

# NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON TIGER CONSERVATION IN VIETNAM



**Song Thanh Nature Reserve**



## 1. Name action plan: National Action plan on tiger conservation in Vietnam

### 2. Introduction:

#### 2.1. Background:

The only tiger subspecies naturally distributed in Vietnam is the Indochinese tiger (*Panthera tigris cobetti*) which according to scientists, historically ranged from north to south Vietnam. They occupied bamboo forests, grass lands, evergreen forests and Dipterocarpus forests. An apex in its habitat, its prey consists of deer, wild boar, muntjac, buffalo, gaur etc.

The tiger population in the country rapidly declined from 3000 individuals in 1960, to a few hundreds in the wild. According to a survey in 2004, they are further decreasing at an alarming pace. Database analysis indicates that there are around 100 individuals remaining alive in fragmented habitat along the Truong Son mountain range and West Plateau. Some scientists believe that there are only 50 tigers living in fragmented habitat along Truong Son. The disappearance of tiger population in Vietnam is

due to several reasons such as habitat loss, poaching, hunting of its prey and disruption of tiger core breeding zone by human activities.

There was some attempt to conserve Indochinese tiger in Vietnam by the government with support from conservation organizations. The Tiger survey in Quang Nam province since 1998 with support from US Fish and Wildlife Service recognized tiger presence in Song Thanh Nature Reserve. The sign of tigers was also recorded on pugmark basis. Biodiversity surveys in Pu Mat National Park in 2001 recorded a tiger by camera trapping.

In Vietnam, recognizing the importance of tigers in their landscape, the government issued a policy regulation in which the animal receives top priority protection. In 1963, the Chair of ministers signed a direction to ban hunting and trading on tigers. The species is listed in IB group of Government Decree since 1991, which incorporates a ban on hunting and trading of the animal.

The Forest Protection Department of Vietnam proposed a Tiger National Action Plan for the period



of 2005 -- 2010. Under this, 13 activities were identified out of which results were seen especially in enforcement activities and Protected Area management. However, there has been lack of a comprehensive survey on wild tiger and their prey due to funding problems.

## 2.2. Justification/rationale:

Tigers are an indicator species of forest health and when we conserve the tiger we conserve the landscape. With three subspecies having been already identified extinct, the remaining global population of tigers survives in limited and separated habitat across 13 countries in Asia.

The Indochinese tiger population in Vietnam is endangered primarily due to human activities and there has been no comprehensive survey or a tiger monitoring program or any project focus on the species.

The National Tiger Action Plan is therefore, a demand from the government to conserve tigers and wildlife in general. It is also to indicate Vietnam's obligation to implement the International Agreement of which Vietnam is a member.

## 3. Objective/goals:

The main objective of the National Tiger Action Plan is to identify suitable habitats to recover tiger prey population and tiger habitat, establish the tiger's landscape and a monitoring system and improve the inter-boundary conservation cooperation with Lao PDR and Cambodia in tiger conservation.

## 4. Expected outcomes:

	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
1	Data base of tiger distribution in the wild	Database and map
2	Monitoring program	Project implemented
3	Protected area staff trained	6 training course
4	Improve protected area management	Investment project
5	Addressing the illegal hunting and trading	Enforcement activities
6	Awareness raising	Mass media campaign
7	Improve international cooperation mechanism	Two agreement is signed

## 5. Activities:



### 5.1. A comprehensive survey in potential tiger distribution landscape will be conducted to identify suitable habitat as well a monitoring program for tiger conservation.

#### Methodology

Field surveys will be implemented by big cat experts from scientific institutions. The main methodology used will be tracking tiger pugmarks, scat, prey killed in potential landscape. Local knowledge regarding the tiger will also be collected via interviews. The database will be analysed by conservation experts in a national tiger workshop. The methodology of tiger tracking from India will also be referenced.

#### Target group

The database of current tiger conservation status will be used by Vietnam Forestry Directorate to establish a sustainable tiger conservation program.

**Responsibility**

Field survey will be conducted by big cat experts from scientific institutions with support of local rangers.

**Resources**

Vietnam Forestry Directorate will be the coordinating institution to manage the field survey activities and be responsible to secure financial resources and arrange the administrative procedures in order to conduct field surveys within a given time frame.

**Time frame**

Field survey activities will be conducted in about 450 days, and will be started in November 2010.

**Budget**

The activities require 90.000 USD budget.

**5.2. Tiger monitoring program will be conducted based on results from field surveys.**

**Institution arrangement**

**Methodology**

Monitoring program will be conducted by camera trapping in core areas and by field patrol activities to identify tiger signs in forest. The monitoring also concentrates on tiger prey. Tiger pugmarks are an important sign for recording and monitoring. A map of tiger presence and movement will be created.

**Target group**

The Protected Area Management Board

**Responsibility**

The monitoring program will be coordinated by Vietnam Forestry Directorate. Field monitoring works will be carried out by Protected Area Management Board.

**Institution arrangement**

Protected Area Management Board with support from big cat experts from scientific institutions.

**Time frame**

Monitoring program will be started from 2011 till 2015

**Budget**

40 thousand USD budget is required for these activities per year, totaling to 160 thousand USD for four years.

**5.3. Training**

Training for Protected Area staff is necessary to equip them with tiger survey and monitoring skills.

**Methodology:**

Training course will be conducted in the field, the training manual will be provided through ASEAN – WEN (ASEAN – wildlife enforcement network) and also perhaps from Global Tiger Forum. On other hand, some Protected Area staff may be trained in India with support from GTF.

**Target group:**

Protected Area staff

**Responsibility:**

Vietnam Forestry Directorate will be responsible to



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secure fund and coordinate the training program. International experts may be invited to be the trainer for training courses.

**Time frame:**

Training course will be conducted in early 2012.

**Budget:**

The total budget for three training course is estimated

around 60 thousand USD, excluding the training course abroad in India.

**5.4. Improvement of Protected Area Management Board**

At least three Protected Areas will be selected to be the priority tiger landscape. The management of tiger landscape should be interspersed with others, in which we focus on tiger, its prey, core breeding areas etc.

**Methodology:**

An investment project proposal will be submitted to government, in which proposal shall include priority activities to recover tiger habitat and population.

**Target group:**

Management Board of three Protected Areas with tiger distribution.

**Responsibility:**

Vietnam Forestry Directorate will facilitate



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aforementioned activities. Protected Area Management Board will prepare a project proposal with support from scientific communities. The project proposal will be submitted to Provincial People Committee or Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for approval.

**Time frame:**

Three Protected Areas identified to conserve the tiger will be decided after field surveys. Hence the investment project proposal should start from 2012 and proceed till end 2017.

**Budget:**

Total budget allocated to three Protected Areas is 900 thousand USD.

**5.5. Addressing illegal hunting and trading:**

There is some demand of tiger bones for traditional medicine in Vietnam and China, and many activities being done so far is to combat wildlife crime. From January to September 2010 three instances of illegal trafficking of tiger have been detected. We also recognize that with regard to the cooperation among government agencies, there still remain some disadvantages in carrying out enforcement programs which need to be worked on.

**Methodology**

A National Committee in wildlife enforcement will be established in 2010 to improve cooperation among agencies. A task force will next be identified to consult the National Committee in combating wildlife crime.

**Target group**

Vietnam CITES MA, Environment Police, Customs, Market control, Border control, and Interpol will be included in National Committee.

**Responsibility**

Vietnam Forestry Directorate will be the lead agency to set up the committee. A proposal will be submitted to Ministry of Agriculture for approval.

**Time frame**

2010 to 2011

**Budget:**

20 thousand USD will be required for these activities, significantly for national workshop on tiger and wildlife enforcement.

**5.6. Awareness raising**

A section of the Vietnamese believe in tiger bone medicine. Many others are not aware of tiger's role in its habitat and the meaning of tiger to culture and human health. An awareness raising campaign is need.

**Methodology**

A film about the tiger in conservation and culture will be produced with the knowledge bank from scientists, local community and experts. Mass media will also be used to convey Vietnam laws on protection of tiger and wildlife.

**Target group:**

Will be the school students, local community, and traditional medicine traders and publishing community.

**Responsibility:**

Vietnam Forestry Directorate in cooperation with Vietnam TV, Radio and Press to conduct the awareness campaign.

**Time frame:**

2011 to 2013

**Budget:**

This activity requires about 200 thousand USD.

**5.7. Improve international cooperation mechanism**

Because the Indochinese tiger is naturally distributed not only in Vietnam but also in neighboring countries of Cambodia, Lao and China, cooperation with international community is a significant to conserve tiger. Vietnam is member of some international institutions such as GTF, CITES and ASEAN-WEN..

**Methodology**

Though ASEAN-WEN, CITES, GTF and by signing MOUs with neighbor countries.

**Target group:**

Vietnam Forestry Directorate, Custom General Department, Environment Police National Department, the Protected Area Management Board.

**Responsibility**

Vietnam Forestry directorate – CITES MA will be the lead agency to coordinate the International cooperation activities.

**Institution arrangement:**

A series of dialogues between Vietnam – Lao, Vietnam – Cambodia and Vietnam – China will be held with support from ASEAN-WEN, NGOs and government to identify the field of cooperation in tiger and biodiversity cooperation.

**Time frame:**

2011 - 2013

**Budget**

*A total of 50 thousand USD is required for the activities.*

No.	Activities	Time frame						Budget located
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
1	Field survey							90,000
2	Monitoring							50,000
3	Training							60,000
4	Improvement of Protected Management Board							900,000
5	Addressing the illegal hunting and trading:							20,000
6	Awareness raising							200,000
7	Improve international cooperation mechanism							50,000
	<b>Total</b>							<b>1,270,000</b>