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IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT

TF0A3972

ON A

SMALL GRANT FROM THE
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

IN THE AMOUNT OF USD 3.0 MILLION

TO THE

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

FOR A

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROTECT
ENDANGERED WILDLIFE IN VIETNAM PROJECT (P162792)

JUNE 23, 2023

Environment, Natural Resources, and the Blue Economy Global Practice
East Asia And Pacific Region

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAF	Animals Asia Foundation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCA	Biodiversity Conservation Agency (under MONRE)
BSC	Biodiversity Steering Committee
BESP	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Platform
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CPF	country partnership framework
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
EA	Environmental Assessment
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FM	financial management
FPD	Forest Protection Department
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
GWP	Global Wildlife Program – a Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development
ICR	Implementation Completion and Results Report
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPS	Ministry of Public Security
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PA	protected area
PAMB	Protected Area Management Board
PDO	project development objective
PM	Prime Minister
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$ (or USD)	United States dollar
VEA	Vietnam Environment Administration
WLC	Wildlife Consumption in Vietnam Project
WLP	Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam Project

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DATA SHEET

BASIC INFORMATION

Product Information

Project ID	Project Name
P162792	Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam
Country	Financing Instrument
Vietnam	Investment Project Financing
Original EA Category	Revised EA Category
Not Required (C)	

Organizations

Borrower	Implementing Agency
Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Project Development Objective (PDO)

Original PDO

The Project Development Objective is to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework, and the related implementation capacity for the protection of threatened wildlife.



FINANCING			
	Original Amount (US\$)	Revised Amount (US\$)	Actual Disbursed (US\$)
Donor Financing			
TF-A9935	3,000,000	2,955,540	2,955,540
Total	3,000,000	2,955,540	2,955,540
Other Financing			
Borrower/Recipient	300,000	300,000	177,262
Total	300,000	300,000	177,262
Total Project Cost	3,300,000	3,255,540	3,132,802

KEY DATES			
Approval	Effectiveness	Original Closing	Actual Closing
25-Nov-2017	25-Mar-2019	31-Dec-2022	31-Dec-2022

RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING		
Date(s)	Amount Disbursed (US\$M)	Key Revisions

KEY RATINGS		
Outcome	Bank Performance	M&E Quality
Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Substantial

RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs				
No.	Date ISR Archived	DO Rating	IP Rating	Actual Disbursements (US\$M)
01	28-Jun-2018	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.00
02	18-Jun-2019	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	0.00
03	01-Nov-2020	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.78



04	24-Jul-2022	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	1.93
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I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL

Context

- 1. The country context at project approval in 2017 was one of remarkable economic growth since 1998, much of it founded on its biodiversity and natural assets.** Vietnam ranked 16th worldwide in terms of animal and plant species richness and is endowed with a wide range of ecosystems which together provide various ecosystem products and services that are critical for many economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (22 percent of gross domestic product combined) and tourism (13.9 percent). It was estimated that approximately 25 million people in Vietnam derived 20-50 percent of their income from Vietnam's high levels of biodiversity found mostly in over 225 protected areas.
- 2. The environmental footprint of Vietnam's rapid development is considered large with the poor disproportionately affected by decline in natural capital.** Land use change, over-hunting, and unsustainable levels of wildlife trade and consumption have led to widespread depletion of wildlife species. Dependency on natural resources makes the rural poor more vulnerable to a decline in natural assets and environmental services than the urban poor. In general, natural resources and biodiversity accounts for over one-third of the wealth of the poor, providing food, medicines, housing materials, and opportunities for income such as small-scale farms, livestock, and tourism. Paradoxically, economic growth has contributed to increased demand for high-value wildlife products used for ornaments, traditional medicine, and specialty foods. One of the key consumers identified were civil servants that may influence other groups in the society, including the poor, local leaders, and business.
- 3. Illegal exploitation, trade, and consumption of wildlife increased significantly in Vietnam, resulting in dramatic declines in wildlife populations and near extinction of some species.** This has led to widespread depletion of species from most forest areas in Vietnam. Vietnam is regarded as a major transit hub and consumer market for illegal wildlife trade for products that include ivory, rhino horn, tiger, and pangolins. In fact, Vietnam was identified by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) as one of the countries of "primary concern" in the control of illegal trade and consumption of ivory as well as rhino horn.
- 4. In response to these trends, the government had strengthened the policy and legal framework to prioritize wildlife protection action, but overlaps and inconsistencies among various laws and rules continued to have serious implications on protecting threatened species.** The government of Vietnam issued 28 decrees, decisions, and ministerial circulars, and five major laws to protect wildlife between 2004 and 2016. A 2008 Law on Biodiversity underpinned major policy action including the 2013 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan that prioritized endangered species protection; a decree on criteria for identifying and managing endangered, rare, and precious species; and a 2015 amendment to the Penal Code to increase punishment for offences against endangered animals including poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking. Various decrees however led to some overlap in mandates of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).
- 5. Enforcement effectiveness was further affected by insufficient coordination and information sharing and complex institutional arrangements.** At least five key enforcement agencies were engaged in wildlife protection and trade at the central level in addition to MONRE and MARD. At the provincial level, Biodiversity Conservation Units were established within Departments of Natural Resources and Environment (DONREs) to strengthen wildlife



conservation on the ground. Individual protected areas (PAs) each have a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB)¹ administered by Provincial People's Committees and supported by MONRE and MARD. The Forest Protection Department (FPD) under MARD is the lead agency for forest protection and management with a mandate to monitor wildlife poaching. Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARDs) are responsible for supervising provincial FPD operations, and at a district level this role is undertaken by the District People's Committees. These complex arrangements have resulted in a lack of cohesion between the various systems and protocols applied in enforcing wildlife protection measures and investigating and prosecuting crime.

6. **The rationale for World Bank involvement was to build on the work and lessons learned in recently completed projects on illegal wildlife trade and consumption as well as to complement relevant initiatives and partnerships with Vietnam.** The US\$1 million project for "*Wildlife Consumption in Vietnam: Reforming Policies and Practices to Strengthen Biodiversity Conservation*" (WLC, 2011-2015) (P122701), financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and administered by the World Bank, was particularly relevant. One lesson was the need to consider points of intervention for reducing wildlife trade and consumption more strategically by involving key stakeholders and designing activities that address motivations as a crucial aspect of the "knowledge, attitudes, practice" theory of change. Through its engagements and commitments to, among others, the Convention on Biological Diversity, CITES and the ASEAN² Wildlife Enforcement Network, Vietnam is highly active in areas of wildlife conservation and trade. As such, it has benefitted from capacity building activities offered by multiple international partners, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), most which do not have the same convening power as the World Bank with various ministries and at the highest levels to support more systematic and synergetic policy and institutional change.

7. **The project meant to address one of the focal areas of the FY18-22 Country Partnership Framework (CPF, Report No. 111771-VN) for Vietnam on ensuring resilience and environmental sustainability.** The protection of biodiversity, especially ecosystems and threatened species, was also a critical task identified in Vietnam's 2011 National Climate Change Strategy and its 2016 Nationally Determined Contribution. The reduction of consumer demand of wildlife products was seen to be aligned with sustainable consumption efforts in the context of low carbon development pathways, stipulated in Vietnam's 2011-20 National Green Growth Strategy.

8. **The project was developed under the GEF parent program, the "Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development," that is led by the World Bank as a GEF Agency.** The overarching objective of the partnership, now known as the Global Wildlife Program (GWP), is to promote wildlife conservation, wildlife crime prevention, and sustainable development to reduce impacts to known threatened species from poaching and illegal trade. Another lesson from the earlier WLC project was that sustainability of actions to combat wildlife trade requires the long-term commitment, support, and resources of the government as well as coordinated efforts, likely best achieved through strong linkages with other established programs. The intent was to coordinate efforts on the proposed Vietnam wildlife project with other national projects to facilitate knowledge sharing within Vietnam as well as with the development partners, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and others working globally under the GWP and other multilateral initiatives towards the same goals. Inclusion of the follow-on project within the GWP ensured that the country's efforts were recognized and integrated in one common approach to conserve biodiversity alongside sustainable development while fostering international collaboration and exchange of experience and knowledge.

¹ There is an exception for six national parks of special importance and/or with interprovincial transboundaries, for which management responsibility remains entirely within MARD.

² Association of Southeast Asian Nations.



Theory of Change

9. **The theory of change (TOC) from the Project Paper is included as Figure 1.** Because the original TOC figure used a more general format modeled on the theory of change analysis of the GWP for short-term interventions, a more detailed representation of the project-specific TOC is included as Figure 2, based on the links indicated between intermediate and outcome indicators in the detailed indicator descriptions in the project paper and other information on the component activities and outputs in the detailed project description (note that the project outcomes column lists *actual* rather than planned outputs/outcomes).

10. The overall GWP theory of change prioritizes emergency short-term interventions aimed at reducing poaching, trafficking, and demand for wildlife products but also includes long-term interventions that help reflect the real value of wildlife. The Vietnam project was designed to address the GWP’s short-term priorities by (a) filling gaps, simplifying, and better aligning the elements of the legal framework; (b) providing capacity building to improve the effectiveness of conservation and law enforcement; and (c) increasing awareness domestically about the impacts of consuming wildlife products and enhancing partnerships and collaboration across agencies, sectors, and national boundaries for sustainable management of threatened wildlife.

11. While reduced poaching, trafficking, and consumption would not be measurable during the lifetime of the project, achievement of the project objectives would enable gains in these areas in the future. This approach helps establish a foundation for fostering the socioeconomic conditions necessary for the long-term sustenance of biodiversity in support of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

12. It is important to note that the World Bank-GEF supported project is designed to complement other active donor-supported projects related to biodiversity and threatened species in Vietnam primarily by giving the government the wherewithal to directly manage and implement activities through its own channels and system. The US\$9.9 million Saving Species project (2016- 21) implemented by USAID and leveraged in the context of GEF approval of the Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam Project (WLP) in 2017 is an example: while some investments under USAID supported capacity building in intelligence operations, the World Bank-supported project focused on improving the legal and regulatory framework from within the government and on strengthening capacity for application of the framework in enforcement and conservation activities on the ground.

Figure 1 Original Theory of Change

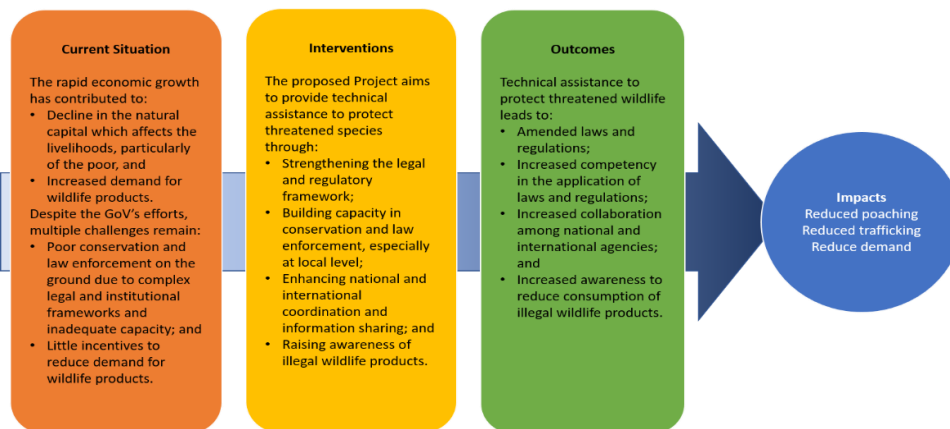
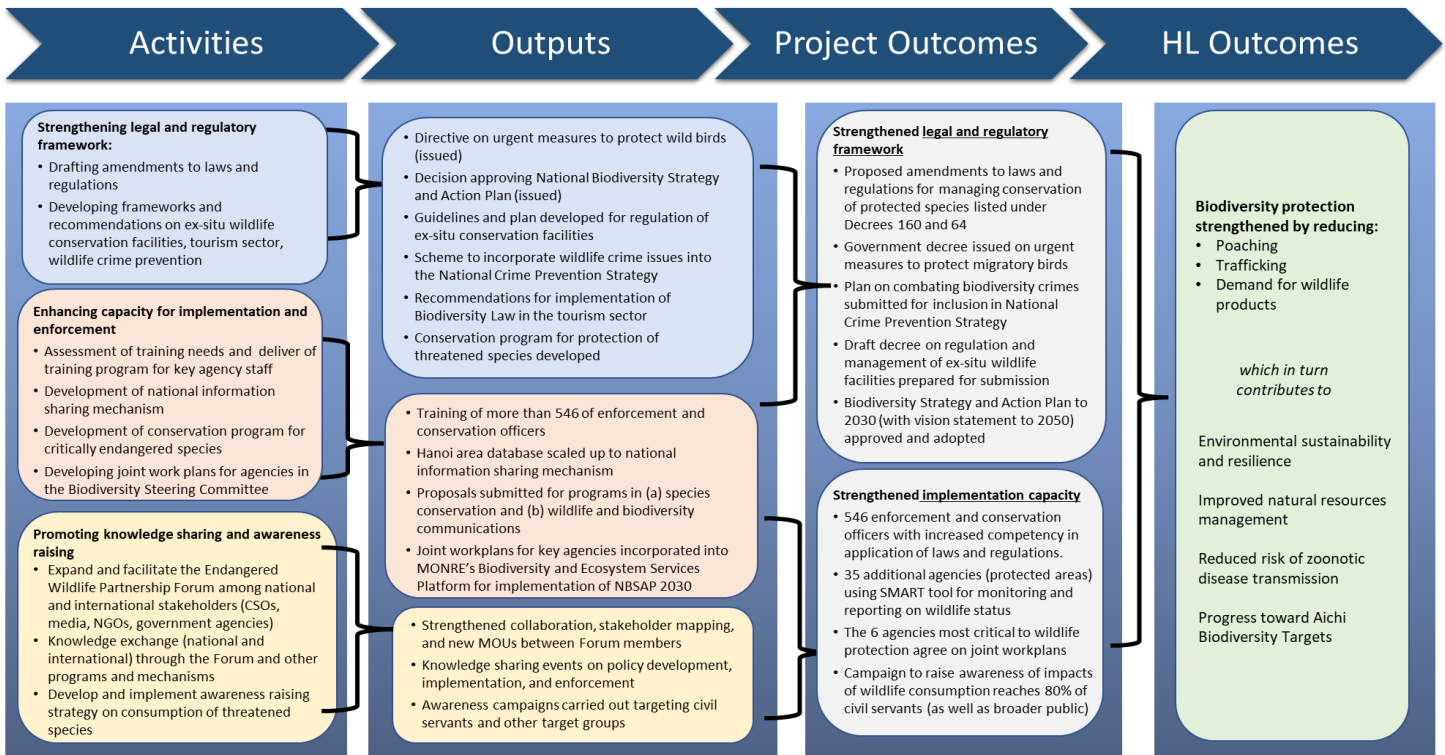




Figure 2 Detailed Theory of Change



Critical Assumptions:

- Consultation with other donors/partners engaged in Vietnam biodiversity and wildlife helps ensure appropriate legal and regulatory instruments developed.
- Training for enforcement and conservation officers increases their capacity/competency.
- NBSAP and BESAP provide the basis for agreed joint workplans on biodiversity.
- Civil servants are both one of key consumer groups of wildlife products and a strong role-model influencing other segments of society that consume wildlife products.
- Measures, frameworks, and capacity to monitor wildlife status and enforce laws generally also improve protection of endangered wildlife specifically.

Project Development Objective (PDO)

13. The project development objective is to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework, and the related implementation capacity for the protection of threatened wildlife.

14. The PDO builds on and states more clearly the objectives embodied in the earlier WLC Project (P122701). The WLC objectives were stated in terms of longer-term objectives (significant reduction in illegal wildlife consumption) that were not expected to be achieved during its three-year span, but rather, would be facilitated by its activities aimed at strengthening legal frameworks, monitoring and enforcement of consumption controls, and changing behavior by building awareness. The WLP PDO, by contrast, states objectives that are meant to delve deeper into several WLC outputs while being achievable during the implementation period of the project rather than the longer-term goals they are meant to help realize.

15. While the WLC made considerable progress including development of various circulars, the project completion report emphasized that sustained engagement and follow-on technical and financial support would be



crucial to both maintaining the WLC’s gains and to scaling up and broadening them. It also provided an outline of key areas of continued weakness to guide future efforts to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework.

Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators

16. Based on the PDO, the project’s key expected outcome had two parts: (a) strengthened legal and regulatory framework for protecting threatened wildlife and (b) strengthened implementation capacity for protecting threatened wildlife. The PDO indicators corresponding to these two outcomes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Outcome-Level Indicators

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Strengthened Legal and Regulatory Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft amendments to the laws and regulations on threatened wildlife protection submitted for approval to the competent authorities
Strengthened Implementation Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement and conservation officers with increased competency in the application of the laws and regulations on wildlife protection • Enforcement and conservation agencies that deploy the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) • Share of government agencies participating in the Biodiversity Steering Committee that agree on joint work plans on wildlife protection • Share of central and local government staff reached by awareness raising campaigns

Components

17. The Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam Project financed four components.

18. **Component 1: Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Framework – US\$1 million (US\$0.85 GEF, US\$0.15 counterpart).** This component provided support for: (a) drafting amendments to the Law on Biodiversity, Decree 160, and other regulations relevant to the protection of prioritized endangered species; (b) development of a legal framework for improved management and monitoring of ex-situ wildlife conservation facilities; (c) development and submission of recommendations to implement the Law on Biodiversity in the tourism sector and integrate threatened species protection into tourism activities; and (d) incorporation of wildlife crime issues in the National Crime Prevention Strategy. This component focused on harmonizing legal and regulatory instruments relevant to the protection of threatened wildlife in Vietnam, especially making clear the roles and responsibilities of key agencies such as MONRE, MARD, DONRE, and DARD. Component 1 was based on the findings from past assessments, including from the WLC Project, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, and the USAID Governance for Inclusive Growth Program in Vietnam, all of which recommended reducing overlaps and improving the legal environment for protecting threatened species. This component was led by MONRE and implemented with MARD and the Ministry of Public Security’s (MPS) Environmental Police.

19. **Component 2: Enhancing Capacity for Implementation and Enforcement of Wildlife Protection Policies and Regulations – US\$1.20 million (US\$1.15 million GEF; US\$0.05 million counterpart).** This component supported (a) strengthening capacity for application of the Biodiversity Law and Decree 160 by field staff of key law enforcement



agencies; (b) development of an information sharing mechanism on the protection and conservation of prioritized endangered species; (c) development of a conservation program for selected critically endangered species; and (d) institutional strengthening of the Biodiversity Steering Committee to enhance coordination of enforcement and conservation operations among various agencies. MONRE led the component activities in coordination with the MPS, MARD, and the provincial DONREs, DARDs, and PAMBs. The component was to first support a training needs assessment and then develop and deliver training programs to complement capacity building initiatives in law enforcement that were being implemented in parallel under the USAID’s “Saving Species” and “Regional Reducing Demand for Wildlife Products” projects.

20. **Component 3: Promoting Knowledge Sharing and Awareness Raising – US\$0.80 million (US\$0.72 million GEF; US\$0.08 million counterpart).** This component promoted knowledge sharing and awareness raising to help reduce demand for consumption of wildlife products. The activities included: (a) an expansion and facilitation of Vietnam’s national Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum; (b) knowledge exchange on policy development, conservation, and enforcement capacity, and outreach on the protection and management of threatened species; and (c) development and implementation of an awareness raising strategy on the consumption of threatened wildlife products for targeted audiences at the central and provincial levels. MONRE led this component with the support and guidance from the Central Party Committee on Communication and Education, as well as support and cooperation from media, communication agencies, and NGOs.

21. **Component 4: Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation – US\$0.30 million (US\$0.28 million GEF; US\$0.02 million counterpart).** This component provided support to MONRE in project management and implementation, including planning, coordination, technical inputs, financial management, procurement, environmental and social safeguards compliance, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. A Project Management Unit (PMU) was established within MONRE for day-to-day project management. MONRE through the PMU developed a project operations manual that set forth guidelines and procedures for project implementation.

B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION

22. The PDO, outcome targets, indicators, and components were not changed during implementation and the project did not require restructuring; however, there were some changes within components to include additional activities (components 1 and 2), modify activity scope (all components), or slightly shift the activity focus (components 2 and 3). These small changes are described under *Key Factors That Affected Implementation* (Section III.B).

II. OUTCOME

A. RELEVANCE OF PDO

23. **During project implementation, the dual objectives of strengthening the legal and regulatory framework and implementation capacity to protect threatened wildlife remained highly relevant to both Vietnam’s biodiversity and sustainable development goals and the World Bank’s country engagement embodied in the FY18-22 CPF.³ The relevance of the PDO to the World Bank’s country engagement is high with the CPF Objective 11 to strengthen natural resource management and improve water security under which the project was listed.**

³ The World Bank’s Country Partnership Framework for Vietnam for FY23-27 is under preparation.



24. **In January 2022, Vietnam’s Prime Minister approved the *National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2030, Vision to 2050, extending Vietnam’s commitment to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably.*** Many of the strategy’s key tasks include initiatives stemming from the project, such as developing a program to conserve endangered, precious, and rare wildlife species prioritized for protection; promulgating policies and strengthening capacity for law enforcement on biodiversity; in situ conservation; and management and protection of migratory wild species. The government has publicly affirmed its readiness to mobilize resources to effectively implement the National Strategy, including at several international events.

25. **Vietnam has reached out to international partners to build upon the achievements of the project, in the context of the GWP and in line with its strategic objectives on conserving biodiversity while promoting socioeconomic development.** The project goals are highly relevant to Vietnam’s priorities in the area and their intention to continue building on the gains made by previous projects. This is particularly relevant following Vietnam’s commitment to adhere to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at COP15 in December 2022. The network of partners and relevant government agencies that worked in close collaboration over the past decade is still active, including through the USAID’s US\$15 million “Saving Threatened Wildlife” project that was approved in 2021 and formally launched in 2022. Furthermore, the World Bank continues its role leading the GWP and in that capacity can engage with Vietnam on the protection of wildlife along with other partners at the international level.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME

26. As discussed in the Theory of Change section, the WLP was designed to target the urgent short-term interventions that the GWP identified as steps toward achieving the fundamental outcomes of reduced poaching, trafficking, and demand for wildlife products. Specifically, the project aimed at (a) filling gaps, simplifying, and better aligning the elements of the legal framework; (b) providing capacity building to improve the effectiveness of conservation and law enforcement; and (c) increasing awareness about the impacts of consuming wildlife products, and enhancing partnerships and collaboration in its wildlife conservation efforts.

27. Completion of investments and activities in these areas would not in themselves result in measurable reduction in poaching, trafficking, and consumption, but rather would help overcome barriers identified by the GWP (most directly barriers 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9 below).

Box 1 Barriers to Achievement of GWP Goals

1. Shortcomings in the institutional frameworks, management and financing for conservation areas
2. Undefined land uses and limited multi-stakeholder consultations in land-use plans.
3. Lack of an enabling environment to support wildlife-based economies.
4. Insufficient capacity and reluctance by state officials to engage communities.
5. Lack of opportunities for communities to engage in conservation.
6. Lack of political will and investment to tackle illegal wildlife trade and deploy innovative technologies to support enforcement activities.
7. Ineffective national and international coordination.
8. Insufficient information available to consumers of wildlife products.
9. Insufficient awareness of threats to wildlife and inadequate access to innovative solutions.

Source: GWP Program Framework Document – GEF-7 (5/13/19)



28. The project's awareness raising aimed at reducing demand for and consumption of wildlife products was not defined as a separate objective in the PDO, but rather counted toward the project's capacity building objective. Consumption-related goals were the primary objective of the WLC project, but were a secondary priority in the WLP, in part because USAID's parallel Saving Species project already supported a large social behavior change campaign related to consumption of wildlife products.⁴

29. As indicated in many of the passages below related to project outputs and indicators, in most cases the indicators do not directly measure GWP outcomes in terms of reduced poaching, trafficking, and demand, but rather measure intermediate outcomes that logically help achieve those outcomes. For example, promulgating a biodiversity crime component for the National Crime Strategy strengthens the legal/regulatory framework for protection of threatened species. More widespread deployment of SMART tools in high-concern areas for poaching does not directly reduce poaching but provides better tools and information for conservation and enforcement officials, thereby improving their capacity.

30. Fostering and enabling diverse partnerships and collaboration for protecting wildlife in Vietnam is another project activity that is promoted by the GWP not merely as an end in itself, but as an essential means toward achieving the GWP's central objectives. Although most project activities were focused on strengthening capacity and coordination among government agencies, the project also sought to collaborate with and foster partnerships between the public sector, local and international NGOs, civil society, and the private sector (including through expansion of the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum). Examples of this include work with the Central Youth Union and the Communist Party to adopt resolutions that forbid their members from hunting, buying, selling, storing, and consuming endangered wild species; technical assistance provided to an international NGO to better advocate for conservation areas in Vietnam; and the engagement of leading academia and reputable nonprofits in the process of developing guidelines, assessments, studies, and policy work.

31. Some activities and outputs contributed to both improving the legal/regulatory framework and strengthening capacity for implementation; such as the collaborative, consultative process for developing draft decrees and MONRE's development of a plan for implementation of the updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) (see additional discussion under achievement of Objective 2). It is important to note, however, that while the project-financed training in Component 2 incorporated, when possible, relevant elements of new regulatory and legal instruments drafted with project support under Component 1, no explicit sequencing was planned or implemented between preparing new proposals and training provided (consistent with GEF-6, which aimed to improve enforcement of existing laws as well as strengthening the legal and regulatory frameworks themselves).

32. The intermediate targets in the results framework called for assessment of training needs and the start of training by year 2 of implementation, but completion of most legal/regulatory outputs (such as those related to conservation facilities, crime, and tourism) was planned for years 4 and 5. In actuality, due to overall delays, training

⁴ The only GWP core indicator directly applicable to the WLP design was number 11, "people benefiting from GEF-financed investments." In the case of the WLP, beneficiaries were defined as recipients of training, although the project also indirectly benefitted conservation officials and others who were able to access data from the project's scaled-up information-sharing mechanism as well as accessing information and interacting with others through the Vietnam Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum. The project also reported other selected outcomes and outputs via the GWP Tracking Tool that were mirrored in the project's results framework, including tools deployed to combat wildlife crime and the presence of legislation that defines wildlife crime as a "serious" crime.



did not start until year 5 and was able to include, where appropriate, some elements of recently issued decrees and elements of advanced versions of proposals pertaining to regulatory measures, planning and strategy, and coordination.

Outcome 1: Strengthen the Legal and Regulatory Framework for the Protection of Threatened Wildlife

33. The project succeeded in developing and submitting amendments to strengthen or help operationalize existing laws and regulations, address gaps in the legal/regulatory framework, and clarify institutional responsibilities. The outcome-level indicator target related to the legal and regulatory framework was achieved, as well as intermediate indicators related to both the process of regulatory reform and selected specific outputs essential to achieving the objective.

Table 2 Summary of Indicator Results for Outcome 1 (Legal/Regulatory Framework)

<i>Outcome Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Achieved</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Draft amendments to the law and regulations on threatened wildlife protection submitted for approval to the competent authority (number)	5	5	Five specific key outputs are counted in the achieved value (see results framework), but several other measures could also be counted as a second tier of amendments or official enabling instruments that strengthened the framework.
<i>Intermediate Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Achieved</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Cross-sectoral constituencies participating in consultations on the proposed amendments to laws and regulations on threatened wildlife protection (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Consultations were wide-ranging and included participants from an array of national and local government agencies as well as the private sector and affected communities.
Legal framework developed for the management of ex-situ wildlife conservation facilities submitted to the relevant authority for approval (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Draft decree on establishment, regulation, and operation of ex-situ conservation facilities is pending final clearance by MONRE prior to formal submission. Some key elements of the proposed framework are already being adopted and applied in practice by responsible agencies.
Recommendations on the implementation of the Law on Biodiversity in the tourism sector developed and submitted to the relevant authority (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Study on integrating tourism and biodiversity protection regulations prepared and submitted to relevant agencies, with final report issued in December 2022. During development, preliminary recommendations provided as input to the NBSAP. The study included a policy note for tourism-related authorities. Tourism/biodiversity training courses for park staff were developed, and tourism models were piloted in two national parks.
Wildlife crime issues integrated into the National Crime Prevention Strategy (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Proposal for component on prevention of wildlife crimes was incorporated into the National Crime Prevention Strategy endorsed by MPS and approved by Prime Minister's (PM) Decision (1623/QD-TTG).



34. The amendments to laws and regulations at the outcome level in some cases corresponded to or were informed by the outputs in the related intermediate indicators (conservation facilities, tourism, wildlife crime). The amendments delivered (in the form of prime minister decrees or decisions) were in line with the needs outlined at the completion of the previous WLC project and identified more specifically through a gap assessment carried out in 2020, during implementation.

35. The five issued or submitted legal/regulatory measures counted toward the outcome indicator target are:

- Urgent Measures to Conserve Wild and Migratory Birds in Vietnam (Directive 04/CT-TTg, issued 5/17/22).
- A lengthy “Review and Quick Assessment” of the existing legal/regulatory framework (March 2020) identified weaknesses throughout the legal system that the project could address through amendment of Decree 160/2013/ND-CP. Though a comprehensive draft amendment of Decree 160 itself was not prepared, the report’s analysis guided implementation and informed preparation of many project outputs and continues to be the analytical basis for efforts to strengthen areas such as (a) institutional responsibilities between ministries, (b) consultative engagement and improved livelihood opportunities for communities in and around conservation areas, (c) reduction of threats to wild species, (d) stopping the capture, raising, and breeding of threatened species for consumption, and (e) sustainable financing for conservation.
- Approval of updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to extend the previous 2020 strategy to 2030, including framing a strategic vision to 2050 (Prime Minister Decision 149/QD-TTg, issued 1/28/22). As a capacity building activity, the project also lent some support to MONRE in development of its Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Platform (BESP) that facilitates implementation of the NBSAP.
- Wildlife crimes component for incorporation into the National Biodiversity Crime Prevention Strategy to strengthen wildlife crime enforcement authority and capacity as well as clarifying roles among relevant ministries and authorities (PM Decision 1623/QD-TTG, issued 12/27/22).
- Regulations for managing ex-situ wildlife conservation facilities prepared. These address a range of concerns related to both wildlife rescue/release and commercial captive breeding operations, including zoonotic disease risk (at closing a draft decree was being reviewed and finalized by MONRE prior to official submission to the government).

36. The project also developed a conservation program aimed at effectively coordinating implementation of efforts to protect the species listed for priority conservation and protection under the NBSAP, Decree 160, and other instruments, although the Project Paper considered this strategy to be a capacity building output rather than a legal/regulatory framework output.

37. **Consultative process.** To ensure the relevance and feasibility of the proposed amendments, strategies, and action plans, as well as their potential impacts and hurdles to effective implementation, the process of developing them was highly consultative, involving more than 30 cross-sectoral meetings and workshops with key agencies, the private sector, and communities. The consultations gave specific attention to gender composition to ensure that women’s voices were heard in the regulatory development process, with women accounting for more than 30 percent of total participants (though representation varied between types of groups consulted).

38. **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2030.** The WLP supported many of the activities that contributed to the updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2030, which constitutes a master plan setting the country’s goals related to biodiversity and defining the means for achieving them, including outlining



legal/regulatory authority and the roles of government agencies. The detailed sector plans and implementation mechanisms for the NBSAP (specific laws, regulations, and decrees) fall within the strategy contained in the NBSAP.

39. Although some of the decrees and regulations developed by the project were submitted or officially finalized after approval of the NBSAP, the research, assessment, and consultations underlying the project proposals contributed to the NBSAP in parallel, particularly in areas critical to protection of threatened species such as prioritization of species for protection.

40. **Proposal to amend Decree 160/2013/ND-CP.** The project (through the Biodiversity Conservation Agency [under MONRE], BCA) prepared a lengthy “Review and Quick Assessment” of the existing legal/regulatory framework. The report, completed in the early stages of the project (March 2020), analyzed dozens of laws, regulations, and decrees to identify specific overlaps, gaps, contradictions, and shortcomings that the project could address. Given the legislative process, constraints, and time required to amend the Biodiversity Law, the report proposed, among other things, that there should be a decree amending and supplementing Decree 160/2019/ND-CP because such an approach could be implemented in a shorter time and within the scope of the WLP. It recommended that the decree “should focus on the missing and weak issues of the entire legal system of wildlife conservation that can be adjusted at the national level” and detailed those weaknesses.

41. Though a draft amendment of Decree 160 itself (that addressed the entire legal system) was not prepared by project closing, the report’s analysis was an essential guiding resource throughout implementation and informed preparation of many project outputs related to specific topics such as conservation facilities and wildlife crime enforcement. The report continues to serve as the central analytical basis for continuing efforts to strengthen the framework, including regulations related to (a) clearer institutional responsibilities between various line ministries including between MONRE and MARD; (b) participation of and livelihoods for people in and around conservation areas; (c) reduction of threats to wild species; (d) strict bans on raising and breeding endangered, precious, and rare wild animals for commercial purposes; and (e) sustainable financing for conservation.

42. **Urgent Measures for Wild and Migratory Birds.** Since endangered wild and migratory bird species can be particularly sensitive to and impacted by habitat loss and capture for consumption or sale as exotic pets, the project supported the preparation and submission of a draft proposal of urgent measures that was approved and issued as PM Directive 04/CT-TTg (May 17, 2022). This measure was not specifically anticipated at appraisal but is a good example of the project’s agility and its ability to respond to changing or emerging issue areas in which strengthening of the legal/regulatory framework is needed.

43. The conservation status of wild and migratory birds had emerged as an increasingly urgent issue during implementation, with some species no longer being seen in Vietnam during the migration season. Of the more than 900 bird species in Vietnam, 51 are considered threatened under the GEF 6 program for reducing poaching and IWT (10 are critically endangered, 17 endangered, and 24 vulnerable), and another 48 are near threatened. The directive includes mandates intended to benefit both threatened and non-threatened species, such as protection of bird flyways and habitats; enforcement of wildlife laws on capture, trade, and consumption of birds; scientific research; and raising public awareness. Though not exclusive to threatened species, the directive cites the list of threatened species in Decree 64/2019 and calls on Provincial People’s Committees (PPCs) to enhance regulatory implementation particularly for the species included in Decree 160/2013 as updated by Decree 64/2019 as well as related laws and decrees.



44. Directive 04 encompasses both threatened and non-threatened species as most measures mandated apply to both (such as protection of bird flyways and habitats, enforcement of wildlife laws, scientific research, and raising public awareness). The directive also references regulatory instruments on threatened species and calls on PPCs to enhance regulatory implementation particularly for species covered in the selection criteria decree and related laws and decrees.

45. **Ex-Situ Conservation Facilities.** This encompasses private and public facilities engaged in both rescue and captive breeding activities. The project assessed the status of facilities in Vietnam, studied international experiences and models, and carried out a consultative process with government agencies and facility operators to develop and propose new legal documents governing the establishment and operation of biodiversity conservation facilities under Article 42 of the Law on Biodiversity. Although at closing a draft decree was still being reviewed and finalized by MONRE prior to official submission to the government, the key elements of such a decree were completed and the path toward finalizing the proposal was clarified. In practice, the process of developing the proposals to an advanced stage had already clarified agency roles and responsibilities and provided guidance that was being applied in areas such as standards for animal welfare, definition of types of facilities, and requirements for their establishment and management to help ensure that they would have a beneficial rather than adverse effect on conservation goals. Considerable training, piloting of models, preparation of guidelines and manuals, and provision of equipment was also carried out; primarily with the aim of strengthening capacity for implementation, but which also had a synergistic effect in informing some proposals for the framework itself.

46. **Biodiversity and Tourism.** The project carried out an assessment of the status of tourism in protected areas in relation to biodiversity and prepared a report with proposals for integrating regulations on biodiversity conservation into tourism activities and eco-tourism in particular. The report did not propose specific decrees or amendments to biodiversity laws and regulations, but rather focused on approaches for ensuring that the current framework is better implemented and integrated into tourism activities to help ensure they did not negatively affect endangered species, and where possible, contribute to awareness of and support for protection measures. A policy note on sustainable nature-based tourism, stemming from assessment work, was disseminated to key agencies including Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism (the Institute for Tourism Development Research), MARD and its Special Use Forest management boards, MONRE, and others, and protected areas management boards.

47. To facilitate implementation of the proposals, demonstrate their integration into tourism, and assess their effectiveness, the project piloted models for applying protection and awareness elements into tourism activities and fostering community involvement in ecotourism in two national parks. The project also provided support to the National Park Management Board in preparing and implementing public awareness activities and training materials (and training) for park staff and tour guides. The materials will be finalized in a published form and distributed more widely to park, protected area, and tourism workers. The pilots were carried out under Component 1, which is primarily linked to the legal/regulatory framework objective but are more closely aligned with achievement of the capacity strengthening objective.

48. **Wildlife Crime.** To strengthen both the legal foundation and operational approach to enforcement of wildlife laws and regulations, the project prepared proposals for consideration by the MPS for a component on prevention of wildlife crimes to be added to the National Crime Prevention Strategy. The plan was endorsed and submitted to the government by MPS and approved by PM Decision (1623/QD-TTG).

49. In addition, the project helped develop a coordination plan between the key departments within MPS (Environmental Crime Prevention and Control Department) and MONRE (Vietnam Environment Administration), which



was signed in July 2021. The agreement is expected to result in better coordination of activities between these key agencies in preventing and detecting crimes, enforcing laws, and prosecuting violations. Through the assistance, a survey of wildlife crimes was also conducted. Although the agreement signed is only for 2021-23, it established a model and practice that can be renewed for subsequent periods and supplements broader joint work plans between multiple agencies, improving their practical operationalization with one key interagency relationship.

Outcome 2: Strengthen Implementation Capacity for the Protection of Threatened Wildlife

50. The project strengthened implementation capacity by (a) improving the competency of enforcement and conservation officers in wildlife laws and regulations, (b) expanding the deployment of the SMART tool for monitoring and reporting on poaching and other illegal activities, (c) facilitating more formal coordination agreements between key stakeholders and agreement on joint work plans between key government ministries, (d) scaling up information-sharing mechanisms, (e) expanding the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum and facilitating collaboration among its member partners, and (f) conducting awareness campaigns aimed at reducing demand for wildlife products.

51. Although many of these activities themselves do not directly measure capacity, they are strong linked logically to improved capacity as elaborated in the project’s theory of change, and consistent with the short-term objectives of the GWP to carry out activities that will address shortcomings and help overcome barriers related to the goals of reduced poaching, trafficking, and consumption of threatened wildlife. Training to increase the competency of enforcement officials is logically expected to help them perform their duties more effectively. Wider deployment of standardized monitoring and reporting tools enhances the capacity of staff in protected areas to detect and understand hot spots and patterns of poaching and other illegal activities, share information, and collaborate in efforts to combat those violations both within protected areas and across wider geographic areas. These and other linkages are discussed in more detail below for specific activities and indicators.

Table 3 Summary of Indicator Results for Outcome 2 (Implementation Capacity)

<i>Outcome indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Achieved</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Enforcement and conservation officers with increased competency in the application of laws and regulations on wildlife protection (number)	500	546	Competency assessed through pre- and post-training evaluations.
Enforcement and conservation agencies that deploy the SMART tool (number)	25	35	“Agencies” refers to protected areas. Values are for new deployment supported by the project.
Share of government agencies participating in the Biodiversity Steering Committee (BSC) that agree on joint work plans on wildlife conservation (percent)	90	100	The BSC included 18 agencies, which proved overly broad and unwieldy. Therefore, in the NBSAP 2030 the BSC was discontinued in favor of a more focused, manageable, and effective approach that assigned clear, central roles to MONRE and the other six most relevant agencies from the former BSC, along with secondary roles for other collaborating ministries and agencies. These core agencies are the ones that agreed to the joint work plans
Share of central and local government staff reached by awareness raising campaigns (percent)	50	80	Values are for campaigns on biodiversity consumption targeting civil servants, and do not capture awareness campaigns intended for a broader public audience on a wider range of topics.



<i>Intermediate indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Achieved</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Training needs assessment and training plan designed for the enforcement and implementation of the Law on Biodiversity and regulations (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Needs assessment completed and training plan designed in early 2021.
People accessing the information sharing mechanism on the conservation of prioritized threatened species (number) the share of which are women (percent)	500	711	The original indicator referred to the scaled-up version of the existing web-based information-sharing database for the Hanoi area. That mechanism was scaled up, conservation and enforcement officials were trained in its use and maintenance, and the number accessing it likely exceeded the project target. However, the value reported was for the number of members/people accessing information generated by the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum, which itself is a valuable indication of the expansion and facilitation of wildlife partnerships under the project. Thirty percent of those accessing the information were women.
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for collaboration with key stakeholders formalized (number)	3	4	Strengthens partnerships among members of the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum. In lieu of MOUs, 4 bilateral cooperation plans were signed between government agencies (2) and with NGOs (2). One MOU was negotiated with Birdlife International (not yet signed) on migratory bird conservation.
Awareness raising strategy targeting civil servants developed and implemented (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Awareness raising campaign on wildlife consumption targeting civil servants carried out in 2020–22.

52. Many activities and outputs that primarily supported achievement of the second objective (strengthened capacity) could also be considered as helping to achieve the first objective (strengthening the legal/regulatory framework). For example, the conservation program, draft action plans on specific topics, and coordination plans among and between agencies and international or national/subnational stakeholders *enhanced capacity for implementing wildlife laws* by defining implementation strategies and actions while also *improving the legal/regulatory framework* by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, including those between central government agencies and the provincial/district/park management authorities implementing the plans.

53. Similarly, the consultative and collaborative process for delivering some outputs that mainly strengthened the legal framework also had an ancillary effect of strengthening the capacity of those involved by giving them a better understanding of the laws, regulations, and issues they aimed to address. While development of the updated and expanded National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is counted as strengthening the legal framework, the related Conservation Program intended to help carry out the strategy is considered part of strengthened capacity. Likewise, the plan issued by MONRE for implementation of the NBSAP (Decision 3220/QD-BTNMT, November 23, 2022) serves as a capacity strengthening output, but also defines the responsibilities of some units in MONRE, the Ministry of Finance, and other agencies.



54. It is also important to note that while the project's communications and awareness activities included wildlife consumption campaigns specifically targeted at civil servants as reflected in the main outcome indicators, they also included an array of events and materials on biodiversity conservation, endangered species, and selected high-priority species aimed at both the general public (through print and broadcast media and special public events) and narrower groups such as students (through an online debate competition and an art competition).

55. Most of the communication and awareness activities did not strengthen implementation capacity directly, but rather did so indirectly by seeking to change the behavior of civil servants who influence the general public by example and by gradually shifting public attitudes and awareness to create a public and civil society that is more receptive and supportive of measures to protect endangered species. Raising awareness could even be considered a third, unstated project objective, but was not counted as a separate objective because it was not considered a primary outcome and the project mainly measures outputs and activities rather than actual change in awareness.

56. **Training in application laws, regulation, and implementation mechanisms.** The project undertook a needs assessment for the staff of national and subnational agencies and protected areas, designed a training program based on the assessment, and carried out 18 training events with more than 1,000 participants. The assessment and design of the training program considered a parallel training program being carried out by USAID's Saving Species project to ensure complementarity and avoid redundant training between the two programs. Thirteen of the events, with 546 participants, specifically focused on enforcement and application of wildlife laws and regulations.

57. Training was provided to environmental police, forest rangers, and staff in MONRE, national parks and protected areas, and biodiversity conservation facilities at the national and subnational levels. Some of the courses covered topics that enhanced conservation capacity generally but not legal/regulatory enforcement or implementation specifically (for example, identification of plant and animal species, wildlife rescue and release, public communication and awareness of the importance of biodiversity, and interaction and messaging between park staff, guides, tourists, and tourism companies). While there was not always a clear line between enforcement training and other training (e.g., species identification) for purposes of the indicator target, training on enforcement was narrowly construed to only include courses on topics such as the application and enforcement of legal regulations, detection, investigation, and prosecution of criminal violations (including deployment of the SMART system for patrolling, monitoring, and reporting), and application and supervision of regulations for biodiversity conservation facilities.

58. To assess the capacity enhancement outcomes of the training activities, the participants' knowledge about legal provisions and their application and enforcement was assessed before and after the training. While this admittedly shows only the immediate increase in competency as a result of the training, the project design recognized that measuring longer-term capacity in actual performance of enforcement responsibilities was not realistic given the limited implementation time frame and project resources, except in selected activities such as deployment of SMART.

59. **Deployment of the SMART Tool.** At appraisal, the SMART tool (an improved and standardized approach to patrolling, monitoring, and reporting on poaching, illegal logging, and other direct threats to biodiversity) had been piloted and was actively deployed in 26 protected areas. The project carried out training in 44 additional protected areas, 35 of which were actively using the tool at project closing (against a target of 25). This brought the total network of PAs using the SMART tool to 61, thereby enabling timely and accurate information on poaching networks and biodiversity hotspots on a larger geographic scale without substantial additional cost to the PAs. The other nine PAs that received training have not yet deployed the tool, but say they intend to do so once they have established the necessary infrastructure and systems. The SMART application itself has been introduced in some of the other



remaining 120 PAs in Vietnam with support from GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation) through Vietnam's Department of Protected Area Management under MARĐ. These activities were running in parallel to the preparation and delivery of training under this project to selected PAs, ensuring more coverage but requiring close coordination by the PMU with government agencies.

60. **Joint work plans.** The original target was for 90 percent of the 18 members of the Biodiversity Steering Committee (created under the NBSAP 2020) to agree on joint work programs. However, in the updated NBSAP 2030 this very broad and somewhat unwieldy implementation and oversight mechanism was discontinued in favor of a more targeted, manageable, and effective approach of assigning specific, key roles to the most relevant of the BSC agencies, with secondary roles defined for some other collaborating agencies. These roles are detailed in MONRE's plan to implement and operationalize the NBSAP, approved by Decision No. 3220/QĐ-BTNMT (November 23, 2022). This MONRE scheme includes a set of work plans to help clarify overlapping roles and improve collaboration, efficiency, and effectiveness. The plan was approved by all six of the agencies (in addition to MONRE) whose collaboration is most essential to the protection and conservation of threatened wildlife. Although the number of agencies is lower, agreement by 100 percent of the six most critical agencies is considered an improvement over the less realistic and less manageable goal of coordinating the work programs of 18 disparate agencies.

61. **Information-Sharing Mechanism.** To enhance the capacity of enforcement and conservation officers, the project scaled up an existing, local, pilot database for information sharing on protection and conservation of endangered species to national coverage and access. The database (<https://loainguycap.ceid.gov.vn/>) includes information on identification, characteristics, ecology, distribution, threats, management arrangements, and conservation status of about 400 priority species. Training on how to update and operate the database was provided to roughly 100 local and national government officials. Local and central government agencies are able to update and access the information compiled from sources across the county, informing protection strategies and practices, and improving interagency coordination (as well as increasing public interest and awareness). The use of the database has substantially increased, has likely met project expectations, and is an important contributor to improved information and capacity for monitoring crimes and enforcing laws. However, the reported value measures the number of people accessing the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum site and newsletter rather than the scaled-up information-sharing mechanism. Although a strong level of activity and access to Forum resources (711 people, 30 percent of whom are women) is itself an important outcome in relation to building and expanding partnerships, it is not the value originally intended to be measured by this indicator.

62. **Memoranda of understanding between key stakeholders to enhance coordination led by MONRE.** Another initiative to strengthen capacity and in particular partnerships for protection of threatened species, was the formalization of MOUs between selected key stakeholders. In some cases, this took the form of agreed collaboration plans rather than formal MOUs. The project facilitated the development and signing of four MOUs/collaboration plans on wildlife conservation between the BCA/VEA (Biodiversity Conservation Agency and Vietnam Environment Administration under MONRE) and the Animals Asia Foundation (AAF), Fauna and Flora International (FFI), Environmental Police, and the Department of Special-use and Protection Forest. Some passages in the Project Paper called for MOUs between new partner organizations in the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum, but the results framework defined key stakeholders more broadly without reference to the Forum. During implementation, the stakeholders/agencies selected for developing MOUs or coordination plans were the ones considered most ready for action from among a longlist that the PMU and BCA kept through their years of consultation with key governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. In that sense, while intentional and reflecting areas that needed to be addressed within the broader framework of safeguarding biodiversity and wildlife conservation, the specific ones facilitated by the project were somewhat opportunistic rather than following a specific plan with the partners identified at the



outset of the project. The MOUs are typically for a three-to-five-year period, though they are expected to be renewed after review and appropriate modification to adapt to evolving needs and priorities. Other partners that have active, collaborative relationships without direct official MOUs include the Central Committee for Education and Communication, Central Youth Union, Wildtour, Birdlife International, ReWild, and other groups and agencies.

63. **Awareness of impacts of wildlife consumption.** The project design called for an awareness raising strategy and campaign focused on the consumption of threatened wildlife and that primarily targeted civil servants (as both consumers themselves and as behavioral role models). However, during development of the project's communication program the consultants and implementing agency proposed to pursue a strategy that included a wider range of topics affecting endangered species and to target a broader audience, in particular, the public.

64. The awareness program, conducted from 2020 through 2022, included activities aimed at awareness of endangered species, biodiversity protection, and links between biodiversity and sustainable development in addition to specific messaging to discourage consumption. It included activities involving mass media, engagement through online discussions and debate contests, dissemination of posters and videos, events for international days dedicated to specific species or conservation topics, and inclusion of awareness raising through programs in protected areas and conservation facilities directed at the public.

65. While wildlife consumption was not the sole focus of the campaigns, they included strong elements on consumption as reflected in the issuance by the Central Committee on Communication and Education of Guidance No. 13-HD/BTGTW (July 19, 2021) on strengthening information campaigns related to hunting, catching, buying, selling, transporting, slaughtering, consuming, storing, and advertising wild, endangered, and rare animals and plants. A sample survey of staff and managers in national parks, protected areas, and other conservation management agencies across the country found that 80 percent had been reached by one of the awareness raising activities supported by the project. The fact that the survey was only conducted with conservation management agency staff limits the strength of the conclusions about how effective the campaign was in reaching central and local government workers more broadly, as the conservation agency staff might not be a representative sample.

C. OVERALL OUTCOME RATING

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

66. **Overall Outcome is rated Moderately Satisfactory.** The overall outcome rating was borderline between satisfactory (S) and moderately satisfactory (MS), but ultimately MS was considered the most appropriate for reasons discussed below. The project substantially achieved both of its objectives, delivering or exceeding its key outcome targets and intermediate indicator targets, though in many cases in a compressed time frame in the final years or even months of implementation rather than in the incremental manner originally envisioned. Examples include strengthened competency of enforcement and conservation officers, deployment of the SMART tool, civil servants reached by awareness campaigns, and agreement by Biodiversity Steering Committee member agencies on joint work plans. Though the COVID-19 pandemic contributed substantially to the delays (thus out of the control of the World Bank and Borrower), earlier progress toward the goals would nevertheless have yielded fuller and more timely delivery of the project's benefits, particularly in relation to capacity building (planned delivery of legal/regulatory framework outputs was geared more towards the later stages of the project). Another factor in rating overall outcome MS is that although indicator targets were met, in some cases the measured outputs/outcomes themselves deviated from or were not as clear-cut as those defined at appraisal. Some intermediate outputs and outcomes also



contributed to achievement of the objectives and are considered in the assessment of the overall outcome although they were not explicitly included in the results framework.

67. The nature of the project and structure of the results framework focus on targets that might be considered closer to outputs or intermediate outcomes. This is largely due to the challenge of directly measuring the strength of a regulatory framework, or the longer-term sustainability of knowledge and capacity demonstrated soon after completion of a training program due to the relatively short implementation period and the understanding that, even with substantial strengthening, both the regulatory and capacity dimensions of endangered species protection are ongoing endeavors that cannot be accomplished in a single project. In that light, the indicators and their targets represent logical, defined steps toward strengthening the framework and capacity that are part of an intentional design approach rather than a shortcoming in the project or its results framework.

68. Much of the delay in completing several activities and outputs was largely beyond the control of the World Bank and implementing agency and does not reflect negatively on their performance, but nonetheless, it is acknowledged that most outputs were completed very late in implementation. More opportunities under Components 2 and 3 related to improving capacity and building awareness founded on new knowledge and regulation and policies could have been achieved had the legal/regulatory instruments been completed earlier. The delay in training for enforcement of laws and deployment of SMART in protected areas also delayed the benefits of those activities.

69. The indicator measuring access to the information-sharing mechanism was intended to be linked to the scale-up of the pilot database system for the Hanoi area (Component 2) but measured engagement in the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum (Component 3). This was useful to demonstrate the project's enhancement and facilitation of the Forum to expand and strengthen partnerships but did not provide data measuring the use of and access to the information-sharing mechanism. The mechanism was scaled up and conservation and enforcement officials were trained in its use and application, but the data on actual access was not captured. For the indicator related to MOUs between key stakeholders, some of the coordination plans counted toward achieving the target were worthwhile in fostering stronger partnerships, but they were not the "formalized" MOUs called for in the indicator definition.

70. The Review and Quick Assessment of the existing legal/regulatory framework, which was counted toward the outcome-level indicator for draft legal amendments, helped define a roadmap for regulatory reform, provided essential guidance during implementation, informed preparation of important project outputs, and is an analytical touchstone for continuing efforts to strengthen the legal/regulatory framework. However, it did not lead to preparation or submission of a draft amendment to Decree 160 as proposed in the report and envisioned in the Project Paper. The review and assessment report called for a decree that would focus on the weaknesses it identified in the entire legal system, which might have been too ambitious an undertaking, though it did help the project address selected weaknesses in targeted thematic areas.

71. The project design proposed to measure the outcomes of its awareness campaign by the percentage of civil servants reached by the campaign rather than by its impact on actual levels of wildlife consumption, which was reasonable given the difficulty of measuring consumption and moreover, attributing it to the project when multiple factors and other donor activities were addressing the same problem from other tacks. However, the sample survey to determine this percentage was only conducted among staff and managers in national parks, protected areas, and other conservation management agencies, which was not the narrow target group suggested in the project paper at appraisal and might not be representative of civil servants generally. The campaign carried out numerous worthwhile



and engaging activities and initiatives aimed at both civil servants and the public, but evidence for how successful it was in reaching civil servants could have been more robust.

72. The factors discussed above reflect only moderate shortcomings in achievement of project objectives and are given outside attention here mainly to explain the rationale behind the difficult decision to rate the overall outcome as MS rather than S, despite the strong performance of the implementing agency and its many contributions to strengthening partnerships and capacity for protecting threatened species in Vietnam.

D. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Gender

73. **During implementation gender issues were not mainstreamed in as proactive a manner as envisioned at appraisal, but the foundation for future mainstreaming efforts under the wildlife agenda was established.** Recognizing that both men and women are involved in wildlife trade, albeit in different ways, the project had set forth to mainstream gender by not only providing equal opportunity in project participation, but by singling out women for strengthening their role and contribution in promulgating rules, exchanging knowledge on policy and enforcement, and in awareness raising. The project missed opportunities to specifically document the ways in which it incorporated gender issues in some activities, such as describing how women's inputs on gender (and other issues) informed regulatory revisions. At least one avenue planned in the project paper for disseminating targeted, gender-sensitive information (i.e. women's unions) was not pursued. The PMU observed that conservation and law enforcement is male dominated in Vietnam but that when training focused on communications aspects rather than actual monitoring and technical issues, there was a higher level of participation by female officers. No information on implementation or outputs indicate that the project took an active role in mainstreaming, but instead focused on monitoring participation by gender in events, meetings, and in the partnership forum. The average percentage of women found to have attended meetings and registered in the forum (30 percent) can serve as a baseline for improvement of the ratio in future initiatives. In addition, it is notable that the government focal point for biodiversity and project counterpart, the head of the PMU, and most PMU staff, were women.

Other

74. **Dissuasion of consumption of wildlife through collaboration with the Buddhist Church and in particular, with high-level proponents from the central office and the executive board.** Although the project intended to develop and implement an awareness raising strategy on the consumption of threatened wildlife products to reach government officials and youth through media and NGOs, the collaboration with the Buddhist Church was not foreseen. This partner, particularly at the highest level, proved to have an extensive reach beyond the targeted civil servants of the project to followers in all segments of society. This is expected to contribute to longer term reduction in demand for wildlife products.

75. **Use of social media and online campaigns due to the pandemic unexpectedly provided a boost in terms of effectiveness of communications and level of participation.** The project experienced delays in reorienting communications and consultations from in-person interactions to electronic media, but by exploiting the opportunity the project unexpectedly witnessed higher engagement and positive feedback by stakeholders on the quality and effectiveness of its outreach through these less traditional means.



III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION

76. The key factors during preparation that contributed to the project's design and eventual outcomes included Vietnam's commitment to project's objectives, the country's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2010–20, the previous WLC project administered by the World Bank, consultation with other international agencies and donors with related programs and projects in Vietnam, and the close coordination with the GEF Global Wildlife Program.

77. Vietnam had long signaled its commitment to protecting threatened wildlife as a signatory to the CBD, CITES, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and other key international biodiversity protection accords. This commitment was underscored by the many plans, programs, strategies, and legal/regulatory instruments developed and implemented in relation to conserving biodiversity. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2010–20, in particular, synthesized Vietnam's experience, activities, and analysis of biodiversity protection issues and challenges, thereby providing a roadmap for ways to make its efforts and enabling frameworks stronger and its gains more sustainable.

78. The World Bank-administered Wildlife Consumption Project, the US\$1 million GEF predecessor project, focused mainly on the drivers of consumption/demand for wildlife products but in doing so, developed direct sector experience and strengthened partnerships between the Bank and key agencies in Vietnam. It also identified ongoing priorities for future engagement in biodiversity conservation, leading to the scaled-up WLP project that took on a broader agenda with a stronger emphasis on the legal framework and implementation capacity for protecting wildlife. Experiences and lessons learned through the GEF's multiagency Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention (now the GWP) and the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), and coordination with USAID's Saving Species project to align the crime enforcement training activities with those of WLP, were important factors in preparation.

B. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION

79. **Two key factors that most affected implementation are a shortened implementation period and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on delivering certain activities.** A lengthy review and approval process within the government reduced project duration from the planned five years to only three and one-half years, leaving little buffer to absorb delays during implementation, as was the case with the selection of some consultants. A rush in completing contractual work left little time for vetting consultant outputs with other experts and policymakers. This was exacerbated by a factor outside the control of the project; the global pandemic which delayed capacity needs assessments (through surveys), preparation of training curricula, deployment of trainers, and required in-person training under Component 2. Key activities were pushed back to the end of the project, not only preventing quality control but also full assessment of outputs, results, and impacts. Despite these challenges, the project was able to adapt to deliver on commitments through the PMU's leadership, persistence, and openness to embrace alternative modes of training, communication, and dissemination. The involvement of consultants from the field of conservation, such as WWF Vietnam, ensured that deliverables received at the end of the project were nonetheless at the level of quality expected.

80. The global pandemic had some impact on the scope of the project as well in that it was enhanced to include more specific awareness raising on zoonotic and spillover diseases such as COVID-19. For example, in early 2020, the



PMU coordinated with other partners to develop a TV report on wildlife-related zoonotic diseases and their linkage to illegal wildlife consumption, trade, breeding, hunting, and encroachment into wildlife habitat. The project's awareness campaigns aimed at both the public and civil servants included greater emphasis on zoonotic disease risk, such as incorporating it into its online contests for young people (that also attracted attention from parents, teachers, and general community). Information on disease transmission and risk reduction were also included in the technical guidelines for ex-situ wildlife facilities and rescue centers. Directive 04 (May 2022) on migratory and wild birds included disease risk as an underlying issue and specifically assigned MARD responsibility for "detecting diseases and epidemics borne by wild and migratory birds that are likely to spread and affect the health of people, livestock, and poultry."

IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

81. **Quality of project monitoring and evaluation: Substantial.** The project M&E was fundamentally sound and provided a good basis for the findings in this Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR). Shortcomings related to some indicators were moderate and did not significantly compromise ability to assess the project outcomes. During preparation, the alignment of outcome and intermediate indicators with project objectives was closely modeled on the approach of the GEF's Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development (GWP) under which the WLP was a national project. Consistent with the GWP, the project focused on investments in "emergency short-term interventions" during the project's implementation period that would contribute in the longer term to reduction in poaching, trafficking, and illegal wildlife trade as the cost-benefit balance between illegal activities and shared benefits at the local and national level shifted in favor of protection. The graphic representation of the project's Theory of Change was fairly general but accompanied by text that more fully laid out the results chain between project activities, outputs, and outcomes.

82. Because of the focus on short-term interventions and the challenge of measuring the strength of the legal framework itself and the effectiveness of strengthened capacity for achieving longer-term goals, the outcome indicators focused on key steps, outputs, and reforms that international experience has demonstrated are essential to the longer-term protection outcomes. In some cases, the criteria for achieving targets were not precisely defined, such as which outputs, in what form, would count as legal/regulatory "amendments." The link between providing training on enforcement and increased enforcement capacity was based on pre- and post-training assessments of competency in the application of laws and regulations (knowledge about their application). Although increased competency regarding the content of the training does not, strictly speaking, demonstrate improved capacity or effectiveness in actual implementation, it was considered the most appropriate indicator for increased capacity given the long time frame required and the attribution challenges of directly measuring capacity in terms of performance rather than learning or knowledge.

83. Awareness raising about consumption of wildlife products was an important activity continued from the WLC and a key to reducing demand in the long-term but did not fit neatly into the results chain for either legal framework or implementation capacity. Awareness was not considered a separate objective on the level of the framework and capacity objectives and was included as contributing to implementation capacity because it would potentially improve



the demand environment in which Vietnam's efforts were being carried out. Even though during implementation the awareness raising campaign had both a broader focus and target audience than wildlife consumption by civil servants, these were still key parts of the campaigns.

84. Clear criteria were set for some framework-related outputs, but not for all. In some ways not strictly defining the form of all legal/regulatory instruments was advantageous during implementation as it allowed for adaptability and a proactive approach in identifying and designing instruments that were best suited to and most administratively and politically practical for addressing shortcomings in the framework without being boxed into narrowly defined legal solutions. In the end, the many plans, decrees, strategies, and proposals developed and submitted (and some approved via formal decision, decree, or directive) exceeded overall expectations even though only five were designated as achieving the related outcome target.

85. While there were some ambiguities during preparation and some variation in definitions and measured outputs during implementation, tracking and reporting of M&E were consistent, reliable, and reasonably accounted for. Variations and interpretations intended to strengthen the measurement and assessment of outcomes were well documented. In areas such as training, awareness raising, and legal/regulatory reform, the project activities and outputs were sufficient and diverse enough to meet the criteria of the original targets even if they were not strictly within the originally defined parameters.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE

86. **Environment and social safeguards.** The project did not include civil works and the Environmental Assessment (EA) Category at appraisal was "C" (no Environmental Assessment required). No safeguards policies were triggered other than the umbrella policy for Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01). Safeguards compliance was satisfactory throughout implementation and no social or environmental issues arose that triggered additional safeguards or required reevaluation of the initial categorization. A recommendation was made and adhered to regarding inclusion of analysis of possible social impacts from the development of the plan to prevent wildlife crime (an additional analysis not required by World Bank safeguards policies).

87. **Procurement.** Capacity of the PMU staff was enhanced by World Bank procurement training which undoubtedly helped prepare it to deliver 30 small consulting packages, various equipment for the office, support to rescue centers, a biodiversity conservation facility, and multiple workshops and non-consulting services by the end of the project. Goods and services were procured in accordance with Bank guidelines and procedures outlined in the project operations manual. A notable change introduced by the World Bank during implementation was the Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) which the PMU accepted and proved capable to use. In the latter half of implementation, some procedural shortcomings were flagged and addressed immediately and the procurement standing ended on a high note with the PMU making considerable efforts to complete remaining procurement packages prior to project closing.

88. **Financial Management.** The project's financial management (FM) system was operational by 2019 and project internal control procedures were found to be properly followed through project implementation. The PMU complied fully with financial reporting and auditing requirements with only one minor delay of less than a month in the submission of the first (FY2019) project audit report. No audits were qualified. PMU staff benefitted from World Bank FM training that built upon the capacity established under the WLC project.



89. **Fiduciary compliance was found to be satisfactory by the end of the project.** Annual work and disbursement plans were regularly delayed as were terms of reference and mobilization of consultant services by about three months, due to MONRE's internal review procedures. This had some impact on project implementation and disbursement but did not prevent the final work plan and all planned activities under the project to be delivered before the project closed. Fiduciary risk was decreased to "low" a month before closing.

C. BANK PERFORMANCE

90. **Quality at Entry.** The project design was complementary not only to the government's policy and regulatory efforts on wildlife protection and biodiversity but to international efforts by established donors and the GWP on wildlife conservation in tandem with sustainable development. The project documentation and reviews at concept and appraisal stages point to careful examination of where the previous wildlife (WLC) project left off, taking on two areas that needed further attention (inconsistent legislation and insufficient coordination among agencies at the central and local levels). While specific in some activities proposed across the three main components, the design and results framework were sufficiently flexible to incorporate additional activities that materialized based on need for supporting the PDO and on opportunities that arose during implementation. The project team also made considerable efforts with MONRE to speed up the processing time of Vietnam's version of the project document to enable the State Bank of Vietnam to sign the grant agreement and allow implementation to commence.

91. **Quality at Supervision.** Implementation support was provided throughout project implementation through four official missions, including one at mid-term and on an ongoing, less formal basis through the Hanoi-based project team. Fewer missions are consistent with World Bank policy for well-performing, small recipient-executed trust fund projects but in this case where there were many moving parts, the added support on the ground, plus a well-timed mid-term review, were essential to ensure that the project met all its targets in the last several months of implementation. The World Bank was supportive of the PMU and BCA, the MONRE implementing agency in terms of capacity building, offering training opportunities for more effective and efficient implementation and understanding the importance of sanctioning travel related to the overarching GWP and the CBD for exchanging knowledge and best practices. The World Bank was also very much attuned to the project's role as another step forward in the country's longer-term path towards sustainable biodiversity and wildlife conservation and thereby promoted the partnerships forged with local and international NGOs, and with the private sector.

92. **Overall, Bank performance is assessed to be Satisfactory.** Performance ratings provided by the World Bank over the course of the project were appropriate, moving downwards when it became apparent that there were some risks in the project and PMU achieving all PDO and intermediate targets in the short period until project closing, particularly the training of government officials. A lowered rating during a key juncture during implementation provided the PMU with additional incentive to reach all targets by the end of the project.

D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

93. **Development outcome may be impacted by factors that include turnover of project proponents and trained officials and lack of resources to continue initiatives related to coordination, awareness raising, and program and plan implementation to conserve and rescue endangered species and wildlife.** Even with the backing of a stronger regulatory framework (for very specific issues), resources are required for implementation and enforcement which is demanding given the costs of monitoring equipment and nature of the challenge in preventing illegal trade in and conserving wildlife. MONRE has the mandate to lead national efforts to implement the CBD, CITES, and other



international and regional initiatives to strengthen collaboration and capacity on wildlife conservation and trade as a global good. As such, MONRE is a likely continued partner and beneficiary in future efforts, as is MARD. But for other partners under this project, such as local law enforcement agencies or national parks, it may be difficult to maintain training programs and continue inducting new staff without the drive of vested individuals and the project network. To counter this, further institutionalization of efforts is critical, as this project undertook, for example through the coordination plans between key agencies and the November 2022 decision (No. 3220/QD-BTNMT) that specifies responsibilities of key agencies under the NBSAP.

94. Relatedly, sustained financial support, or the lack thereof will likely impact the degree to which coordination, awareness raising, and delivering on national programs continue between the national and local levels, among line ministries and agencies, and between the public and private sector. Given that Vietnam is one of the 16 countries with the highest biodiversity in the world, while also being a center of wildlife trade in the region, there will likely be continued external grant funding to key government agencies but not necessarily the level and type of support needed. Here too, the project initiated something that should be fostered with the next round of support and that is engaging more with the private sector to leverage financing for implementing policies and government plans that came out of the project. Sustainable tourism, support to ex situ conservation sites and facilities and other economic activities that promote wildlife in line with national and international policy are the domain of the private sector in some other countries, as was investigated by one project study on resource mobilization in the Vietnam context submitted the last month of implementation. This will have to be picked up in another activity to minimize the risks to outcomes of the second part of the PDO.

V. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

95. **Promoting coordination and building bridges and relationships within government and with civil society enhances the delivery of national programs and plans, the enforcement of national and local laws, and the sustainability of project achievements.** The project was punctuated with examples of multifaceted efforts to develop and strengthen partnerships within the government itself as well as with civil society, such as technical assistance to FFI Vietnam for the promotion and establishment of a conservation area for the critically endangered Delacour Langur⁵ habitat involving local authorities (DARD, DONRE, and FPD) in Ha Nam Province. Cooperation plans between MONRE's Biodiversity Conservation Agency with MARD's Forest Protection Department to provide joint training on the SMART tool and with MPS to develop the National Biodiversity Crime Strategy are other examples of partnerships that have led to concrete outputs, many of which are certain to carry into the future given the further institutionalization of certain roles and responsibilities of key agencies.

96. **The introduction of alternative ways to promote intragovernmental cooperation can inject new energy into addressing enduring challenges.** A workshop held by BCA in December 2022 was the first in a planned series of workshops to officially promote activities it implemented and showcase innovative approaches from specific agencies (in this case between the forestry and fisheries departments). Such targeted consultation and promotional workshops are a departure from the standard national project workshops in which minor agencies or departments are not always heard. Surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic gave an unexpected boost to national-provincial cooperation by facilitating participation through virtual meetings, online engagement surveys, and knowledge seminars. Another

⁵ One of 12 species of leaf-eating primates in Vietnam and one of three Vietnamese endemics that is critically endangered.



example of this adaptive management was the recognition of the advantages of, and agreement to institutionalize in the NBSAP a cooperation strategy between selected key ministries and agencies while dissolving the Biodiversity Steering Committee.

97. **Incremental, measurable progress requires a policy baseline.** A lesson carried over from the previous project into this project (WLP), is to be clear about what the project has achieved, what it missed, and where it has left off so that the country can continue to make incremental progress in developing and strengthening its regulatory, policy, and administrative framework with the support of the international community. To that end, the project included a study on the required policy and legal path forward to conserve wild species by the 2030 NBSAP target. It builds on the policies and regulations that were delivered before the end of the project; identifies some remaining overlaps in MONRE, MARD, and local government policy, including in listing and categorizing endangered, precious, and rare species; and clearly shows where more efforts and new initiatives are needed. Another study and project deliverable on resource mobilization made recommendations to streamline government efforts with a view to manage costs and outlines how MARD's Department of Conservation Management, which focuses on forestry issues and has been deploying the SMART application, can work more effectively in the future with MONRE, protected areas, and enforcement agencies taking into account their respective priorities and mandates.

98. **A multilateral approach to tackling a complex global challenge precipitates action at multiple levels and sets the stage for sustained change.** The project built upon existing partnerships and fostered new partnerships among a range of actors, including local, provincial, and national policymakers, regulators, and enforcement officials; civil society, including the Buddhist Churches of Vietnam, the Central Youth Union and local NGOs; the Central Party Committee on Communication and Education; and the state media. The project created a mechanism for sharing information and knowledge on wildlife conservation and had, at project closing, more than 1,000 subscribers (including the international community). It tapped into the expertise of local and international NGOs, academia, and institutes to generate knowledge, strategies, and new legislation. This cooperation and coordination for joint action on various fronts extended to the international community, including the GEF's GWP and donors active in projects with MONRE partner agencies (MARD, etc.) on public awareness, enforcement, technical assistance, knowledge sharing, and other complementary work to the project's main thrust of policy and regulatory reform and capacity building. A broader but coordinated approach to combatting wildlife crime and protecting endangered species going forward is expected to generate efficiencies and facilitate resource mobilization.

99. **A global platform such as the GWP proved essential to anchor extensive initiatives at the country level while providing affirmation and cross-fertilization necessary to earn buy-in by stakeholders.** The Vietnam project focal point, BCA, regularly exchanged experiences and knowledge with other GWP country beneficiaries particularly in terms of policy and communication approaches. Participation in the GWP also ensured that the country was privy to the latest thinking and approaches in implementing and fulfilling its treaty obligations (CBD, CITES, etc.). This has helped position BCA, MONRE as the authority in Vietnam best able to lead coordination and collaboration efforts among agencies and to source and disseminate information on protection of wildlife, endangered species, and biodiversity.



ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS

A. RESULTS INDICATORS

A.1 PDO Indicators

Objective/Outcome: Strengthen the legal and regulatory framework for the protection of threatened wildlife

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
PDO1: Draft amendments to the laws and regulations on threatened wildlife protection submitted for approval to the competent authorities	Number	0.00 01-Jul-2018	5.00 31-Dec-2022	5.00 31-Dec-2022	5.00 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Mostly Achieved. The five legal/regulatory outputs developed by the project include two that were submitted and subsequently issued as Directives/Decrees. One is pending final administrative approval before formal submission. Two are outputs or contributions that did not involve formal submission of a draft amendment for approval but are considered key project achievements that played an important role in strengthening the legal/regulatory framework (therefore the target is "mostly achieved" rather than "achieved"): (a) PM Directive 04/CT-TTg on urgent measures to protect wild and migratory birds (issued May 17, 2022) (b) Provided support and helped develop key elements of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2030 with vision to 2050 (approved by PM Decision 149/QD-TTg, issued January 28, 2022). (c) Plan on preventing and combating biodiversity crimes, including threatened wildlife crimes, submitted by MPS and approved for incorporation into National Crime Prevention Strategy (Decision No. 1623/QD-TTG, Dec 27, 2022) (d) Review and Assessment of Current Legal Provisions on Management and Conservation of Wild Species (March 2020) analyzed legal system for wildlife conservation and proposed roadmap for modifying the framework, in particular guidance for amending Decree 160/2013/ND-CP. (e)



Draft decree on establishment, regulation, and operation of ex-situ conservation facilities, pending final clearance by MONRE prior to formal submission to government. Additional outputs were considered for inclusion in this indicator, such as the Conservation Program and the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Platform, but were not counted toward the value achieved because they were more closely aligned with the project's capacity strengthening objective.

Objective/Outcome: Strengthen implementation capacity for protection of threatened wildlife

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
PDO2: Enforcement and conservation officers with increased competency in the application of the laws and regulations on wildlife protection	Number	0.00 01-Jul-2018	500.00 31-Dec-2022	500.00 31-Dec-2022	546.00 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Exceeded. The project organized 13 training events focused on application and enforcement of laws related to endangered wild species. The training reached 546 enforcement and conservation officers from DONRE, DARD, FPD, Environmental Police, market control, rescue centers/conservation facilities, and protected areas. Increased competency in application of administrative and criminal laws and regulations was validated through pre- and post-training evaluations. In addition, the project carried out 5 additional training events to strengthen capacity for biodiversity conservation and management that were not specifically on application of laws, which reached about 500 additional official nationwide.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
PDO3: Enforcement and	Number	0.00	25.00	25.00	35.00



conservation agencies that deploy the SMART tool		01-Jul-2018	31-Dec-2022	31-Dec-2022	31-Dec-2022
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Comments (achievements against targets):

Exceeded. Training was provided to the staff of 44 protected areas in application of the SMART tool that captures and reports information on poaching, illegal logging, and other direct threats to biodiversity and threatened wildlife. A follow-up survey determined that 35 of the PAs continued to use or were in the process of deploying the tool and that the remaining 9 PAs planned to deploy SMART but did not yet have the necessary resources or system in place. The 35 PAs that have deployed SMART under the project are in addition to 26 PAs that were already using SMART at appraisal.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
PDO4: Share of government agencies participating in the Biodiversity Steering Committee that agree on joint work plans on wildlife protection	Percentage	0.00 01-Jul-2018	90.00 31-Dec-2022	90.00 31-Dec-2022	100.00 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. The joint workplans for implementation of the NBSAP are defined in the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Platform and approved through Decision No 3220/QD-BTNMT (Nov 23, 2022). The Biodiversity Steering Committee that existed at appraisal, which included 18 agencies, was discontinued under the new NBSAP in favor of a more focused, manageable, and effective coordination approach that assigned clear, central roles to the six most relevant agencies from the former BSC (plus MONRE), with secondary roles for other collaborating agencies. MONRE and the six other core agencies all agreed to the joint work plans.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
PDO5: Share of central and	Text	0%	50	50	80



local government staff reached by awareness raising campaigns		01-Jul-2018	31-Dec-2022	31-Dec-2022	31-Dec-2022
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Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. The project carried out a series of communication campaigns during 2020 through 2022, targeting a wide range of civil servants. Sample surveys of central and local government staff found that more than 80% had been reached by or had accessed at least one awareness raising activity or communication product sponsored by the project or included in its awareness raising campaigns. The indicator does not capture the reach of the project's entire biodiversity awareness campaign that targeted a broader public audience on a wider range of wildlife issues. Although the value achieved surpassed the target by a large margin, it is characterized as achieved rather than exceeded because the sample survey was only conducted among staff of conservation-related agencies at various government levels, which might not be representative of government agencies generally.

A.2 Intermediate Results Indicators

Component: Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Framework

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
IR1: Cross-sectoral constituencies participating in consultations on the proposed amendments to laws and regulations on threatened wildlife protection	Yes/No	N 01-Jul-2018	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. The project conducted more than 30 consultation meetings and workshops during the development of the national strategy on biodiversity to 2030 vision to 2050, the species conservation program, roadmap/proposals for amendment of Decree 160, the directive on migratory birds, the decree on



ex-situ conservation facilities, wildlife crime enforcement, and other measures. Participants in the consultations included representatives from government agencies (including CITES, MARD, DARD, DONRE, national parks, Environmental Police, market control, and others), the private sector, and stakeholders communities (with attention to ensuring representation from female constituencies).

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
IR2: A legal framework developed for the management of ex-situ wildlife conservation facilities and submitted to the relevant authority for approval	Yes/No	N 01-Jul-2018	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Nearly achieved. The draft decree on legal requirements applicable to ex-situ wildlife conservation facilities was completed in December 2022 and submitted to MONRE for final review and clearance before submission to the government for formal approval and issuance. The framework prepared under the project also includes technical guidelines to rescue centers and conservation facilities on wildlife rescue and guideline on conservation translocation. Some key recommendations are already being adopted as best practice and applied in practice by selected agencies.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
IR3: Recommendations on the implementation of the Law on Biodiversity in the tourism sector developed and submitted to the relevant authority	Yes/No	N 01-Jul-2018	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022



Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. The project prepared recommendations for integrating biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector, including policy brief submission to relevant agencies in the tourism and biodiversity sector. The preliminary recommendations were incorporated into the National Biodiversity Strategy that was approved by PM Decree in January 2022. A printed report on the final recommendations was publicly disseminated in December 2022. A related output of this activity was the development of training courses for park staff and piloting of tourism integration models in two protected areas.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
IR4: Wildlife crime issues integrated into the National Crime Prevention Strategy	Yes/No	N 01-Jul-2018	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. The project provided technical support to the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) in the development of a national scheme on biodiversity crime prevention, with a focus on the wildlife crime, for inclusion in the National Crime Prevention Strategy. The plan was endorsed by MPS and approved by the government per PM Decision 1623/QD-TTG (Dec 27, 2022).

Component: Enhancing Capacity for Implementation and Enforcement of Wildlife Protection Policies and Regulations

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
IR5: A training needs assessment and training plan designed for the enforcement and implementation of the Law on Biodiversity and regulations	Yes/No	N 01-Jul-2018	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):



Achieved. A needs assessment and training plan was designed for enforcement and conservation officers, which was the basis for the training program carried out during the second half of 2022.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
IR6: People accessing to the information sharing mechanism on the conservation of prioritized threatened species, and its share of women	Number	0.00	500.00	500.00	711.00
		01-Jul-2018	31-Dec-2022	31-Dec-2022	31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. This indicator was originally intended to measure access to the scaled-up information-sharing mechanism under Component 2. The project scaled up this mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the status of endangered species and trained conservation and enforcement official on how to access, upload, and retrieve data. Although the number of people accessing this mechanism likely exceeded the target, the values tracked in the indicator were related to the Endangered Wildlife Partnership Forum under Component 3, which is a valuable indication of the project's outcome in terms of expanding and facilitating wildlife partnerships. The project met the secondary target for women as a share of those accessing the system (30%). The Forum has now reached more than 700 members including government officers, conservationists, press and media contacts and project steering committee members and project consultants. This is an informal two-way knowledge and information sharing forum among wildlife conservation stakeholders. It provides updates on weekly wildlife news, project activities and outputs, and the conservation activities of forum members.

Component: Promoting Knowledge Sharing and Awareness Raising

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
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IR7: Memorandum of Understanding for collaboration with key stakeholders formalized	Number	0.00 01-Jul-2018	3.00 31-Dec-2022	3.00 31-Dec-2022	4.00 31-Dec-2022
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Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. The project facilitated the development and signing of four MOUs/collaboration plans between BCA/VEA with AAF, FFI, the Environmental Police, and the Department of Special-use and Protection Forest on wildlife conservation. Collaboration also continued between government agencies and partners that had signed MOUs previously, such as Four Paws, Education for Nature Vietnam, and the Asian Turtle Program. Other partners that have active, collaborative relationship without direct official MOUs include the Central Committee for Education and Communication, Central Youth Union, Wildtour, Birdlife International, ReWild, and other groups and agencies.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
IR8: An awareness raising strategy targeting civil servants developed and implemented	Yes/No	N 01-Jul-2018	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022	Y 31-Dec-2022

Comments (achievements against targets):

Achieved. An awareness raising program on wildlife conservation was developed that included a focus on consumption of threatened wildlife products, and was implemented during 2020 through 2022. The program targeted civil servants through activities that included the honoring programs, displaying posters and videos in government office buildings, a biodiversity photo exhibition, and a number of guidelines to government agencies on strengthening communications on zero hunting, catching, buying, selling, transporting, slaughtering, consuming and storing, advertising, or harming wild, endangered, and rare animals and plants. The broader awareness campaign encompassed a wider range of wildlife issues and was targeted at the public as well as civil servants. Both activities included messaging on zoonotic disease risk.



B. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PDO

Objective/Outcome 1: Strengthen legal and regulatory framework for protecting threatened wildlife	
Outcome Indicators	Draft amendments to the laws and regulations on threatened wildlife protection submitted for approval to the competent authorities (more than five decrees, decisions, and amendments submitted and/or approved, with numerous secondary implementing decrees and additional action plans prepared, submitted, or approved)
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-sectoral constituencies participating in consultations on the proposed amendments to laws and regulations on threatened wildlife protection (Yes/No) 2. A legal framework developed for the management of ex-situ wildlife conservation facilities and submitted to the relevant authority for approval (Yes/No) 3. Recommendations on the implementation of the Law on Biodiversity in the tourism sector developed and submitted to the relevant authority (Yes/No) 4. Wildlife crime issues integrated into the National Crime Prevention Strategy (Yes/No)
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urgent Measures to Protect Wild and Migratory Birds (Directive 04/CT-TTg, issued 5/17/22) 2. Updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2030 with Vision to 2050 (Prime Minister Decision 149/QD-TTg, May 17, 2022) 3. Incorporation of Plan on Preventing and Combating Biodiversity Crimes into the National Crime Prevention Strategy (Decision 1623/QD-TTG, Dec 27, 2022) 4. Detailed Review and Quick Assessment of the existing legal/regulatory framework (March 2020) identifying weaknesses throughout the legal system that the project could address through amendment of Decree 160/2013/ND-CP and other means. 5. Regulations for managing ex-situ wildlife conservation facilities prepared (pending final review by MONRE prior to official submission to the government)



Objective/Outcome 2: Strengthen implementation capacity for protecting threatened wildlife	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enforcement and conservation officers with increased competency in the application of the laws and regulations on wildlife protection 2. Enforcement and conservation agencies that deploy the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) 3. Share of government agencies participating in the Biodiversity Steering Committee that agree on joint work plans on wildlife protection 4. Share of central and local government staff reached by awareness raising campaigns
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A training needs assessment and training plan designed for the enforcement and implementation of the Law on Biodiversity and regulations (Yes/No) 2. People accessing to the information sharing mechanism on the conservation of prioritized threatened species, and its share of women (Number/Percentage) 3. Memorandum of Understanding for collaboration with key stakeholders formalized (Number) 4. An awareness raising strategy targeting civil servants developed and implemented (Yes/No)
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conservation Program for Endangered and Rare Wildlife 2. Training program with 18 events for wildlife/biodiversity enforcement and management agencies (including more than 1,000 staff in national and subnational agencies, protected areas, and conservation facilities) 3. Database and platform for sharing information between local and central agencies on the status of almost 400 endangered species 4. Plan for implementation of the NBSAP (Decision 3220/QD-BTNMT, November 23, 2022) 5. Training and technical support provided to 44 protected areas (PAs) in deployment of SMART tool for monitoring and reporting (at closing 33 of the PAs were actively deploying the tool)

**ANNEX 2. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT****Cost by Component**

<i>Components</i>	<i>Amount at Approval (US\$M)</i>	<i>Actual at Project Closing (US\$M)</i>	<i>Percentage of Approval (%)</i>
Component 1: Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Framework	1.00	0.73	73
Component 2: Enhancing Capacity for Implementation and Enforcement of Wildlife Protection Policies and Regulations	1.20	1.03	86
Component 3: Promoting Knowledge Sharing and Awareness Raising	0.80	0.63	79
Component 4: Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation	0.30	0.74	247
Total	3.30	3.13	95

Note: The high actual cost for Component 4 is partly because the reported counterpart financing was not separated by component; therefore all \$177,262 was included in Component 4 (versus \$20,000 at approval).

Financing by Source

<i>Source</i>	<i>Amount at Approval (US\$M)</i>	<i>Actual at Project Closing (US\$M)</i>	<i>Percentage of Approval (%)</i>
World Bank (GEF-GWP grant)	3.00	2.96	98.5
Counterpart	0.30	0.18	59.1
Total	3.30	3.13	94.9

Note: Actual amounts at closing are rounded; percentages are based on the unrounded amounts for GEF (\$2,955,540) and counterpart financing (\$177,262).



ANNEX 3. RECIPIENT, CO-FINANCIER AND OTHER PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

No formal comments were received by the Recipient. However, the ICR was reviewed and feedback provided by the Recipient twice on an informal basis, helping to adjust many details and enhance the quality of the document. Among the more substantive issues addressed in this feedback was clarification of one of the outputs counted as a legal/regulatory measure under the first PDO-level outcome indicator. This clarification is reflected in the final ICR.



ANNEX 4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

World Bank. 2017. *Project Paper on a Proposed Grant for a Strengthening Partnerships to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Vietnam Project*. Report No. 2290. Washington, DC: World Bank.
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/201711549978117936/pdf/Vietnam-Strengthening-Partnerships-to-Protect-Endangered-Wildlife-in-Vietnam-Project-additional-financing.pdf>

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Vietnamese legal documents that are not individually listed may be available through the Vietnam Law Library website:

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