activities: achievements, current status and issues

(a) Establishment of Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre (STRC)

- **Achievement:** STP has continued with the purchase and collection of additional materials from a range of sources. Visitors are predominantly tourism students and academics, as well as international researchers. Many of the latter have heard about the STP from international networks, including Tourism Concern and The Ecotourism Society (of which the STP is a member). A basic cataloguing system has been initiated, with references entered into a database. A policy on photocopying was established and outlined to all visitors.

- **Current status:** continuation of activities.

- **Problems:** Lack of funds to undertake extensive translation of materials. Relatively small visitation (lack of time to dedicate to PR/advertising the STRC through media channels). Cataloguing system incomplete and basic. Policy on photocopying needs policing as references become damaged easily. Limited capacity of the STP office to cater to researchers, and the IUCN library/meeting room is...
sometimes occupied. Students tend to arrive without notice. The time available for STP staff to dedicate to visitors is limited.

(b) Subscriptions

- **Achievement:** The number of subscriptions has been increased and now comprises of: Cultural Survival; WTO Newsletter; Contours; Our Planet, as well as the TES Newsletter and Tourism Focus (received through membership to The Ecotourism Society and Tourism Concern).

(c) Sustainable Tourism Resource Kit

- **Achievement:** Compilation of a "sustainable tourism resource kit" using materials translated over a 20 month period (sustainable tourism, ecotourism, environmental and cultural impacts, tourism and biodiversity, conference papers etc). These were sent to 15 ‘key’ individuals/counterparts. Positive and appreciative feedback was received from a few colleagues.

- **Current status:** It is possible that more copies of the kit will be compiled and disseminated, and additional materials added.

(d) Translation, publication and dissemination

- **Achievement:** Successfully completed translation, publication and dissemination of The Ecotourism Society’s *Ecotourism: A guide for planners and managers I* and WWF/Tourism Concern’s *Beyond the Green Horizon: Principles for Sustainable Tourism*. WWF Vietnam contributed to the publication of the latter along with the SEMA project of NEA, which fully covered the publishing costs of *Ecotourism: A guide for planners and managers I*. 1000 copies of each were published. The publications were much appreciated by a wide audience (tour operators; PA managers; tourism faculties; academics; research and planning institutions etc).

- **Current status:** *Ecotourism: a guide for planners and managers II* is being translated by CRES, and SEMA has agreed to fund its publication as per the first volume. The publication will be complete by Christmas 1999.

- **Problems:** IUCN’s *Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas* has been translated but not published due to delays with *Ecotourism: a guide... I* (there were problems of quality control and responsibility between STP and SEMA with respect to printing and a partial reprint of *Ecotourism: a guide... I* was required). Also, it has not yet been determined how to reproduce the colour plates.

(e) Internet and Email Networking

- **Achievement:** Internet and email access has continued, with information downloaded and included in the STRC, as well as passed on to counterparts, especially ITDR, VNAT. As with the other references and information collected for the STRC, the open sharing of information has significantly strengthened the relationship between IUCN, ITDR and VNAT. The internet is valuable for the ‘global view’ information accessed. The email has been especially valuable in establishing a strong international network. The information flow has been two-way, with international contacts contributing advice and input to STP activities eg: proposal development for STPII and NES Workshop.

- **Current status:** continuation of activities

- **Problems:** Lack of time and money to undertake extensive translation of materials.

(f) Strategic Linkages

- **Achievement:** Linkages with multiple international and national organisations (tourism, government, donor, academic and research, education and training, protected area etc) were expanded and strengthened. A prime example was the National Workshop on Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam, which enabled STP to establish strong contacts with key international experts and institutions (and bring them together with a variety of Vietnamese stakeholders in an interactive forum).

(g) Participation in International and National Fora
• **Achievements:** Participation by Project Advisor in several national and international fora (conferences, seminars, workshops), including presentation of papers eg: *Review of Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam, 1998; Global Biodiversity Forum, Montreal, 1999*... (see Advocacy and Awareness Raising). Project Director participated in *Partnership for Development* – a donor workshop held in Lao Cai Province in September 1999 – as a group facilitator and presenter (slide presentation on ‘Tourism and Community Development’).

**Assessment of Benefits/Outcomes**

The STP is the only body in Vietnam that can provide advice and expertise on sustainable tourism. It possesses the only extensive and varied collection of resources on sustainable tourism, ecotourism and community based tourism in the country. Over the last year the profile of the STP has increased within Vietnam as well as regionally and internationally. It is achieving recognition as a reliable and reputable institution dedicated to the promotion of tourism for conservation and development (sustainable tourism).

The STP and its STRC are benefiting a wide range of stakeholders/actors. Many recipients have been appreciative of the free sharing of information. While most of the information flow within Vietnam has been from the STRC outwards, the STRC has begun to receive some contributions from those it has directly assisted, for example, students who have visited the STRC are now returning to present a copy of their final theses or project documents.

There is an expressed need from stakeholders for advice and technical assistance in ecotourism/sustainable tourism. Consultancy services are required. A second phase of the STP should consider how it can join with other organisations to set up a sustainable tourism consultancy centre offering low cost technical advice.

2. **RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

**Activities: achievements, current status and issues**

(a). **Sa Pa Research**

- **Achievement:** The research commissioned by the Human Geography Research Centre of National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities, on "The Impact of Tourism on Ethnic Minority Inhabitants of Sa Pa District, Lao Cai: their participation in, and attitudes toward, tourism", was finalised in January 1999. The results were presented at the STP’s "Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop" in December 1998 as part of a compilation of results of previous research on tourism in Sa Pa. The Human Geography Research Centre approached STP in mid 1999 requesting permission to publish the research and disseminate more widely amongst researchers and academics.

- **Current status:** The HGRC is currently defending the publication of the research to the NCSS&H. When published the research will bear the IUCN and HGRC logos.

- **Problems:** Considerable work was required in editing and formatting the report and ensuring quality translation (and extra costs were incurred in hiring a bi-lingual consultant); the research paid insufficient attention to environmental impacts of tourism, though it was acknowledged that this could be the focus of a single research project. As a result, when STP was contacted students and academics wanting to conduct research in Sa Pa, it recommended they direct their attention to this area.

(b). **Research on Vietnam’s Tour Operators**

- **Achievement:** The research conducted by ITDR on the "Level of Awareness of Sustainable Tourism and the Impacts of Tourism: Vietnamese Tour Operator’s" was conducted intermittently over 15 months from the signing of the contract in August 1998. The final report was submitted to STP at the beginning of October 1999. A total of 119 tour operators (total number in Vietnam is around 390) nation wide were interviewed and provided with reference materials introducing sustainable tourism.

- **Current status:** The final report from ITDR is being translated into English. If necessary, a consultant may be hired to undertake improvements and re-edit both versions. Research will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders.
• **Problems:** The research extended far beyond the contract period (anticipated three months, final report from ITDR presented 15 months later). STP felt unable to speed the process up. ITDR experienced problems in response rates, which delayed compilation of results. There appeared to be a weak capacity in areas of research design, conduct, analysis and reporting. This, in combination with problems with translation, saw STP making suggestions for improvements to two draft reports. It appears that weak supervision of the research, and the interview technique (interviews were mailed rather than conducted in person as envisaged) affected the quality and level of responses. Questionnaires were based closely on questions provided by the Project Advisor. They were deemed to be too long, but little was done to re-draft or re-design the research. The overall delay in finalising the research means that the STP will probably not be able to implement activities in response to the research results, as had been intended.

(c). Advice, Information, Contacts

• **Achievement:** STP continued to provide assistance/information and advice to several international students, researchers, academics, INGOs – in person, via email (and through the use of the STRC) - particularly with respect to Sa Pa. The collation of research on Sa Pa has been a significant help to other researchers and organisations. Several students, researchers and academics approached STP, seeking research placements, research collaboration as well as part-time or full-time work. A collection of Curriculum Vitae is being compiled, which also includes CV’s of international tourism, ecotourism, training and other consultants.

• **Current status:** Additions will continue to be made to the collection of CV’s.

• **Problems:** At times answering queries and providing information was quite demanding on STP staff time. Unfortunately the STP was not in a position to offer full time work, research funds were already allocated, and staff resources were already stretched. Approaches did not necessarily coincide with the needs and activities of the STP. STP was in a better position to call on locally based international consultants when necessary (e.g: Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop; editing of HGRC research; National Workshop on Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy).

**Assessment of Benefits/Outcomes**

The research conducted by HGRC was highly valued by a number of stakeholders, especially researchers and tourism professionals. Apart from the information on the existing situation of ethnic groups in Sa Pa with respect to tourism, the research made a number of recommendations aimed at achieving a form of tourism in Sa Pa that benefited local ethnic minority communities. The research played an awareness raising role for the implementing institution and the key researchers. It was gratifying to see the HGRC consider the research of significant value to request permission to publish it using funds from the NCSS&H. The report will hence be shared with a wider audience.

The survey carried out by ITDR has transmitted a message of responsible tourism to the various tour operators involved, both through the questions themselves, as well as the educational materials provided to all interviewees. ITDR has also benefited from the exercise, which has advocated (and hopefully proved the need for) engaging the tour operators (private sector included) in awareness raising activities, and the dissemination of information to this group of stakeholders. It is hoped that ITDR will follow up with implementation of targeted activities.

STP has a large number of international contacts, many of them experts and renowned in their field, to share with Vietnamese colleagues and stakeholders.

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Activities: achievements, current status and issues

(a). Nepal Training Course in Community Based Tourism

• **Achievement:** Nguyen Van Lam (STP), Nguyen Duc Hoa Cuong (ITDR) and Duong Quang Chau (TEW) attended the one month training course: *Community Based Tourism for Conservation and Development*, organised by RECOFTC/TMI/Nepal Institute of Forestry in February 1999. Mr Cuong’s attendance was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SEE individual reports).
• **Problems:** The original intention had been to invest in the training of a candidate from Sa Pa, however there were no suitable candidates with sufficient English. It was decided to invite a staff member of TEW - a Vietnamese NGO which works with ethnic minority women, instead, and for the three participants to conduct a small training course in Sa Pa on their return.

(b). Sa Pa Community Tourism Training Workshop

• **Achievement:** Lam, Cuong and Chau conducted a small training course in Sa Pa to apply lessons learnt from Nepal. The *Sa Pa Community Based Tourism Training Workshop*, 14-18 July 1999 involved 23 participants including government officials as well as H'mong and Dao community members from three communes (SEE individual report). IUCN collaborated with WWF (Cat Tien National Park), who provided the translation of the CBT training manual from Nepal.

• **Problems:** Lack of monitoring by Advisor due to project workload (division of responsibilities) and participation in *Global Biodiversity Forum* in Montreal. Project Director was forced to do the bulk of the work, with little contribution towards organisation and preparation from the two other members of the team.

(c). Ecotourism Training for National Park and Protected Area Managers and Staff

• **Achievement:** Successfully applied for a grant to the value of USD42,142 from the Netherlands Embassy to convene a one month “Ecotourism Training for National Park and Protected Area Managers and Staff”, to be organised with the Forest Protection Department and conducted by an international training institution. STP is providing funding of USD8,000. Grant received at the beginning of September 1999, grant period until 30th December 1999.

• **Current status:** Expressions of interest from four international training institutions/consortiums are currently being received (Lincoln International, New Zealand; the Australian Conservation Training Institute/Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism/Charles Sturt University; Corporate and Community Sustainability/University of Technology, Sydney; and Environmental Tourism Consultants, Thailand). FPD expressed the desire to hold the training in November, however the international institutions are already committed at this time. The STP is now trying to coordinate with FPD on a re-schedule for early 2000 (after Tet), pending permission for extension from the Netherlands Embassy.

• **Problems:** The application process with the Embassy was lengthy. STP was unable to bring CRES and FPD together to organise the training programme. The re-scheduling of the training should cause few problems now that the STP is able to extend into 2000. The re-schedule is partly due to the decision to call for expressions of interest from a number of international training institutions, rather than accepting ACTI ‘fait accompli’ as the training institution. This change in strategy occurred after changes took place at ACTI in mid 1999. Depending on the final choice, previous work with ACTI on draft curriculum development may be made redundant.

**Assessment of Benefits/Outcomes**

The Nepal course provided ITDR and TEW with their first exposure to and training in Community Based Tourism. It had considerable influence on ITDR’s perspective of communities and their role in tourism development and tourism as a (community) development tool. ITDR is now both acknowledging and better understanding the intrinsic links between tourism, community development and conservation of nature. It intends to conduct research on ecotourism and community based tourism on Cat Ba Island.

The STP Project Director felt much more confident to work with communities with respect to CBT.

The Sa Pa training was a collaborative effort between institutions. Staff members of ITDR and TEW contributed their time for free to facilitate the *Sa Pa Community Tourism Training Workshop*. Sa Pa District stated that the training was very useful because of its practical nature.

4. SUPPORT FOR A PILOT PROJECT

Activities: achievements, current status and issues
(a). Sustainable Tourism Study Tour, Nepal 2-21 September 1998

- **Achievement:** Annalisa Koeman and Nguyen Van Lam (IUCN); Nguyen Tai Cung (ITDR); Nguyen An Toan (Sa Pa People’s Council); Tran Manh Diem (Trade and Tourism, Lao Cai) visited Nepal for a three week study tour. The team visited three Protected Areas (ACAP, Chitwan, Langtang) and a variety of organisations (TMI, KMTNC, KEEP, ICIMOD, UNDP etc).

- **Problems:** Mr Diem’s briefcase broken into between BKK and Kathmandu, while Annalisa’s entire luggage was lost/stolen on the same leg. Lam was required to interpret for the entire trip due to communication problems for Mr Diem (no English) and Mr Cung (weak English) – both had been nominated by their respective institutions.

(b). Sa Pa Sustainable Tourism Management Board

- **Achievement:** STP drafted a document, in collaboration with Frontier Vietnam, on the formation of a “Sustainable Tourism Management Board/centre for Sustainable Tourism”. This was presented to authorities in September 1998.

(c). Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop

- **Achievement:** Successfully completed Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop, 3-5 December 1998, the first workshop of its kind in Vietnam. The workshop attempted to bring together representatives from all major stakeholder groups, including ethnic minority communities. A special half-day session was held with members from the ethnic minority community. Two staff from the Faculty of Environmental Sciences along with the STP Project Director facilitated the workshop. Two international presenters were invited from Nepal and Thailand. Activities included identifying tourism impacts and local resources/values (SWOT); listing priority actions; and developing and voting on ‘guiding principles’ (SEE individual report).

- **Problems:** Some difficulties were experienced with facilitating in-depth participation from ethnic minority participants in the morning session. A separate forum solely involving this stakeholder segment, run in advance of the workshop would have been useful. The attitude of some government participants in the workshop was a little strong and domineering at times.

(d). Sa Pa Community Based Tourism Training Workshop, 14-18 July 1999

- **Achievements:** (see Education and Training).

(e). "Support to Sustainable Tourism in Sa Pa District, Lao Cai Province" Project Proposal

- **Achievements:** In January 1999 IUCN and SNV agreed to work together to develop a proposal for a project to support sustainable tourism in Sa Pa. A three-year project has been designed with two key objectives – to establish mechanisms for a more equitable sharing of the benefits from tourism among a greater part of the population, and to increase the capacity of local stakeholders in reducing the negative impacts of tourism. Proposal was developed in consultation (interviews, meetings and a workshop), with local stakeholders and government representatives (including the Tourism Support Board). The Sa Pa People’s Committee to be the implementing agency (specifically the Section for Culture, Information, Sports and Tourism), SNV and IUCN to provide technical advice.

- **Current status:** Draft proposal sent to Sa Pa and Lao Cai, as well as to potential donors. Awaiting feedback from two potential donors, two have already commented on the proposal. Also awaiting feedback from Sa Pa People’s Committee and Lao Cai Trade and Tourism Department. Sa Pa People’s Council has provided written response (support).

- **Problems:** Large budget (to be revised). Some donor concerns include: the need for strong linkage between Sa Pa project and STPII (ie: local and national level), and the apparent focus on protection and lack of community input. IUCN and SNV need to investigate new avenues of funding (EU, ESCAP, ADB). IUCN/SNV collaboration still requires final clarification (specifically, the SNV contribution of CTA).

**Assessment of Benefits/Outcomes**

The Nepal study tour was highly successful and valuable, particularly for district and provincial level officials,
who returned home with new ideas and intentions to implement (eg: with respect to home stays and trekking). Nepal had many similarities in conditions that Sa Pa and Lao Cai could relate to and the site visits/field trips provided visual material. It was also useful in terms of establishing a solid foundation for the STP in Sa Pa.

The document "Sustainable Tourism Management Board/Centre for Sustainable Tourism", in combination with the trip to Nepal and the Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop, influenced Sa Pa’s decision to establish a Tourism Support Board comprising of representatives from several stakeholder groups. This Board is envisaged to play an important role in ‘re-orienting’ tourism in Sa Pa in a more sustainable direction and is a first step towards addressing concerns about poor management of tourism in Sa Pa (and lack of community participation).

The Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop was a successful brainstorming exercise. It spurred/assisted both local authorities and commune members to start to think of their responsibilities towards their tourism assets. The international case studies from Nepal and Thailand provided useful ‘comparison’ and ‘reference’ material. A notable output was the general agreement on the need for community members at the grass roots level to take part in the tourism planning and decision making process.

“Support to Sustainable Tourism In Sa Pa” is a natural consequence of a series of activities initiated by the STP in 1998-1999. The proposal was developed based on the need of local authorities and other stakeholders including commune level communities.

5. ADVOCACY (AND AWARENESS RAISING)

Activities: achievements, current status and issues

(a) Workshop on Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam

- **Achievement:** Successfully convened a National Workshop for Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam, September 7-9, 1999 with co-organisers VNAT and ESCAP. The organising committee comprised of STP and ITDR staff. Funding was provided by ESCAP (USD13,365), SIDA (USD16,000) and STP (USD5,000). Six international resource persons/facilitators participated from Australia, Malaysia, Thailand and Nepal. Vietnamese participants came from various sectors and levels of government (tourism, science, technology and environment, planning and investment, agriculture and rural development, protected areas); research and training institutions; tour operators; INGOs and others. The workshop was an interactive and process output oriented exercise. An expert panel was convened on the last day to produce key outputs. ITDR is to follow up with drafting a submission to government for development of an NES in consultation with the expert panel.

- **Current status:** The acquittal is complete. Remaining funds from the STP contribution will be directed to the publication of the proceedings, though additional funds are required. ITDR is requesting a contribution from VNAT. ITDR has completed its report to the government. IUCN is currently finalising its report. Both will be included in the proceedings. STP is keen to encourage the preparation of a submission to government by ITDR in close consultation with the Vietnamese expert panel.

- **Problems:** Logistical problems/difficulties were experienced partly due to bureaucratic organisations and procedures and tri-party organisation. A few disappointment were experienced with the quality and content of some presentations and participation of key persons.

(b) Sabah World Ecotourism Conference and Field Seminars

- **Achievement:** STP invited Dr Pham Trung Luong (ITDR) and Mr Pham Trong Hien (Forestry Expert, International Relations, MARD) to attend, along with the Project Advisor and Project Director, the World Ecotourism Conference and Field Seminars in Sabah, Malaysia 17-23 October. The conference includes key-note presentations from those in the forefront of ecotourism planning and development from around the globe, as well as informal fora/discussion sessions. STP is also supporting the Vietnamese participants to attend a three day Ecolodge Field Seminar.

(c). Responsible Travel Booklets

- **Achievement:** Design and development of booklets: “Tread Softly – A Guide to Eco-friendly Travel in
Vietnam” and “One Day Travel, Perfection the Next” to promote responsible travel amongst international and domestic tourists respectively. ITDR and VNAT reviewed and edited the text. Both are supportive of the activity. The intention is to print 50,000 copies of each version for distribution for free throughout the country. To be launched with two workshops targeting tour operators/guides. Expression of financial support received from Canada Fund (part funding).

- **Current Status:** Stylish "mock up" produced in order to attract donors. Some Vietnamese tour operators have expressed interest in distributing the booklet, but they can provide very small financial contributions. More attention will be paid to fund-raising in the coming months and re-approaching Vietnam Airlines for assistance with distribution.

- **Problems:** Lack of funds to print/produce booklet and distribute. Numerous Embassies approached (including Japanese, German, British, American, Australian, New Zealand, Denmark), as well as Best Hotel Alliance, some national tour operators and Vietnam Airlines. Lack of time to dedicate to corporate (tourism) fundraising and supervise project staff to follow through with activities. It remains a little unclear exactly to what extent VNAT will assist with distribution.

**Achievement:**

(d) "Tourism and Environment in Vietnam: a story of the goose and the golden egg"

- **Achievement:** STP prepared a concept paper for a documentary for domestic and international screening looking at the relationship between tourism and the environment. Drafted with assistance from Television Trust for the Environment in the UK and in consultation with VTV (Science and Education Programmes, VTV Department of International Relations, and director of the tourism programme: "Vietnam Through A Small Screen"). IUCN Communication and Environmental Education Division supportive of the idea (Head of IUCN CEED visited Vietnam in early 1999).

- **Current status:** Concept sitting on shelf. No time or resources available to dedicate to this activity.

- **Problems:** Lack of funds. Embassies of EU, France, Switzerland, Britain and Australia approached. Lack of input/contribution to proposal by VTV. IUCN CEED unable to find funding or provide follow-up support.

(e). Participation in International and National Fora

- **Achievements:** Participation in several national and international conferences, seminars, workshops (including presentation of papers):

1. **Culture and Development Workshop.** Organised by the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) and UNDP as part of the UNDP Highland People’s Programme; Hanoi, October 5 –12, 1998). Presented paper on “Culture and Tourism: Complex Interrelationships” with Michael di Gregorio of CRES.

2. **Workshop to Review the Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam.** Organised by the National Environment Agency in collaboration with SIDA, IUCN and WWF, Hanoi October 22-23 1998. STP presented a paper on “Why Tourism is an Important Factor in Biodiversity Conservation”.


4. **Environmental Management for Marine and Coastal Tourism Activities with ISO14001.** Halong Bay, Quang Ninh, October 22, 1999. Presented a paper on "Impacts of Tourism on Coastal Zone Environments: International Initiatives tackling the problems". Organised by the Directorate for Standards and Quality of MOSTE.

- **Problems:** Participation in all fora very time consuming. Some events provided short notice and added to already heavy work-loads. Participation in these fora may be undervalued in project assessment.

(f). Review of Tourism Development Master Plan for Vietnam
• **Achievement:** In October 1998 STP responded to a request from the environment and natural resources section of UNDP in Hanoi to review a proposal by the World Tourism Organisation for revision of the Tourism Development Master Plan for Vietnam. IUCN STP (with input from IUCN PPA and WCPA Tourism Taskforce) made several recommendations which were all taken up by UNDP in its response to WTO. Result: WTO sent Mr Scott Cunliffe, a consultant with sustainable tourism credentials to Vietnam in September 1999 to rewrite the proposal. Mr Cunliffe also participated in the NES Workshop.

(g). Community Based Ecotourism Concept

- **Achievement:** STP Project Director assisted Eco-Eco to develop a concept paper “Community Based Ecotourism” for Hang Kia Commune of Pa Co Nature Reserve. Concept paper submitted to UNDP Hanoi for GEF/SGP funding, however as Eco-Eco had already received GEF funding it was considered ineligible for further funds. STP found another interested local partner - the Women’s Union of Mai Chau District of Hoa Binh Province – and revised and re-submitted the proposal to UNDP. The project aims to contribute to poverty alleviation, conservation and cultural preservation through development of a model for Community Based Ecotourism based on sustainable development principles.

- **Current status:** Late submission means the concept will be considered in the next round of funding.

**Assessment of Benefits/Outcomes**

The NES workshop hopefully initiated a process of strategy formulation. It was considered by all as a very valuable exercise in information dissemination and sharing of experiences, as well as bringing stakeholders together and generating a sense of commitment and ownership to the process of developing sustainable ecotourism in Vietnam. Relationships were strengthened between VNAT, ITDR and IUCN (SEE individual report, which is on its way) and alliances formed between organisers and donors that will hopefully continue.

The value of the internet and email access in helping STP in its advocacy role was reinforced during the workshop on *Environmental Management for Marine and Coastal Tourism Activities with ISO14001*. A large amount of information was sourced through the internet and international email networks.

Participation in a variety of fora has contributed greatly to STP’s advocacy and awareness raising roles. The STP and its staff are becoming well known in certain circles.

The review of the Tourism Development Master Plan for Vietnam forged strong collaborative partnership with UNDP Hanoi, who is also very supportive of STP and its activities. The collaboration has succeeded in a redrafting and re-orientation of the proposal based on sustainable tourism principles. STP’s involvement significantly raised the profile and level of respect for the STP and its staff within Vietnam, and possibly outside.

Both STP Project Director and Project Advisor are increasingly being asked to provide advice and guidance to those seeking assistance with developing ecotourism or CBT, whether tour operator, NGO or local institutions. Investing in CBT training for the Project Director in CBT has been valuable. Unfortunately, limited time and resources constrain the extent to which STP can become a ‘consultancy’.

6. PROJECT EXTENSION

**Achievements, Current Status and Issues**

(a). "Capacity Building in Environment for the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism"

- **Achievement:** STP drafted this concept paper following consultations with the International Relations Department of VNAT. The concept was reviewed by Jeremy Carew-Reid (CTA of Capacity 21 Project), Hans Friederich (CR of IUCN Vietnam) and Peter Sutcliffe (CTA of SEMA Project). Submitted to both VNAT and ITDR for their comments. VNAT informed STP verbally that Mme Vo Thi Thang was submitting the concept to the National Tourism Steering Committee for its comments.

- **Current status/problems:** No official response received from VNAT (and from the National Tourism Steering Committee).
(b). "Sustainable Tourism Project Phase II"

- **Achievement:** Concept paper for a three year STPII (Technical Support for Sustainable Tourism) drafted and submitted to ITDR and VNAT. During drafting, feedback and input sought and obtained from STP international network. Meeting on the 27/9/99 saw confirmation from VNAT and ITDR of the desire to see a STPII. Verbal agreement between VNAT, ITDR and IUCN to commence project proposal development, combining the Capacity Building in Environment concept with the STPII concept and incorporating VNAT/ITDR priorities: a) policy formulation for sustainable tourism; b) pilot projects (including Sa Pa). IUCN emphasised the need to include VNAT in the project in specific ways.

- **Current status:** ITDR presented IUCN with its own proposal in early October. A meeting to discuss the two proposals, also attended by a representative of VNAT (at IUCN’s invitation), led to STP Project Advisor taking on the responsibility for combining the two proposals.

- **Problems:** Extra work created, and time consumed unnecessarily, with production of separate proposals, rather that using original STP proposal as a basis. Need to ensure that both ITDR and VNAT are involved in project proposal development and implementation (both should be targeted with activities). Possible competition or ‘territoriality’ between VNAT and ITDR (eg: over responsibility for the environment). ITDR proposal is ambitious and costly (USD3 million).

**Assessment of Benefits/Outcomes**

The expressed need of VNAT and ITDR for a second phase of STP, reflects their appreciation of the work undertaken by STP and the value of the new alliance with IUCN.

The timing is right for a second phase to directly engage and involve ITDR and VNAT and provide targeted support and activities.

The last year has seen some major actions by VNAT and ITDR and the Government of Vietnam, including the establishment of the National Tourism Steering Committee; issuance of the Ordinance on Tourism and launching of the State Action Plan for Tourism. ITDR has recently been working on the National Tourism Strategy, which is currently under consideration by the GOV. These actions indicate their desire to chart a more sustainable course for the industry.

During the period of implementation of the STP, international arrivals to Vietnam fell and the GOV was forced to take stock and learn some lessons. The design of an STPII and its immediate implementation will be opportune. The value for Vietnam as a whole may be significant (for protected areas, for local communities).

7. GENERAL


- **Achievement:** A two-person team undertook the project review. Leading the team was Mr Hum Bahadur Gurung; National Programme Manager, Sustainable Community Development Programme, Nepal Capacity 21 Programme, UNDP, P.O. Box 107, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Nepal. The National Team Member was Mr Le Dong Phuong; Research Associate, Vietnam Environment and Sustainable Development Centre, 106 Tran Hung Dao, Hanoi. Mr Gurung was strongly recommended by Dr Chandra Gurung, Country Representative of WWF Nepal who was originally contacted to undertake the mission but due to his new appointment was unable to commit the time. The project team visited numerous organisations, both international and national, in Hanoi, and spent two days in Sa Pa meeting various stakeholders.

- **Current Status:** A report is currently being drafted. It will be translated and widely disseminated.

8. CONCLUSION

(a) Progress made in achieving project goals
The STP has achieved a considerable amount. It started from ‘scratch’ as the first project of its kind in Vietnam. It began implementation when there was very limited awareness of or initiatives in the field of sustainable tourism. Over the two years some significant ‘sea changes’ have been taking place in the tourism sector in Vietnam, and STP has been there to assist, encourage and advocate for sustainable tourism. It has arguably been an important stimulus for national level authorities and agencies to better understand and prioritise sustainability issues.

The STP has benefited from flexibility, which has allowed creativity. Hard work and dedication above and beyond the eight-hour day, five day week has been a key reason for its success.

(b). Constraints

Working with government, the STP has faced bureaucratic delays and procedures. The location of the project counterpart in a different offices (though close together) has, at times, resulted in a lack of communication and cooperation as well as an inefficient use of time/human resources. However, this has greatly improved over the last year as trust and mutual respect have been built. It is very important to build on this trust and keep the momentum going through a second phase.

The number and capacity/skills of project staff has been, to some extent and in some areas, limited, for example: in proposal development, in the ability to take initiative and follow through, and to take responsibility for specific tasks. The titles of the project staff have not truly reflected their tasks and roles. The Project Advisor has had a very heavy workload.

STP feels it is important to engage the corporate (tourism) sector as the target of activities as well as a source of funding. There has been limited time and skills for fund raising with the corporate sector (though some attempt has been made, specifically with respect to the booklet), which is outside IUCN’s normal funding channels. The downturn in the economy and the industry has possibly affected the interest from the corporate sector.

(c). Project Extension

The project is being extended until the end of March 2000 in order to finalise a number of activities within the limits of remaining funds. The Project Director will be full time, while the Project Advisor will be half time from December (six-week block over the three months). This provides time to implement the Ecotourism Training course; finalise both the Sa Pa and STPII proposals and (hopefully) secure funding; and try to find funds to publish and launch the responsible travel booklets.

The STP is well aware of the need to gain MPI support as a means of expanding its links with other Ministries and government departments, and as a way to stimulate donor interest. It will be lobbying MPI to assist in prioritising assistance for sustainable tourism.

There is a great need for funds to maintain the presence of the STP Project Director at IUCN beyond the end of the project. This is necessary in order to continue the momentum created by STP through to the successful commencement of the next phase and even beyond (as an IUCN support officer to a Phase II).

The STP project review also identified the importance of the Project Advisor being present during the first months of Phase II in order to ensure a smooth ‘handover’ and to brief the new CTA.