
Country: Vietnam

Development measure

Title: Conservation and development of key sites in the man and biosphere reserve Kien Giang, Vietnam

Project number: 04.2184.2-002.00

Duration of current phase: 2.5 years

Overall term: 07/2008 - 12/2010

Lead executing agency:

Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee

GTZ organisational unit: **GTZ officer for the contract and cooperation:**

Date:

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BMZ German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	3
DAC Development Assistance Committee	3
GTZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit	3
MPI Vietnam Ministry for Investment and Planning	3
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BMU	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DoET	Department of Education and Training
DoNRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
DoST	Department of Science and Technology
FIPI	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
KUFO	Kien Giang Union of Friendship Organisations (International Relations)
LTE	Long Term Expert
MPI	Vietnam Ministry for Investment and Planning
NP	National Park
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development,
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
SEDP	Socio-economic Development Plan
STE	Short Term Expert
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VND	Vietnamese Dong
WU	Womens' Union

1. Preliminary remarks

The first phase of the project will end in December 2010. The project progress review was scheduled to take place in April 2010, in order to assess the current phase and provide evidence and recommendations for an extended second phase, which has been formally discussed between AusAID and GTZ, and agreed to by Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). This timing should allow the proper transition from phase 1 to phase 2. Recommendations for phase 2 will be elaborated in detail. The recommendations will not be made in isolation, but keeping in mind that the activities in Kien Giang will be extended into Ca Mau and An Giang as part of a programmatic response to Climate Change effects on natural resources in the southern Mekong Delta building on the concept paper which forms the basis for the cooperation between AusAID and GTZ. AusAID is funding the named programme which is part of a larger programme including a GTZ programme on integrated coastal management, currently being developed from ongoing projects in Soc Trang (BMZ) and Bac Lieu (BMU). Resources, learning, coordination and management are shared for optimal outcomes.

This report follows GTZ reporting requirements and formats, but ensures that all information required for AusAID procedures is made available. Both GTZ and AusAID formats use agreed OECD DAC criteria.

2. Summary

AusAID and GTZ are cooperating with the provincial authorities of Kien Giang Province to reduce poverty and to conserve natural resources of protected areas and wetlands in the project entitled “Conservation and development for key sites of the Man and the Biosphere Reserve of Kien Giang Province”, which started in August, 2008 and will end its first phase in December 2010.

To appraise the achievements of the project and design the second phase, an AusAID and GTZ mission team worked in Kien Giang province from 6 to 13 April 2010. It consisted of the following members:

Prof. Dr. Manfred Niekisch – Team leader

Dr. Nana Jessica Kuenkel – International Consultant - GTZ

Dr. David Lamb – International Consultant

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Mr. Nguyen Quoc Viet – Senior Program Manager - AusAID

Dr. Pham Trong Thinh – National consultant

Dr. Pham The Dung – National consultant

Dr. Sharon Brown – Chief Technical Advisor

Mr. Chu Van Cuong, Technical Staff

Mr. Nguyen Tan Phong, Technical Staff

The mission team visited U Minh Thuong National Park, Hon Dat District coastal land use model, Hon Dat Acid Sulphate Soil Agricultural Production model and Phu Quoc National Park. It discussed project results and elements for the proposed second phase with a wide range of stakeholders.

The **objective of the first phase** was formulated as follows: The protected areas and coastal forests in Kien Giang Province are managed effectively.

To measure success on this objective and further orient the work, the **following indicators were formulated**:

- The area of **coastal forests** has not been reduced below current levels;
- Artificial increase of the **water** level in the **U Minh Thuong National Park** is discontinued;
- Improved **fire management** in Phu Quoc National Park leads to increased natural biodiversity;
- **Cattle grazing** in the core zone of Phu Quoc National Park is discontinued;
- Local people have **new income opportunities**.

The assessment of the achievement of results yielded the following:

Promising work on **coastal forests** was undertaken. Studies on mangroves found more tree species than expected. This will allow a wider range of species to be tested in future reforestation than has been used up until now. Survey of the forest composition and resource condition over about 200 km coastline will allow priority for further work to be identified. Further insights were gained on the effects of and current practice of the model 7/3 (70% mangrove forest / 30% aquaculture/agriculture). Design and testing on construction of fences, together with testing ways to optimize mangrove establishment in severe erosion areas has allowed planting of mangroves in difficult high erosion areas. A variety of silviculture demonstrations has been carried out by the project to improve the productivity and value of Melaleuca plantations, including demonstrations on fertilizer use, spacing, thinning, fish farming under Melaleuca. The project has generated interest in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), and increased awareness amongst key stakeholders in the importance of climate change, but also in new opportunities for conservation of biodiversity. Several maps on forest cover and coastal erosion have been produced at the request of relevant agencies and are in the

process of verification and approval by the Provincial People's Committee. This is an important baseline for further planning and monitoring of the project's and province's management.

However, the agricultural area is currently encroaching into Melaleuca forests. In addition, mangrove forest is being lost to erosion with 50% of the coastline at a rate of 10-25 m/year (results of survey). At the same time, reforestation and restoration is going on in the Province and a promising technique has been developed and first practical experiences have been gained to reduce or halt coastal erosion.

A range of livelihood activities has been supported with the aim of providing **new income opportunities** to local people. Livelihood activities were chosen so as to demonstrate options for multiple cropping and biodiversity conservation. Livelihood activities based on production of water melon, vegetable, fish, rice-shrimp rotation, blood cockle, coconut, Melaleuca and Mangrove timber, fruits and handicrafts were supported. An enabling activity was training programmes to prepare proper transparent, costed applications. The training targeted agencies and commune level groups (including Womens' Union) able to assist local people to apply for funding. For all activities cost and benefits data was gathered which will be forwarded to extension services. Only one activity has yielded financial results so far (water melons), and yielded an extra 8 Mio Vietnamese Dong for one harvest (after 2.5 months) per household (net benefit). Attempt was made to target poor minority women. 60% of beneficiaries of livelihood improvement were women and 20% were Khmer. Two livelihood activities are implemented by commune Womens' Union. Others are implemented by district level agricultural extension services, U Minh Thuong National Park and authorities in cooperation with farmers association and commune village leaders. With this, outreach to a fairly large group could be established. The province authorities are recommending that the new variety of coconut (pineapple coconut) be introduced through one of the livelihood activities is being planted by farmers. District Chairmen in the target districts have supported and endorsed the specific livelihood activities. In total, these activities were carried out with the involvement of 109 households and covered 70 hectares.

For U Minh Thuong the following indicator was established: Artificial increase of the water level in the U Minh Thuong National Park is discontinued. For this purpose, a Workshop on water management was organized in December 2009 at the request of Provincial authorities. This led to an immediate drainage of water from the park one month after the workshop. During the field visit of this mission the results were already visible in the

form of increased bird life and natural regeneration of Melaleuca. Fire management is now a major concern. A large pump station has been installed, funded by the government, and is operational. The fire fighting equipment, including a network of fire observation towers, is in place and operational. The project supported training in fire management including participation of park staff in an International workshop in China.

For **Phu Quoc** two indicators were established: 1) Improved **fire management** in Phu Quoc National Park leads to increased natural biodiversity; 2) **Cattle grazing** in the core zone of Phu Quoc National Park is discontinued. The project has conducted limited activities on the first indicator, because of need to prioritize project interventions and because of limited direct communication between the project and local authorities. The project enabled participation of park staff in a training on **fire** management in China. No major fire in the Park occurred, but the mission was not able to attribute this to the project outputs. **Cattle** grazing continues in the core zone, which is not seen as a problem by the park management.

A major concern of the mission in Phu Quoc is the fact that a major road is being constructed (upgraded) and cutting 15 km through the core zone, and that there is a plan for a large water reservoir in the core zone. In addition, 400 ha in the coastal area of the National Park have been approved for development. It is evident that, in view of these decisions taken by the National Government, the indicator formulated for the overall objective of the project ("No additional infrastructure is established in the core zones of the protected areas") will not be achieved. For a completely different reason, this indicator turns out to be inappropriate also for U Minh Thuong National Park, as there the new infrastructure which was established (observation tower, pump station) is contributing to the intended improvement of the ecosystems there. This will be taken into account in the planning of the second phase of the project.

Overall, the project represents the **first attempt to make the new Biosphere Reserve operational** for conservation. The mission has heard very supportive words from senior officials who stressed the relevance of this project to the province. The project has been strongly supported by stakeholders including government officials and local stakeholders (e.g. Womens' Union, youth union). Visitors and media attention has been significant.

The project made **strong use of local human resources**, especially consultants. All international consultants were supported by national consultants or provincial technical or education staff, contributing to building local capacity and building up a pool of local

consultants. Each held workshops that were attended by provincial departments stimulating strong debate and thus uptake of new ideas was particularly strong.

For the new phase, the **core problem** has been confirmed from the first phase as follows: “Economic pressure, poverty and the lack of knowledge result in non sustainable resource use in the coastal wetlands, special use forests, protected areas and their buffer zones and have negative impacts on to the coastal protection function of mangrove forest and income generating opportunities for the local population.”

The **overall objective** is to utilise the natural resources of Kien Giang Province in a sustainable way with effective management of the protected areas.

The project interventions will be designed along the following **results chain**: The project will use the lessons learned from the first phase, from Soc Trang Project and Bac Lieu and share lessons with relevant AusAID and GTZ projects and between the five provinces of the proposed integrated coastal management programme. Baseline and new surveys, maps, studies will be produced on issues of management of coastal forests, biodiversity in key areas of the Biosphere Reserve and climate change impacts on natural resources. New techniques and models for land and water use, promoting biodiversity and resilience to climate change, will be developed for replication by the province. Support in trainings with follow-up will be provided in areas of management of the Biosphere Reserve, mangrove reforestation, promotion and effective management of livelihood activities. Support is provided to enable an effective and operational Biosphere Management Board. Capacity development and awareness raising on environmental and climate change issues in the Province will be supported. The province will be supported in organising exchange on coastal management with its neighbouring provinces with a view to biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

This will provide the basis for improved knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management against the background of climate change. The stakeholders will use inputs and skills contributing effectively to the implementation of the concept of the Biosphere Reserve.

As an indirect result, natural resources of Kien Giang Province are utilised in a sustainable way with effective management of the key areas of the Biosphere reserve.

As in the first phase, the approach of the project is a participatory one and will involve the interaction between farmers, Womens' Union and Youth Union and government officials. The project management system is designed to be sufficiently flexible to support both current and evolving planning and implementation practices. The programme will be

demand driven and targeted to relevant stake holders. Awareness campaigns and knowledge management will be jointly implemented with the other projects of the proposed programme (AusAID and GTZ) to ensure wide applicability to different situations found in the south west of the Mekong delta.

The project will provide technical assistance in support of the poor, especially women, in the province successfully tapping existing livelihood and poverty alleviation programmes. It will also provide training and capacity building in biodiversity conservation in selected communities. These capacity building initiatives will work primarily through the Womens' Union at district and commune level.

The proposed indicators for the second phase are:

- A system for successfully restoring coastal forests, particularly mangroves, is established in the Province.
- Understanding of and options for land and water use in the provinces of the South-Western Mekong Delta region in the face of climate change are increased
- The local authorities are enabled to cope with the risks arising from infrastructure developments and climate change in the three key areas of the Biosphere
- The Biosphere Management Board is strengthened in performing its role in managing the Biosphere Reserve for conservation of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change
- Training has led to implementation of effective management measures, of which at least three (including fire management and biodiversity management) are related to the key areas of the Biosphere Reserve and five to promotion of sustainable livelihoods and wildlife protection for local communities, especially through the WUs.
- The concept of the Biosphere Reserve is understood and applied widely for conservation of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change.

3. Framework conditions

As almost everywhere in the Mekong Delta, rapid population growth results in a very high pressure on the natural resources of the inland and coastal forests which are very high in biological diversity.

Kien Giang Province has 1.7 million inhabitants with a total area of 6,243 km² including 206 km of coastline. The Man and the Biosphere Reserve, recognized by UNESCO in 2006, has a total area of 1,188,105 ha, including core zones of 36,935 ha and buffer zones of 172,578 ha. The remaining area is the so called transition or administration zone.

Only recently, during the first phase of the project, the Province has set up a Biosphere management board. For this, the Province has used the model of the project steering committee and project management unit. The three key areas are U Minh Thuong and Phu Quoc National Parks (NP) and Hon Chong Kim Luom. The coastal forests which are especially rich in biodiversity and important for coastal protection, even more so in the light of climate change, are not declared as key areas, but form part of the transition zone, where a wide range of economic activities is allowed.

4. Presentation and assessment of the development measure

4.1 Presentation and assessment of the design and the results chain

The results chain of the project is formulated as follows:

The project will use the lessons learned from the Soc Trang Project. Baseline surveys will be conducted to produce inventories of animal and plant species present in the key areas, especially in the core zones of the protected areas. This will provide the basis for the monitoring of the impacts of the project. Workshops will be undertaken with project collaborators to plan and share information within the project and between this project and the Soc Trang project.

The approach of the project is a participatory one and will involve the interaction between farmers, extensionists and government officials. The project management system will be designed to be sufficiently flexible to support both current and evolving planning and implementation practices. The programme will be demand driven and targeted to appropriate stake holders. Awareness campaigns will be jointly implemented with the Soc Trang project to ensure wide applicability to different situations found in the Mekong delta.

Livelihood development activities will be designed to include ethnic minorities (especially Khmer), poor families and women.

From this follow the **direct benefits** of the project: collaboration and *coordination* between different stakeholders will be improved. They will agree on solutions that will ensure the sustainable use of forests and coastal wetlands and improve the participation of poor population groups in economic growth. At the same time, the core zones of the protected areas will be appropriately managed and safeguarded. This will also lead to new income alternatives (**direct benefits**). As a consequence, the basic livelihoods of the poor people who are dependent on the forests and coastal wetlands are assured, and the biodiversity of the region will be better protected and restored. The project therefore contributes to the

improved implementation of the concept of the Man and the Biosphere Reserve (**indirect benefits**).

Project activities were designed and implemented along this results chain. The province has not had a project of Technical Assistance (TA) before, so gaining trust and establishing working relations was a major first step. In the e-VAL report it is highlighted that “nearly all interviewees highly appreciate the good coordination of and cooperation between project and related stakeholders”. This project being the first project under the co-financing agreement between AusAID and BMZ, had to set up the working mechanisms for this new relationship between AusAID and GTZ. The attractiveness of this new cooperation and the relevance of this topic was demonstrated by a number of high level visitors from AusAID, BMZ, GTZ and National Ministries, which in return resulted in a higher profile of the project. It is noteworthy that the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Vietnam discussed the project with the Prime Minister of Australia during an official visit to Australia. Likewise, the media attention was remarkable.

The approach of this project strongly emphasized testing of innovative solutions in support of provincial priorities and plans, and responding to concrete provincial and national requests. It was therefore able to generate concrete, visible results in a relatively short time. One good example is awareness raising with the National Park and PPC which led to a National workshop on fire and water management for U Minh Thuong NP. This generated instant and substantial outcomes (compare section 4.2). The project in its next phase will have to work on extending these results and ensuring their uptake and sustainability.

A good basis for land use planning and management of the Biosphere Reserve was developed through the collection and synthesis of existing knowledge and the assembly of data bases covering biodiversity, land use, and socioeconomics as well as through the consultation with the province and relevant line agencies, such as the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) at national level.

The results chain was perceived by the mission and by stakeholders as coherent and addressing relevant issues. The e-VAL report states: “Positive comments relate to the concept are that project is relevant and realistic to the province need, that project assists the province to address urgent and important matters of livelihood and biodiversity, that project focuses on long term support to the project areas.”

4.2 Assessment according to OECD-DAC criteria

Due to time constraints the mission could not verify all the achievements presented in the project monitoring reports (especially the strategic monitoring report), but through field visits and interviews with relevant stakeholders found no indication that these achievements have not been reached.

4.2.1 Assessing relevance

The project supports the implementation of national Agenda 21, which gives the conservation of the sea, coastal areas and biodiversity, and mitigation of the consequences of climate change and natural disasters, as priorities for sustainable development. It is in line with Vietnam's Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy of 2002, and the National Environment Protection Strategy 2001-2010, passed in 2003, which anchor the conservation and use of natural resources as essential elements within the Vietnamese environment and development policy. Vietnam has developed national action plans for the protection of biodiversity, wetlands and the environment for the period 2001 – 2010. The project is also in line with the National Socio-economic Development Plan 2006-2010 (SEDP).

At provincial level, the Biosphere Reserve is an important instrument to use in protecting its natural resources in the context of the rapid socioeconomic development. This project provided the first attempt to provide technical assistance and capacity building to enable provincial agencies to make the Biosphere Reserve operational.

Overall, the mission heard very supportive words from senior officials of PPC, DARD, DoST and DoNRE that have stressed the relevance of this project to the province.

4.2.2 Assessing effectiveness

As shown by the results the project was able to achieve in a relatively short time (compare sections 4.1 and 4.2.2 below) the project is assessed as having a high level of effectiveness. There are however a few points showing room for improvement which could have raised the level of effectiveness even higher:

- Working regulations were only approved by the PPC in January 2010, which caused some confusion amongst stakeholders and limited the activities that could be carried out.

- A Project Coordinator has not been appointed. Instead a project Vice-Director was installed by the PPC. This arrangement was ineffective in promoting communication between the project and members of the project steering committee, especially DARD.
- Lack of coordination between the involved functional departments and their relationship to the project resulted in the need for project staff to take over coordination roles outside their mandate.

Therefore, it is recommended that the PPC replaces the position of a Vice-Director with a Project Coordinator and responds more actively to the requests and needs of the project.

Assessment of effectiveness in achieving the objectives as spelled out in five indicators for the first phase gave the following results.

Indicator: The area of coastal forests has not been reduced below current levels

According to provincial data from 2006 and recent mapping done by the project, the forest has not been reduced during the project phase – which cannot be directly compared. However, it is evident that the agricultural area is currently encroaching into *Melaleuca* forests. In addition, mangrove forest is being lost to erosion with 50% of the coastline at a rate of 10-25 m/year (results of survey). But at the same time, reforestation and restoration is going on in the Province and promising work on coastal forests was undertaken by the project. Design and testing on construction of new fences to allow sedimentation areas which were eroding before, together with testing ways to optimize mangrove establishment in severe erosion areas has allowed planting of mangroves in difficult high erosion areas. For that purpose, appropriate species, planting seasons, nursery management and spacing were tested.

In the light of these dynamics and uncertainties, it is impossible to fully assess the achievement of the indicator, but it still can be said that there has not been a major reduction of the coastal forests since the project started.

In addition to this quantitative aspect, there has been a series of qualitative improvements in the use and biodiversity of coastal forests. A variety of silviculture demonstrations has been carried out by the project to improve the productivity and value of *Melaleuca* plantations, including demonstrations on fertilizer use, spacing, thinning, fish farming under *Melaleuca* with the intention to increase the market value of these forest resources which is hoped to increase the attractiveness of *Melaleuca* planting in the future. Studies on mangroves, undertaken by the project, found more tree species than expected; the Biosphere Reserve application to UNESCO mentions 2 tree species, whereas the study found 27 tree species. This allows a wider range of species to be tested in future

reforestation than has been used up until now. For that purpose, a seedling bank including some of the rare species has been set up.

Survey of the forest composition and resource condition over about 200 km coastline will allow priority for further work to be identified. Further insights were gained on the effects of and current practice of the model 7/3 (70% mangrove forest / 30% aquaculture/agriculture). The project has generated interest in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), and increased awareness amongst key stakeholders in the importance of climate change, but also in new opportunities for conservation of biodiversity. The project has embarked on an awareness campaign using several means such as mass media, training and environment days and reaching a wide range of audiences. A particular initiative has been to develop a resource book for primary school teachers on the topics of climate change, biodiversity and waste management. This book has been approved for implementation into the curriculum by the Department of Education and Training (DoET). Several maps on forest cover and coastal erosion have been produced at the request of relevant agencies and are in the process of verification and approval by the PPC (Map of the Biosphere Reserve, allowing the Biosphere Management Board to plan future activities; Map of Phu Quoc District allowing National Park to monitor changes in forest cover and biodiversity management, Map of U Minh Thuong National Park allowing management of biodiversity; Land Cover Map of Kien Giang Province, allowing project and province to monitor changes, detailed map of the coastline, allowing to define priority areas for further work, Historical Map of the Coastline showing losses and gains of coast). These form an important baseline for further planning and monitoring of the project's and province's management.

Indicator: Local people have new income opportunities

A range of livelihood activities has been supported with the aim of providing new income opportunities to local people, which led to the achievement of this indicator. Livelihood activities were chosen so as to demonstrate options for multiple cropping and biodiversity conservation. Livelihood activities based on production of water melon, vegetable, fish, rice-shrimp rotation, blood cockle, coconut, Melaleuca and Mangrove timber, fruits and handicrafts were supported. An enabling activity was training programmes to prepare proper transparent, costed applications. The training targeted agencies and commune level groups (including Womens' Union (WU)) able to assist local people to apply for funding. For all activities cost and benefits data was gathered which will be forwarded to extension services. Only one activity has yielded financial results so far (water melons), and yielded an extra 8 Mio VND for one harvest (after 2.5 months) per household (net

benefit). The average monthly income of women in this commune is 300.000 VND/month. Attempt was made to target poor minority women. 60% of beneficiaries of livelihood improvement were women and 20% were Khmer. Two livelihood activities are implemented by commune WU. Others are implemented by district level agricultural extension services, U Minh Thuong National Park and KUFO in cooperation with farmers association and commune village leaders. With this, outreach to a fairly large group could be established. The province (DOST and DARD) is recommending that the new variety of coconut (pineapple coconut) introduced through one of the livelihood activities is being planted by farmers. District Chairmen in the target districts have supported and endorsed the specific livelihood activities. In total, these activities were carried out with the involvement of 109 households and covered 70 hectares. It is noteworthy that the endangered fish species Sac Ran (*Trichogaster pectoralis*) which is endemic to Melaleuca forest, is now being cultured for livelihoods which is also a substantial contribution to the conservation of biodiversity.

Indicator: Artificial increase of the water level in the U Minh Thuong National Park is discontinued

Artificial increase of the water level in the U Minh Thuong National Park is now discontinued. To achieve this, a Workshop on water management had been organized in December 2009 at the request of MARD, DARD and the PPC. This led to an immediate drainage of water from the park one month after the workshop. During the field visit of this mission the results were already visible in the form of increased bird life and natural regeneration of Melaleuca. Fire management is now a major concern. A large pump station has been installed, funded by the government, and is operational. The fire fighting equipment, including a network of fire observation towers, is in place and operational. The project supported training in fire management including participation of park staff in an international workshop in China.

For Phu Quoc NP two indicators were established:

Improved fire management in Phu Quoc National Park leads to increased natural biodiversity;

Cattle grazing in the core zone of Phu Quoc National Park is discontinued.

The project has conducted limited activities on the first indicator (improved fire management), because of the need to prioritize project interventions and because of limited direct communication between the project and local authorities, as the National Park authority did not show an active interest in the project. The project enabled the participation of park staff in a training on fire management in China. No major fire in the

Park occurred, but the mission was not able to attribute this to the project outputs. Relating to the second indicator, cattle grazing continues in the core zone, which is not seen as a problem by the park management. In fact, the mission could not assess substantial damage through cattle grazing, but this cannot be assessed without more detailed studies.

There are serious concerns of the mission not related to these two phase indicators, but to the overall objective indicator, as described in the following section 4.2.3.

4.2.3 Assessing the overarching development results (impact)

The focus of the activities is on management of the natural resources of two National Parks and the coastal protection forests in the Biosphere reserve with the aim of improving the social and ecological systems' ability to adapt to the consequences of climate change.

One of the positive development results has been in U Minh Thuong NP has been to enable natural regeneration and recovery of the park's ecological systems. In the case of the coastal forests some promising technologies have been developed to enhance the capacities of these forests to recover from degradation and contribute to protection of inland areas from coastal erosion, and increasing and more severe storms. The project has also explored a variety of alternative livelihood strategies which offer opportunities for diversification and potentially contributing to increasing resilience of livelihoods in view of extreme climatic events.

More worrying developments are occurring in Phu Quoc NP. A major concern of the mission in Phu Quoc NP is the fact that a very broad road is being constructed and cuts through 15 km of the core zone, dividing practically the park into two. Furthermore, there is a plan for a large water reservoir in the core zone. In addition, 400 ha of land in the coastal area of the NP have been approved for development. It is evident that, in view of these decisions taken by the National Government, the indicator formulated for the overall objective of the project ("No additional infrastructure is established in the core zones of the protected areas") will not be achieved. For a completely different reason, this indicator turns out to be inappropriate also for U Minh Thuong NP, as there the new infrastructure which was established (observation tower, pump station) is contributing to the intended improvement of the ecosystems there. This should be taken into account in the planning of the second phase of the project.

4.2.4 Assessing efficiency

The livelihood work of the project was relatively resource intensive (especially project staff), but the project made full use of co-financing opportunities and addressed a broad variety of implementers and topics. It used innovative modes of cooperation with private sector. It has provided advise and training on how to tap government funds to a range of agencies responsible for livelihood improvement.

The project managed to use its financial resources strategically as shown e.g. by the strong co-financing for fire equipment and sluice gates funded by the provincial government and by mobilizing 5000 people to actively take part in an environment day with very small capital input.

The project made strong use of local human resources, especially consultants. All international consultants were supported by national consultants or provincial technical or education staff, contributing to building local capacity and building up a pool of local consultants. Each held workshops that were attended by provincial departments stimulating strong debate and thus uptake of new ideas war particularly strong.

4.2.5 Assessing sustainability

As stated above, the project is supporting and advising provincial and national strategies and policies. The project has been strongly supported by stakeholders including government officials and local stakeholders (e.g. WU, youth union). The material and experiences produced by the project so far were widely used by the targeted groups for everyday work and in specific policies. The project has helped create awareness of the challenges posed by climate change and the value of biodiversity. Acceptance of the problem and wide consideration in planning and management is a further indication of the sustainability of the activities undertaken by the project. Capacities of implementing organisations, in particular DARD, have been strengthened through the above mentioned trainings, equipment, study tours, provision of surveys, maps, technical reports that assist them in managing natural resources into the future.

All this suggests that the work of the project will be sustainable.

In line with the recommendations of the e-VAL report, the project should increasingly make sure that activities are increasingly implemented by the partners as their capacity increases.

4.2.6 Overall assessment

(1) Criterion	(2) Rating for criterion	(3) Weighting for criterion	(4) = (2) x (3) Weighted criterion (automatic)
Relevance	1	3	3
Effectiveness	2	2	4
Impact	2	3	6
Efficiency	1	2	2
Sustainability	1	3	3
Average of the weighted criteria 1 - 5			1
If effectiveness, impact or sustainability are accorded a numerical rating of "4" or poorer, the overall rating will be downgraded to "4" even if the average is better than "4". Under exceptional circumstances, should the sustainability be less important (weighting "1", see assessment grid), the overall rating will not be downgraded.		No, the overall rating is not downgraded.	
Overall rating of the project/programme:			1

4.3 Cross-cutting themes

The project is assessed to be in category **G1**, calling for measures to ensure that women as traditionally under privileged will especially benefit from the economic effects of the project interventions and this will strengthen their role in culture and society. The following activities and results are related to this. All livelihood activities had women as a priority target group. The WU has implemented two out of 10 livelihood activities. A village level WU is responsible for organising the establishment and maintenance of the coastal land use model, leading to the chair women being awarded a special commendation by the province. The primary school education programme supported 12 women out of 30 teachers in a train-of-trainer environmental awareness programme. Technical trainings always attempted to get 50% women, which was not always possible to achieve, but on average, 32% of participants in technical trainings were women.

An issue addressed by the project is HIV/Aids, as this is a major problem in the province. The project made information materials on HIV/Aids available during trainings.

The project is assessed to be in category **UR-2**. Environment is a key concern of the project. All project activities are designed to address environmental issues, in particular conservation of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change, and sustainable management of natural resources.

5. Other important issues related to the development measure

5.1 Results-based monitoring system

A results-based monitoring system was designed and implemented. Baselines were developed for the more quantitative indicators (forest area, biodiversity in the NPs). The system monitors 8 outputs, links them to results such as new decisions developed by the Province, and monitors the whole results chain. It differentiates between strategic, performance and operational monitoring, with different frequency. The monitoring system is appropriate and easily understood and thus continuously being used and applied by project staff to inform the steering committee on the progress made.

5.2 Concept of sustainable development

The project works towards a **holistic approach** in that it combines technical expertise and advice (like e.g. tree spacing demonstrations) with organisational and policy advice (e.g. support to the organisation of National Workshop preparing key strategies, such as in U Minh Thuong NP). Policy advice is on request, and it could be shown that outputs from the project have been picked up in policies, regulations and plans. The project intervenes mostly at provincial level, but also at community level (livelihood approaches) and the level of NPs.

Process orientation is most apparent regarding testing innovative solutions, feeding in new ideas, and supporting processes from very early stages through decision-making and implementation (e.g. following up on concerns with fire management after changes in water management in U Minh Thuong NP).

Value orientation – as it is promoted through GTZ's concept of sustainable development – becomes evident especially with regard to gender and ecological dimensions of sustainable development. In line with partner strategies, the project promotes these aspects, for example where trade-offs are evident between financial gains and ecological dimensions.

5.3 Capacity Development

This is covered in section 5.4

5.4 Capacity WORKS

Capacity WORKS is the new GTZ management and steering model introduced on a pilot basis in development measures since the first quarter of 2007. It builds on describing the following five success factors.

This management tool has been actively applied in the project.

Strategy:

The project has been perceived as very relevant to the Province, as outlined above. The “What” – the strategy - therefore seems to be well addressed through the project. e-VAL states: “project is relevant and realistic to the province need, that project assists the province to address urgent and important matters of livelihood and biodiversity, that project focuses on long term support to the project areas.”

It has been the first project in the Province specifically working on the Biosphere Reserve, which is a focal area of biodiversity management and sustainable development (Man and Biosphere Concept; perceived and promoted by the province as “Conservation for development – Development for conservation”).

It has also been strategic in allocating resources to relevant ongoing initiatives and leveraging these (livelihood initiatives, relevant policies and regulations, timing of interventions so as to quickly respond to demands for workshop organization, using political momentum).

e-VAL further mentions the participatory planning approach and cooperation with WU and youth union to increase the impact at local level.

Processes:

The processes towards delivering results are coherently planned in the results chain. In concrete provision of outputs, it is worth mentioning, that while in the future, partners could be involved even more in the implementation of activities, processes have already now been organized so as to ensure that outputs will be used (e.g. maps being validated by Province).

On project internal processes, the e-VAL mentions “the lack of an approved project management regulation, despite the fact a draft has already been available in Vietnamese and English”, and this, now signed, will smooth processes even further.

Cooperation:

e-VAL states the following: “Nearly all interviewees highly appreciate the good coordination of and cooperation between project and related stakeholders.” It also highlights the “active participation of local people, the close relation btw. the project office and project region, both with the local authority and with local people.”

As the programmatic approach develops, cooperation with projects in the neighboring provinces will become an important success factor.

Steering Structures:

The steering structure at highest level can be seen as very successful, as underlined by the Province having used the model of this project’s Management Board for the Management Board of the Biosphere Reserve. The project Management Board comments on and approves the annual operational plan.

The above mentioned need for a Project Coordinator is reemphasized from the perspective of effective steering structures.

Innovation and Learning:

Strong emphasis is put on innovation. The project tests new approaches, often in areas, where the stakeholders have been less flexible and innovative, such as mangrove reforestation with very limited number of species (and success). Likewise, the focus on climate change introduces a new topic, where innovation and new solutions are needed.

Making use of and learning from international expertise from international consultants (systematically sharing and challenging this expertise with a wide range of stakeholders in provincial workshops) is an important approach in the project.

5.5 Cross-cutting issues within the sector network

As an important input to GTZ’s Sector Network Rural Development (SNRD) Asia, information on the following questions was requested from this PPR:

1. Baseline, indicators and monitoring

The project has a robust monitoring system in place. Impacts were quantified and are systematically tracked in the monitoring reports. Baseline data were collected. However, monitoring for some indicators proves fairly complex, e.g. when it comes to forest area. The monitoring, however, has a value in steering decisions by the province. Therefore the effort can be justified.

The project can be said to have very ambitious indicators (e.g. “No additional infrastructure is established in the core zones of the protected areas”). It has a mixture of bio-physical and socio-economic indicators. This proved a good mixture, albeit for the next phase some more emphasis on socioeconomic indicators (“system of coastal forest”) was recommended by the mission, because this can be immediately related to project results. One impressive example of facts and figures on evidence of project results is that livelihood activities (water melons) have yielded an extra 8 Mio VND for one harvest (after 2.5 months) per household (net benefit), where the average monthly income of women is 300.000 VND/month.

2. Linking national approaches to regional level

In the current phase, there are no links to the regional and only few links to the national level, as this project is working directly at province level. The project is very much down-to-earth and as such is an important contribution to enhance capacities at provincial level to make planning and policies, including national level planning, relevant for local people.

3. Consideration of climate issues in the project or program

The project is directly targeting the issue of climate change adaptation, and it works at the interface between biodiversity and climate change adaptation through increasing resilience of ecosystems. It is recommended that for the remaining time of the project the projects collect quantitative evidence on the contribution of biodiversity conservation to climate change adaptation.

6. Recommendations for the new phase

The **core problem** has been confirmed from the first phase as follows:

“Economic pressure, poverty and the lack of knowledge result in non sustainable resource use in the coastal wetlands, special use forests, protected areas and their buffer zones and have negative impacts on to the coastal protection function of mangrove forest and income generating opportunities for the local population.”

The **overall objective** is to utilise the natural resources of Kien Giang Province in a sustainable way with effective management of the protected areas.

The project interventions will be designed along the following **results chain**: The project will use the lessons learned from the first phase, from Soc Trang Project and Bac Lieu and share lessons with relevant AusAID and GTZ projects and between the five provinces of the proposed integrated coastal management programme. Baseline and new surveys, maps, studies will be produced on issues of management of coastal forests, biodiversity in key areas of the Biosphere Reserve and climate change impacts on natural resources. New techniques and models for land and water use, promoting biodiversity and resilience to climate change, will be developed for replication by the province. Support in trainings with follow-up will be provided in areas of management of the Biosphere Reserve, mangrove reforestation, promotion and effective management of livelihood activities. Support is provided to enable an effective and operational Biosphere Management Board. Capacity development and awareness raising on environmental and climate change issues in the Province will be supported. The province will be supported in organising exchange on coastal management with its neighbouring provinces with a view to biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

This will provide the basis for improved knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management against the background of climate change. The stakeholders will use inputs and skills contributing effectively to the implementation of the concept of the Biosphere Reserve.

As an indirect result, natural resources of Kien Giang Province are utilised in a sustainable way with effective management of the key areas of the Biosphere reserve.

As in the first phase, the approach of the project is a participatory one and will involve the interaction between farmers, WU and youth unions and government officials. The project management system is designed to be sufficiently flexible to support both current and evolving planning and implementation practices. The programme will be demand driven and targeted to relevant stake holders. Awareness campaigns and knowledge management will be jointly implemented with the other projects of the proposed programme (AusAID and GTZ) to ensure wide applicability to different situations found in the south west of the Mekong delta.

The project will provide technical assistance in support of the poor, especially women, in the province successfully tapping existing livelihood and poverty alleviation programmes. It will also provide training and capacity building in biodiversity conservation in selected communities. These capacity building initiatives will work primarily through the WU at district and commune level.

The proposed indicators for the second phase are:

- A system for successfully restoring coastal forests, particularly mangroves, is established in the Province.
- Understanding of and options for land and water use in the provinces of the South-Western Mekong Delta region in the face of climate change are increased
- The local authorities are enabled to cope with the risks arising from infrastructure developments and climate change in the three key areas of the Biosphere
- The Biosphere Management Board is strengthened in performing its role in managing the Biosphere Reserve for conservation of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change
- Training has led to implementation of effective management measures, of which at least 3 (including fire management and biodiversity management) are related to the key areas of the Biosphere Reserve and 5 to promotion of sustainable livelihoods and wildlife protection for local communities, especially through the WUs.
- The concept of the Biosphere Reserve is understood and applied widely for conservation of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change.

The institutional arrangements for the proposed second phase are:

The current phase is implemented under a **co-financing agreement** between AusAID and GTZ, under the umbrella MoU between AusAID and BMZ. This mechanism will continue for the next phase.

Executing agency is Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee (PPC) with Department of Science and Technology (DOST) being the leading **implementing organisation**.

The **target group** includes the poor population who uses the natural resources of the coastal forests, wetlands and key areas of the Biosphere Reserve, as well as land users in the province. **Intermediaries** are local authorities, WU and youth union, and the staff and Management Board of the Biosphere Reserve and its key areas.

The **project area** is Kien Giang Province with its Man and the Biosphere Reserve, recognized by UNESCO in 2006.

The mission team proposes a **duration** of 5 years for the second phase of the project, starting in January 2011, with a **budget** of 5 Million Euro.

The mission identified one major **risk to the sustainability** of the project:

Given the strong plans to develop Phu Quoc Island into a high class touristic destination, it may be that the central or local government may set priorities that will overrule parts of this project's intentions. To reduce this risk, the project is designed to strengthen the advisory role of the Biosphere Management Board and raise the profile of the UNESCO concept of Man and the Biosphere.

The mission team proposes to continue the **arrangements on partner inputs and the GTZ personnel concept** as in the current phase. The executing agency has expressed its commitment to continue in this fashion.

Recommendations for the formulation of the offer to BMZ:

Current indicators for the overall objective are as follows, and need to be changed:

- No additional infrastructure is established in the core zones of the protected areas;
- No biological resources are taken illegally from the protected areas.

The reasoning for changing these indicators on overall objectives is as follows: The first indicator on infrastructure needs to be dropped because the mission found that unexpectedly some infrastructure is needed in U Minh Thuong NP to regulate the water level, and in Phu Quoc NP a major road project cutting the core area of 15 km length is something that couldn't be foreseen and cannot be influenced by the project. The second indicator should be changed to "effective management of biodiversity" (through water mgt and fire mgt) since illegal extraction of biological resources from parks is not the major problem, and there is need and potential to effectively manage biodiversity even outside the NPs.

In addition, a new indicator on promoting new and preserving existing coastal forest is recommended at the level of overall objectives as coastal forests are a key contribution to coastal protection and the focus of the work of this project. Finally, an indicator explicitly on climate change is needed, reflecting priority given to this topic in the Province and the focus of the overall programmatic approach.

Suggested indicators for the overall objective are:

1. The area of coastal forests has not been (significantly) reduced below current levels
2. Biodiversity of coastal forests is managed effectively.
3. Preparedness of coastal areas for climate change is improved.

4. The concept of the Biosphere Reserve is understood and applied widely for conservation of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change.

Recommendations for the programmatic approach:

- Coherence in at least one or two indicators between provinces, which was taken into account for Kien Giang, An Giang, Ca Mau
- Focus on adaptation to climate change issues in coastal areas, with particular reference to building resilience through biodiversity conservation, water management and land use practices
- Joint awareness raising and trainings across provinces (e.g. primary school resource book)
- Share databases and transfer knowledge between provinces (esp. on biodiversity of coastal ecosystems and climate change)
- Share knowledge and cooperate in work on coastal dynamics
- Apply in Ca Mau lessons learned on Mangrove restoration and rehabilitation from Kien Giang, Soc Trang and Bac Lieu
- Apply in An Giang lessons learned on Melaleuca, silviculture and land use on acid sulphate soils from Kien Giang
- Feed into national and (where existing) regional strategies (e.g. Mangrove and Dyke protection policy for the Mekong Delta) lessons learned in all provinces
- Identify opportunities for and facilitate cooperation between provinces, especially regarding water management between Kien Giang and An Giang
- Share experiences on Biosphere reserve management (Kien Giang and Ca Mau)
- In the light of the programmatic approach it is highly desirable to examine the possibilities for the Bac Lieu project to be continued after its first phase, in order to apply here lessons learned from the other projects and vice versa to feed its own experiences into the other projects of the proposed programme.

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Key data of the phase under review and recommendations for the new phase

AURA offer (or joint programme proposal)	Current phase	Recommendations for new phase
Title of development measure	Conservation and development of key sites in the man and biosphere reserve Kien Giang, Vietnam	Conservation and development of key sites in the man and biosphere reserve Kien Giang, Vietnam
Project/programme area	Kien Giang Province with its Man and the Biosphere Reserve, recognized by UNESCO in 2006.	Kien Giang Province with its Man and the Biosphere Reserve, recognized by UNESCO in 2006.
Lead executing agency	Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee (PPC)	Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee (PPC)
Implementing organisation(s) in the partner country	Department of Science and Technology (DOST)	Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
Term	07/2008 - 12/2010	01/2011 - 12/2016
Target groups / intermediaries	<p>The target group includes the poor population who uses the natural resources of the coastal forests, wetlands and protected areas as well as the staff of the National Parks.</p> <p>Mediators include staff of commune, district and provincial administrations. The Women's Union with its advisory and small credit services seemingly does not play a significant role with regard to women in poor</p>	<p>The target group includes the poor population who uses the natural resources of the coastal forests, wetlands and key areas of the Biosphere Reserve, as well as land users in the province. Intermediaries are local authorities, WU and youth union, and the staff and Management Board of the Biosphere Reserve and its key areas.</p>

	circumstances and therefore should be included here.	
Development-policy classification (Chapter 3.2- 3.4 AURA offer)		
Objectives and indicators	<p>The proposed objective of the first phase is as follows: The protected areas and coastal forests in Kien Giang Province are managed effectively.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area of coastal forests has not been reduced below current levels; • Artificial increase of the water level in the U Minh Thuong National Park is discontinued; • Improved fire management in Phu Quoc National Park leads to increased natural biodiversity; • Cattle grazing in the core zone of Phu Quoc National Park is discontinued; • Local people have new income opportunities. 	<p>The overall objective is to utilise the natural resources of Kien Giang Province in a sustainable way with effective management of the protected areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system for successfully restoring coastal forests, particularly mangroves, is established in the Province. • Understanding of and options for land and water use in the provinces of the South-Western Mekong Delta region in the face of climate change are increased • The local authorities are enabled to cope with the risks arising from infrastructure developments and climate change in the three key areas of the Biosphere • The Biosphere Management Board is strengthened in performing its role in managing the Biosphere Reserve for conservation of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change • Training has led to implementation of effective management measures, of which at least 3 (including fire management and biodiversity management) are related to the key areas of the Biosphere Reserve and 5 to promotion of sustainable livelihoods and wildlife protection for local communities, especially through the WUs. • The concept of the Biosphere Reserve is understood and applied widely for conservation of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change.
Results chain(s) <i>(from activities to the impact)</i>	The project will use the lessons learned from the Soc Trang Project. Baseline surveys will be conducted to produce inventories of animal and plant species present	<p>The project interventions will be designed along the following results chain:</p> <p>The project will use the lessons learned from the first</p>

<p>level)</p>	<p>in the key areas, especially in the core zones of the protected areas. This will provide the basis for the monitoring of the impacts of the project. Workshops will be undertaken with project collaborators to plan and share information within the project and between this project and the Soc Trang project.</p> <p>The approach of the project is a participatory one and will involve the interaction between farmers, extensionists and government officials. The project management system will be designed to be sufficiently flexible to support both current and evolving planning and implementation practices. The programme will be demand driven and targeted to appropriate stake holders. Awareness campaigns will be jointly implemented with the Soc Trang project to ensure wide applicability to different situations found in the Mekong delta.</p> <p>Livelihood development activities will be designed to include ethnic minorities (especially Khmer), poor families and women.</p> <p>From this follow the direct benefits of the project: collaboration between different stakeholders will be improved. They will agree on solutions that will ensure the sustainable use of forests and coastal wetlands and improve the participation of poor population groups in economic growth. At the same time, the core zones of the protected areas will be appropriately managed and safeguarded. This will also lead to new income alternatives (direct benefits). As a consequence, the basic livelihoods of the poor people who are dependent on the forests and coastal wetlands are assured, and the biodiversity of the region will be better protected and restored. The project therefore contributes to the improved implementation of the concept of the Man and</p>	<p>phase, from Soc Trang Project and Bac Lieu and share lessons with relevant AusAID and GTZ projects and between the five provinces of the proposed integrated coastal management programme. Baseline and new surveys, maps, studies will be produced on issues of management of coastal forests, biodiversity in key areas of the Biosphere Reserve and climate change impacts on natural resources. New techniques and models for land and water use, promoting biodiversity and resilience to climate change, will be developed for replication by the province. Support in trainings with follow-up will be provided in areas of management of the Biosphere Reserve, mangrove reforestation, promotion and effective management of livelihood activities. Support is provided to enable an effective and operational Biosphere Management Board. Capacity development and awareness raising on environmental and climate change issues in the Province will be supported. The province will be supported in organising exchange on coastal management with its neighbouring provinces with a view to biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.</p> <p>This will provide the basis for improved knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management against the background of climate change. The stakeholders will use inputs and skills contributing effectively to the implementation of the concept of the Biosphere Reserve.</p> <p>As an indirect result, natural resources of Kien Giang Province are utilised in a sustainable way with effective management of the key areas of the Biosphere reserve.</p> <p>As in the first phase, the approach of the project is a participatory one and will involve the interaction between farmers, WU and youth unions and government officials. The project management system is designed to be sufficiently flexible to support both current and evolving</p>
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	the Biosphere Reserve (indirect benefits).	<p>planning and implementation practices. The programme will be demand driven and targeted to relevant stake holders. Awareness campaigns and knowledge management will be jointly implemented with the other projects of the proposed programme (AusAID and GTZ) to ensure wide applicability to different situations found in the south west of the Mekong delta.</p> <p>The project will provide technical assistance in support of the poor, especially women, in the province successfully tapping existing livelihood and poverty alleviation programmes. It will also provide training and capacity building in biodiversity conservation in selected communities. These capacity building initiatives will work primarily through the WU at district and commune level.</p>
Cooperation partner DC / IC / PPP		
Inputs of major actors		
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The planned paper mill in the neighbouring province of Hau Giang, if realized, likely to increase the opportunities for the sale of large amounts of timber. This may lead to uncontrolled exploitation of the forests; The tourist boom on Phu Quoc Island could lead to the creation of infrastructure such as a golf course in the core zone and to other forms of development counterproductive for the purpose of the protected area and for the conservation of biodiversity 	<p>The mission identified one major risk to the sustainability of the project:</p> <p>Given the strong plans to develop Phu Quoc Island into a high class touristic destination, it may be that the central or local government may set priorities that will overrule parts of this project's intentions. To reduce this risk, the project is designed to strengthen the advisory role of the Biosphere Management Board and raise the profile of the UNESCO concept of Man and the Biosphere.</p>
Classifications	G-1	G-1

	UR-2	UR-2
Mode of delivery (components of promotion) incl. personnel concept	Short term and long term experts (LTE, STE), capacity building, financial contributions International CTA, National LTE	As in phase 1

7. Learning processes and lessons learned

This is addressed in sections 5.5. and 6.

8. Annexes to the PPR report