



PHOTO CREDIT: USAID/VIETNAM

MEKONG DELTA COASTAL HABITAT CONSERVATION

2021 - 2024 | IMPLEMENTER: INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) | PLANNED BUDGET: \$2,900,000

The Mekong Delta and its islands are home to 70 percent of Vietnam's mangroves and 90 percent of its seagrass beds. Fed by the sediment and nutrients from the Mekong River, these habitats support Vietnam's richest fishing grounds and provide crucial protection for coastal communities from storm surges.

However, these habitats and the commercially important species they support, such as sea bass and snapper, are under growing threat. The Mekong Delta's mangrove forests are declining and overfishing is causing ecologically devastating effects. Climate change impacts such as prolonged droughts and higher ambient temperatures threaten shrimp stocks, forcing shrimp farmers to turn to pumped groundwater to maintain required marine temperatures, leading to land subsidence and faster mangrove loss. These impacts lead to loss of economic opportunities for people living in the Mekong Delta and severely impact their long-standing lifestyles and communities.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Mekong Delta Coastal Habitat Conservation project works to reduce threats to coastal biodiversity and fisheries and strengthen coastal resilience in the Mekong Delta, in partnership with the Government of Vietnam, provincial governments, businesses, management boards, development partners, and fishing communities.

STRENGTHENING MARINE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

In Kien Giang province, the project introduces models of co-management between the government and communities of fisheries resources in three West Sea island clusters (Hai Tac, Ba Lua, Nam Du) and conducts a series of studies to provide specific recommendations to strengthen marine resources management. The project involves the active participation of local communities and businesses in promoting biodiversity conservation activities in these island clusters and the Phu Quoc Marine Protected Area. In addition, the project supports the creation of a platform for businesses to promote and coordinate private investment in Phu Quoc's coastal habitat and species conservation.

RESTORING AND PROTECTING MANGROVE FORESTS

In Soc Trang province, the project also explores and tests solutions to restore and protect mangrove forests to increase fish nursery habitat and coastal biodiversity, including mangrove expansion behind sea dikes.

IMPACT

The project strengthens the management of marine resources, conserves, and expands coastal and marine biodiversity of the Mekong Delta, which will also strengthen the coastal resilience of local communities.

TARGETED LOCALITIES

The project works in Kien Giang and Soc Trang provinces.