

# Sustainable Management of Coastal Forest Ecosystems in Bac Lieu Province

Management of Natural Resources

**Executing Agency:** Provincial People's Committee (PPC) of Bac Lieu Province

**Other Partners:** Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Bac Lieu Province

**Overall Term:** 33 Months: 12.2008 - 08.2011

**Current Phase:** 1. Phase: 12.2008 - 08.2011

**Programme Area:** Bac Lieu Province



## Context

The Mekong delta is particularly affected by the impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels and storms of increasing magnitude threaten the poor rural population, Viet Nam's rice and shrimp production, and Ho Chi Minh City with increasing regularity.

The delta is of extreme economic importance though, as it is seen as Viet Nam's "rice chamber". Intensive rice production and the rapid expansion of aquaculture have contributed to economic growth and poverty reduction.

In addition, the population of Bac Lieu Province makes a living principally from agriculture (rice cultivation) and aquaculture (shrimp production). Over the last 20 years, however, large areas directly behind the protected mangrove forests were converted into shrimp farms. The land is being sold or leased to investors, while the local residents are increasingly being pushed into the hinterland, a development, which further endangers the protective function of the coastal forests.



The lack of an integrated approach to sustainable management and the use of natural resources, as well as overlapping competencies among various offices and economic interests (shrimp farms), contributes to resources being used in an unsustainable way, which negatively impacts the protective function of the coastal mangrove forests and the income generating opportunities for the local population.

### **Desired Impacts**

The overall objective of the project is to improve the ecological functionality and resilience of the protective coastal forests.

Across the province, coastal forests are being reforested and renaturalised, while their biodiversity is being surveyed and enriched, all in an effort to increase the sustainability, adaptability and effectiveness of the protective coastal forests. An existing reservation and the bordering Ca Mau Province serve as reference areas. Protected areas for mangrove forests will be established, which the local population and the provincial administration will administer jointly. Programmes supporting coastal residents in achieving higher incomes (value chain approach) will be developed. These people will thereby become less dependent on the coastal forests and can use them in a more sustainable manner.

The project improves the management capacities of the relevant administration offices and pilots an approach for resolving the conflict between economic development and sustainable management of natural resources.

### **Main Activities**

The project advises and supports the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Forest Protection Department, and the People's Provincial Committee of Bac Lieu Province in the development of protective mechanisms for the coastal zone, the management and rehabilitation of the mangrove forests, and the development of implementation mechanisms.

A special focus is placed on the capacity development of the workers in the relevant offices, cooperatives and communes (for example with education programmes and additional training programmes on the sustainable management of the coastal wetlands).

The project is monitoring the resilience of the coastal protection forests.

Additional income generating opportunities for the poor coastal population will be created along aquatic value chains.