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Strategic Plan

2023 - 2025, with directions to 2030

WE C.A.R.E

Conservation. Adaptation.
Restoration. Engagement.



DECEMBER

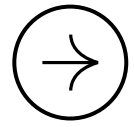
2022

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Foreword



Recovery and adaptation

The Covid-19 pandemic has left behind tremendous impacts on every aspect of our society. As a small local organization, PanNature has been under tremendous pressure to survive and stayed relevant within restrained resources.

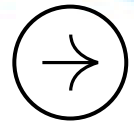
This strategic plan outlines an ambitious roadmap for our organization for the next three years: recovering organizational capacity and strength in order to significantly contribute to the well-being and resilience of species, ecosystem and communities in Vietnam.

During this period, we join with the national and global movement in this decisive decade to rewild nature, reverse biodiversity loss, and combat climate crises by working in pragmatic partnership with local communities, the business sector, government authorities, and other interested entities. PanNature summarizes our programs and activities in the motto “We C.A.R.E”, which implies Conservation, Adaptation and Mitigation, Restoration, and Engagement.



Introduction

Our vision, mission, and values



About us

PanNature was formed in 2004 by a small team of Vietnamese conservation practitioners and officially registered as a non-state scientific and technological organization in January 2006 under Vietnam's laws. Over the last 18 years, we have used our broad experience, varied skills, and contagious motivation to help lead a community-based movement to preserve Vietnam's natural heritage and promote sustainable development nationwide. We work to conserve nature and protect our living environment by mobilizing society, changing values, and creating transformative changes through enriching society's knowledge, promoting good governance, and better public policies.

Mission: PanNature is a Vietnamese not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting and conserving the diversity of life and improving human well-being in Vietnam by seeking, promoting, and implementing feasible, nature-friendly solutions to critical environmental problems and sustainable development issues.

Vision: PanNature sees Vietnam as a sustainable and nature-friendly society where people live prosperous lives in harmony with their living environment, properly utilizing the country's natural resources to ensure sustainable development in the present and future.

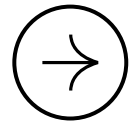
Values

We embrace four key values to guide our programs and activities into the future:

- **People:** As in our name, we will embrace inclusiveness in all of our activities, with a priority on working with local and ethnic communities to develop and implement solutions on the ground.
- **For the Planet:** The world is interconnected and impacts are on all.
- **Prosperity together with nature.**
- **Partnership** with key stakeholders through a pragmatic approach.



The Problem



Biodiversity in peril

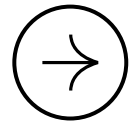
Biodiversity is declining

Worldwide, biodiversity is declining. It has been estimated that around one million species already face extinction, many within decades, unless action is taken to reduce the intensity of drivers of biodiversity loss. Without such action, there will be a further acceleration in the global rate of species extinction, which is already at least tens to hundreds of times higher than it has averaged over the past 10 million years (IPBES, 2019). Causes are multiple and include habitat destruction and fragmentation, over-exploitation, and pollution. Climate change in recent years significantly pressures species and ecosystems and is likely to intensify. In Vietnam, a country with a huge biodiversity and many indigenous species, pressure on remaining forests, coral reefs and many other ecosystems is accelerating due to its growing population and economy.

The consequences of this biodiversity loss can be significant. Besides the moral question if humans have the right to push species into extinction, there are many reasons why biodiversity loss can also affect the lives and economy of millions of people. A healthy nature provides a broad diversity of nutritious foods, medicines and all sort of other products. It enables plant pollination, climate regulation, watershed conservation and is a source for inspiration and recreation. And it constitutes a genetic reservoir that can be used for new varieties in agriculture and new medicines. The amount and quality of these and many more services and goods that nature provides are highly dependent on the diversity of ecosystems and species. For instance, forests with a large variety of tree species can store much more carbon than monocultures. Ecosystems rich in species are also much more resilient to disturbances, such as wildfires and storms.



The Problem



Biodiversity in peril

Solutions

In order to safeguard biodiversity, we need to ensure the protection of natural ecosystems, especially by developing a system of protected areas such as national parks, nature reserves, community-managed protected areas as well as other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM). Currently, about 17% of the world's terrestrial and freshwater environments are covered by protected areas, with about 10% of the marine area covered (Global Biodiversity Framework, 2022). While this remains a very important measure for biodiversity conservation, it is not enough to reverse the negative trend. Indeed, there are many other actions and measures that should accompany nature conservation. For instance, legislation and law enforcement to stop the illegal trade in endangered animals, poaching, and illegal logging. Since protected areas will often remain relatively small and isolated, populations need to be able to move from one place to another. Hence, reducing fragmentation and creating corridors that link conservation sites are equally essential to prevent biodiversity loss.

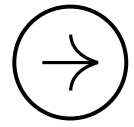
Perhaps the most important challenge is to change human behavior by raising society's knowledge through education and awareness campaigns to reduce the negative side effects of development and promote a more sustainable, inclusive, and low-carbon economy. More informed and knowledgeable society is not only helping biodiversity but is also providing public support for reducing inequality, mitigating and adapting to global warming, shifting to more resilient and green economy toward a sustainable future.

In order to solve ongoing crises for climate and biodiversity, we need collective actions to facilitate shifts in consumer preferences towards products with a lower ecological footprint (e.g., less meat and more demand for organic food) and changes toward more sustainable and less destructive livelihood alternatives for local communities. Our society also needs to adjust to more resilient production methods and services, such as adopting certifications ranging from labels for products (e.g. FSC, Rainforest Alliance) to green tourist awards.

Extinction is forever. But it is not too late for many endangered species and ecosystems to reverse the tide. Therefore, nature regeneration, reforestation, reintroduction of species and rewilding projects add a significant contribution to biodiversity programs worldwide.



The Problem



Biodiversity in peril

The situation in Vietnam

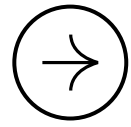
Over the last four decades, Vietnam has achieved great results on the economic front, lift the country out of poverty, and joined international markets. However, the success comes with a high price: degradation of environmental quality, fragmentation and loss of natural ecosystems and the disappearance of many wildlife species. We have lost many valuable ecosystem services due to our reckless behavior towards nature. Furthermore, global climate change, induced by human activities, is making Vietnam one of the most vulnerable nations on Earth.

Although the area of Vietnam's forest cover has increased over the past decade, much of this increase has been due to the planting of production forest while primary forests are still in decline. Overall the habitat for wildlife is decreasing as a result of land conversion, the status of rare and endangered species is declining sharply, and both inland water and marine ecosystems are being degraded due to inappropriate resource exploitation activities.

The IUCN Red List classified 980 species in Vietnam as threatened, of which 173 are critically endangered, which means that their population size has become very small. An example is the Northern White-cheeked Gibbon, which shows a steep population decline.



Our Strategy



Reconciling the relationship between people and nature



Making choices

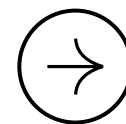
Clearly, the challenges we are facing in order to stop biodiversity loss are huge while our resources are limited. Therefore, choices have to be made to develop a successful strategy for PanNature. We do that by selecting three key areas on which our work will concentrate:

- Conserving remaining natural ecosystems.
- Restoring degraded and lost ecosystems through rewilding.
- Preventing adverse impacts of development.

Preserving what remains and restoring what we've lost are at the core of our mission, while we acknowledge that development is necessary but has to become more sustainable. We will continue working with diverse stakeholders, especially local and ethnic communities, to realize these goals.



Our Strategy



Reconciling the relationship between people and nature

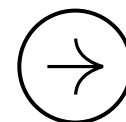


Biodiversity conservation

Initiatives that protect and sustainably manage ecosystems have a crucial role to play in protecting biodiversity. Currently, Vietnam has 167 protected areas with over 2.3 million hectares. In addition, there are over 5.9 million hectares of protection forests. Another 270,271 hectares are marine protected areas of which 169,617 ha as sea area (MONRE, 2019). Together these provide the bare minimum of protection and cannot prevent further biodiversity loss due to the 'island effect', illegal trade and consumption of wildlife, and other threats. Therefore, we believe that the total protected area needs to be enlarged, while at the same time corridors should be established to connect these areas. Protection itself should be stepped up by improving park management, as much as possible by working with communities to develop initiatives to preserve areas of ecological values and biodiversity through community-managed conservation areas. With lessons from the previous projects, we will aim to mobilize more public participation, both indirect and direct, in our activities.



Our Strategy



Reconciling the relationship between people and nature

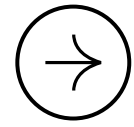
Restoring and rewilding

Restoring what's lost is our second pillar of activities. Many ecosystems in Vietnam are moderately to heavily degraded but still have a good potential to grow back to healthy and diverse forests and wetlands. Over the past two decades the forest cover in Vietnam grew significantly, from about 33 % in the year 2000 to over 40% in 2021, according to the figures of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. However, part of these forests contains only a few fast growing and exotic tree species, such as Eucalyptus and Acacia, rubber and bamboo. These figures provide two important messages. First, ecosystem restoration on a large scale is well possible. Second, the way it is currently done does not always lead to higher biodiversity. Therefore, we prefer to use the concept of rewilding, which uses a mixture of native species and allows nature to take full advantage of the potential the environmental conditions provide. This sometimes requires adjustments of these basic conditions, such as restoring original hydrological conditions or soil quality. A good example is mangrove restoration by providing optimal conditions, e.g. by constructing a breakwater to reduce wave attack, after which natural regeneration can take place, only partially assisted by planting seedlings. This is also called assisted natural regeneration and is a much better approach than only forest planting.

There are great opportunities for restoring nature in Vietnam, considering the increasing attention for ecosystem services, e.g. for reducing soil erosion along hydropower reservoirs and for carbon storage. It has been estimated that nature-based solutions could provide about one-third of the mitigation needed by 2030 to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. With new global commitments on combating climate change and biodiversity loss, there are a growing number of financing mechanisms for nature restoration. PanNature wants to be at the forefront of this development to that maximum benefits for local communities and biodiversity can be generated.



Our Strategy



Reconciling the relationship between people and nature



Mitigating impacts

In the coming period, we will not only aim to participate in activities on ecological restoration and biodiversity conservation, but also work with the business sector and government agencies to reduce or avoid negative impacts on ecosystems. This includes a broad spectrum of activities, such as reducing pollution, promoting eco-tourism, and integrated pest management in agriculture, or promoting renewable energy and nature-friendly livelihood alternatives. In order to be manageable, PanNature will keep focus mainly on developments that may significantly impact natural ecosystems and wildlife species. We consider three broad types of activities:

- Mitigating impacts from development projects and investment and trade activities.
- Promoting alternative production activities and livelihoods.
- Identifying and advising on potential impacts from policies and development programs .



Our Approach

PanNature will focus our efforts to solve practical problems and meet the need of our stakeholders, including local and ethnic communities, governmental agencies, and business sector in order to contribute to Vietnam's and Global Biodiversity Framework 2030.

Working bottom-up

While aiming for a biodiverse Vietnam, people are at the center of our activities. We believe that we can only succeed while working together with vulnerable and local communities, community-based organizations, local authorities at grassroot level, and farmers as well as like-minded business owners. Naturally, we keep a good relationship with government agencies at all levels and work with them to promote nature-friendly livelihood as well as protecting nature. We will reach out to the wider public and especially the young generation for general support and to promote an environmentally friendly attitude.

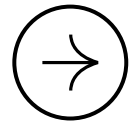
PanNature prioritizes support for initiatives by frontliners and real change-makers on the ground through closely working with them, as well as providing technical and financial resources when possible.

Building partnership for collaborative actions

Because of the huge tasks ahead, we have to partner and coordinate with other like-minded organizations and agencies. We find it important to learn from each other so that together our work becomes more effective and efficient. We will maintain current partnerships and expand new ones with organizations at different levels, including community-based, governmental, and international partners. Wherever synergy is possible we do joint projects and expand our reach through collective actions, making a strong voice that will be heard.



Key Activities



Program I: Designing and implementing field-based interventions and conservation projects

Our projects in the field are making a real difference. With our field office in Son La province we actively work together with local communities to conserve nature and promote sustainable livelihoods in the Northwestern Mountains. These field projects not only benefit the local people and nature, but also provide essential information and lessons learned that can be used to scale-up these activities and to suggest improvements in policies and legislation.

Since 2014, we have been enhancing the role of ethnic minorities in responding to climate change in 25 villages in three Northwestern provinces: Son La, Dien Bien, and Lai Chau. We are initiating, testing, and promoting a model of agricultural villages to respond to climate change in six villages in Son La and Lai Chau provinces so that farmers in mountainous areas make appropriate adaptation in agricultural production in the context of climate change and toward safe production, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and ensuring local food security and households' income. PanNature has also worked with communities and local partners in the Central Highlands to promote collaborative management of forests and natural resources. In the coming years, we will continue to focus on the Northwestern Mountains and the Central Highlands for our field interventions in biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, climate change resilience, and inclusive livelihood alternatives.

Program II: Building an informed and knowledgeable society

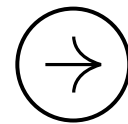
As our mission is to promote nature-friendly solutions to the benefit of people and nature, we see it as our task to inform society about the need to conserve nature and reduce human ecological footprints. It is common knowledge that people value things more when they have greater knowledge about them. Although awareness and knowledge on environmental issues does not directly alter people's behavior, it still is an important precondition.

PanNature has grown a wide network of partner media agencies and journalists to join field investigation and reporting about a diverse range of environmental and natural resources issues in Vietnam. We look critically at the negative impacts of development on communities and ecosystems.

PanNature has a small but strong communication task force. We are active on the social media and continue to publish knowledge products, such as the Policy Review newsletter. A good example of what we do with media is combatting illegal wildlife trade. We focused on changing social and cultural norms through intensive social media campaigns, supporting media investigation and reporting of wildlife crimes, and exploring new solutions to this endemic conservation problem.



Key Activities



We will invest in knowledge production through online and print publications and other educational materials to enrich society's knowledge on biodiversity and nature conservation.

Program III: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation policies

PanNature critically follows policies and legislation that may affect biodiversity and our living environment at large. Important policy documents that guide an active role of government agencies and the private sector alike are the Law on Biodiversity, Forestry Law, Environmental Protection Law, National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, The National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change, National Strategy for Water Resources, National Environment Protection Strategy, Vietnam Strategy for Forestry Development and several more. We stimulate discussions on how to turn these strategies into real actions through different means such as dialogues, workshops, policy publications, and others.

PanNature is building up the Van Ho forest in Son La into a long-term ecology research (LTER) site to support ecology studies, conservation, and adaptation to climate change as well as contributing to evidence-based recommendations for the socio-economic development policy and planning.

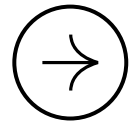
PanNature is also active beyond borders. As a member of a number of regional networks and coalitions, we are actively engaged in research and public awareness activities on impacts of large-scale development and investment on biodiversity and natural resources. We will continue to promote good practices and lessons from global movements in biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, climate change, indigenous people and local communities, as well as international standards in natural resources (e.g. FSC certification) to the Vietnamese stakeholders.

Program IV: Developing strategic partnerships and engaging the business sector

One of the new areas of work that PanNature is building is a cooperation program with the business sector to jointly reduce unwanted impacts and jointly implement activities to protect the environment and nature. The Sustainable Business Program aims at creating positive changes in awareness, mindsets and approaches that harmonizes long-term profitability and environmental sustainability in the business sector in Vietnam. PanNature hopes to make meaningful contribution to advancement of both the business sector and relevant public policies to minimize negative impacts, and to drive more active participation of companies and entrepreneurs in environmental protection and nature conservation.



Funding



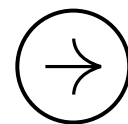
As the funding landscape for biodiversity conservation and climate change has changed largely, PanNature will manage to diversify sources of funding for our activities through:

- Prioritizing domestic funding sources, especially through contribution from the Vietnamese business sector and local foundations;
- Securing support from major international conservation donors;
- Increasing incomes from technical services for partners;
- Seeking new opportunities from emerging carbon market and other blended financing mechanisms.

PanNature would like to sincerely thank past and present donors and funding partners for valuable financial support to our organization in the past 18 years. We look forward to more fruitful collaboration in the coming period.



The Organization



Human resources

During this period, PanNature will focus on rebuilding and replenishing the team with new technical skills and professional knowledge in biodiversity conservation and climate change. We will maintain a small but strong core team to provide support and guidance for staff. One important aspect we will prioritize is to ensure participation of new and young generation of Vietnamese in biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. In addition to job opportunities, PanNature will facilitate internship and fellowship positions for young Vietnamese to take part in our work.

An important mission of senior leaders and managers of PanNature is to ensure long-term sustainability of the organization through leadership transition process. Potential young leaders will be provided with professional development opportunities in order to be able to take more management and leadership roles in the organization.

Capacity and organizational development will be integrated as an important part in the budget in order to ensure sufficient resources for maintaining effective human resources for PanNature to grow.



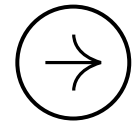
Office facilities

PanNature maintains a main office in Hanoi and a field office in Van Ho, Son La province. We will seek opportunities to build up a long-term facility for research and training activities together with the LTER in Van Ho.

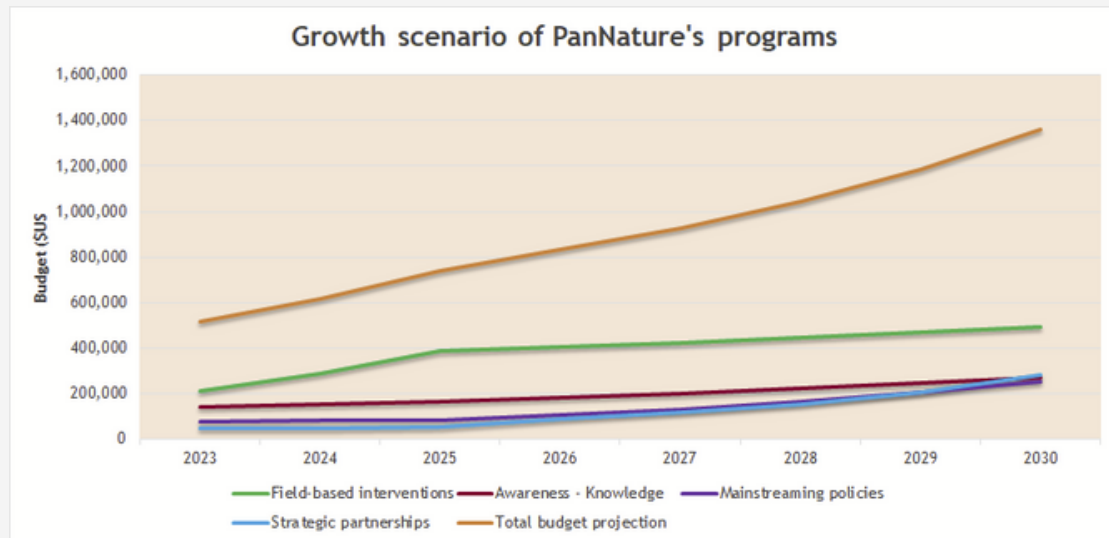
With the increasing application of information technologies in biodiversity conservation, we will also invest more on relevant equipment, staff training, and recruitment of new expertise to expand our capacities to make use of modern techniques.



Roadmap & Milestones



The chart below describes projection of growth of our activities from 2023-2030, with 2023-2025 as the important phase for recovering the organizational capacity.



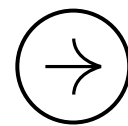
Key milestones

PanNature expects to deliver following key results by 2025:

- Providing support to at least 50 forest communities throughout Vietnam.
- Piloting 03 models of community-managed protected areas in biodiversity conservation.
- Assisting formation of 02 new protected areas with over 30,000 hectares for wildlife habitats.
- At least 2,000 hectares of natural forest restored.
- At least 10 endangered plant and animal species protected in their wild habitats through our field interventions.
- Continuing publication of Policy Review on regular basis and expanding the reader's group.
- Maintaining news website ThienNhien.Net and social media channels for active communication and campaigns.
- 03 educational publications and 03 knowledge products produced each year.
- Contributing to 03 national policies in support of biodiversity conservation.
- National laws fully recognize the community-managed protected areas.
- Expanding the partnership with the business sector with at least 03 partners per year.
- PanNature is fully recovered by end of 2025 with at least 25 full-time capable staff.

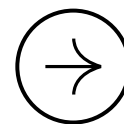


Conclusion



We are living in a decisive decade, with 2030 as the key deadline for humanity to reverse biodiversity loss and halve carbon emissions to ensure our planet is still a habitable place. Both the climate and biodiversity crises require urgent actions and ambitious plans. PanNature wants to be part of the global movement and contribute our best to confront the greatest challenge of our time in history!





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