

UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI)

Overall goal: *To contribute to poverty reduction and improved well-being of poor and vulnerable groups through mainstreaming of poverty-environment linkages into national development processes.*

Objectives at country level:

- *Inclusion of environmental sustainability as a central objective in national development strategies, such as poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), MDG implementation plans or equivalents;*
- *Increasing national budget allocations in support of pro-poor environmental outcomes;*
- *Building the long-term capacity of the government to integrate poverty-environment concerns into the design and implementation of development plans.*

Basic Facts of PEI Viet Nam

- The focus of PEI in Viet Nam was on harmonizing poverty reduction and environmental goals in policy and planning for sustainable development. It aimed at strengthening government capacities to integrate environment and poverty reduction goals into policy frameworks for sustainable development.
- The project was launched by UNDP-Viet Nam prior to the launch of the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative and its scale-up across regions. It was originally entitled Poverty-Environment Project (PEP). The project was jointly financed by UNDP, DFID and the Government of Viet Nam.
- The project was coordinated by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.
- The implementation started in 2000 and ended in September 2009. The budget for the programme encompassed USD 3.7 millions (UNDP: USD 1,4 million, DFID: USD 2 millions and Government of Viet Nam: USD 300,000). Selected activities are still being implemented and supported through on-demand technical and policy advisory services.

The context of mainstreaming environment in Viet Nam

- Environmental conditions have a significant impact on the livelihoods, health and security of poor and vulnerable groups – in particular women and children – and better environmental management is critical to poverty reduction, sustainable growth and attainment of Viet Nam's Development Goals.
- The Government of Viet Nam has made considerable progress in establishing an overall strategic framework for sustainable development, including the National Orientation Strategy on Sustainable Development (National Agenda 21), the National Strategy for Environmental Protection and Vision until 2020 and the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy.
- Important policy and institutional gaps still remain, and significant capacity constraints at all levels of society threaten to undermine strategy implementation and the achievement of sustainable development outcomes.
- These strategic frameworks need to be fully consistent with the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2001-2010, and linkages between sector strategies need to be strengthened, for example, in the Socio- Economic Development Plan 2006-2010.
- This requires expanded efforts to mainstream environmental and sustainable natural resource use concerns into sector strategies and sector development planning. Similarly, poverty reduction concerns need to be mainstreamed into environmental and natural resource management policies and activities.

Main activities of PEI-Viet Nam

The project has four focal areas: forestry, fisheries, renewable energy and natural resources and environment. The main activities included:

- Improving knowledge and awareness within government and civil society of barriers, capacities and opportunities for natural resource use and environmental protection to contribute to national goals, targets and strategies for poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- Strengthening institutional capacity to monitor and report on poverty-environment indicators and outcomes, and to use this data effectively.
- Strengthening institutional mechanisms and capacity to integrate poverty reduction and environmental concerns into development policy and planning frameworks.
- Strengthening capacity in MONRE to set strategic priorities and develop policy and legal instruments that encourage environmental protection and natural resource use and support poverty reduction and improved equality.
- Strengthening institutional capacity of MONRE to coordinate donor support within a programmatic framework, regarding natural resource use and environmental protection, and links to poverty reduction.

What has been achieved to date?

- Site visits to the UK and Tanzania have contributed to gain knowledge and experience of lessons learned on poverty-environment mainstreaming in other countries.
- PEI Viet Nam has conducted ten participatory case studies to improve knowledge and awareness of how natural resource and environmental management may contribute to poverty reduction. The results of these studies are now being used to develop and pilot, using participatory methods, poverty-environment policy investment models in two communes in Ha Tay and Ha Tinh Provinces. These reports are available on the [project website](#) and under "Key documents for PEI".
- Additional country specific evidence was developed: a research on "Poverty and Climate Change in South-Central Viet Nam" was conducted for the Ha Tinh and Ninh Thuan provinces; a case study on payment for ecosystem services was developed and a study on the Natural Resource and Environment 5-year plan and poverty-environment issues was carried out. All these will further support poverty-environment mainstreaming,
- Particular progress has been made in the mainstreaming of poverty issues into environmental legal frameworks and regulations, notably the new biodiversity law which was approved by National Assembly in November 2008. A decree on compensation for damages caused by environmental pollution and degradation was also finalized and the development of a roadmap for environmental policy and legislation reform was initiated.
- Pilot activities in Hà Tây and Hà Tĩnh provinces were developed with a view to involve poor communities in developing and implementing environmental policies, legislation and regulation and accessing funds for Natural Resource Management and bio-conservation.
- Monitoring of poverty-environment indicators has improved through a review of existing indicators, developing a comprehensive list of indicators, and development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Manual. The set of indicators on poverty-environment was completed and will be used for mainstreaming poverty-environment concerns into national and provincial plans.
- Capacities to integrate poverty-environment concerns into national and provincial planning, including developing pro-poor economic instruments and building partnerships, have improved. Policy makers were trained at the national and provincial levels (Ha Nam, Ha Tinh, Ninh Thuan and Ha Noi) and a report on partnerships for environmental protection was completed. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in particular has strengthened its capacity to coordinate donor support within a programmatic framework, to understand poverty issues, and to influence the development authorities to attend to environment issues. PEI has also supported the Institute of Strategy and Policy on natural Resources and Environment to formulate a development strategy.

- Communication has been strengthened through the development of the poverty-environment network, a communication network of over 100 members including Government officials from various Ministries, to provide better support to the development of partnerships between Government donors and civil society in addressing poverty-environment issues. The project also raised public awareness through the [website](#) which features documents and reports, essay writing, photo and poster contests on poverty-environment, and dissemination of messages on poverty-environment linkages using nine public billboards in Hanoi.

Lessons learned

- Collaboration among line Ministries is the key for successfully integrating poverty-environment concerns into policies and planning.
- Participation of line Ministries in the implementation of the project is important for mainstreaming poverty-environment issues into sector planning and implementation.
- Demonstration models are required for effective dissemination of project results.

Way forward

- Continue to enhance the capacity to integrate poverty-environment issues into national and provincial planning, including developing pro-poor economic instruments.
- Complete on-going studies and conduct a new one on “Building Resilience - adaptive strategies for coastal livelihoods most at-risk to climate change impacts in Central Viet Nam” in Ha Tinh and Thua Thien Hue provinces.
- Develop a manual for integrating poverty-environment issues into plans.
- Support the integration of poverty issues into the Natural Resource and Environment Strategy 2011-2020.
- Support the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to develop the Law on Marine and Islands
- Pilot policy and investment models in three provinces: Ha Tay, Ha Nam and Ninh Thuan.
- Carry out communication activities in line with the strategy (e.g. news and events announced on the project website, forums on poverty and environment through poverty-environment communication network, development of the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment website).

Key documents for PEI-Viet Nam

- [Viet Nam Agenda 21](#)
- [Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy \(CPGRS\)](#)
- [Viet Nam National Environment Performance Assessment](#)
- [Law on Environmental Protection \(LEP\)](#)
- [Policy Brief - On Poverty and Environment linkages in Viet Nam, Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and United Nations Development Programme, 2008](#)
- [Understanding the voice of the Poor, Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and United Nations Development Programme, 2007](#)
- [Environmental Policies, Legislation and the Poor, Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and United Nations Development Programme, 2007](#)
- [The Environment, Income generation and the Poor, Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and United Nations Development Programme, 2008](#)
- [The Environment, Renewable Energy and the Poor, Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and United Nations Development Programme, 2008](#)
- [Health, Water Supply, Sanitation and the Poor, Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and United Nations Development Programme, 2008](#)

- [The Environment, Gender, Migration and the Poor, Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and United Nations Development Programme, 2008](#)

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