

PREM project summary

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Number: **8**

Title:

Coral Reefs in Vietnam: Economic Value, Resource Dependency, Livelihoods and Coastal Poverty

Country:

Vietnam

Involved persons:

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Dr. Thai Thi Ngoc Du (University of Social Science and Humanity, Ho Chi Minh City)
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Abstract:

Vietnam has a large coastal population, which relies heavily on fisheries and other coastal resources. Around 64% of these coastal people live below the poverty line. Coral reefs, which are found along much of Vietnam's coastline, and which provide many functions, goods and services to coastal communities, are being degraded due to anthropogenic impacts, such as destructive fishing, coastal alteration, etc. This has been eroding the economic value of coral reefs, yet dependency on the reefs by the local poor remains large and pressures along the coastline are on the increase. To address these challenges, the proposed research project follows a three tiered approach: (i) the economic value of coral reefs in selected sites in Vietnam for the various stakeholders is assessed with the aid of primary data collection; (ii) the dependency of the local population on coral reefs in terms of livelihood is assessed and the relationship between reef dependency and poverty is analysed; and (iii) costs and benefits of destructive fishing and possibly other local threats as well as management options are investigated for the various stakeholders. The focus on an assessment per stakeholder and on reef dependency allows us to address management and policy issues better than a standard economic valuation and cost benefit analysis alone.

Research objectives:

To assess the economic value of coral reefs in selected sites in Vietnam for different stakeholders and to link it to resource dependency, sustainable livelihoods and poverty issues in order to arrive at a more comprehensive idea of natural resource value (*in casu*: coral reef) and at more relevant policy and management insights.

Specific Objectives:

- To assess the economic value of coral reefs in Vietnam, through analysis of reef fisheries and reef-related tourism, as well as other services provided by reef ecosystems for different stakeholders
- To assess the dependency of local population on coral reefs. This shows vulnerability of local population on reef degradation and potential poverty links. This also involves finding good quantitative measures of resource dependency.
- To analyse the costs and benefits of reef-related threats like destructive fishing and management options to address coral reef degradation in the face of human use.

Impact on policy:

The research results will help assist government agencies to understand the potential conflict between different uses of reef ecosystem and assist them to develop improved policy processes. It is expected that the research's results show that changes need to be made to use the resources efficiently. For example, changes in marketing arrangements or in technology may have positive impacts on several aspects of local livelihoods such as opportunities for employment, availability of fish, uses of beach for tourism etc. It can also add to the debate on other cost-effective management in coastal areas in Vietnam.

Dissemination:

- Discuss draft version of report to the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Resource and Environment, People's Committees of coastal provinces and various related agencies such as IUCN Vietnam, WWF Vietnam, World Bank Vietnam, International Marinelife Alliance Vietnam.
- Hold a seminar to present research results and policy recommendations. The participants might include representatives of the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Resource of Resource and Environment, and NGOs, the media, representatives of coastal communities, and researchers from universities and research institutions.

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