

**CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
INITIATIVES PROJECT**

## **Mid-term Progress Report**

**Hanoi**

**27 October, 1998**

### **FOREWORD**

In 1996, IUCN Vietnam was approached by the Responsible Tourism Working Group of the NGO Resource Centre with the suggestion that we might want to carry out a study on eco-tourism and sustainable tourism.

IUCN believes in sustainable development and community participation in natural resource management, and eco-tourism may provide the right foundation for this. We therefore agreed to take on the job, and the capacity building for sustainable tourism project was born. We deliberately use the word sustainable tourism, as we want to look at all environmental aspects of the tourism industry in Vietnam, including the cultural environment.

The project has a wide range of objectives, some of them fairly loose. This is a reflection on the fact that we know so little about tourism and environment in Vietnam. The overarching goal of the project is therefore to raise awareness about the situation, identify threats and opportunities.

After one year, it is time to take stock. The project has made significant steps in developing contacts, building a network of interested and concerned individuals, and getting the concept of sustainable tourism into the mainstream discussions on environment and development. A significant contribution in this respect was the presentation by the project staff and subsequent discussion during a recent review of the Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam.

The project is now getting down to on-the-ground activities, with a workshop in Sapa planned for early December. A number of the other products, which have been developed during the past year, will also see the light of day during the next few months. This includes a guide to eco-friendly travel in Vietnam, a number of Vietnamese reference texts and results of a survey of Vietnamese tour operators.

We hope that the second year will see closer interest and involvement from the donor community in Hanoi, as there is need for financial assistance. We will help to put together the concepts and proposals for continued involvement in this important development sector for Vietnam.

This report was written by the project staff, Annalisa Koeman and Nguyen Van Lam, and I hope that it will give the reader an indication of the challenges to build a sustainable tourism industry in Vietnam. Any comments and reactions are welcome, and they can be sent to the IUCN Office in Hanoi.

**Hans Friederich**

IUCN Country Representative in Vietnam  
Hanoi, 28 October 1998

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Insert box: Tread Softly – A Guide to Eco-friendly Travel in Vietnam

Insert box: International Conferences/Study Tours

Insert box: Roundtable Retreat on Sustainable Tourism

Insert box: Documentary Film on ‘Sustainable Tourism’ in Vietnam

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
ACTI	Australian Conservation Training Institute
CBST	Community Based Sustainable Tourism
CRES	Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
Eco-Eco	Institute for Ecological Economy
FF	Ford Foundation
FPD	Forest Protection Department
ICCO	Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation
ICER	International Centre for Ecotourism Research
ICIMOD	International Center for Integrated Mountain Development
ITDR	Institute for Tourism Development Research
KEEP	Kathmandu Environmental Education Project
KMTNC	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
MOSTE	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
NEA	National Environment Agency
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
NTFPRC	Non-timber Forest Products Research Centre
ONT	Office of National Tourism
OWT	One World Travel
RTWG	Responsible Tourism Working Group
STA	Sa Pa Tourism Association
STAS	Sustainable Tourism Action Strategy
STP	Sustainable Tourism Project
STRC	Sustainable Tourism Research Centre
SRTWG	Sa Pa Responsible Tourism Working Group
TES	The Ecotourism Society
TMI	The Mountain Institute
TVE	Television Trust for the Environment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VNAT	Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
VTV	Vietnam Television

### **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**

- a) Networking & Information Exchange
- b) Research & Analysis
- c) Education & Training
- d) Support for a Pilot Project
- e) Advocacy
- f) Project Extension

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Project Background**

The "*Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project*" (Sustainable Tourism Project or STP for short), evolved from concern amongst International NGOs working in Vietnam with the potential and observed impacts of tourism on ethnic minority groups and their environment, particularly in Sa Pa District, Lao Cai Province which had experienced rapid tourism development in the mid 1990s.

A study undertaken in early 1996 on behalf of the Oxfam family in Vietnam by One World Travel (Community Aid Abroad) in Australia - "*Tourism and Minority Groups in Hoa Binh, Lao Cai and Lang Son, Vietnam*" - made a number of recommendations, including:

- Design a project to engage key national tourism stakeholders about the negative effects of tourism on minority groups and the planning that can be put in place to prevent the problems;
- Develop a project in Sa Pa to include, among other things, the establishment of guidelines for fair and sustainable tourism in Sa Pa; facilitation of a broad consultative process with local villages about tourism and its impacts and the establishment of a local Tourism Committee.
- Develop a handout and poster with information on minority groups and behavioral guidelines for travelers;
- Monitor the impact of tourism on minority groups and their environment and plan effective strategies to minimise problems.

Following this report, Oxfam and other INGOs in Vietnam established an ad-hoc, informal 'responsible tourism

working group' (RTWG), and spent over a year developing a proposal which was finally termed *the "Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Project"*. IUCN was asked to become the implementing agency, and Ford Foundation, Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and the Oxfam family agreed to fund the two year project to the sum of USD250,305.

### **1.1.1. Midterm Report and Financial Report**

This mid term report is a requirement of grant funding by Ford Foundation and the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation. It is accompanied by mid-term financial reports (reporting period September 1997 – August 1998) for each of the two major donor organisations.

Project activities for the STP as outlined in this mid term report are those undertaken from the period 17 October 1997 to 17 October 1998 – from the first day of work of the Project Advisor. The financial reporting year commenced with the recruitment of the Project Advisor in August/September 1997.

The establishment of the STP office at IUCN Vietnam, 13 Tran Hung Dao began with the purchase of furniture, equipment and consumables by the Advisor and IUCN staff in October 1997.

## **1.2. Institutional Arrangements**

### **1.2.1. Sustainable Tourism Project Team**

On the 17 October 1997, the advisor to the STP, Ms Annalisa Koeman, commenced work at IUCN Vietnam after formally accepting the position from Australia in September.

Interviews for the position of Project Coordinator (later to be re-named Project Director) were undertaken in October following consideration of twelve applications. Three interviews were conducted in person by the Advisor and Dr Hans Friederich, IUCN Country Representative. Another applicant, resident in HCMC, was unable to accept the remuneration package offered and hence did not reach formal interview stage.

Mr Nguyen Van Lam, formerly of Vietnam Tourism, was offered the position and commenced work on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1997.

### **1.2.2. Project Counterpart**

In late November the STP was informed by the National Environment Agency – NEA - that, contrary to previous understanding between IUCN and the Ministry of Science Technology and Environment , the STP was required by law to have a formal Vietnamese counterpart.

In February THE STP Advisor approached the Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES) proposing CRES become the interim project counterpart during the first phase of the project (ie: first two years), during which time other potential organisations would be investigated and assessed for future collaboration and capacity strengthening activities. One of these future potential counterparts was the Institute for Tourism Development Research (ITDR) under the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism.

Later NEA informed IUCN that it had already been in contact with VNAT on the issue of counterpart. ITDR had been chosen as the project counterpart. A meeting was held in July between ITDR and IUCN to formalise the counterpart arrangement

The role of the counterpart, as expressed by the STP advisor at this meeting was as follows:

1. Assign a person to be liaison officer for the Sustainable Tourism Project.
2. This person would be responsible for:
  - organising official authorisations, permissions etc for the project, including visas, sponsor visitors, publishing/printing, organising events etc;
  - reporting to the counterpart director on the activities of the Sustainable Tourism Project (the Project

would be in regular contact with the liaison officer and can brief on activities at any time);

- be available to the Project in the event of any difficulties (eg: visa, access to information, contact with officials etc);
3. The liaison officer and the counterpart would not be involved in directing or managing day to day operations and activities of the Project. However, the counterpart will certainly be approached for advice and expertise input, and possibly assistance in organising or managing certain activities such as workshops, research... Thus the counterpart may be a direct collaborator/implementing agency with the IUCN team on specific activities of the Project as a whole, while other organisations will also play this role (see last paragraph).
  4. It is possible that the liaison officer could play a greater role by being employed part time by the Project to work on daily project activities and initiatives, and hence be based at the IUCN Sustainable Tourism Project office part time. In this role it is hoped that the liaison officer would benefit from increased skills and knowledge in the area of sustainable tourism, and impart this knowledge to the counterpart.
  5. It would be important that a proficient English speaker, someone with initiative and open to new ideas, and a hard worker, be appointed as liaison officer for the Project.

As per the Project Proposal, the Project will be assigning tasks (contracting out work) to Vietnamese institutions, NGOs or foreign consultants as required, depending on the task and the skills and expertise required. This is important because it strengthens the Project's network and contributes to the goal of awareness raising of sustainable tourism at all levels, and it means specific skills can be applied most appropriately to the activity/task at hand.

**Note:** In November the STP had requested a formal introduction from NEA to the head of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT). When this was not forthcoming the STP team initiated contacts with the Vice Director of VNAT, Mr Vu Tuan Canh, and the Head of International Relations, Dr Nguyen Van Luu. Introductions were also made to ITDR in November, initially through the Head of the Training Department, and Vice Dean of the Faculty of Tourism at Hanoi Open University, Dr Nguyen Van Thanh.

The STP met on several occasions with VNAT representatives to discuss STP proposed activities such as the production of a responsible travel booklet and convening of a national workshop on development of a national ecotourism strategy for Vietnam, and to commission ITDR to conduct a study of tour operators from around the country (to ascertain their level of environmental awareness and environmental behaviour and cultural sensitivity). Further, in April 1988 the STP had supported ITDR's workshop on "Ecotourism's Role in Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam".

### **1.2.3. Project Steering Committee**

Unfortunately after one year of the STP, a formal Project Steering Committee has yet to be established.

In the early days of the STP, a request was made to NEA to assist with the formal establishment of the Steering Committee. This was deferred until the formalisation of counterpart arrangements, as it was felt the counterpart should be responsible for inviting members to the Steering Committee. When agreement was made with ITDR however, the STP/IUCN was requested to invite members to join the Steering Committee. A formal approach was then made by Dr Hans Friederich to the head of NEA, Dr Sinh, to head and convene the Steering Committee.

To date the lack of Steering Committee has not hindered the STP in carrying out its work. The STP has been able to confer with many of the proposed Steering Committee members individually, as well as other Vietnamese individuals and institutions, including Professors Le Quy An and Le Thac Can.

The value of a Steering Committee with an advisory role is acknowledged, and it is hoped that a first convening of the Committee will take place before Christmas.

## **1.3. Impediments to Effective Project Implementation**

### **1.3.1. Institutional**

It appears that several factors are hindering acknowledgement of the value (and hence importance) of the project and have contributed to the delay in formalisation of both the counterpart and Steering Committee:

- The size of the project budget;
- Uncertainty amongst authorities as to what the project aims to achieve (being the first of its kind);
- Lack of clear responsibility for 'sustainable tourism' that incorporates environmental, cultural and socio-economic issues;
- Lack of priority given to tourism by the National Environment Agency;
- Lack of capacity/skills within VNAT and ITDR to undertake a small project that focuses on environmental impacts and ethnic minority considerations and community/local scale initiatives (and continued emphasis on large scale projects);
- Lack of linkages/collaboration/cooperation/dialogue between NEA and VNAT.
- Unfortunately the lengthy process of formalising counterpart arrangements, coupled with the lack of clear responsibility for inviting and convening the Steering Committee, did occupy valuable time that could have been more productively used.

### **1.3.2. Human resources**

The Project Director has valuable practical experience with the tourism industry in Vietnam, and has numerous contacts with state tour operators and tourism bodies.

The advertisement for a Vietnamese national for the position of "Sustainable Tourism Project Coordinator" met with applications from those with tourism backgrounds, but none with experience in development, environment or culture. This was largely because of the applicants' lack of exposure to/knowledge of 'sustainable tourism'. In hindsight such a position should have been advertised under a different title.

The STP is in effect providing capacity strengthening and skills training, through practical experience (and attendance at workshops and training courses – such as the Community Tourism Training Programme in Nepal in February 1999).

The titles of both STP staff do not reflect their real roles and responsibilities. The role of the Project Advisor is actually a multiple one: management, coordination, project formulation and development, administration, representation. In reality the Project Director fulfills the role of Project Assistant.

The employment of Ms Nguyen Quynh Nga from ITDR as Project Assistant is anticipated to ease the current work load slightly.

### **1.3.3. The project budget**

Though the STP has considerable flexibility in the activities that can be undertaken within each objective, the line items in the project budget do not reflect this flexibility and are generally insufficient to cover the costs of proposed activities.

A request is being made to re-allocate money between line items and budget components now that certain training and workshop activities have been identified as priorities.

## **2.0. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

Where possible, STP activities will be outlined under the STP objectives. Some activities fall under more than one objective.

### **2.1. Networking & Information Exchange**

### **2.1.1. Internet and email**

In January the STP connected to the Internet. The resources on sustainable tourism available in the Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre (STRC) have been supplemented by valuable material gained from key websites on the internet e.g.:

EcoNETT; GreenGlobe; PATA; WTO; The Ecotourism Society; Tourism Concern; International Centre for Ecotourism Research; Mountain Forum; UNEP; IUCN WCPA Taskforce on Tourism and Protected Areas; Tourism Research Links; El Planeta....

In May the STP participated in the Mountain Forum's interactive email conference on 'Community Based Mountain Tourism: practices for linking conservation with enterprise'. Again, valuable case study material was collected for the STRC, and useful contacts made.

The STP has joined "Contents Direct" from Elsevier Science which provides listings of contents of three tourism related journals, and the Cultural Heritage and Development Network List. Outputs are filed for reference purposes.

### **2.1.2. Consultation with international tourism guide books, tour operators and tourism NGOs**

The STP has consulted with international tourism guide books, tour operators and tourism NGOs on the formulation of a 'responsible travel' booklet for Vietnam. e.g.:

Active Travel (Australia)  
 Intrepid Travel (Australia)  
 One World Travel (Australia)  
 VidoTour (J/V Vietnam)  
 Buffalo Tours (Vietnam)  
 O.S.C Travel (J/V Vietnam)  
 Destination Asia (J/V Vietnam)  
 Lonely Planet  
 The Rough Guide  
 Moon Travel Handbook  
 Footprint Handbooks  
 Rethinking Tourism Project  
 Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism  
 Network for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism  
 Tourism Concern  
 The Ecotourism Society

#### **Tread Softly – A Guide to Eco-friendly Travel in Vietnam**

Two versions of the responsible travel booklet have been written by the STP, one targeting domestic tourists, the other international tourists. Editing and design assistance was sought from media consultants in Hanoi for the international version. Both versions have been shared with ITDR, Committee for Protection and Care of Children (CPEC), IUCN staff and VNAT. VNAT has responded with written support for the initiative, with a promise to assist with permission and distribution.

It is hoped that a first run of 50,000 VN and 50,000 English version booklets can be produced.

Two local artists have been approached to assist with design of the cover and interior sketches. When finalised, three quotations will be obtained (for recycled paper if possible), and the booklets will be presented to potential donors. The Canada Fund has expressed some interest in the exercise, as have a couple of Vietnamese tour operators.

When preparation of the booklet began, the STP approached Vietnam Airlines and Heritage (inflight magazine) for financial and distribution assistance (placing the booklets on all VN Airlines flights), but met with the response that this was an 'unprecedented proposal'. It was recommended that the STP prepare a complete version of the booklet to present to Vietnam Airlines at a later date. At the same



time, Intrepid Travel expressed some interest in contributing financially, however this option no longer exists.

### 2.1.3. Establishing linkages with NGOs involved in CBST, ecotourism etc

The STP has establishing linkages with NGOs in the region, both international and national, involved in community based sustainable tourism, ecotourism or integrated rural(mountain) development. For example:

- ASSET (Philippines)
- Bina Swadaya Tours of Bina Swadaya Foundation (Indonesia)
- Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism
- Impect (Thailand)
- Indonesian Ecotourism Network (INDECON)
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP) (Nepal)
- King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation and Annapurna Conservation Area Project (Nepal)
- Kunming Institute of Botany
- Multatuli Travel (Netherlands)
- Network for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism (Thailand)
- Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
- Rethinking Tourism Project
- Thai Volunteer Service (REST project)
- The Mountain Institute (Nepal and US)
- The Ecotourism Society
- Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA)
- Tourism Investigation and Monitoring Team (t.i.m. team)
- Tourism Concern
- WWF Malaysia
- Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences

### 2.1.4. International donor, government agencies, tourism organisations, educational institutions

The STP has been in contact with, shared information and obtained advice from many international donor, government agencies, tourism organisations, consultants, educational institutions etc. For example:

- ATLAS (European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education)
- Australian Conservation Training Institute
- Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism
- GreenGlobe (World Travel and Tourism Council)
- Hanns Seidel Foundation
- International Ecotourism Research Centre
- IUCN WCPA Taskforce on Tourism and Protected Areas
- Lincoln International
- Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB)
- Office of National Tourism (Australia)
- PACT
- Profound
- Television for the Environment (TVE)
- Tilburg Katholieke Universiteit Brabant (Program in International Tourism Study)
- Tool Consult
- Tourism Resource Consultants
- Tourism Council Australia
- UNDP Bangkok and Vietnam (Highland People's Programme)
- UNESCO (Nam Ha Ecotourism Project, Lao)
- UNEP (Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)
- UNIDO Vietnam (Cultural village tourism project, Hoa Luu)
- University of North London, Centre for Leisure and Tourism Studies
- University of Luton, Business School, Department of Tourism and Leisure
- World Tourism Organisation (WTO)...

The STP has established contact with **'ethical' or 'eco' tour operators in the region**, including: One World Travel; Borneo Ecotours; Borneo Rainforest Lodge; Sea Canoe; Tiger Mountain; Temple Tiger; East-West Siam; Ecotour Samoa...

### 2.1.5. Vietnamese stakeholders

In addition to VNAT and ITDR, NEA and MoSTE, the STP has met with and discussed sustainable tourism and ecotourism with representatives from the following Vietnamese stakeholders (and more):

Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas  
 Committee for the Protection and Care of Children  
 DOSTE representatives from several provinces  
 Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies  
 Forest Protection Department, Forest Science Institute and Forest Inventory and Planning Institute:  
 MARD  
 Hanoi National Economics University  
 Hanoi Research and Training Center for Community Development (RTCCD) (NGO)  
 Hanoi Tour Operators Club (part of the Hanoi Department of Tourism of Hanoi People's Committee)  
 Hanoi University of Science  
 Human Geography Research Centre, Institute for Folk Studies and Institute of Ethnology: National  
 Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities  
 Institute for Ecological Economy (NGO)  
 Institute for Ecology and Biological Resources (National Center for Science and Technology)  
 Ministry of Culture and Information  
 MPI Department of Trade and Services Department  
 MOET Centre for Education Technology  
 National Park managers from several national parks  
 National Research Program on Natural Resources and Environment  
 Sub Institute of Ecological Resources and Environmental Studies  
 Tour companies, both private and state owned, including some joint venture companies  
 Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
 Vietnam Environment and Sustainable Development Centre  
 Vietnam Sub Association of National Parks and Protected Areas  
 Vietnam Television  
 Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations

The STP discussed with a representative of the Vietnam Sub Association of National Parks and Protected Areas a proposal to develop a poster for educating visitors to National Parks in Vietnam on the local environment and environmentally appropriate behaviour.

### 2.1.6. Tourism researchers and consultants

The STP has shared information on the STP with various researchers and consultants, both in personal meetings and via email, and assisted them with information, advice and contacts. Interactions with researchers have been mutually beneficial, with research reports and other reference materials being donated to the STRC. For example:

a) Anne Casson, Research Fellow, Resource Management in Asia Pacific Project, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU, Australia:

*'The political ecology of tourism in Sa Pa, Northern Vietnam'*, and

*'Awareness of social and environmental issues among some private tour operators in Hanoi, northern Vietnam'*.

- a. Dr Judith Cukier, Lecturer and Coordinator Tourism Studies Programme, Department of Geography, University of Waikato, NZ.  
 Research on international tourists choosing to travel with private tour cafes in Vietnam – socio-economic/demographics as well as motivations, expectations, degree of satisfaction etc.  
 Dr Cukier approached the STP Advisor to co-write a chapter of a forthcoming book on Vietnam's upland areas edited by Professor Geoffrey Hainsworth of the University of British Columbia. The chapter was completed in October 1998 and is entitled *'Towards Sustainable Mountain Tourism: the case of Sa Pa, Vietnam'*.
- b. Linda Nguyen, undergraduate honours student in Tourism Studies, Department of Geography, University of Waikato, NZ.  
 Research into the role of tour guides in enhancing or detracting from the tourist experience.
- c. Dr Trish Nicholson, Consultant and former Country Representative of VSO Philippines. Report for Department of International Development UK:

*'Culture, Tourism and Local Strategies Towards Development: case studies in the Philippines and Vietnam'*

- d. Janet Martin, Asian Studies Honours Student, Murdoch University, Australia.  
*'Tourism, Employment and Gender in Hanoi, Vietnam: Women Work or Women's Work?'*
- e. Kate Lloyd, Research Fellow, Department of Asian and International Studies, Victoria University  
PhD into institutional organisation/management/control of tourism in Vietnam and its implications for the sustainability of the industry.
- f. Dr Jean Michaud, Anthropologist, Lecturer in Thai Language and Culture, Centre for South East Asian Studies, University of Hull, UK.
- g. Dr Michaud offered to write a report for the STP based on a collation of tourism related findings of his research on the H'mong in Sa Pa. The result was *'A Few Observations on Tourism in Sa Pa District: with special attention paid to ethnic minorities'*.

The STP organised a joint presentation with Dr Michaud to the Ethnic Minority Working Group at the NGO Resource Centre during a brief visit to Hanoi by Dr Michaud in May 1998. The focus of the presentation was on the need for more research on the impacts of tourism on ethnic minority groups in Sa Pa, the research methodology and the how the outcomes would be used to increase the voice of local people's in the proposed community tourism planning workshop. Dr Michaud presented a 'counter-argument' or critique of the STP's research aims, methodology and justification.

### **2.1.7. Facilitation of linkages**

The STP has facilitated linkages between international consultants and researchers, some of them based full or part time in Vietnam, with Vietnamese institutions and tour operators.

### **Non-timber Forest Product Consumption in the Tourism Sector**

At the end of 1997, IUCN and the STP was approached by Ms Lisa Brinkman, a Masters of Science student at the University of Guelph in Canada studying international rural planning and development. Ms Brinkman had access to CIDA research funding and was keen to contribute to IUCN's work in Vietnam by tailoring her research to IUCN's priorities.

STP proposed the following topic: "To Investigate the Impact of Tourism on the Collection, Use and Cultivation of Timber and Non-timber Forest Products", and approached the Non-Timber Forest Products Research Centre (NTFPRC) to see if they were willing to be Lisa's formal Vietnamese sponsor organisation. NTFPRC agreed to assist Ms Brinkman, acknowledging that the research could feed into or indeed be part of the pipeline IUCN three year NTFP Project being implemented by the NTFPRC in collaboration with CRES and Eco-Eco.

Over several months, with the advice of IUCN NTFP Regional Advisor in Bangkok, a research proposal was developed, with a new, non-tourism focus: "The Study of Formal and Informal Property Rights of Non-Timber Forest Product Resource Land in Buffer Zones of two National Parks in Northern Vietnam". Ms Brinkman was a successful applicant for CIDA funding and will be based at the NTFPRC, along with the IUCN NTFP Project Advisor, in 1999.

### **Development of Ecotours**

The STP has facilitated communication between Doug Hainsworth, tourism consultant from British Columbia keen to develop community based ecotourism, and Bettina Greiser-Johns, ecotourism consultant based in Nghe An with both the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute and TF Handspan Travel (private tour operator) to discuss ecotourism in Mai Chau, and with the Forest Tourism Service Company of the Forestry Corporation of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to discuss ecotourism development in Phu Mat.

Further, the STP was approached by the International Finance Corporation seeking information on possible private sector tourism businesses to support in 'ecotourism' ventures.

### **2.1.8. Membership and subscriptions**

The STP has become a member of The Ecotourism Society, Tourism Concern and Cultural Survival. It receives newsletters from TES (copies of which are forwarded to the Forest Protection Department of MARD),

the quarterly publication *In Focus* from Tourism Concern and *Cultural Survival Quarterly* from Cultural Survival.

The STP has purchased reference materials (including video documentaries, teaching packs, books and reports) for the Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre from both organisations. Further, it has received feedback on ideas, recommendations, contacts and general moral support from both organisations.

STP has also subscribed to 'Contours', the magazine of Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism, and receives 'New Frontiers' from the t.i.m. team.

The STP Advisor has contributed an article on the project to Contours, for possible publication in issue 3-4 1998.

### **Translation, publication and dissemination of reference materials**

The STP has obtained permission for translation into Vietnamese, publication and free distribution of three reference books:

*Ecotourism: a guide for planners and managers* (TES),

*Beyond the Green Horizon: a discussion paper on Principles for Sustainable Tourism* (WWFUK/Tourism Concern), and

*Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas* (IUCN)

The STP is covering costs of translation, and coordinating with the IUCN implemented project "Strengthening the Environment Management Authority" (SEMA) to edit and cover costs of publishing (and distributing) the books. WWF Vietnam is contributing editing and financial assistance for the production of *Beyond the Green Horizon*.

STP has ten original copies of *Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas*, which it will present to the Director of each of Vietnam's 10 National Parks, along with a Vietnamese version. STP has had some difficulty in organising for the purchase of negatives of the figures, drawings, tables and photographs from the original *Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas* to include in the Vietnamese version.

STP plans to distribute, in coordination with SEMA and WWF, all three Vietnamese publications to national parks and protected area managers, tour operators, provincial and district government departments (DOSTE, DPI, Trade and Tourism, DARD), central government Ministries and Departments, Tourism Faculties of Universities and other.

Further translations and publications are planned with the financial assistance of SEMA.

## **2.2. Research & Analysis**

### **2.2.1. Extent of involvement in, impacts of and attitudes towards tourism of ethnic minority residents, Sa Pa District**

After deciding on Sa Pa as the site for the pilot project, and having collected the known research conducted in Sa Pa on tourism issues, the STP decided to commission further research to try and gather more material on the 'extent of involvement in, impacts of, and attitudes towards tourism'.

Basic questions to be answered included:

- Are they experiencing negative impacts?
- Are they changing their lifestyles, and are the changes detrimental?
- Are they wanting to reap more benefits, get more involved in tourism or not?
- Are they feeling restricted in the extent to which they can be involved (and reap greater economic benefits)?

Are they utilising the Hoang Lien Son Nature Reserve more intensively because of tourism?

The STP considered the research necessary in order to:

- supplement/complement/add to research (fill the gap in research) already undertaken in Sa Pa;
- understand the issues, problems or impacts (both good and bad) as perceived by local ethnic minority groups in Sa Pa;
- consider whether the predominant assumption that tourism is having negative impacts on ethnic minorities is founded or not;
- to assist in determining the type of activities to be undertaken as part of the pilot project;
- to feed into the first 'activity' of the pilot project - a community tourism planning workshop which would have as one of its outputs a draft sustainable tourism action for the District - as a means to strengthen ethnic minority involvement in tourism discussion, planning and decision making.

The research included four target groups: Residents of four selected communes of Sa Pa District; ethnic minority street sellers and street children in Sa Pa town; Kinh townfolk; domestic and international tourists. Lao Chai, San Sa Ho, Ta Van and Ta Phin Communes were chosen, based on their distance from Sa Pa, ethnic minority mix and proximity to Hoang Lien Son Nature Reserve.

The Human Geography Research Centre of the National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities was chosen to conduct the research, in conjunction with a member of CEMMA and a member of the Institute for Folkculture (both conducted research with Michael diGregorio from East West Centre on 'Growth and Impact of Tourism in Sa Pa' in 1996).

The research commenced at the beginning of June. At the time of writing the second draft report had just been received by the STP. It is anticipated that revision, and possible external review/editing will be required before the final report is ready.

### ***2.2.2. National Survey of Vietnamese Tour Operators: Level of awareness of sustainable tourism and the environmental and cultural impacts of tourism***

In February the STP approached ITDR to commission a national survey of tour operators. The proposed aims of the research were to:

- gain an insight into the extent of tour operators' awareness of sustainable tourism and related management, operational and regulative/licensing actions (eg: codes of sustainable practice or conduct, principles of sustainable tourism..);
- gain an insight into the differences between tourist segments eg: domestic and foreign w.r.t. destinations and activities, behaviour and environmental and cultural impacts;
- gain an insight into the extent of tour operators' awareness of the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and culture;
- find out about the attitudes of tour operators towards ethnic minorities, and ethnic minority involvement in tourism, and operators' opinions on the impacts of tourism on ethnic minority culture and environments;
- determine tour operators' actions to minimise the negative impacts of tourism (if any);

The research was considered as an awareness raising exercise for those operators who took part. The STP chose some brief materials on sustainable tourism which were translated into Vietnamese and presented to each tour operator interviewed.

Both private and state operators are being chosen from eight regions of Vietnam (Hanoi; HCMC; Ha Long/Hai Phong; Hue; Da Nang/Hoi An; Nha Trang, Ba Ria/Vung Tau; Da Lat and the Mekong Delta. It is hoped that over 30% of Vietnam's tour operators will be included in the survey.

ITDR commenced the survey at the beginning of August, and estimates it will be finished by the end of the year. Some difficulties are being reported due to the length and depth of interviews.

ITDR was chosen to undertake the research, despite concerns about its research capacity, as the STP felt that it would be a good awareness raising exercise for ITDR and those it employed to undertake the interviews, as well as be a positive public relations exercise to build closer links between the STP and ITDR and ultimately VNAT.

Based on the results of the survey the STP anticipates formulating some recommendations to ITDR and VNAT with respect to a licensing or accreditation system for tour operators; awareness raising and training activities for tour operators and their guides in sustainable tourism, ecotourism, community based sustainable tourism, and possibly activities focusing on educating tourists.

### **2.2.3. Tourism research and proposal development, Mai Chau District, Hoa Binh**

STP has been approached by Mr Marcus Madeja, a researcher and tour operator/consultant based in Hanoi who is undertaking research on tourism in Lac village (Thai minority) Mai Chau. The focus of the research is on the impact of tourism and on the institutional organisation of tourism at the village, commune and district level. STP is considering commissioning a report on his research findings as it would provide an excellent comparison to the research in Sa Pa, and further be a valuable addition to the STRC.

Mr Madeja is also interested in developing a proposal for capacity strengthening of the District authorities in tourism planning and management, which he is currently discussing with the STP. Such a proposal could be included in a final set of recommended activities prepared by STP at the end of its term.

## **2.3. Education and Training**

### **2.3.1. Sustainable Tourism Training Project (WUSC)**

The STP contributed to the World University Service of Canada's 'Sustainable Tourism Training Project'(STTP) at the Faculty of Tourism, Hanoi Open University. In May, STP attended a field trip to Mai Chau with the students and teachers of the Sustainable Tourism Training Project, and a film crew from Vietnam Television. The STP participated in field exercises and contributed to group discussion with students.

The STP shared information and ideas with the teachers from WUSC, and was asked to provide advice and suggestions on the Sustainable Tourism Training Manual being developed for the Faculty. The students from the STTP were invited to visit the STRC with their teachers, and following this introductory visit a couple of students visited to gather information for research projects, and others for undergraduate theses.

STP assisted one honours student applying the travel cost method to tourism destinations by obtaining theoretical materials on the Travel Cost Method from contacts in Australia.

### **2.3.2. Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre (STRC)**

At all workshops and meetings that the STP team has attended, the STP has been introduced and the STRC mentioned, with invitations to all to come and visit and use our reference materials. To date however there have been relatively few individuals visit the STRC.

To date the STP has purchased a few original books from overseas, has collected for free certain government publications eg: guidelines and manuals, has had research reports, texts and other references donated by visiting researchers and academics, and has photocopied other references from sources in Hanoi. Recently STP purchased two VHS 3 hour video cassettes from Tourism Concern with a number of documentaries on tourism impacts from around the world.

It is unfortunate that the project budget does not include a line item specifically for purchase of a comprehensive collection of original reference materials. To date any purchases have been allocated to the contingency line item (B/L 500).

One goal for the second year is to advertise the centre more widely, and possibly hold an 'opening' ceremony. Such a public launch depends on the success of an application made by STP in August to the Australian

Embassy's Direct Aid Program for a grant of USD5,000 to purchase reference materials.

### **2.3.3. Facilitation of a discussion on the need for a national sustainable tourism curricula**

The STP initiated some preliminary discussions on the need for a national sustainable tourism curricula to be taught at all tourism universities, colleges and departments. This idea was shared with WUSC staff, the European Union (a large, 5 year, nationally implemented 'Human Resource Development in Tourism' Project has been proposed), and the advisor to the EU funded 'Capacity Building for Environmental Management in Vietnam' Project. It was also raised in discussions with representatives from various educational institutions (currently teaching tourism or wishing to teach ecotourism).

STP decided that such a large initiative required resources, skills, time and political influence far beyond what STP could offer, however the idea of a workshop or 'roundtable' to bring educational institutions together to discuss a national curricula is a possibility for the future, and may be one proposal produced at the end of the second year.

### **2.3.4. International Community Based Tourism Training Programme, Nepal, 25/2/99 – 6/3/99**

The STP has decided to support two Vietnamese to attend this training course in Nepal, organised by the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre of Thailand (RECOFTC) and The Mountain Institute (TMI), in collaboration with the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) and the Institute of Forestry, Nepal.

Originally it was proposed by the STP that one or two persons from Sa Pa attend the training course, however no-one in Sa Pa has sufficient knowledge of English to attend the course, and unfortunately the nominated person from the Women's Union is not recommended by INGOs working in Sa Pa. Further, the STP cannot invest in intensive English training (and the time is insufficient).

It has been decided that a better option is to support project officers working with I/NGOs (as none have staff trained in community based sustainable tourism). Thus, the STP Director, Nguyen Van Lam will participate (the participation of the STP Director is important to the STP activities in general and its activities in Sa Pa in particular), as well as one member of a Vietnamese NGO. Investigations are currently underway to identify a female participant from an NGO that works with ethnic minority groups. One possibility is Towards Ethnic Women (TEW).

### **2.3.5. National Workshop: Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam**

Since early 1998 the STP has been working on developing a proposal for a national interactive workshop (as distinct from a seminar) on ecotourism, the aim being to raise awareness on ecotourism; present the experience with ecotourism from other countries in the region and their efforts to develop National Ecotourism Strategies or Plans; assess the appropriateness or relevance of these efforts to the Vietnamese situation; consider the strengths, constraints, opportunities, risks and expectations with respect to developing ecotourism in Vietnam, and to determine the need for developing an NES for Vietnam.

The STP has conferred with a few key Vietnamese environmental organisations or individuals in the development of this idea, as well as international experts and organisations. All have supported the idea. The STP has had valuable input and contributions to the proposal from the director of the Australian Conservation Training Institute in Sydney and a representative from the Office of National Tourism, Australia, both of whom have been invited to facilitate the workshop, along with a Vietnamese team of facilitators and interpreters. The STP Advisor met both ACTI and ONT during a visit to Australia in July/August and is in regular email communication with them.

It is proposed that the three day workshop take place in Cuc Phuong National Park in the first quarter of 1999.

The estimated budget for the workshop, including participation of presenters from Malaysia, Australia, Thailand and Nepal, is currently over USD15,000. The fee for overseas facilitators has yet to be included (one can donate time for free, another requires payment). The Canada Fund has been approached to ascertain its interest in contributing (it can only cover local costs). A request will be made to donors for a transfer of funds between line items to increase the STP contribution to the workshop (currently only USD3,000 is available for two national workshops).

### **2.3.6. Training Course: Ecotourism training, and development of an ecotourism manual, for National Park and Protected Area Managers and Staff**

In late April, the STP learnt of an ecotourism training course being held in Thailand for representatives from ASEAN by Lincoln International (with funding from the Mekong Institute). In May, STP met with a representative from Lincoln International (the consulting arm of Lincoln University, New Zealand) to learn about the training course and whether Lincoln International was interested in holding a course in Vietnam and developing a training manual specific to Vietnam.

Lincoln was interested in the idea but was not certain of its overall programme strategy for Vietnam or the funding that would be available. It promised to keep in touch.

The STP subsequently met with the head of the Forest Protection Department (FPD) of MARDC to discuss the need for ecotourism training and whether such a course would be considered valuable. FPD responded to the affirmative.

In May the STP was put in contact with the Australian Conservation Training Institute to discuss STP's proposed National Ecotourism Workshop. Ecotourism training was also discussed. In July/August the STP Advisor obtained material from ACTI on its Ecotourism Planning and Management Training Programme.

ACTI has held intensive six-week Ecotourism Planning and Management Training Programs in Australia for participants from African and Asia Pacific countries, and has also conducted the ecotourism program in India. Each course that ACTI conducts is designed to fit the specific requirements of recipient countries.

The course includes four components:

1. Ecotourism Planning and Management;
2. Effective Business and Marketing for Ecotourism;
3. Infrastructure Design and use of Low Impact Technology in Ecotourism;
4. Ecotourism for the Benefit of Conservation and Communities.

ACTI is a joint initiative of the Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales, the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). As such, ACTI acts as an "NGO consulting body" and its fees are at cost. It hence offers competitive rates compared to other consulting bodies.

Following an expression of interest from ACTI to come to Vietnam to conduct training for national park and protected area managers and develop a manual, STP met with the director of CRES to discuss whether CRES would be interested in joining with ACTI to realise this initiative. CRES made a verbal agreement to assign a staff member – Ms Vi - to work with STP and ACTI to develop a proposal/programme. Ms Vi is currently undertaking a masters at Sydney University and is thus well placed to make contact with ACTI in person.

CRES emphasised that it wished to see such an initiative have long term outputs rather than being merely a solitary exercise. Specifically, that the manual developed by ACTI and CRES be used for annual training courses in ecotourism, and that CRES receive, through working with ACTI on the first training course and manual development, the skills and expertise necessary to conduct these training courses.

A proposal and budget will continue to be developed and presented to the Royal Netherlands Embassy as soon as possible. The Embassy was approached for funding assistance for a variety of activities in June 1998. It singled out ecotourism training as an activity that it would be interested in funding through its Local Environmental Fund.

Again, a request will be made to donors for a transfer of funds between line items to increase the STP contribution to the training course (currently only USD3,000 is available for training in country).

## **2.4. Support For A Pilot Project**

### **2.4.1. Selection of pilot project site**



The STP team visited Cat Tien, Cuc Phuong, Ba Vi, Mai Chau, Tam Dao, Ba Be National Parks, as well as Sa Pa District, and Hoi An in the first year. These field trips were primarily investigatory – to observe first hand the extent of tourism development, to meet with park or local government officials to discuss tourism issues and plans, problems and constraints, and to introduce the STP. The aim also was to choose the site for a pilot 'community based sustainable tourism' (CBST) initiative.

Sa Pa was chosen over Ba Be National Park as the preferred site for initiating a pilot project. Several factors influenced this decision, not least being the acknowledgement of the Sa Pa authorities of the need for improved planning and management of tourism in the District, and their concern with the negative impacts of tourism. Further, several INGOs were already operating in the District and the STP felt that they could provide possible future support for the pilot initiative.

Ba Be is still considered a site worthy of future attention – it has the potential for a small scale ecotourism-community based tourism initiative that involves local ethnic minority villages in an 'eco-route' or 'trekking-route'. However, lack of clarity on the role and responsibilities for tourism development within the National Park (open conflict between the Park and District and Provincial authorities) was a potentially difficult issue that STP felt it could not address. Further, there was considerable uncertainty created in the area by the delay of the GEF funded 'PARC' project.

#### **2.4.2. Sustainable Tourism Study Tour, Nepal 2 – 21 September 1998**

Following fruitful networking with organisations in Nepal, STP invited three government representatives from District, Provincial and Central government levels to participate in a Nepal 'sustainable tourism' study tour. The tour was considered the 'first step' in initiating a pilot project in Sa Pa, and was timed to precede the Community Tourism Planning Workshop (providing the study tour participants with new ideas and knowledge).

The tour was also originally to have coincided with an international conference on '*Sustainable Tourism in the Next Millenium: Implications for the Environment, Economy and Culture, Discourses on Processes, Experience and Prognoses*' in Kathmandu, 7-10 September. The STP had expressed interest in presenting at the conference and assisting a representative from ITDR to attend the conference. At the end of June the conference was postponed indefinitely.

The participants of the study tour to Nepal were:

Mr Nguyen An Toan, Chairman of Sa Pa People's Council and Secretary of the Sa Pa Communist Party;

Mr Tran Manh Diem, Head of Trade and Tourism Department of Lao Cai People's Committee, and

Mr Nguyen Tai Cung, Ecotourism Researcher at the Institute for Tourism Development Research in Hanoi;

Mr Nguyen Van Lam, STP Director

Ms Annalisa Koeman, STP Advisor.

The team visited three field sites in Nepal – Langtang National Park, Annapurna Conservation Area and Chitwan National Park. The aim of the tour was to learn from Nepal's experiences with community based sustainable tourism, ecotourism, the impacts of tourism and measures taken to ameliorate or minimise the impacts.

Field trips were undertaken with the aim of learning from the experiences of integrated mountain development projects implemented by international or national non-government organisations that had ecotourism and community tourism components, and to learn about the management and operation of ecotourism ventures. Hence the team visited The Langtang Ecotourism Project run by The Mountain Institute; the Annapurna Conservation Area Project run by the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation; the Nepal Conservation Research & Training Centre (also KMTNC), Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge and Temple Tiger Jungle Resort in Chitwan National Park.

In Kathmandu, several meetings were arranged with donor, INGO/NGO and government representatives:

UNDP - funding the "Partnership for Quality Tourism Project" which has led to the establishment of the Nepal Tourism Board with equal private and government sector representatives;

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) – has conducted a large body of research on the impacts of tourism in Nepal and provided valuable background to the tourism industry;

Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP) – local NGO involved in conducting education and training for tour operators, guides, lodge owners etc in environmentally friendly practices, safety/first aid and language; raising awareness amongst tourists/trekkers of the impacts their activities have on the environment, and general advocacy and awareness raising activities.

The Mountain Institute (TMI) – implementing several projects with ecotourism components in the Himalaya region;

King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) – Nepali NGO responsible for, among others, the world renowned Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP);

Temple Tiger Pty Ltd/Tourism Board – private member of the newly founded Nepal Tourism Board as well as owner of Temple Tiger Jungle Lodge in Chitwan and other tourism operations.

A valuable joint meeting was held at the KEEP office with Mr P.T. "Kerung" Sherpa, Director of KEEP, Dr Chandra Gurung, former director of ACAP, and Mr Shailendra Thakali, Deputy Program Manager of TMI's "Community Partnership Project" in Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area (and former Program Officer at ACAP). All three men had provided STP with valuable information and advice by email. STP had indicated interest in having KEEP and or TMI visit Vietnam to present at the Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop, and to possibly provide technical advice on the establishment of an environmental education centre/interpretive centre in Sa Pa.

The study tour was, overall, a valuable trip for all participants. The Sa Pa/Lao Cai participants were able to compare/relate field situations in Nepal with their own situation in northern Vietnam. They were all introduced to integrated development projects with a strong environmental conservation focus that had tourism as one component. Participants experienced first hand 'home stay', community based tourism, learnt about energy/fuel wood conservation achievements, observed up-market private sector ecotourism ventures, and learnt about national initiatives with respect to the management and control of tourism and revenue sharing.

All participants have prepared quite lengthy reports on their impressions and lessons learnt. STP will be preparing a short report on the study tour, to be sent to the organisations visited in Nepal and to STP's donors.

#### **2.4.3. Community Tourism Planning Workshop, Sa Pa, December 1998**

During the year several meetings were convened for INGOs interested in sustainable tourism and Sa Pa. At the start, the 'Responsible Tourism Working Group' was invited to discuss the pilot project in Sa Pa. This group shrank and evolved into the informal, ad-hoc 'Sa Pa Responsible Tourism Working Group' (SRTWG) which includes representatives from SNV, Craftlink-Museum of Ethnology project, Vietnam Swedish Mountain Rural Development Programme (Scandiaconsult), and Frontier.

Discussions lead to the development of a document "*Ideas for Assistance to the 'Tourism Sector', Sa Pa District, Lao Cai Province*" This was presented to the People's Committees of Lao Cai and Sa Pa in April 1998 by the STP team, along with representatives from Frontier, MRDP and Craftlink-Museum of Ethnology.

At this time a request was made for approval to conduct research in Sa Pa, and to hold a tourism planning workshop.

The STP, with assistance from Frontier, continued to work on the idea of a 'Sa Pa Tourism Association' (STA) and a 'Sustainable Tourism Action Strategy' (STAS). This resulted in the drafting of a formal document for the establishment of a Tourism Association, including composition (representation from the broad community), mandate, responsibilities and guiding principles. This was presented to Lao Cai and Sa Pa authorities at the end of August 1998. The STP hoped that the idea for a STA could be presented and proposed at the planning workshop.

In August Frontier proposed to the STP that it take on the role of implementing agency for a project to assist Sa Pa with the establishment of the STA over a one year period. This was considered carefully by the STP, which

felt unable to dedicate the time and personnel to such an initiative and which was interested to receive assistance from an INGO with experience in Sa Pa. However, there was concern that donor funds were being sifted through two international organisations before reaching the project site, and after consultation with donors it was decided to abandon this initiative.

Further, after a series of discussions with members of the SRTWG and STP donors, it was decided that the STA document would not be presented at the workshop, rather it would be kept for a later date, and, depending on the outcomes of the workshop, could be discussed with local authorities in more concrete and detailed terms. It was felt that the establishment of a more informal 'tourism group' that required fewer inputs/time from STP was more realistic in the short term.

It was also felt that the document and its contents were rather ambitious and daunting for a workshop forum, and further, that the workshop should be more focused on gleaning the ideas of the participants rather than presenting those from outside.

The Sa Pa Community Tourism Planning Workshop is to be held on the 3-4-5 December 1998. The agenda continues to be revised and improved based on consultation with INGOs and consultants. SNV and Oxfam Hong Kong, Jonathan Caseley have provided valuable suggestions.

The STP has invited two international participants – Mr Shailendra Thakali from The Mountain Institute in Nepal, and Mr Songwit Chuamsakul from The Tribal Research Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand – to present at the workshop on their country's experiences with tourism. It is hoped that they will also be valuable resource persons during the three days.

#### **International Conferences/Study Tours**

In early 1998, the STP began preliminary investigations into a study tour to Indonesia, the aim being to visit local NGOs working in the field of CBST and ecotourism. This visit was postponed indefinitely due to the political instability and the increasing connections with Nepal.

The STP had also received an invitation to/notice of a forthcoming conference on 'Entrepreneurship and Education in Tourism', to be held at the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) and organised by ATLAS,;Department of Leisure Studies of Tilburg University; The International Institute for Asian Studies at Leiden, and the Centre for Tourism Research and Development of the ITB. The STP expressed interest in attending and participating. The conference was postponed until sometime in 1999. The is considering whether to invite a representative of its counterpart, ITDR to attend.

In January the STP received notification from NOVIB of the production and launch of a manual on CBST in the Philippines. The manual, being produced by Philippine and Thai NGOs involved in CBST, was to have been launched in May, along with a South East Asia Conference on CBST. STP expressed keen interest in participating in this conference, however the conference and the launch was delayed indefinitely.

## **2.5. Advocacy**

### **2.5.1. National and Project workshops**

The STP has attended and presented at several national/project workshops:

- a. National Workshop on Participation of Local Communities in Management of Protected Areas in Vietnam. Organised by Vietnam National Parks and Protected Areas Sub-Association, Vietnam Forestry Science-Technology Association of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. HCMC 17-18 December 1997.

Paper on "*Sustainable tourism and ecotourism*" presented by STP.

- b. National Workshop on Exchanging Information on Development Approaches and Experiences with Highland People Communities. Organised by the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) and UNDP as part of the UNDP Highland People's Programme:" Hanoi, 16-20

February 1998.

The STP was requested by UNDP to provide assistance in organising speakers for the session on Responsible Tourism.

To this end, the STP facilitated the presentation of a paper by Dr Pham Trung Luong, Vice Director of ITDR, entitled '*Tourism Activities and Ethnic Minority Groups in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam*', and sponsored the participation of Professor Philip Dearden - Department of Geography, University of Victoria and member of the IUCN WCPA's Taskforce on Tourism and Protected Areas. Professor Dearden presented a paper on '*The positive and negative impacts of trekking tourism on the hilltribes of Thailand*'.

STP prepared a paper on '*Responsible tourism: a responsibility not to be taken lightly*' but was unfortunately unable to present – except for an introduction to the STP - due to lack of time. Excerpts from the same paper were later presented to an English class of CEMMA employees upon the request of Wendy Erd, English teacher who attended the CEMMA workshop.

Professor Dearden spent one week in Vietnam providing advice to and feedback on STP activities and proposals, and accompanying STP to meetings with NEA, FPD and MPI (Trade and Services Department) as an advocacy and public relations exercise.

- c. Ecotourism's Role in Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam. Organised by the Institute for Tourism Development Research in collaboration with IUCN STP. Hanoi, 22-23 April 1998.

ITDR approached the STP to seek assistance with funding of their workshop, part of a research project on the 'scientific basis for ecotourism in Vietnam'. STP agreed to cover costs for papers and their translation. Further, STP offered/requested that it provide additional materials for participants on sustainable ecotourism (translated into Vietnamese).

Unfortunately ITDR did not include these additional materials in the compilation of papers given to each participant.

The STP, the only foreign agency at the workshop, played a fairly active role in the workshop during discussion periods. The paper '*Sustainable development based ecotourism*' was presented by STP.

- d) 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.

Workshop was for government representatives from Vietnam and Cambodia involved in ethnic minority development. '*Culture and Tourism: complex interrelationships*' – jointly prepared and presented by Annalisa Koeman, STP and Michael di Gregorio, CRES/East-West Centre.

- e) 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshops on EIA. Organised in the framework of the EU funded project "Capacity Building for Environmental Management in Vietnam". Organised by the National Centre for Science and Technology and the National Environment Agency, Hanoi, 23 January and 25 September 1998.

At the second workshop a first draft 'Environmental Impact Assessment Guideline Book for Tourism Development Projects' was presented for feedback.

STP was unfortunately not involved in consultation prior to the workshop, and though it is keen to provide comments/input, to date it has not had time to dedicate to this important task.

- a. 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.

In early July, the STP was asked to attend and present on 'tourism and biodiversity' at the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Review Workshop, originally scheduled for the end of September. The STP's participation was an important one: it was charged with highlighting the impacts tourism has on biodiversity; explaining why tourism should be included in the Biodiversity Action Plan as an activity with considerable consequences for biodiversity; and making recommendations on possible activities/actions/ projects to be undertaken with respect to the tourism industry and the BAP.

STP's presentation stimulated considerable response. Other international participants included tourism in their list of 'emerging issues in biodiversity conservation' and list of recommendations for additions to the BAP. It was felt that the participation of STP had been worthwhile in putting tourism on the environmental agenda.

### 2.5.2. Other advocacy work

#### Quang Ninh- Hai Phong Regional Development Conference

In July 1998 the World Bank in Vietnam approached IUCN to assist with a forthcoming 'Quang Ninh- Hai Phong Regional Development Conference', to be held in Ha Long Bay in December 1998. As tourism was to be one of the topics discussed at the conference, the STP was asked to provide assistance in sourcing a tourism economist.

IUCN and STP suggested to the World Bank that IUCN contribute by commissioning an 'economics of environment' case study, using tourism in Ha Long as the focus. The aims being to:

- a) show the linkages between tourism and other sectors, both positive and negative;
- b) attempt to value the environmental/biodiversity costs of tourism development in monetary/economic terms;
- c) consider the ecotourism potential in Ha Long and how it could benefit biodiversity conservation and ameliorate the current impacts of tourism (ie: transform tourism from mass to eco);
- d) To show the economic costs to the tourism industry (via environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, destruction of scenery) due to unplanned and uncontrolled development of tourism in Ha Long (tourism kills tourism).

IUCN had a small grant available for such purposes. STP began approaching international environmental/tourism economists, including Greg Lindberg, Mike Wells and Pamela Wight, to ascertain their availability and interest in conducting a study with a Vietnamese counterpart (an initial approach was made to CIEM) and presenting at the World Bank conference. Mike Wells was contacted by both the World Bank and STP, and he accepted an offer to undertake an assignment for the World Bank (IUCN funds were insufficient to cover his fee) in September 1998. He met with the STP Advisor to discuss tourism – environment – institutional and other issues.

The Conference has been postponed until sometime in early 1999. It is not known at this stage what role the STP will play.

Following the STP's visit to Ba Be National Park in Bac Kan Province in March, an internal IUCN memo was written highlighting STP's concerns with respect to tourism management in the National Park. In particular the perceived conflicts between National Park and local and provincial government and the lack of clear roles and responsibilities for tourism; the threat that tourism development in the current situation posed for the Park, and the constraints to small scale, community based ecotourism. An abridged version of this memo was informally forwarded by IUCN to the head of the Forest Protection Department.

In early October 1998 STP was approached by the environment section of UNDP in Hanoi to review and make recommendations on a proposal by WTO to develop a new Tourism Master Plan for Vietnam. The aim is to incorporate environment and sustainable tourism into the proposal's terms of reference as much as possible.

#### Roundtable Retreat on Sustainable Tourism

In early 1998, the STP drafted a concept paper for a "*Roundtable Retreat on Sustainable Tourism*", to follow a similar IUCN "Environment Retreat" held for Ministers and Vice Ministers and high level government representatives in Do Son. This idea was discussed with Professor Le Quy An who made some valuable suggestions. Due to other priorities and time constraints, this proposal was not pursued actively. It may be possible to re-activate this idea in 1999.

The aim of the Retreat would be to gather together key decision makers, policy makers and stakeholders -whose decisions have direct consequences on tourism and the environment - in an informal environment

conducive to the open discussion (facilitated) of personal opinions and views on: the desired and actual direction of Vietnam tourism; what 'sustainable tourism' means for Vietnam and how to work towards achieving it; negative and positive impacts of tourism on the environment, culture and local communities etc.

The STP Advisor has contributed an article 'Are Vietnam's tour operators ready for the challenge of genuine ecotourism?' to the Vietnamese "Tourism Review". This appeared in the September issue which had a special feature on Ecotourism. STP Director contributed an article on the study tour to Nepal to "Tourism Weekly".

The STP has contributed a number of the papers presented at the afore-mentioned workshops to Tourism Weekly, one excerpt has been published.

The STP undertook a filmed interview with Vietnam Television, essentially explaining the aims and importance of the project. This appeared in the half hour programme produced on the Sustainable Tourism Training course conducted by WUSC. The programme, one in the series "Through the Eye of a Small Screen", was aired on national television in July.

Unfortunately this initiative has not progressed due to lack of response from TVE. Continued efforts will be made to establish contact. Additional funding (> USD30,000) will have to be sought for such a production.

### **3.0. CONCLUSION - PROGRESS MADE IN ACHIEVING PROJECT GOALS**

The project has a broad ranging and ambitious mandate while at the same time providing some flexibility in how particular goals and objectives are achieved. Among other things, it is charged with raising awareness of the negative impacts of tourism and disseminating the message of 'sustainable tourism' amongst all stakeholders.

As the first project of its kind in Vietnam, the project began with a 'clean slate'. It has quickly discovered that there is an overwhelming amount of work that could be/should be/needs to be done in Vietnam in raising awareness of and capacity building for 'sustainable tourism'.

Many ideas are slowly coalescing into project proposals and activities, however within a time frame of two years it is uncertain how many activities can be completed. Some initiatives will hopefully have a continued effect (eg: Ecotourism Training and Development of a Manual for National Park and Protected Area Managers) others need to be followed up/carried further in order to be sustainable positive contributions (eg: Workshop on Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam).

The STP has achieved a substantial amount in the first year, however less than half of the project budget has been expended in the first twelve months. This is a poor indication of the amount of work undertaken by the STP team, particularly in the area of project proposal development and networking with stakeholders within and outside Vietnam. Further, research initiated in the first year has not been completed and hence final payments have not been made. The expenditure for the Nepal Study Tour undertaken in September is not included. A couple of international conferences/seminars that STP was keen to attend were postponed indefinitely.

It is anticipated that several major activities undertaken in the second year will incur considerable expenditure. However the implementation of some of these activities will depend on the STP receiving agreement from donors for the movement of funds within the project budget. To date one hindrance to project implementation has been the size of the project budget and line items and the need to seek supplementary funding/co-financing for certain initiatives.

From its approaches to the international donor community in Hanoi, the STP is of the opinion that there is little awareness of the importance of 'sustainable tourism' as a focus of development assistance. The STP thus plans to try and convene a donor roundtable to present on the STP's activities and findings and to discuss the tourism sector in Vietnam, in order to try and convince donors to include 'sustainable tourism' in their sectoral programming.

In the first year an important step has been made in establishing cooperative links with VNAT and ITDR. A staff member of ITDR will now be employed part time in the STP office. The STP believes that there is great room for awareness raising, advocacy and capacity strengthening work with ITDR and VNAT, and the next year will

see only modest steps made in this area.

The issue/topic of 'sustainable tourism' has been introduced to various Vietnamese stakeholders, some of whom have to date had no concern with tourism eg: CEMMA, and has pushed for tourism to be placed higher on the agenda of environmental agencies eg: NEA. STP has tried to introduce tourism to a wide variety of Vietnamese institutions to promote the idea that tourism is a 'cross sectoral' sector.

Certain specific gaps in knowledge and awareness have been identified - for example the general lack of awareness of ecotourism - that pose threats to the sustainability of the industry and the ability of the industry to act as a development tool rather than a mere income earner.

Although the pilot project in Sa Pa is still in the early stages of development, the STP feels that it has established a good cooperative relationship with the local authorities, who are relatively open to new ideas and initiatives. The study tour to Nepal was valuable in terms of public relations as well as for its awareness raising and informative/educational aspects.

The STP has succeeded in introducing itself to the international stage, and is now being included in some international 'sustainable tourism' networks, the result being an increase in the number of approaches for assistance and advice by researchers, consultants, institutions and donors. In this capacity the STP hopes it will be able to facilitate linkages between Vietnamese and international organisations and institutions, and gather valuable material for the STRC.

Another goal in the coming year is to publicise the STRC more widely and actively. The STP has yet to receive word from the Australian Embassy on its application for funds for purchase of original reference materials. In 1999 IUCN may receive a visit from a professional librarian, in which case the STRC reference collection will be included in a more systematic reference system.

#### **4.0. PROJECT EXTENSION**

One proposal identified by the STP as a priority for the future, and which will be developed over the coming year, is a proposal to strengthen the capacity of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism in 'sustainable tourism'. This would involve the establishment of an 'environment' or 'sustainable tourism' branch or department within VNAT. It is envisaged that such a capacity strengthening programme – which would include theoretical, technical and practical training in the environmental, cultural, community and socio-economic aspects of sustainable tourism – would be a minimum of two years.

Another possible proposal would focus on convening a national forum on education for sustainable tourism – essentially to discuss the need for a national curriculum on sustainable tourism. This initiative must take into consideration other potential/proposed projects, such as the European Unions' *'Human Resource Development in Tourism'* Project, and Lincoln International's aims to conduct a tourism training needs assessment for Vietnam (and three other Mekong countries).

If funds cannot be secured for the TVE-VTV 'sustainable tourism in Vietnam' documentary within the next twelve months, the proposal for this activity will be included in the STP's set of recommended future actions.

A proposal will be developed for providing assistance to Sa Pa District. Several ideas on the form this assistance should take have already been formulated ("Ideas for assistance to the tourism sector in Sa Pa") and these may be further developed, or new areas of assistance identified.

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