

VIET NAM



MDG7

Progress Towards Environmental Sustainability

Viet Nam is slowly mainstreaming the principles of sustainable development into the country's policies and programmes. Rapid economic growth, along with growing population and substantial migration has exerted over the last decades enormous pressures over the environmental quality and natural resources of Viet Nam, making environmental sustainability one of the greatest challenges for the achievement of the MDGs. Moreover, Viet Nam is a country prone to natural disasters, particularly typhoons, floods and drought. An average of more than 1 million people need emergency relief each year due to natural calamities. Many of these people are just above the poverty line, and the impact of a flood or typhoon often pushes them back into poverty.

Natural forest cover shrunk from 43% of total land in 1950s to 27% in 1990, and though the forest cover has increased to 35.8% in 2002, the overall quality of forest has decreased due to natural forest destruction and loss of biodiversity associated with the introduction of non-native flora species. In response to this threat, the Government has encouraged the development of the protected areas system. The number of protected areas has increased between 2001 and 2003 from 95, accounting for 6.7% of total land area, to 121 accounting for 7.54%.

In 2002, between 48-56% of the Vietnamese population had access to safe water supply. This national figure, however, does not reflect the urban-rural disparities in the country. While 78% of the urban households are using safe water supply, only 44% of the rural households have access to safe drinking water sources. From 1998 to 2000, Viet Nam increased overall access to safe water by 13% —an average of 4.6% per annum, which is one of the fastest improvement rates in the world.

QUICK FACTS

CURRENT PORTFOLIO BUDGET

Total UNDP-GEF and Co-Finance:	\$61,192,977
Total UNDP and Co-Finance:	\$4,694,792
Total MPU and Bilateral:	\$787,799
Total:	\$66,675,568

Cumulative Total ODS Phased-Out: 282.8 ODP tonnes

To meet the Government's goal of 85% overall safe water coverage by 2010 and 100% coverage by 2020, Viet Nam needs an average growth rate of 3.3% per year from 2000 to 2010 and an average annual growth of 1.5% from 2010 to 2020. Achieving these goals is possible provided the Government maintains access to safe water as a funding priority for the next 20 years.¹

SPOTLIGHT



Energy-efficient Brick Kilns Reduce Local Air Pollution and GHGs²

Brick-making is one of the most important industries in Viet Nam, traditionally carried out by family-run businesses in rural areas. In 1998, there were over 300 brick-making enterprises in the country, of which 200 were privately owned and predominantly small-scale, accounting for about 70% of national brick production. However, brick production is one of the most environmentally damaging activities in the construction sector. Most brick kilns tend to be highly inefficient, relying on low-quality coal with a high sulphur content, leading to local air pollution and GHG emissions.

The GEF Small Grants Programme contributed \$32,000 to a project to develop a model of a high efficiency vertical brick kiln in Viet Nam. Working with community leaders, government officials and researchers at the University of Technology, the project studied alternative kiln designs that would have less of an environmental impact, while still affordable for small and rural businesses. Local brickmakers were heavily involved in testing different kiln designs, finally settling on a vertical shaft brick kiln.

By the end of 2003, 21 vertical kilns had been installed, six in Hung Yen Province and 15 in Hai Duong Province, with more in the pipeline. The systems have proven to be up to 50% more efficient in their use of coal than the traditional model – at a fraction of the cost. The increased energy efficiency helps reduce local air pollution and GHG emissions. In addition, the new technology has reduced the incidence of broken bricks, saving both time and money for brick producers.

The demonstration of this new technology was so successful that the Government of Viet Nam recently issued a decree that all traditional brick kilns must be phased-out by 2005 in cities and by 2010 in rural areas.

70% of Vietnamese earn their living from the land, making them directly dependent on the quality and availability of natural resources. At the same time, population growth, urbanization and economic expansion are placing increasing pressure on Viet Nam's environment.³ "Viet Nam is one of the 10 centres of highest biodiversity in the world. Environmental protection and natural resources management are closely related to poverty reduction. The poor rely heavily on natural resources to generate income and for direct consumption. Many rural people in remote uplands and coastal areas face the challenge of degrading natural resources. UNDP is assisting the country in defining local solutions to ensure that resource management strategies are sustainable and empower the poor.



Jordan Ryan, Resident Representative

PORTFOLIO

FSSD* Three initiatives are underway that aim to provide support for formulation and implementation of the national Agenda 21, to identify country level priorities and needs for capacity building to address global environmental issues relating to biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation, and to assist Viet Nam in implementing the National Policy Statement and National Implementation Strategy for Environmental Education.

ENERGY To ensure access to sustainable energy resources, UNDP has initiated two projects that aim to determine and develop a comprehensive programme to remove barriers to energy efficiency in the public lighting sector and to determine and develop a programme to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from small-and medium-sized enterprises.

BIODIVERSITY Agriculture is a main source for sustainable livelihood for poor and rural communities in Viet Nam. To ensure access to and sustainable use agro-biodiversity resources, UNDP through GEF funding is supporting an agro-biodiversity project focusing on conserving globally significant agro-biodiversity of six important crop groups in three eco-geographical areas: the northern mountains, the northern mid-lands, and the northwest mountains. The project aims to improve operations capacity at two sites to efficiently and sustainably manage and maintain the areas, and reduce external threats to biodiversity by integrating conservation and development objectives.

CHEMICALS Under its Montreal Protocol programme framework, Vietnam works with UNDP in the aerosols and refrigeration sectors. Currently, two projects in the aerosols sector aim at phasing out CFC-12 in the manufacture of perfumes by conversion to hydrocarbon propellants. In the refrigeration sector, assistance is provided through implementation of the refrigeration management plan which encompasses a recovery and recycling programme and establishment of a national monitoring system. Furthermore, having ratified the Stockholm Convention, Vietnam receives support from UNDP to develop a National Implementation Plan that will lay the groundwork for consideration of any future POPs elimination activity in the country.



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¹MDGR 2003 http://www.undg.org/documents/4430-Viet_Nam_MDG_Report_3_-_Closing_the_Millennium_Gaps.pdf; ²UNDP-GEF, "Meeting the Climate Change Challenge, Sustaining Livelihoods", UNDP, 2004: http://www.undp.org/gef/undp-gef_publications/publications/climate_change_brochure2004.pdf; ³<http://www.undp.org.vn/themes/environment/index.htm>; *Frameworks and Strategies for Sustainable Development