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DEVELOPMENT OF A REFURBISHMENT PLAN

to improve visitor experiences and services offered by
the Nature Museum in Cuc Phuong National Park



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation,
Building and Nuclear Safety



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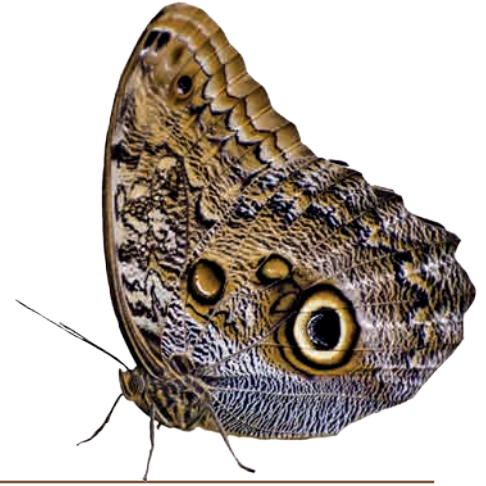
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Photo: internet



1.1 PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name

Development of a refurbishment plan to improve visitor experiences and services offered by the Nature Museum in Cuc Phuong National Park

Location

Ninh Binh Province

Duration

04/2018 – 12/2018

Implementing Organization

BIOFIN Viet Nam, Viet Nam Administration of Forestry/Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance

2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 ABOUT BIOFIN

The global Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) is managed by UNDP, in partnership with the European Commission and the Governments of Germany, Switzerland, Norway, and Flanders. The \$29 million initiative was launched in October 2012, set to run until the end of 2018, with a secured commitment for a phase 2 from the Government of Germany that will allow implementation of some finance solutions.

Guided by a global steering committee representing its partners, BIOFIN aims to develop a methodology for quantifying the biodiversity finance gap at the national level, for improving cost-effectiveness through the mainstreaming of biodiversity into national development and sectoral planning, and for developing comprehensive national finance plans.

2.2 ABOUT THE CUC PHUONG PILOT PROJECT

Cuc Phuong National Park was established on July 7, 1962. It is the first national park and also the first nature reserve in Viet Nam. Cuc Phuong has long been famous both at home and abroad for the diversity of species in its forest ecosystem, its beautiful natural scenery, its cultural value, and its local Muong ethnic community. Due to the large number of visitors that come to this popular tourist destination every year, it has great potential for raising awareness of environmental issues among the public.

The limited financial resources available do not, however, currently allow the park's museum to adequately perform its assigned information and awareness-raising duties to the public. Collections and facilities need updating and maintenance, and the museum has

limited experience with offering or outsourcing alternative services to visitors, as well as a lack of applicable knowledge on global best practices in museum service offerings and income generation.

The refurbishment of the Cuc Phuong Nature Museum is a pilot activity under the cooperation of UNDP's BIOFIN team in Viet Nam with the Ministry of Finance and the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is intended to operationalize a strengthened financial scheme and legal framework for charging and collecting fees for visitor services in nature museums under national management, as well as a government circular based on the scheme that addresses the collection and use of fees and services.



Photo: internet

3. PROJECT RESULTS

RESULT 1:

FINANCIAL SCHEME FOR THE COLLECTION OF VISITOR FEES

Currently, the Vietnam Forest Museum and the Nature Museums of National Parks under VNFOREST are identified by the government as public non-commercial units, and their financial resources are mainly provided by the state budget. In spite of rising public demand, however, budget allocations are very limited, which hampers the museums' effectiveness. As there are no legal regulations on the collection of visitor fees, the museums have no other sources of funding to finance their regular activities. Developing a scheme for collecting visitor fees in nature museums is, therefore, a meaningful and necessary task in line with the priority areas of the BIOFIN project.

This financial scheme, which will be piloted at the nature museum in Cuc Phuong National Park, aims to provide legal guidance for increasing revenues to Viet Nam's nature museums by introducing visitor fees, since no such regulations exist at present.

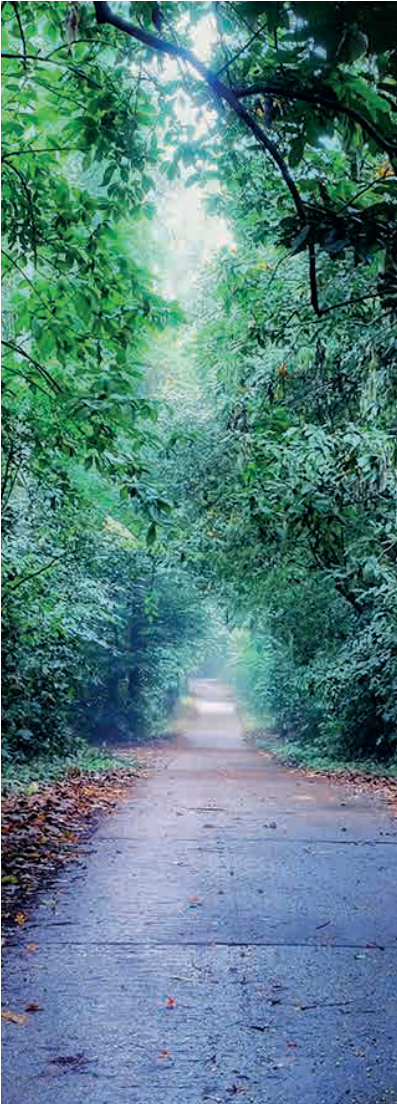


Photo: internet

The proposed financial scheme has resulted in a draft circular on the collection and use of nature museum fees and services, in support of strengthening the legal arrangements for the collection, remittance, and use of self-generated income by museums related to national parks and institutions under the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry. It will support the implementation of the Law on Fees and Charges, building upon the government decree on autonomy mechanisms for public non-business units and specifically making use of opportunities for the self-generation of alternative, stable, and sustainable sources of financing by the museums as public non-business units for maintaining, developing, and improving the effectiveness of their operations.

The circular regulates the charge rates, charge collection mechanisms, charge payment, management, and use of fees for visiting Viet Nam's forest resource museums in the six national parks of Tam Dao, Ba Vi, Cuc Phuong, Bach Ma, Cat Tien, and Yok Don, as well as at the Vietnam Forest Museum in Ha Noi.

Specifically, the circular includes:

- i. A description of services allowed to be provided by museums, and agreed level of fee charged to identified types of visitors;
- ii. A description of subjects exempt of, or allowed a reduction in, fee payments for identified services; and
- iii. A description of modes of operation and management in the collection, remittance, and expenditure of fees collected.

The charge rates for visiting Viet Nam's forest resource museums have been stipulated as follows:

- **Adults:** VND 40,000/person/entrance
- **Students:** VND 20,000/person/entrance
- **Children over 6 years:** VND 10,000/person/entrance

The charge-collecting organizations will return 10% of their total revenue to the state budget, but will be able to retain the remaining 90% for their own expenses. After accounting revenue and expenditures as prescribed, the organizations will retain the rest to improve the quality of visitor services and reinvest in museum activities, among which it has been recommended that collecting specimens and upgrading essential facilities be prioritized.

4. EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACT

The collection of nature museum visitor fees is expected to:

- Contribute to maintaining the regular operation of the system of Viet Nam's nature museums in order to partially cover annual state budget allocations for the organizations, help them manage and exploit investment funds more effectively, and create additional funds for reproductive investment.
- Improve the quality of service offered by nature museums to meet the needs of visitors who come to study, research, and visit.
- Supplement museums' funds for research, procurement and maintenance of specimens, improvement of visitor services, educational outreach, etc., thereby propagating and strengthening public knowledge, awareness, and understanding of forests' rich and diversified resources, the benefits forests and biodiversity provide to livelihoods and the economy, and the need for conservation and protection of forests and the environment.

Photo: internet

5. RENOVATION OF THE CUC PHUONG NATURE MUSEUM



Figure 1. Facade of the Cuc Phuong Nature Museum building.

5.1 CURRENT STATE OF THE CUC PHUONG NATURE MUSEUM

The museum, which was constructed in 2005, is located on beautiful terrain in Cuc Phuong National Park, suitable for a local nature museum. The architecture of the building is not modern enough for current exhibits, however, and the museum has not created an impressive and attractive experience for visitors. In order to draw in visitors to the museum and ensure that the fee collection scheme succeeds in practice, renovations will be required.

Challenges the museum faces in upgrading its facilities and services include:

- The lighting, air conditioning, ventilation, and firefighting systems are not suitable for modern museum architecture, nor are they suitable to meet professional requirements for the preservation of objects and biological specimens.
- Current museum exhibits are not displayed in a way that would attract or interest visitors: the specimens are simply and negligently set in outdated cabinets.
- Exhibits lack useful necessary information for visitors in term of signage, guidance, boards, posters, flyers, brochures, or logos.
- At present, there are only two staff members working on the research, collection, and management of the specimens at the Cuc Phuong Nature Museum.
- The museum does not currently have any public activities, and hosts only very few scientific activities. The policy of the management is not to encourage visitors to come, because the facilities are not qualified enough to attract more.

5.2 PROPOSED FINANCIAL INVESTMENT POLICY

The Cuc Phuong Nature Museum's current yearly state budget of 500 million VND only finances its very core operations, including the collection and preservation of specimens. This fund cannot guarantee expenditures for the public opening.

With the support of BIOFIN, Cuc Phuong National Park has prepared an investment plan for the natural museum. This plan has been approved with a budget of 5.3 billion VND over two years. After upgrading the museum, there will be expected changes in the revenue as follows:

- The number of visitors to the museum will increase over the years.
- Types of revenue will be diversified (e.g. ticketing, event organizing for research organizations or schools, selling souvenirs and soft drinks).
- Total revenue will increase over the years.
- Yearly net income will increase over the years (see Figure 2).

This will contribute to the success of the implementation of the Circular on nature museum entrance fees.

5.3 PROPOSED DISPLAY SCENARIO

Proposed name of the pilot project:

Biodiversity of Cuc Phuong.

Message:

The museum's intention is to brand itself in such a way as to express the value and distinctive features of Cuc Phuong's biodiversity.

Exhibition space:

About 470m² (indoor) to serve the needs of research, studying, sightseeing, and cultural enjoyment, as well as for environmental education for the public as a whole.

Vision and approach:

Vision: To express the conservation and promotion of Cuc Phuong's biodiversity and indigenous cultural value to the public through the language displayed in the museum.

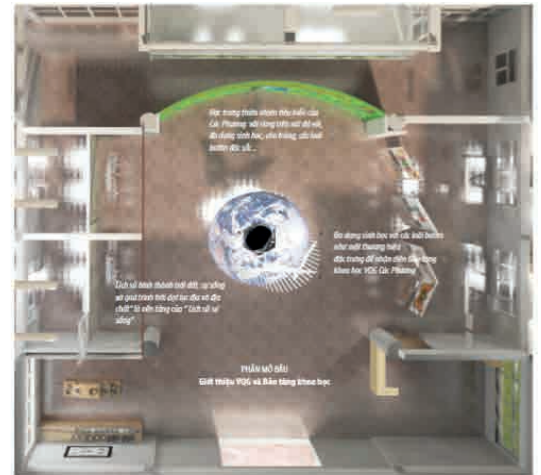
Approach: Using an ecologically-focused approach, the narrated stories will be tied to the environment of animals, forest plants, biological resources, and humans to recreate the characteristics and environment of Cuc Phuong National Park in a way that shows the deep links between nature and humanity.

Display topics

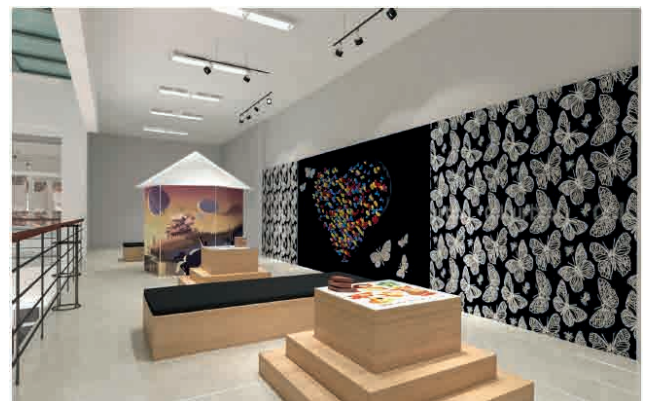
The Cuc Phuong Nature Museum's exhibits and display route will be comprised of four themes, along with introductory and ending areas. The four display themes will be:

1. Plant diversity and plant resources of Cuc Phuong
2. Aquatic animals in Cuc Phuong
3. The diversity and abundance of vertebrate and insect species in Cuc Phuong
4. Muong ethnic culture, indigenous knowledge, and archaeological sites in Cuc Phuong

Each topic will present pictures, videos, selected specimens, artefacts, and the like illustrating a characteristic feature of the park, and be linked with the rest in order to improve awareness about conservation and the importance of protecting biodiversity.



3D interior of proposed museum redesign: lobby & first floor.



3D interior of proposed museum redesign: second floor interactive area.



The new Cuc Phuong Nature Museum logo.



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