



CỤC LÂM NGHIỆP



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL

Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan

to 2035, Vision 2050

VECAP 2022



© Dr. Jennifer Pastorini/Sri Lanka-CCR

Ha Noi, 2024





Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan

to 2035, Vision 2050



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Citation: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. 2024. *Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050*. Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

Department of Forestry
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Viet Nam Government
2024

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Foreword



Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

Living in harmony with nature and all species is a shared aspiration of the global community, and this goal becomes especially urgent in the case of the Asian elephant in Viet Nam. It is therefore imperative that we must take timely and decisive action to protect this iconic species from extinction and foster peaceful coexistence to prevent conflicts between humans and elephants. Harmonious coexistence is not merely a means to an end, it is the ultimate goal of elephant conservation in Viet Nam.

Safeguarding a keystone species such as the elephant requires a coordinated and strategic approach that adheres to core conservation principles while also reflecting the socio-economic and cultural contexts of each locality. To this end, the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050, has been developed as a comprehensive framework to address this critical need.

In preparing the Action Plan, the Forestry Department collaborated closely with both national and international experts, convened four national workshops, and conducted extensive field missions in key regions. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development actively engaged with forest protection officers/agencies, scientists, policymakers, conservation practitioners, and local communities. Their valuable insights have been translated into concrete measures, fully integrated into the Action Plan to enhance its relevance, feasibility, and effectiveness.

I firmly believe that, with a careful and inclusive approach and the active involvement of diverse stakeholders, this plan will serve as a practical and impactful tool in our collective effort to conserve Viet Nam's endangered and treasured elephant population.

Sincerely,



HON. NGUYEN QUOC TRI

DEPUTY MINISTER

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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Acknowledgements

The Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050 (known as VECAP 2022), was developed under the framework of the Comprehensive Elephant Conservation Project, as mandated by the National Decision No. 413/QĐ-TTg dated March 31, 2022, issued by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam. With consistent direction and support from both central and local authorities, the Action Plan was finalized under the coordination of the Forestry Department, with valuable inputs and proposals/concept notes from elephant range provinces.

The successful development of this Action Plan - both in terms of its level of detail and alignment with global conservation trends - would not have been possible without the technical and financial support of Humane Society International (HSI). They played a pivotal role in facilitating engagement with leading international elephant experts, testing and validating practical conservation approaches through a pilot project in Dong Nai Province, and drawing upon these experiences to build a robust scientific foundation for the Action Plan.

The Department of Forestry sincerely acknowledges the contributions of Humane Society International (HSI), the dedication of the drafting Committee, particularly Dr. Prithviraj Fernando, MSc. Nguyen Thi Mai, MA. Tran Thi Hoa, MBA. Nguyen Tri Man, and Dr. Jennifer Pastorini, and extends its heartfelt appreciation for their contributions in elephant conservation efforts in Viet Nam.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the People's Committees, Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Forest Protection Departments of the following provinces: Dak Lak, Dong Nai, Ha Tinh, Nghe An, Quang Nam, Gia Lai, and Son La, as well as to the management boards of Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai Nature and Culture Reserve, La Nga One Member Limited Liability Forestry Company, Yok Don National Park, the Dak Lak Elephant Conservation, Wildlife Rescue and Forest Protection Management Center (formerly the Elephant Conservation Center), Vu Quang National Park, Pu Mat National Park, and Quang Nam Species and Habitat Conservation Area. These agencies actively engaged and closely collaborated with the drafting Committee and international experts, participated fully in consultation meetings, thematically technical workshops, and completed their own provincial proposed action Concept notes throughout the development of the Action Plan.

We sincerely thank the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG), along with Non-Governmental Organizations/ NGOs including the Animals Asia Foundation (AAF), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Save Vietnam's Wildlife (SVW), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), and IUCN Viet Nam, for their valuable participation in consultation and technical meetings. Their expert reviews and insightful feedback were instrumental in shaping the logical framework of the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan (VECAP 2022).

We also express our heartfelt appreciation to the Viet Nam National University of Forestry and its Dong Nai Branch, Tay Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR), and national experts on elephant conservation. In addition, we are grateful to the representatives of various agencies, organizations, and individuals who devoted their time and expertise to technical meetings, consultations, and thematic workshops.

Lastly, we extend our sincere thanks to the local communities in the elephant-inhabited areas of Dak Lak, Dong Nai, and Quang Nam for their enthusiastic participation and for sharing information and critical insights from the perspective of those living in daily proximity to wild elephants. Their voices, emotions, concerns, and hardships have been thoughtfully incorporated into each proposed action, ensuring that VECAP 2022 is practical, contextually relevant, and responsive to the cultural and economic realities of each locality.

With sincere gratitude,

Department of Forestry

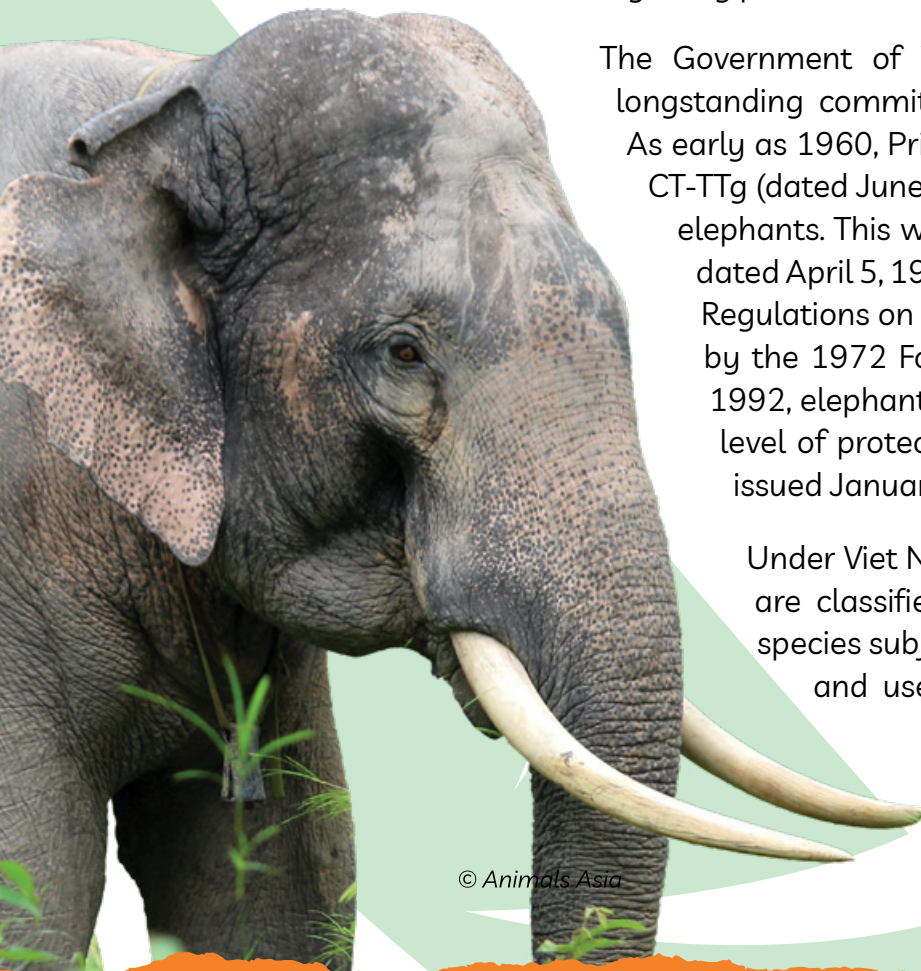
Preface

The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) is the largest terrestrial mammal and plays a vital role in maintaining ecological balance and supporting the integrity of forest ecosystems. However, this iconic species is facing critical threats, particularly across Southeast Asia and southern China. As one of the 13 home range countries where Asian elephants still exist, Viet Nam places a high priority on their conservation - not only for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, but also for sustaining long-term socio-economic development.

In Viet Nam, elephants hold a revered place in cultural traditions and maintain a profound relationship with people, reflected in spiritual beliefs, historical narratives, warfare, and economic practices. At the international level, the species is protected under key multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). At the national level, elephants are legally recognized as an endangered species, with hunting and trade strictly being prohibited.

The Government of Viet Nam has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to elephant conservation. As early as 1960, Prime Ministerial Directive No. 134/CT-TTg (dated June 21, 1960) banned the hunting of elephants. This was followed by Decree No. 39/CP dated April 5, 1963, which introduced “Temporary Regulations on Hunting Forest Wildlife”, and later by the 1972 Forest Protection Ordinance. Since 1992, elephants have been afforded the highest level of protection under Decree No. 18-HĐBT, issued January 17, 1992.

Under Viet Nam’s legal framework, elephants are classified under Group IB (list of those species subject to a strict ban on exploitation and use). Any illegal acts involving the hunting, trapping, capturing, exploitation, transport, or use of elephant ivory or derivatives are punishable



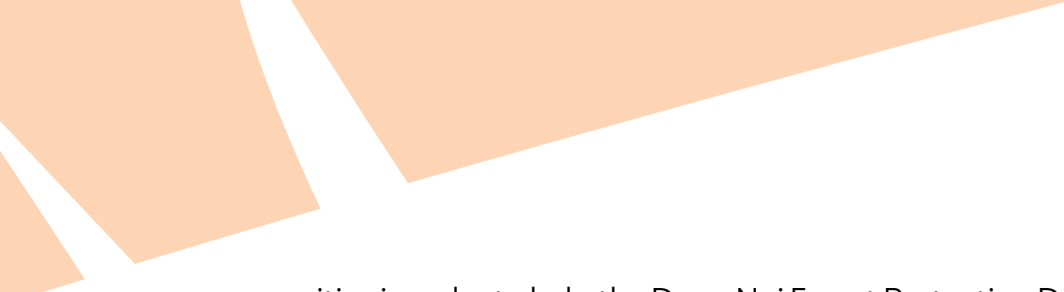
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by law, with penalties including substantial fines or imprisonment of up to five years. Additionally, the Asian elephant is listed as “Critically Endangered” and on the verge of extinction in the Viet Nam Red Data Book Part I. Animals.

Despite these efforts, Viet Nam’s elephant population experienced a dramatic decline by the late 20th century. In the 1990s, estimates placed the population at approximately 1,000 - 1,500 individuals (Dawson, 1996). However, by the early 21st century, this number had fallen to fewer than 200 individuals (MOST 2007). In response to this alarming trend, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 733/QĐ-TTg on May 16, 2006, approving an Emergency Action Plan for Elephant Conservation until 2010. In 2012, the priority level for elephant conservation was elevated to a higher state of urgency. This was clearly reflected in the issuance of Decision No. 940/QĐ-TTg on July 29, 2012 regarding approval of the Emergency Action Plan for Elephant Conservation in Viet Nam until 2020. This was followed by Government Decision No. 763/QĐ-TTg on May 21, 2013, approving the “Comprehensive Elephant Conservation Project for the 2013–2020 Period”, which comprised three provincial projects (Dak Lak, Dong Nai, and Nghe An) and one national-level project. To maintain momentum and continuity in these conservation efforts, the Government extended the project until 2025 through Decision No. 413/QĐ-TTg, issued on March 31, 2022. The implementation of this decision required a detailed and actionable plan aligned with global conservation best practices and oriented toward long-term directions. Additionally, in the planning process, available internal resources and the roles of key stakeholders were carefully assessed to ensure that priority actions were evidence-based, resource-attractive, and conducive to delivering integrated solutions for conserving elephants and their habitats.

To develop a robust conservation strategy for the upcoming phase which was to be submitted to the approving authorities, the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) sought support from the IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG), bilateral collaboration with Thailand, and consulted a wide range of Non-Governmental Organizations actively involved in elephant conservation, including WWF, FFI, SVW, AAF, GIZ, IUCN, etc.

In 2019, VNFOREST collaborated with Humane Society International (HSI) to seek support for appropriate conservation strategies/solutions for the elephant population in Dong Nai, based on technical guidance provided by international Asia elephant experts selected by HSI. With the endorsement of Dong Nai Province, three elephant conservation initiatives were piloted, including: (i) monitoring elephant via camera traps, (ii) monitoring human - elephant conflicts, and (iii) management of elephant home range/habitats. These piloted initiatives applied scientifically clear methodologies and engaged multi-stakeholder participation from national to local levels. Initial results provided essential baseline data on elephant biological characteristics, behavior, herd social structures, prevailing threats, and interactions between elephants and local



communities in order to help the Dong Nai Forest Protection Department, the Forestry Department (formally known as VNFOREST), and HSI jointly propose practical and locally appropriate solutions for the conservation and sustainable development of wild elephants.

The science-based, practical solutions developed through the piloted project in Dong Nai laid a strong foundation for the Forestry Department, in partnership with HSI, to develop the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050, and the solutions/directions/strategies to the planning issue has started to be put into action.

The plan was initiated in 2022, based on the application of two key documents titled “Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning” (with focus on endangered and rare species) and “Species Conservation Planning Principles and Steps” issued by the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC). These documents are currently applied across all 13 Asian elephant range countries. Members of the drafting committee represented by various sectors, including management, science, conservation, finance, planning, and policy development. For the first time, the drafting committee of a national action plan also included international experts on Asian elephants. Based on a thorough review of the status of elephant conservation, several drafts on general and detailed outlines, a logical framework including the vision, objectives, strategies, and actions were developed and revised by representatives of elephant range provinces through three thematical workshops on wild elephant conservation, captive elephant management (Dak Lak) and evaluation of pilot elephant conservation initiatives aiming at promotion of human-elephant coexistence (Dong Nai); two national technical workshops; one national consultation workshop; more than 30 technical working group meetings and many consultation meetings with communities, international and national experts and researchers, NGOs such as WWF, AAF, SVW, and FFI. Priority actions proposed by each elephant range province or at the national level were designed to address challenges in elephant conservation, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders and were formulated using the SMART criteria (Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Relevant – Timebound). Each proposing focal agency was required to submit detailed action descriptions, including a summary of the proposed action, implementation steps, expected outputs, and resource requirements, thereby establishing a solid foundation for future execution/implementation.

It is hoped that, with the collective efforts and inclusive participation of all relevant stakeholders throughout its development, the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050, will mark a turning point in the conservation of elephants in the country.

Abbreviations

In this National Action Plan, the following abbreviations stand for:

AAF	Animals Asia Foundation
BTTN	Nature Conservation
CKL	Forest Protection Department
CLN	Department of Forestry
CCKL	Provincial Forest Protection Department
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
ĐVHD	Wildlife
FFI	Fauna & Flora International
HEC	Human-Elephant Conflict
HECox	Human-Elephant Coexistence
HSI	Humane Society International
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUCN AsESG	IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group
IUCN SSC	IUCN Species Survival Commission
NECAP	National Elephant Conservation Action Plan
NN&PTNT	Agriculture and Rural Development
TCLN	Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST)
TU	National Level
UBND	People's Committee
VECAP 2022	Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, vision 2050
VQG	National Park
SVW	Save Vietnam's Wildlife
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature in Viet Nam (WWF-Vietnam)

Technical Terms and Explanations

In this National Action Plan, the following terms are defined as follows:

Wild elephants are individuals that live in natural habitats.

Captive elephants refer to individuals that are kept and managed under human care and supervision, including in private households, zoos, or safari facilities.

Habitat refers to the natural living environment of animals, plants, or other organisms.

Home range is an area that an animal or a group of animals regularly uses and moves through in search of food or mates. This area may overlap with the ranges of neighboring individuals or groups of the same species.

Wildlife corridor is a pathway that connects two or more natural habitats, allowing the movement, migration, and genetic exchange of animal populations.

Elephant population fragmentation refers to the division of a population into smaller herds or groups that no longer interact with one another.

Carrying capacity refers to the maximum number of individuals of a given species that an ecosystem can sustainably support over the long term without degrading natural resources or ecological functions. In the context of elephant populations, carrying capacity refers to the highest number of elephants that can persist in a particular ecosystem without causing detrimental impacts on food availability, water resources, habitat integrity, or biodiversity. It is influenced by various biophysical and ecological factors, and due to their complexity and variability, precise determination of carrying capacity in practice remains a significant challenge.



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Inbreeding (or consanguineous mating) refers to the reproduction resulting from the mating of closely related individuals, typically measured by the degree of genetic relatedness across generations. Inbreeding increases the likelihood of expressing genetic disorders associated with recessive alleles and may lead to reduced genetic diversity and fitness within a population.

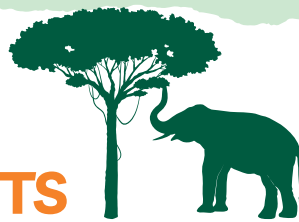
Rapid response team refers to a designated unit established to manage human-elephant conflict incidents, to provide timely intervention when one or many elephants are encountered/occur in human settlements or agricultural areas.

Elephant protection patrol team refers to a team responsible for conducting patrols and monitoring activities within elephant habitats with the aim of protecting elephants.

Human-elephant conflict refers to negative interactions between humans and elephants that occur in shared areas where humans live or conduct agricultural activities.

Human-elephant coexistence refers to the acknowledgement of elephants' presence by humans and the adoption of appropriate behaviors that avoid causing harm to elephants when they appear in human settlements or agricultural areas.

Summary of the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050



WILD ELEPHANTS



VISION

By 2050, ensure the conservation and sustainable growth of elephant populations, and foster harmonious coexistence between elephants and humans in Viet Nam.



OVERALL GOALS BY 2035:

1. Maintain and increase the current elephants
2. Manage and improve elephant habitats
3. Manage human-elephant conflict and promote human-elephant coexistence
4. Enhance research, enforcement, and management capacities among relevant stakeholders

GOAL 1 MAINTAIN AND INCREASE THE CURRENT ELEPHANTS

a. Objective 1.1: Strengthen understanding of elephants

- i. Mission/Strategy 1.1.1:** Enhance understanding of the biological characteristics, social structure, and distribution of elephants (4 Actions)

b. Objective 1.2: Mitigate threats and prevent the decline of elephants

- i. **Mission/Strategy 1.2.1:** Enhance elephant patrols, control measures, and protection efforts, and eliminate threats to elephant survival (1 Action)
 - ii. **Mission/Strategy 1.2.2:** Rescue and release/reintroduce wild elephants (1 Action)
 - iii. **Mission/Strategy 1.2.3:** Prevent elephant mortality (1 Action)
 - iv. **Mission/Strategy 1.2.4:** Implement outreach campaigns to raise awareness and/or promote behavior change amongst relevant stakeholders for elephant conservation (1 Action)
- c. **Objective 1.3:** Develop and implement population recovery measures in suitable habitats
- i. **Mission/Strategy 1.3.1:** Identify and implement measures to maintain and increase elephant populations (1 Action)
- d. **Objective 1.4:** Enhance the legal framework for the conservation of elephants and other endangered species
- i. **Mission/Strategy 1.4.1:** Develop a support mechanism for personnel involved in elephant conservation (2 Actions)

GOAL 2 MANAGE AND IMPROVE ELEPHANT HABITATS

- a. **Objective 2.1:** Ensure the maintenance and expansion of elephant habitat areas or the improvement of habitat quality, and prevent habitat encroachment and fragmentation
- i. **Mission/Strategy 2.1.1:** Enhance understanding of elephant home ranges, habitats and movement corridors (2 Actions)
 - ii. **Mission/Strategy 2.1.2:** Prevent habitat encroachment and degradation (1 Action)
 - iii. **Mission/Strategy 2.1.3:** Interventions to improve habitat quality for elephants (1 Action)
 - iv. **Mission/Strategy 2.1.4:** Expand elephant habitat areas based on scientific evidence of elephant distribution and habitat use (2 Actions)

b. Objective 2.2: Strengthen international cooperation in elephant conservation

i. Mission/Strategy 2.2.1: Promote and strengthen cross-border collaboration in elephant conservation (3 Actions)

GOAL 3 MANAGE HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT AND PROMOTE HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE

a. Objective 3.1: Apply prevention, avoidance, and mitigation measures for human-elephant conflict, aiming at harmonious coexistence

i. Mission/Strategy 3.1.1: Enhance understanding of human-elephant conflict (1 Action)

ii. Mission/Strategy 3.1.2: Implement human-elephant conflict mitigation measures promote harmonious coexistence (2 Actions)

iii. Mission/Strategy 3.1.3: Support response to human-elephant conflict (1 Action)

b. Objective 3.2: Improve livelihoods and develop a mechanism to mitigate losses of related communities

i. Mission/Strategy 3.2.1: Develop mechanisms/policies to support compensation and mitigate losses caused by human-elephant conflict (1 Action)

ii. Mission/Strategy 3.2.2: Develop appropriate livelihoods for villagers/communities in human-elephant conflict areas (1 Action)

c. Objective 3.3: Raise awareness and promote behavior change among local communities regarding elephant conservation and human-elephant conflict

i. Mission/Strategy 3.3.1: Provide training and capacity building (1 Action)

ii. Mission/Strategy 3.3.2: Communication and publication of materials (1 Action)

GOAL 4 ENHANCE RESEARCH, ENFORCEMENT, AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES AMONG RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

- a. **Objective 4.1:** Strengthen insitutional capacity and cooperation mechanisms in elephant conservation
 - i. **Mission/Strategy 4.1.1:** Enhance capacity for relevant officers (1 Action)
 - ii. **Mission/Strategy 4.1.2:** Establish necessary cooperation/ coordination mechanisms (1 Action)
 - iii. **Mission/Strategy 4.1.3:** Enhance capacity through professional forums/networks (1 Action)
 - iv. **Mission/Strategy 4.1.4:** Improve working conditions for local elephant conservation forces (1 Action)
 - v. **Mission/Strategy 4.1.5:** Enhance capacity through international cooperation (1 Action)
- b. **Objective 4.2:** Advocate for the implementation of elephant conservation research programs
 - i. **Mission/Strategy 4.2.1:** Enhance national and local capacity for elephant conservation and development research (1 Action)

CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS



VISION

By 2050, ensure optimal welfare for elephants and promote the sustainable development of captive elephant populations in Viet Nam.



OVERALL GOALS BY 2035:

1. Enhance the welfare of captive elephants
2. Ensure the availability of infrastructure, equipment, and facilities necessary for the rescue, healthcare, and reproduction of elephants
3. Promote captive breeding towards the sustainable growth of captive elephants
4. Contribute to overall elephant conservation efforts

GOAL 1 ENHANCE THE WELFARE OF CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS

- a. Objective 1:** Ensure physical and spiritual health for captive elephants (6 Actions)
- b. Objective 2:** Develop suitable and enriched habitats for captive elephants (2 Actions)
- c. Objective 3:** Build capacity of centers, elephant owners, mahouts, caretakers on the husbandary of captive elephants (4 Actions)
- d. Objective 4:** Rescue and rehabilitate captive elephants (2 Actions)

GOAL 2 ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE, EQUIPMENT, AND FACILITIES NECESSARY FOR THE RESCUE, HEALTHCARE, AND REPRODUCTION OF ELEPHANTS

- a. Objective 1:** Upgrade and optimize infrastructure for captive elephant care and management (1 Action)
- b. Objective 2:** Ensure specialized health care machineries, equipment, means used in treatment and rescues of elephants (1 Action)

GOAL 3 PROMOTE CAPTIVE BREEDING TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS

- a. Objective 1:** Ensure breeding opportunities for captive elephants with reproductive potential (3 Actions)
- b. Objective 2:** Increase the number of legally sourced breeding captive elephants to promote a sustainable population (1 Action)

GOAL 4 CONTRIBUTE TO WILD ELEPHANT CONSERVATION EFFORTS

- a. Objective 1:** Support wild elephant conservation through appropriate captive elephant management and use (1 Action)

PART I

OVERVIEW OF ELEPHANTS AND ELEPHANT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN VIET NAM

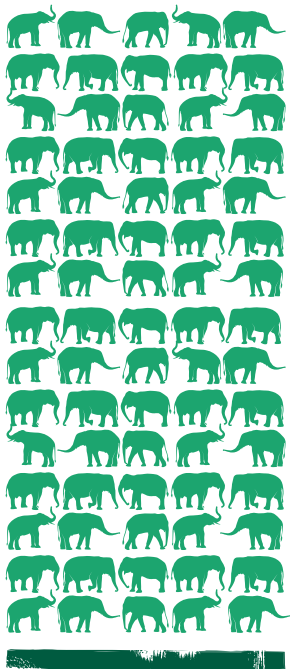
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1.

Status of Asian Elephant Conservation in Viet Nam

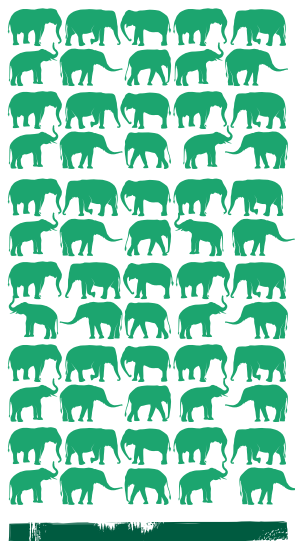
Previous inventories on the population status of the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) found that Viet Nam had an estimated 2,000 wild individuals in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the estimated number of wild elephants in Viet Nam was approximately 1,000 - 1,500 individuals (Do Tuoc and Santhini 1990, Dawson 1996). However, by the early 21st century, this number had decreased (VNFOREST 2020).

~2.000
wild elephants



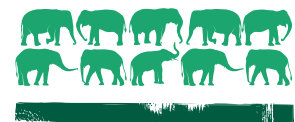
1980s

~1.000-1.500
wild elephants

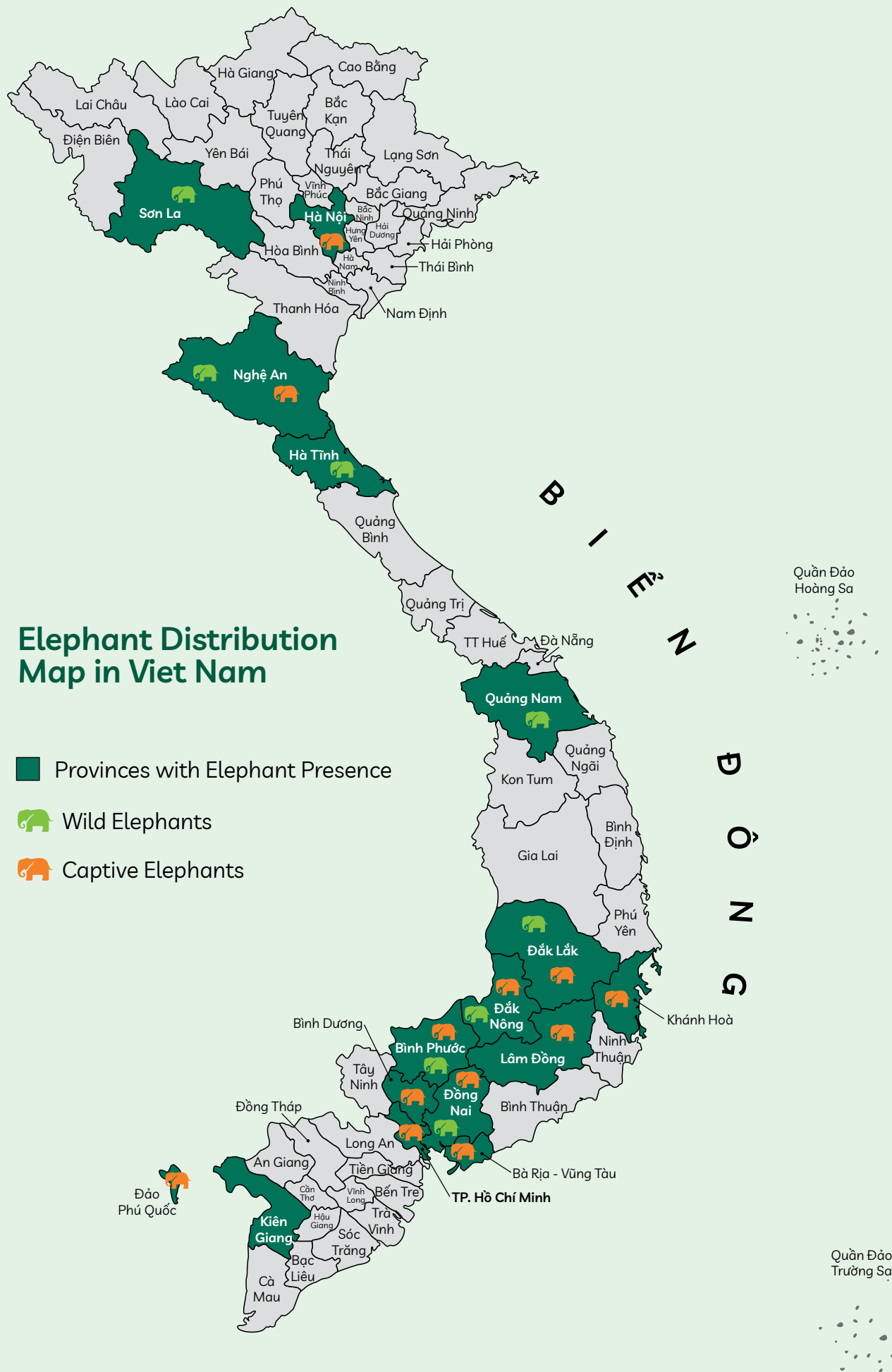


1990s

~200
wild elephants



2010-2020



Summary of estimated wild elephant data in Viet Nam

Province	Number of herds/groups	Estimated total individuals	Estimated number of males	Estimated number of females
Son La	1	1	0	1
Nghe An	5	13-15	2	11-13
Ha Tinh	3	8-10	1	7-9
Quang Nam	3	7-11	2	5 – 9
Dak Lak	5	60-78 (-2 deceased)	15-21	45-51
Dak Nong	1	2-3	0	2-3
Dong Nai	1	14 (+4 newborns)	5 (+1)	9
Binh Phuoc	1	3	0	3
Total	19	104 - 134	24-35	83-101

(According to the reports provided by provinces, 2020)

Numerous conservation efforts have been undertaken by the Vietnamese Government and many international organizations. However, the recovery of wild elephant populations in natural habitats remains limited and has fallen short of expectations. Moreover, this recovery is also difficult to ascertain due to the absence of baseline data for temporal comparison.



Wild elephants in Sri Lanka © Nguyễn Thị Mai/HSI VN



Captive elephants were released into Yok Don National Park, Dak Lak Province © Animals Asia

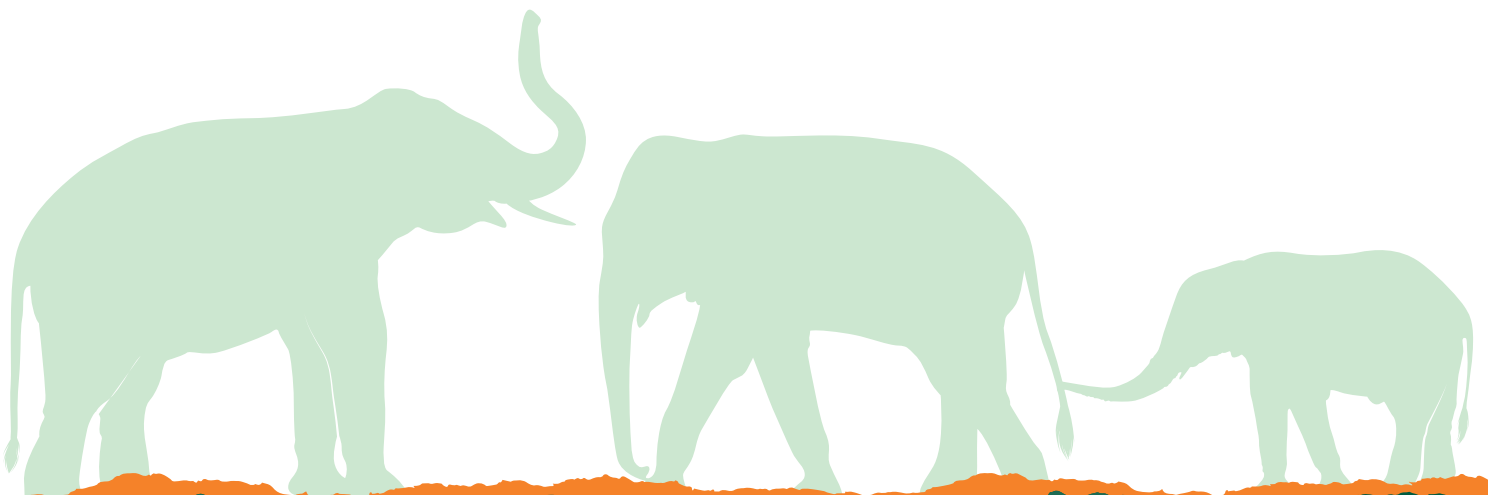
Summary of captive elephant data in Viet Nam

Province/City	Number of captive facilities	Number of captive elephants	Sex	
			Male	Female
Ha Noi	3	6	1	5
Ho Chi Minh City	3	11	1	10
Nghe An	1	2		2
Dak Lak	29	45 (+3)	19	26
Dak Nong	1	2		2
Lam Dong	4	6 (-3)	3 (-1)	6 (-2)
Binh Phuoc	5	7		7
Khanh Hoa	1	1		1
Dong Nai	1	2	1	1
Binh Duong	1	1		1
Kien Giang	1	5		5
Total	50	88	24	64

(According to the reports provided by provinces, 2020)

According to 2018 statistics, the entire country had 91 captive elephants across 11 provinces and cities, whereas this number was 165 in 2000. In Dak Lak province, considered as the 'capital' of captive elephants, the number of elephants also sharply declined. Specifically, during the period 1979-1980, Dak Lak had 502 captive elephants; in 1990, there were 299; in 1997, 169 remained; and in 2000, only 138 remained, representing a decrease of 364 individuals within 20 years (from 1980-2000). By 2018, Dak Lak's captive elephants had decreased by nearly 100 individuals compared to 2000, with only 45 remaining. Clearly, the declining trend in number and the lack of reproduction among captive elephants nationwide are alarming signals for efforts to improve welfare, conserve, and develop captive elephants in Viet Nam.

The opportunity to conserve Asian elephant populations in Viet Nam still exists if timely and appropriate actions are taken. VECAP 2022 was developed with this goal/objective in mind.





National technical workshop on VECAP 2022 development, Ha Noi, July 26–29, 2022 © HSI VN

2.

Elephant Conservation Efforts in Viet Nam

2.1

Legal framework for elephant conservation

1954 - 1990

After 1954, efforts to protect elephants began to gain more attention. In 1960, the Prime Minister issued Directive No. 134/CT-TTg dated June 21, 1960, which prohibited elephant hunting and outlined preliminary regulations for elephant protection and domestication. Key points of the directive included:

- A complete ban on shooting elephants.
- Promotion of efforts to capture and domesticate elephants for use in economic development.
- In exceptional and urgent cases, the decision to shoot elephants was delegated to the district-level administrative committee or the military unit's command.
- Dissemination of traditional knowledge from Central Highlands communities on how to prevent elephants from damaging crops.

1991 - 2017

The legal framework for elephant conservation in Viet Nam was progressively strengthened through the Law on Forest Protection and Development No. 58-LCT/HĐNN8 (1991), its amendment in 2004, and the Forestry Law No. 16/2017/QH14 (2017). These legal provisions have inherited and expanded earlier protections, evolving toward a more stringent conservation regime.

1992: The Council of Ministers issued Decree No. 18-HĐBT dated January 17, 1992, which stipulated the list of rare forest fauna and flora and their management and protection regimes. Under this decree, elephants were classified into Group IB (animals that are endemic, possess special scientific and economic values, and are at high risk of extinction). This decree prescribed:

- A total ban on the exploitation and use of elephants.
- That any exploitation or use of elephants for scientific research purposes must be authorized by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers.
- The implementation of measures to deter elephants from destroying crops and to protect human lives.
- That the state management agency for forestry was mandated to organize surveys, monitoring, and protection of rare species, including elephants.

2008: The Biodiversity Law No. 20/2008/QH12 was promulgated, introducing regulations on the conservation and sustainable development of biodiversity. Article 7 of this law strictly prohibits the hunting and exploitation of wild species within strictly protected areas.

2017: The Forestry Law No. 16/2017/QH14 replaced the Law on Forest Protection and Development, continuing to inherit and strengthen regulations on elephant conservation:

- Prohibits the illegal hunting, captive breeding, killing, storing, transporting, and trading of all wild species.
- Prohibits the conversion of forest land use purposes, except in special cases approved by the Prime Minister or the National Assembly.

2019

Decree No. 35/2019/ND-CP: This decree stipulates violations in the forestry sector and corresponding administrative penalties related to elephants.

A review of the legal framework for elephant conservation reveals that:

- The protection and conservation of elephants constitute a unified policy of the Viet Nam Government articulated from very early stages in Viet Nam's highest-level legal documents. These legal instruments are developed consistently and demonstrate strong continuity.
- Elephant conservation is regulated within the broader framework of conserving endangered and rare wild fauna and flora, with elephants belonging to the group afforded the highest conservation status. This conservation regime is highly stringent and aligns with international regulations, including international conventions to which Viet Nam is currently a signatory.
- Administrative violations related to elephant conservation incur severe and strict penalties.
- These regulations collectively establish a comprehensive legal framework for elephant conservation efforts.

However, surveys conducted in current elephant range provinces revealed, a clear need for specific regulations and/or policies to compensate local households and villagers affected by elephants incursions into human residential or agricultural areas. Without timely support policies, human-elephant conflict risks to escalate to critical levels. Additionally, the need for a mechanism to incentivize officers involved in the conservation of endangered species, including elephants, has also been proposed by many localities. Furthermore, although environmental monitoring is stipulated in the 2017 Forestry Law, the promotion of elephant species monitoring should be clearly defined in an appropriate legal document. This would provide elephant conservation management agencies with a basis to implement the priority actions proposed in VECAP 2022 in the coming years.

2.2 Elephant conservation programs and initiatives

To halt the decline of elephant populations, Viet Nam has not only developed a comprehensive legal framework but also actively implemented various, elephant conservation programs, initiatives and action plans, many of which were launched earlier than those for other wildlife species.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) issued Decision No. 1204/NN-LN-QĐ dated July 16, 1996, and implemented the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Program for the 1996 - 1998 period. This program focused on conserving elephants in key areas of Dak Lak Province and included a range of activities such as reviewing the special-used forest system; establishing nature reserves; increasing investment and technical support; developing and enhancing legal regulations; addressing human-elephant conflict; and promoting elephant conservation through public media and awareness campaigns.



1996

2006



The Prime Minister issued Decision No. 733/QĐ-TTg dated May 16, 2006, approving the Urgent Action Plan for Elephant Conservation until 2010. Over five years of implementation this plan laid the foundation for the development of targeted conservation projects in provinces with significant elephant populations, such as Dak Lak, Dong Nai, and Nghe An, and led to the establishment of the Dak Lak Elephant Conservation Center.

In response to a series of unexplained elephant deaths, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 940/QĐ-TTg dated July 29, 2012, approving the Urgent Action Plan for Elephant Conservation in Viet Nam until 2020 to conserve elephants in Viet Nam.



The Prime Minister approved the Comprehensive Elephant Conservation Project for the 2013–2020 Period through Decision No. 763/QĐ-TTg dated May 21, 2013, with a total budget of over VND 300 billion allocated from the state budget, aimed to implement three provincial-level projects in Dak Lak, Dong Nai, and Nghe An, along with a national-level project.

By the end of 2020, the project had achieved several key outcomes, including a reduction in elephant poaching and killings, early signs of population growth and development, and a decrease in human-elephant conflict incidents.

2012



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On March 31, 2022, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 413/QĐ-TTg, approved the extension of the Comprehensive Elephant Conservation Project through to 2025.

2013

2022

Dak Lak Province

2010

The People's Committee of Dak Lak Province approved the Elephant Conservation Project for the 2010–2015 period, with a total budget of VND 61 billion, aimed to sustainably manage wild elephant populations, develop the captive elephant herd, preserve indigenous cultural identity, and promote environmental education and awareness.

2012

The People's Council of Dak Lak Province issued Resolution No. 78/2012/NQ-HĐND dated December 21, 2012, stipulating specific policies for elephant conservation in the province for achieving consensus among the government and people to actively engage in elephant conservation efforts.

2013

The Provincial People's Committee approved the Urgent Elephant Conservation Project of Dak Lak Province until 2020, with a revised total budget of nearly VND 85 billion, replacing the earlier project.

2021

Dak Lak Province committed to gradually phasing out elephant riding tourism in order to enhance animal welfare and support the effectiveness of the captive elephant breeding program.



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Dong Nai Province

**1990 -
2010**

With support from non-governmental organizations and research institutes, numerous surveys on elephant population were conducted in the Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai Nature and Culture Reserve, and La Nga – Dong Nai Forestry Company Limited. Prior to 2009, human-elephant conflict in the region was extremely severe.

**2014 -
2020**

Many solutions were implemented to conserve and develop the elephant population, such as rapid surveys of elephant population numbers; identifying elephant food plant species; implementing solutions to mitigate human-elephant conflict, such as building 50 km of electric fences; and organizing awareness campaigns for local residents living in and around elephant habitats.

**2019 -
Present**

Implemented a pilot program of three initiatives, including: Elephant monitoring using camera traps, human-elephant conflict monitoring, and habitat management for elephants. These initiatives have enhanced understanding of the elephant population in the province (numbers, social structure, individual health); and human-elephant conflict (locations, conflict levels, types of conflict, and conflict agents) serving as a basis for local authorities to consider conservation solutions and mitigate human-elephant conflicts in the next phase. In addition, the province continued to build 22 km of electric fences to further reduce human-elephant conflict.

Quang Nam Province

2017

The Quang Nam Elephant Species and Habitat Conservation Area was established after the discovery of seven wild elephants in Que Lam Commune, Nong Son District.

2018

Quang Nam was officially included in the Comprehensive Elephant Conservation Project in Viet Nam.

**2019 -
Present**

Conducted rapid surveys, population monitoring, awareness campaigns to educate local communities on the importance of conservation, and piloted green fence models, among other activities. These activities utilized funding from the scheme and support from projects such as USAID's Truong Son Xanh and WWF Viet Nam.

Nghe An Province

**2013 -
2020**

Under the provincial elephant conservation project, Nghe An identified approximately 15-16 wild elephants and implemented activities to raise community awareness about wild elephant protection. The province constructed an infrastructure system supporting elephant and habitat protection, including two fire watchtowers, three rest stops, 29 km of patrol trails, and 4.6 km of buffer ditches. Additionally, two rapid response teams with 16 members were established to help local communities prevent human-elephant conflicts.

**2021 -
Present**

Currently, efforts are focused on monitoring wild elephant populations and maintaining four rapid response teams with 26 members to support local communities in preventing human-elephant conflict. Community awareness-raising activities, training on elephant conflict prevention methods, and district- and commune-level conferences on elephant protection continue to be carried out. A livelihood model aimed at mitigating human-elephant conflict is also being piloted, alongside collaboration with the FFI organization to conduct monitoring and patrolling for elephant protection.

Ha Tinh Province

**2020 -
Present**

As a newly added component of the Comprehensive Elephant Conservation Project in Viet Nam, the investment and resources allocated in elephant conservation efforts in Ha Tinh are still limited. To date, only a few rapid survey activities have been conducted to confirm the presence of wild elephants in Ha Tinh.

Viet Nam has allocated substantial resources to elephant conservation, making elephants one of the most heavily funded endangered and rare species through the government budget. However, these efforts remain insufficient to achieve conservation goals or to ensure the natural recovery of wild elephant populations.



Elephant monitoring program using camera traps in Dong Nai

3. Threats to the Survival of Elephant Populations in Viet Nam

Similar to other Asian elephant range countries, elephants in Viet Nam face major threats such as habitat loss, escalating human-elephant conflict, etc. However, given their small numbers and fragmented distribution across five provinces, the risk to their continued survival is particularly acute.

3.1

Small population size and limited understanding of herd structure

Reports from relevant stakeholders reveal that data on elephant numbers within the same province are inconsistent and show significant variation. Furthermore, the rapid assessment/inventory methods used in most provinces primarily rely on interviewing local villagers, measuring footprints and/or dung boli, which can only estimate the number and size of elephants but cannot determine other crucial information such as male-female ratio (sex ratio), age, social structure, etc.

To date, only Dong Nai Province has obtained scientific evidence to identify elephant individuals and determine the size and social structure of its elephant population. This was possible through the implementation of a camera trap-based monitoring program.



Monitoring elephants via camera traps



Map of the camera trap locations

By August 2023,
images have been analyzed



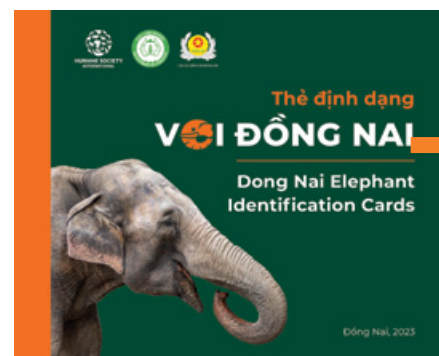
Monitoring **400** days and nights consecutively.



Totally collected **400,453** images & videos.



16.032 images & videos of elephants



Clear Herd Structure:



6 + 2* Adult Males

(*Note: Due to several overlapping characteristics and reliance on existing images from previous programs/projects, additional data is needed to confirm the exact number).



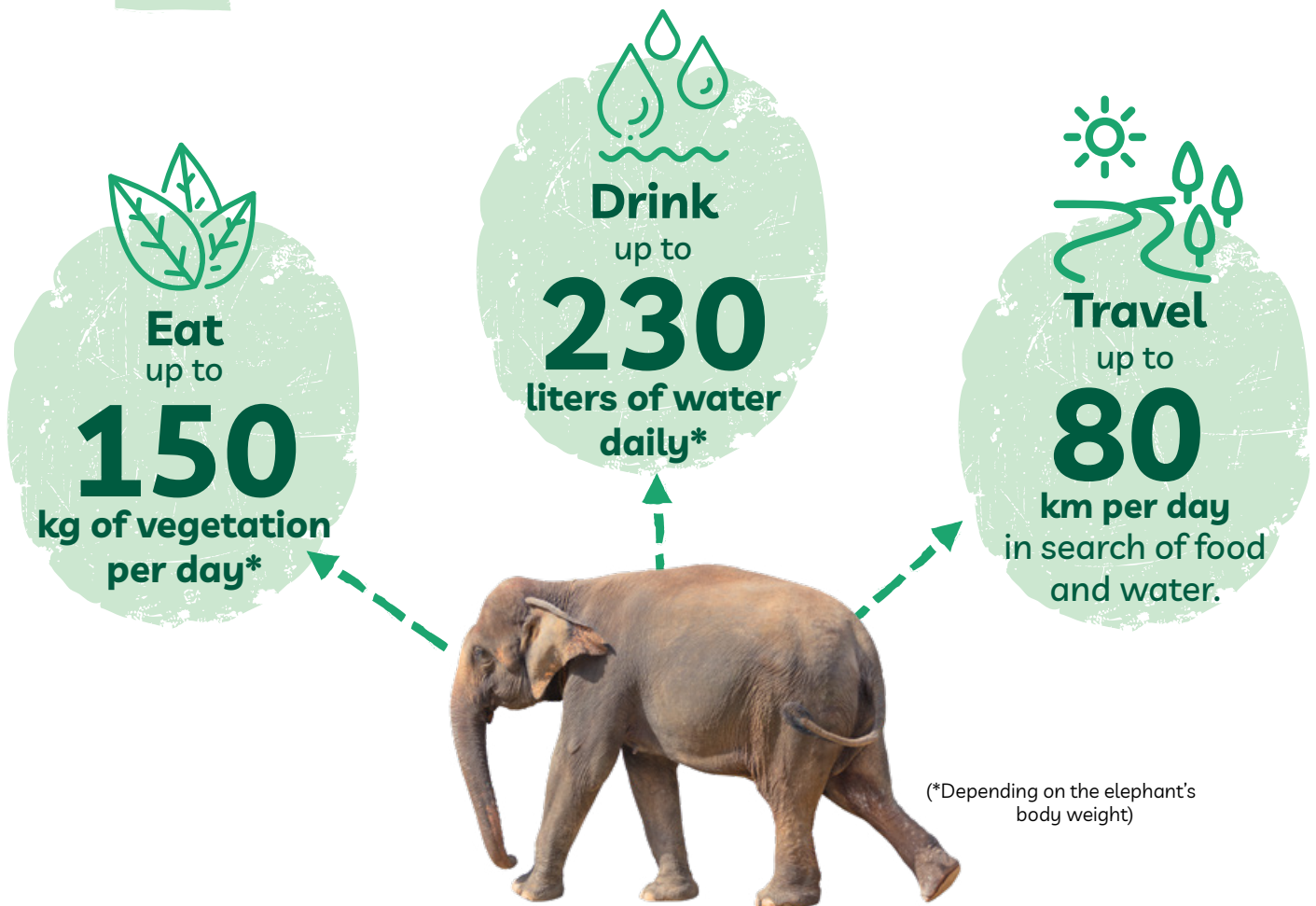
4 elephant herds: 16 individual members

Dong Nai has identified 4 elephant herds, each consisting of 3 to 5 elephants. These herds composed of adult females and juveniles of different age classes.

3 adult female elephants often seen moving alone

Most elephant range provinces lack accurate information on herd structure, individual health status, and other key data. Consequently, there is an absence of a solid scientific basis and evidence to identify specific threats in each province or to propose appropriate intervention measures. Enhancing the understanding of elephants is an urgent need to ensure the success of conservation efforts at the local level.

3.2 Habitat loss and degradation



Elephants are herbivores. An adult elephant typically consumes up to 150 kg of vegetation and drinks approximately 230 lit of water daily¹. Therefore, they may spend 16 to 19 hours per day² foraging and moving covering distances up to 80 km. As a result, habitat reduction and barriers preventing access to food, water, and mineral sources can pose significant threats to their survival.

According to 2020 statistics, Viet Nam has a land area of 331,210 km² and human population of over 97 million people, with more than 65% residing in rural areas. A young and rapidly growing population has led to increasing demands for residential and agricultural land, contributing to deforestation and the shrinking of habitats for many species of wildlife, including elephants.

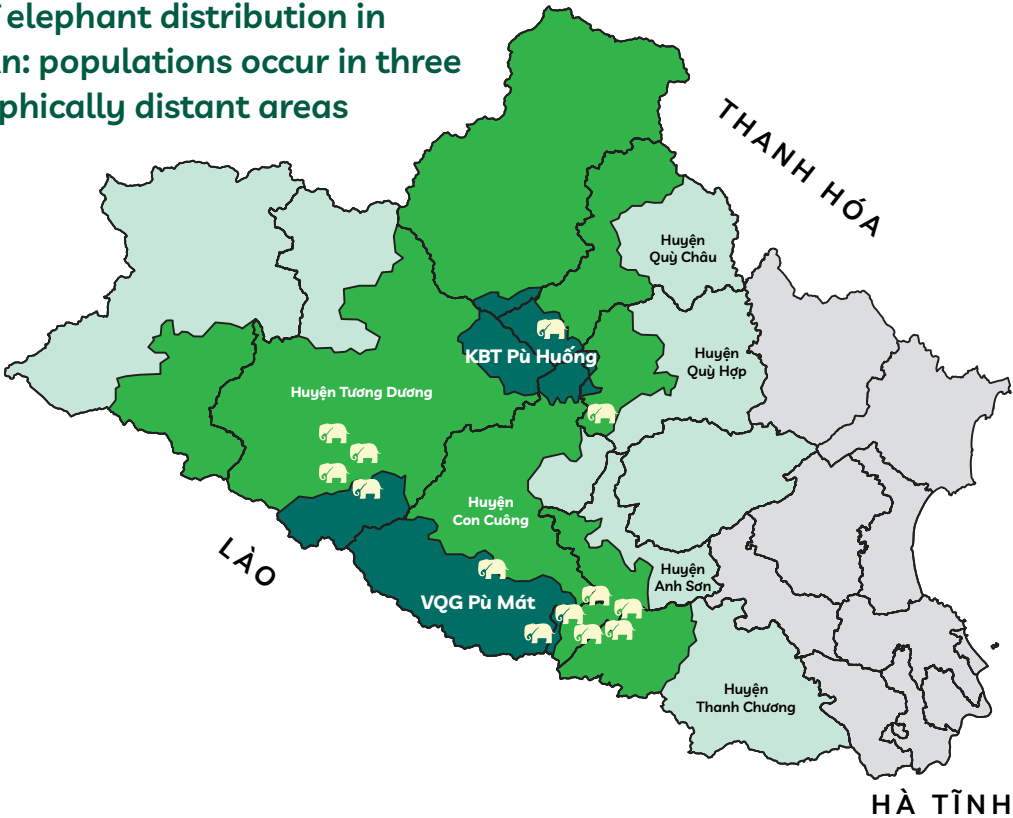
1. Source: Asian Elephant, Facts and Information (National Geographic); What Do Elephants Typically Eat, and How Do They Feed? (wildlifefaq.com)
2. Source: Asian Elephant Animal Profile (National Geographic); What Do Elephants Typically Eat, and How Do They Feed? (wildlifefaq.com)

In addition, the development of infrastructure and hydropower systems across the country has contributed to habitat loss and fragmentation. Discussions with local communities near Vu Quang National Park reveal that hydropower reservoirs and water storage lakes not only occupy large land areas, further reducing elephant habitats, but also act as major physical barriers hindering the movement of elephant herds within their range and, in some cases, even isolate them entirely.

3.3 Fragmentation of elephant herds

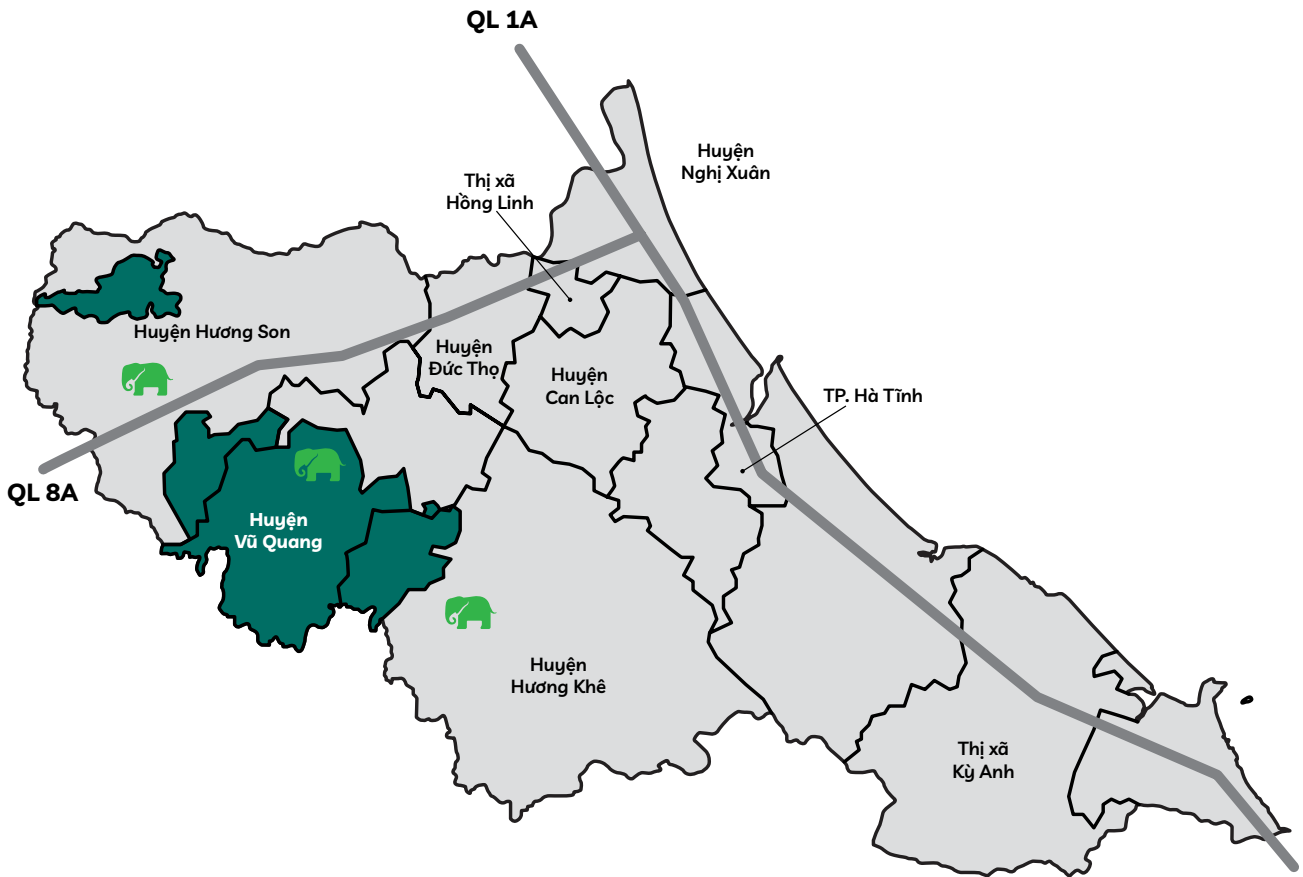
According to reports and discussions with the elephant range provinces in Viet Nam, habitat fragmentation has been observed in Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Nam, and Dak Lak provinces. However, from the perspective of international experts, the fragmentation of elephant habitat caused by natural and human-made barriers such as rivers, streams, roads, hydropower dams, etc. only poses a significant impact if there is conclusive evidence that individual elephants do not use those habitats and/or there is no movement or interaction between individuals in geographically separated areas.

Map of elephant distribution in Nghe An: populations occur in three geographically distant areas



Source: Nghe An province

Map of elephant distribution in Ha Tinh: populations occur in three geographically distant areas



Source: Ha Tinh province

Addressing the issue of elephant population fragmentation is a very complex and time-consuming task. Before proposing solutions, we need to conduct research to assess the interaction and exchange among elephant herds to accurately confirm the extent of fragmentation. The results of initial research will ensure the success of any proposed connectivity solutions when they are piloted at each site.

3.4 Human–elephant conflict

Similar to many other Asian elephant range countries, human–elephant conflict is a top concern for authorities at all levels and poses a serious threat to the survival of elephants in Viet Nam.

Among the elephant range provinces, Dong Nai and Dak Lak are systematically recording human–elephant conflict incidents, while incidents in other elephant range provinces are not fully documented or reported. Additionally, only Dong Nai and Nghe An provinces have flexibly utilized emergency social assistance policies, including support for people affected by natural disasters, to create a mechanism for assisting local communities suffering losses due to human–elephant conflict. Other elephant range provinces still face many difficulties in addressing this issue.

In Viet Nam, human–elephant conflict primarily results in economic losses. Incidents involving injury or death of either people or elephants have been rarely recorded and mostly occurred prior to 2019. During conflict with elephants, local residents often employ various deterrent measures such as shouting, chasing, using fire or strong lights directed at elephants' eyes, and high-power loudspeakers, and in some cases, using sharp objects or improvised tools with high lethality to drive elephants away. However, elephants are intelligent animals and easily adapt to human deterrent methods. The repeated and increasingly aggressive nature of these measures can cause elephants to become combative and attack humans. In response, people resort to stronger, more dangerous measures, sometimes inadvertently leading to the killing of elephants. Therefore, if actions to deter, prevent, and deal with elephants are not appropriately managed and guided, they may trigger unnecessary escalation in human–elephant conflict.



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© CCKL Đồng Nai



© CCKL Đồng Nai

The threats mentioned above are quite common in other Asian elephant range countries. However, due to Viet Nam's small and fragmented elephant population, the severity and impact of these threats is significantly greater.



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4. Challenges to Asian Elephant Conservation in Viet Nam

4.1 Lack of scientific information and evidence

a. Limited data on current elephant population size

In countries with large elephant populations, numbering in the tens of thousands, such as India or Sri Lanka, precisely determining the exact number of individual elephants may not be of great value. However, in countries with small elephant populations like Viet Nam, such data is critically important to (i) demonstrate the endangered level/status and promote conservation efforts; (ii) estimate the necessary resources required for elephant conservation; and (iii) propose appropriate, science-based conservation measures.



Elephant named Back Kham, which died on April 23, 2011. © Quoc Dung*

* Source: <https://vnexpress.net/voi-o-viet-nam-se-tuyet-chung-trong-10-nam-toi-2193669.html>

Over the past five years, the elephant range provinces have conducted inventories to estimate elephant numbers within their areas. The survey methods employed were quite diverse, including interviews with local villagers and officials, recording and measuring footprints, and/or dung boli, genetic assessment through DNA fingerprinting from dung, and camera traps. However, as these surveys/inventories were conducted over short periods, the results have several limitations: (i) limited accuracy, as some wild elephants may not have been detected; (ii) difficulty in precisely determining population structure (this includes social structure, relationships among individuals within herd(s) and reproductive status) and (iii) inability to provide insights into population dynamics and the movement patterns of individual elephants or herds.

b. Insufficient information on elephant demographics and health status

Information on population structure helps determine the reproductive capacity and self-recovery potential of wild elephant populations, as well as the extent of human intervention needed. Similarly, data on the body condition scores not only reveal the health status of individual elephants but also reflect the suitability of their habitat, existing threats, or the effectiveness of current conservation measures.

Until now, Dong Nai is the only province with this crucial information, derived from verifiable scientific evidence through camera trap data and image analysis. Other elephant range provinces lack this information due to insufficient resources for image analysis or implementing appropriate methods.



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c. Limited information on home ranges, distribution, and herd interactions

Information on the distribution area and/or home range of individual elephants and herds is crucial for proposing interventions to improve or expand elephant habitats. Without this scientific data, interventions may be unsuitable or lead to wasted resources.

The optimal method for gathering information on home ranges is GPS collaring elephants. However, this is a new method that has not yet been applied in Viet Nam, so it requires piloting and evaluation.

Another effective method is to conduct grid-based distribution survey surrounding the elephant protected areas. Currently, Dong Nai is implementing this method to establish a foundation for understanding elephant distribution, with the aim of proposing appropriate habitat management measures.

d. Limited information on human–elephant conflict

The nature of human–elephant conflict is urgent, unique, and complex. In Viet Nam, human–elephant conflict occurs in all elephant range provinces. However, information regarding the level, frequency, causes, actors/elephants causing conflict, damages, and the attitude/behavior of both humans and elephants during these incidents has not been recorded fully and systematically. This absence of data means that interventions and responses to human–elephant conflict (such as constructing electric fences, digging ditches, or translocating conflict-causing individuals, etc.) carry a high risk of unintended negative impacts for both elephants and humans.



Documenting/recording damages caused by human–elephant conflict
© Nguyễn Thị Mai / HSI Viet Nam

Dong Nai province is currently piloting the detailed recording of human–elephant conflict incidents, including: (i) information on the time and location of the conflict; (ii) a description of the conflict process; (iii) the extent of damage; (iv) a review of conflict response measures used in the area; and (v) regular data updates. Other provinces have not yet implemented this systematic recording.



4.2 Lack of standardized research methods and strategic direction

In the recent past, elephant surveys/inventories and research in Viet Nam haven't been conducted uniformly with a common methodology or consistent data requirements. Most studies have relied on secondary information or primary information collected over very short periods. This has led to a lack of data and inconsistent figures, negatively impacting the effectiveness of elephant conservation efforts.

Consistent research results with standardized data from each province are essential inputs for building a national elephant database. This, in turn, will contribute to guiding appropriate nationwide conservation strategies.



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4.3 Lack of specific mechanisms to support communities affected by HEC

A compensation mechanism is critically important for elephant conservation because it helps change the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of people living in human-elephant conflict zones. Without timely support, residents may become frustrated and hostile, leading them to adopt drastic measures against elephants. This escalates human-elephant conflict and diminishes the effectiveness of conservation efforts. However, there is currently no specific policy in place to establish such a compensation mechanism.



© CCKL Dong Nai

Given the urgent human-elephant conflict situation in some provinces, Dak Lak, Dong Nai, and Nghe An are temporarily utilizing special mechanisms for disaster relief to promptly provide partial compensation for damaged crops or property. The implementation of this mechanism has shown certain effectiveness in responding to human-elephant conflict.

4.4

Limited capacity for elephant conservation

Reports on the current status and proposed activities from the provinces indicate that elephant conservation efforts in Viet Nam still face numerous limitations and capacity challenges, specifically in the following areas:

a. Limited capacity for planning and policy development

The current personnel situation in elephant conservation is quite challenging due to: (i) there are very few domestic experts in elephant conservation; (ii) most provinces lack specialized technical staff for elephants and elephant conservation. Instead, staff members often handle various different tasks; and (iii) elephant conservation officers do not possess in-depth knowledge and are not updated on new information and techniques in elephant conservation. These impose difficulty for provinces to develop plans and select appropriate solutions, especially when multiple solutions exist for the same problem. For example, both camera trap monitoring and DNA analysis from fecal samples can provide necessary results for studying elephant numbers. DNA analysis offers high accuracy and quick results but comes with high costs and requires specialized skills in fieldwork and analysis. Without a clear understanding of these challenges, local authorities might choose DNA analysis and potentially not achieve the desired outcomes.

b. Limited capacity for field research and conservation implementation

This situation can be attributed to several factors including (i) lack of specialized or updated training for local staff; (ii) research is often conducted by scientific consultants with limited in-depth participation from local staff; and (iii) a shortage of necessary equipment. Camera traps serve as a clear example. While camera traps are used in various survey and monitoring activities, such as biodiversity assessments, confirming species presence in a geographical area, or population monitoring, many staff members who have been trained on setting camera traps lack specialized knowledge of the specific procedures and requirements for elephant monitoring. This often results in camera traps failing to capture images that meet the necessary criteria for elephant identification.

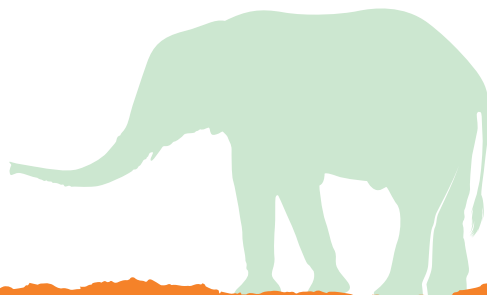


Elephant monitoring program using camera traps in Dong Nai Province

Furthermore, all five key elephant conservation provinces have proposed receiving advanced specialized training and additional equipment from the early years of their plans. This includes rescue and treatment equipment for elephants, and gear for rapid response teams and elephant protection patrol units. This clearly indicates a critical need to enhance on-the-ground implementation capacity.

c. Limited capacity for community engagement

Beyond knowledge about elephants, local officials also lack soft skills and other auxiliary skills, particularly those related to community engagement and mobilization in elephant conservation. This is quite evident from the provinces' requests for training in communication skills and developing communication content. Community participation is consistently considered a crucial factor for the success or failure of conservation efforts.



4.5 Weak interagency coordination/ collaboration in elephant conservation

At least three provinces have proposed establishing a dedicated cooperation mechanisms among relevant state agencies for elephant conservation. Their explanation is that without a unified cooperative framework, there will be no specialized personnel for this work. Consequently, conservation teams will face significant difficulties when incidents arise that require the involvement of other functional agencies. Furthermore, having dedicated personnel (beyond forest rangers and elephant conservation agencies) also facilitates capacity building for inter-agency staff. This is because, for specialized tasks like elephant conservation, most non-specialized personnel lack the necessary knowledge to perform the work effectively.

This situation highlights, on one hand, the need for collaborative problem-solving among agencies involved in elephant conservation, as each agency is typically assigned only specific tasks. On the other hand, it also indicates that the level of cooperation among these agencies is not yet high, as each agency has its own priority tasks.



*Consultation meeting at the Quang Nam Elephant Species and Habitat Conservation Area
© Nguyễn Thị Mai / HSI Viet Nam*

PART II

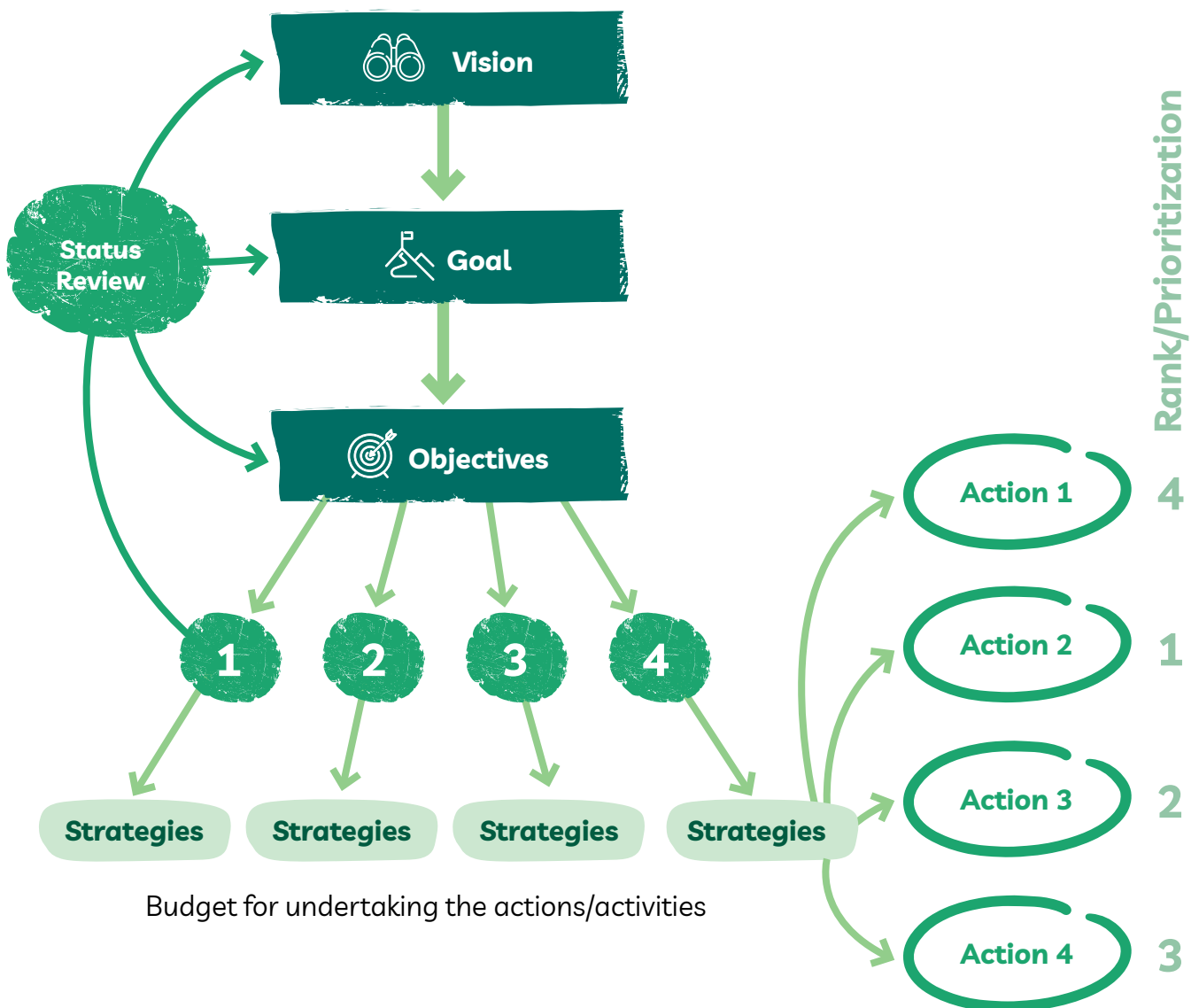


VECAP 2022 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

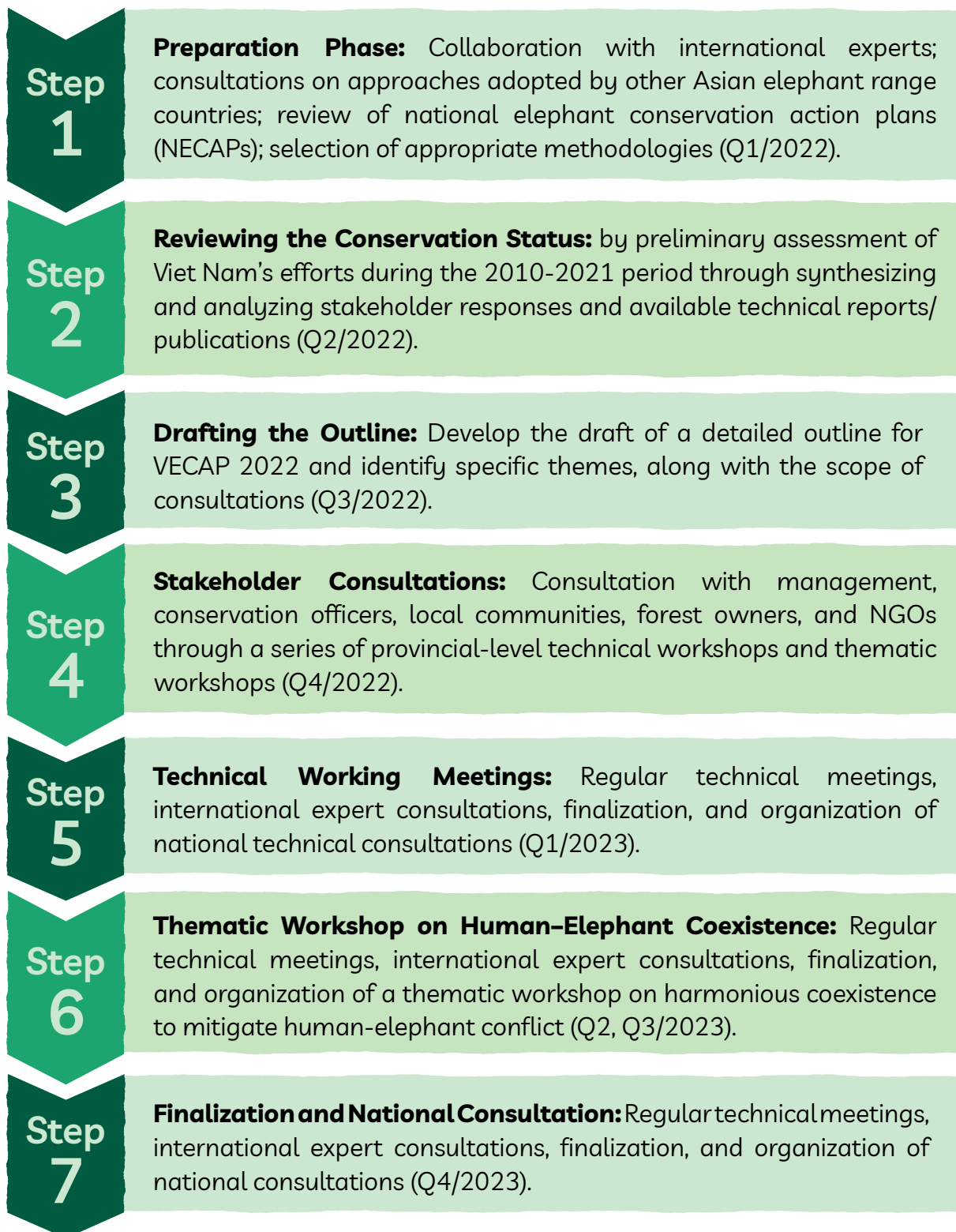
© Dr. Jennifer Pastorini/Sri Lanka-CCR

1. Development Process of VECAP 2022

To ensure scientific rigor and integration with Asian elephant range countries, the Department of Forestry adopted two technical guidance documents issued by the IUCN Species Survival Commission as the foundation for developing VECAP 2022. The process for developing a National Action Plan for an endangered and rare species is proposed in the diagram below:



Based on the IUCN guidance and aligned with Viet Nam’s administrative document development procedures and regulatory framework, the National Action Plan was developed through 10 structured steps, as illustrated in the diagram below, to ensure comprehensive stakeholder participation:



Step
8

Final Review and Editing: Regular technical meetings, consultations with international experts, finalization, and proofreading (Q1/2024).

Step
9

Submission for Approval: Submission of the finalized draft for official approval (Q1–Q2/2024).

Step
10

Official Launch and Implementation: Official publication and commencement of implementation (Q3/2024).

The primary distinction in Viet Nam’s process for developing this National Action Plan, compared to other Asian elephant range countries, is that each unit proposing activities for the national action plan must also submit an accompanying activity description document. This document includes:

- Activity name (applying the SMART model)
- Activity summary
- List of specific activities
- Expected outcomes
- Required resources
- Estimated budget for the activity

These activity description documents will serve as reference materials during the implementation of the National Action Plan. Anyone interested in a specific activity in a particular site can clearly understand that activity. Describing these activities also requires the proposing units to thoroughly understand the activities they wish to implement, and helps relevant ministries, departments, or donors comprehend the implementation steps and outcomes of each activity.

2. Selected Images from the VECAP 2022 Development Process



1 Technical workshop on the development of VECAP 2022, held from July 26–29, 2022 in Ha Noi, focused on formulating the vision, overall objectives, specific objectives, and priority actions for the next 10 years, with a vision toward 2050.





1 Thematic workshop on the management of captive elephants, held in Dak Lak from November 30 to December 1, 2022.



1 National technical consultation workshop, held in Ha Noi from February 23 to 24, 2023.





Quảng Nam



Hà Tĩnh



Đắk Lắk

5 Provincial consultation workshops held in Ha Tinh, Nghe An, Dong Nai, Quang Nam, and Dak Lak on the management and conservation of wild and captive elephants.

10+
Community consultation meetings conducted in Dong Nai and Dak Lak Provinces.





Training on elephant monitoring using camera traps in Nghe An © Pu Mat National Park



Training on elephant monitoring using camera traps in Nghe An © Pu Mat National Park





1 Evaluation workshop on the pilot elephant conservation program promoting human–elephant coexistence, held in Dong Nai from August 30 to 31, 2023.





5 International presentations on the development of VECAP 2022 with the participation of relevant stakeholders.



International conference on human-wildlife coexistence, held in Turin, Italy, in October 2024.



11th Meeting of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group, held in New Delhi, India, in March 2023



11th Meeting of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group, held in New Delhi, India, in March 2023



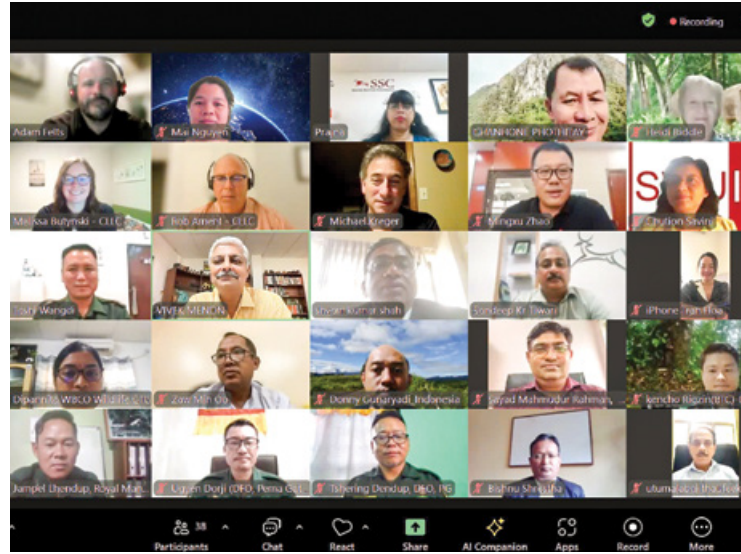
19th International Elephant Foundation (IEF) Symposium on Elephant Research and Conservation, held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in November 2023



Technical Meeting of the Elephant Conservation Group, held in Corbett National Park, India, in March 2023

4

Consultations with international experts on the feasibility of proposed actions.



10-15

Regular technical meetings of the drafting team with national and international experts.



3. Stakeholder Participation



Management and Enforcement Sector:

National government agencies; provinces of Dak Lak, Dong Nai, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Nam, Sơn La, Gia Lai; Cat Tien National Park, Pu Mat National Park, Vu Quang National Park; Quang Nam Elephant Species and Habitat Conservation Area, etc.



Scientific Research Sector:

IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG), Centre for Conservation and Research (CCR - Sri Lanka), Viet Nam National University of Forestry, Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources, Forest Inventory and Planning Institute, Tay Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, etc.



Non-Governmental Organizations:

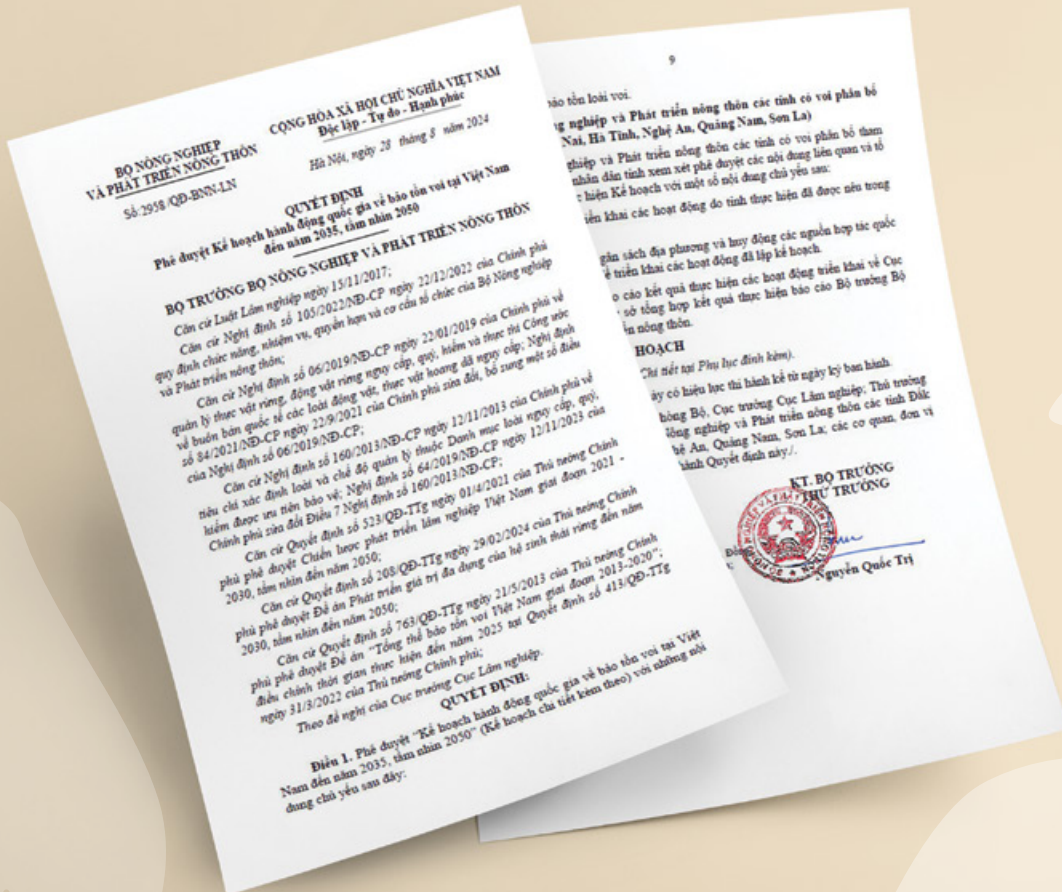
Humane Society International (HSI), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Animals Asia Foundation (AAF), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Save Vietnam's Wildlife (SVW), etc.



Community Sector:

Villagers of Thanh Son commune (Dinh Quan), Ta Lai commune (Tan Phu), Ma Da and Phu Ly communes (Vinh Cuu) in Dong Nai Province; Nong Son District in Quang Nam Province; villages and hamlets surrounding the elephant habitats in Pu Mat National Park (Nghe An), Vu Quang National Park (Ha Tinh), and Yok Don National Park, Buon Don, Buon Lak (Dak Lak).

PART III



CONTENT OF VECAP 2022

On August 28, 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued Decision No. 2958/QĐ-BNN-LN approving the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050.

The Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050, is structured around two separate logical frameworks: one for wild elephants and another for captive elephants. For each group, the conservation vision to 2050 reflects the collective aspirations of stakeholders. The proposed actions for the first 10 years were developed based on a thorough review of the current status of elephant conservation, considering available resources and the capacity of relevant actors. Each measure or action was carefully evaluated before being assigned to specific mission/strategy groups, aligned with time-bound goals contributing to the overarching objectives.

Some symbols and explanations in the logical framework:

- (****): Indicates the priority level of the activity, reflected by the number of asterisks *; the highest priority is four asterisks (****) and the lowest is one asterisk (*).
- Year: Year (e.g., 2025) or period (e.g., 2026 – 2032) indicates the timeframe for implementing the activity. For the same activity, this data may vary in different provincial columns, showing that provinces plan to implement it in different timeframes.
- A blank cell (no time recorded) in the provincial columns means that the activity is not proposed for implementation in those provinces. For example, in the activity “Enhancing knowledge on elephants via DNA analysis from elephant dung samples” blank cells in the national level, Dong Nai, Ha Tinh, and Quang Nam columns mean this activity will not be carried out at the national level or in the three aforementioned provinces.
- The “Expected Results” column indicates the output of the activity, providing a basis for evaluating the activity’s implementation later.
- “Technical recommendations” is the section where the technical team proposes the implementation steps for the action. This section is only present for actions with complex implementation processes.

WILD ELEPHANTS



VISION

By 2050, ensure the conservation and sustainable growth of elephant populations, and foster harmonious coexistence between elephants and humans in Viet Nam.



OVERALL GOALS BY 2035:

1. Maintain and increase the current elephants
2. Manage and improve elephant habitats
3. Manage human-elephant conflict and promote human-elephant coexistence
4. Enhance research, enforcement, and management capacities among relevant stakeholders

GOAL

1

Maintain and increase the current elephants

Objective 1.1: Strengthen the understanding of elephants

Mission/Strategy 1.1.1: Enhance understanding of the biological characteristics, social structure, and distribution of elephants

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 1. Monitoring elephants via camera traps								
a. First phase of monitoring elephants	2025	2025	2024	2025	2025	2025	NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities	Knowledge on individuals; demographic structures, the number of individuals, their health status; forecast of recovery trend of populations in the wild National level: 1. Camera trap installation guidelines; 2. Elephant images identification guidelines; 3. Elephant monitoring data processing guidelines, including report templates; 4. National wild elephant database is tested/ piloted. Provincial level: 1. ID card for each discovered elephant individual in each province; 2. Reports of implementation of the first phrase.
b. Implement annual monitoring consecutively (recommended for the following phase)	2026-2035	2026-2035	2024-2035	2026-2035	2026-2035	2026-2035		Reports on annual elephant population monitoring of provinces
c. Development of national database on wild elephants	2024 - 2025 (piloted); 2026-2035 (implemented based on results of the piloted period, providing recommendations for the following periods)							A national database on wild elephants
Priority rate	****	****	****	****	****	****		

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop and update (i) Technical guide on monitoring wild elephants via camera traps; (ii) Guide on identifying individual elephants; (iii) Guide on processing data of the monitoring wild elephants including report templates;
- b. Organize training courses to train technical personnels to implement monitoring activities;
- c. Develop a provincial process/guideline for the elephant monitoring implementation (if required);
- d. Purchase suitable equipment;
- e. Training on-site implementation techniques (installation, testing, data processing, exchange with local and international experts) and advance training on identification;
- f. Data processing and annual/regular reports compilation.

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 2. Enhancing knowledge on elephants via DNA analysis from elephant dung samples							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities.	Complete knowledge on the elephants distributed in the implementation areas (i.e. number of individuals, males, females, age, relationship between individuals in the populations).
This action is recommended to be implemented in the later phase		2026-2028		2026-2027				1. A technical guide on collecting elephant dung samples; 2. Training materials on collecting the elephant dung samples; 3. Term of reference; 4. Preliminary reports on implementation of the sample collection guideline.
Priority rate		****		**				

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop and update processes/guidelines on DNA analysis from elephant dung samples;
- b. Identify and select appropriate institutes/labs and relevant experts;
- c. Identify suitable personnels to participate in training courses on collecting dung samples for DNA analysis, based on requirement by potential analyzing agencies;
- d. Purchase suitable equipment serving process of collecting, storing and shipping samples to laboratories;
- e. Timely analyses of the collected samples and disseminate/publicise the results.

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 3. Enhance understanding of elephant distribution via conducting grid-based distribution surveys							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities	A past and present elephant distribution map; A map of human-elephant conflict areas (if conflicts are available)
Conduct 5 x 5 km grid-based distribution surveys per province			2023-2024	2024-2025	2024-2025	2024-2025		National level: 1. A guideline on conducting grid-based distribution surveys; 2. Training courses organized; 3. Technical reports on technical support/coaching to encourage the implementation and data analysis in collaboration with elephant range provinces. Provincial level: 1. Technical reports including the maps showing elephant distribution previously and currently; hotspots of human-elephant conflict (if available).
Priority rate			****	****	****	****		

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop and update a technical guideline on conducting grid-based distribution surveys;
- b. Identify suitable personnels (at least one person capable to work with mapping software) who will be nominated/assigned to participate in the training on doing the grid-based distribution surveys on the ground, or select a consulting team to carry out the survey;
- c. Identify time, sites and pre-visit to design an implementation plan;
- d. Conduct the surveys by round(s) until the round grids without elephant presence;
- e. Analyse the interviewed data and map showing the elephant distribution and the human-elephant conflict hotspots (if available).

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 4. Coordinate and provide national and international technical support for elephant conservation activities							NGOs; Asian Elephant specialist group; Representative of elephant distribution countries; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Embassies and potential donors.	The technical assistance needs of local stakeholders are adequately addressed.
VNFOREST coordinate technical and financial support based on actual demands of elephant range province requests	2022-2035	Receive assistance coordinated by national level						
Priority rate	****							

Technical recommendations:

- a. Identify international sources and contacts, develop a list of international experts for different sectors in relation to elephant conservation;
- b. Contact and request for collaboration;
- c. Support administrative requests/logistics arrangement and coordinate the collaboration of parties.

Objective 1.2: Mitigate threats and prevent the decline of elephants

Mission/Strategy 1.2.1: Enhance elephant patrols, control measures, and protection efforts, and eliminate threats to elephant survival

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 5. Strengthen patrols to protect elephants and its habitats, remove traps/snares; prevent illegal poaching or injuring of elephants							NGOs; Relevant enforcement agencies; Forest owners; Local authorities; Local communities;	Threats to the existence of elephant populations are minimized
Implement annual patrolling plan per province		2024-2035			2025-2035			1. Annual reports on patrols, the number of snares/traps removed on the ground; 2. Reports on unexpected serious incidents.
Priority rate		***			****			

Technical recommendations:

- a. Set up and/or maintain elephant patrol units/teams;
- b. Based on planning of monitoring elephants and its habitats, make annual or seasonal patrolling plan, including the join participation of relevant enforcement agencies (if needed);
- c. Execute planned and/or sudden patrols (Attention: Focus should be given to removing traps and preventing elephant poaching);
- d. Compile patrolling and regular reports.

Mission/Strategy 1.2.2: Rescue and release/reintroduce wild elephants

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 6. Develop a procedure/protocol for rescuing, treatment/rehabilitation and reintroduction of wild elephants							NGOs; Relevant authorities/agencies; National and international experts related to elephant rescue, treatment and re-introduction to the wild; Forest owners; Local communities; Local People's Committees; Embassies and potential donors;	The procedure for rescuing, treating/rehabilitation, and reintroducing wild elephants is approved and widely disseminated for implementation.
a. Review the process of wild elephant rescue, rehabilitation and re-introduction to the wild; compare it with the ones that are successfully applied in other countries;		2024						Report reviewing the actual procedure of the rescuing, treatment/rehabilitation and reintroduction wild elephants
b. Specialist consultation: develop a new process and execute experiment application (recommended for the next phrase);	2025-2029	2025-2029						1. Specialist consultation report; 2. A process of wild elephant experiment rescue, treatment and re-introduction to the wild; 3. Report on experiment implementation of the process.
c. Complete the process of wild elephant rescue, treatment and re-introduction to the wild (recommended for the following phrase);	2029-2030	2029						The process of wild elephant rescue, treatment and re-introduction to the wild is improved and completed.
d. Submit to national level for consideration to issue the process as a standard applied nationwide (recommended for the following phase).		2030						The process of wild elephant rescue, treatment and re-introduction to the wild is issued by relevant authority.
Priority rate		***						

Technical recommendations:

- Search for and refer to international process of rescue, treatment and re-introduction to the wild of wildlife in general and Asian elephant in particular;
- Review current practices in the rescue, treatment and reintroduction to of wild elephants in Viet Nam, compare them with international standards and identify existing gaps;

- Develop a preliminary draft of the procedure for rescuing, treatment/rehabilitation and release wild elephants;
- Consult with national and international experts;
- Finalize the draft procedure and define it as a pilot version;
- Pilot the approved procedure draft in Dak Lak Province;
- Take lessons learned, evaluate outputs/outcomes of the procedure piloting phase, and revise the piloted procedure to meet Viet Nam context;
- Submit the revised procedure to central authorities for consideration as a nationally applicable standard.

Mission/Strategy 1.2.3: Prevent elephant mortality

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 7. Collaborate with relevant authorities to the causes of elephant mortality (including scene investigation, necrosy)							NGOs; Relevant enforcement agencies; Forest owners; Local authorities; Local communities;	Appropriate solutions/interventions determined to prevent elephant mortality
a. Develop a process to identify reasons of elephant deaths		2024-2025						A protocol/procedure is accepted (including from collecting blood samples/tissues, licensing procedures-roles of specific enforcement agencies, related costs, resources).
b. Enhance capacity of 1 to 3 vet personnels on elephant forensic investigation techniques		2024-2025						One to three veterinarians shall be provided with specialized/advance training in relevant techniques and must be assigned to carry out investigations into the causes of elephant mortality.
c. Trained personnels take part in nationwide forensic investigation of elephant deaths (recommended for the next phases)		2025-2030						The report on the cause of elephant mortality shall be submitted to local authorities, Department for Forestry and CITES Management Authority to complete their reporting duties to CITES.
d. Propose solutions/interventions to prevent the risks causing elephant deaths (recommended for the next phases)		2030						A list of solutions/interventions to prevent the risks leading to elephant mortality.
Priority rate		****						

Technical recommendations:

- a. Review the current procedures to identify causes of elephant mortality and determine the gaps;
- b. Assign 1 to 3 veterinary staff (who have basic knowledge of elephants) to participate in intensive training on related techniques such as collecting samples or process to identify elephant mortality;
- c. After training, the trained veterinary staff actively participate in determining causes of of elephant deaths if any;
- d. Compile reports on the cause of death for each case;
- e. Develop risk management solutions based on identified causes.

Mission/Strategy 1.2.4: Implement outreach campaigns to raise awareness and/or promote behavior change amongst relevant stakeholders for elephant conservation

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 8. Develop, coordinate and implement communication campaigns on national or provincial level							NGOs; Asian Elephant specialist group; Representative of elephant distribution countries; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Embassies and potential donors; Forest owners; Local communities; Related communication agencies.	Communication efforts actively contribute to raising awareness or/and changing behavior among individuals and stakeholders connected to elephants and elephant conservation.
a. Organize annual communication activities at national level (Elephant conservation week in response to World Elephant Day (12 August))	2022-2035	In collaboration with elephant range provinces						Elephant conservation week organized annually
b. Organize international and regional conferences/workshops on elephant conservation in Viet Nam; mid-term and final evaluation workshops for reviewing and amending actions of VECAP (including recommendations/adjustments for upcoming phases of VECAP 2022 implementation)	2022-2035	In collaboration with elephant range provinces						Conferences and workshops successfully organized; related documents widely distributed and contributed to raising awareness on elephant conservation
c. Communication activities on elephant conservation and protection at community/district/provincial levels related to elephant conservation efforts			2024-2035	2024-2035	2024-2035	Awareness on elephant conservation among targeted audience at community/district/provincial levels is raised		
d. Develop online, offline communication materials (Billboards, posters, leaflets, brochures)	2024-2035		2024-2035	2024-2035	2024-2035	Awareness on elephant conservation and protection of targeted audience (the public, children, students, staff of enforcement agencies) is raised.		
e. Produce and exhibit elephant specimen(s) to support environmental education activities at the Nature and Culture Museum of Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve					2024-2035			
Priority rate	****		****	****	****			



Solution/Action 8. Develop, coordinate and implement communication campaigns on national or provincial level



Technical recommendations

- a. Identify detailed communication objectives, suitable communication messages;
- b. Identify communication audience;
- c. Identify appropriate timing and locations for communication events, ensuring they are aligned with the social and cultural context;
- d. Review local available resources (such as personnels, finance, communication contents) and assess additional needs (such as national and international experts, participation of media channels);
- e. Promote active participation of local communities and relevant stakeholders in elephant conservation efforts;
- f. Share communication messages and products for replication and application in other elephant range provinces.

Objective 1.3: Develop and implement population recovery measures in suitable habitats

Mission/Strategy 1.3.1: Identify and implement measures to maintain and increase elephant populations

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 9. Propose and implement interventions to maintain and increase elephant populations, based on scientific results gained from those actions under Objective 1.2/Goal 1, Objective 2.1/Goal 2 and Objective 3.1/Goal 3								Elephant populations maintained and/or developed in number of individuals
a. Propose evidence-based conservation solutions-such as translocation or habitat connectivity-tailored to the specific needs of each province for maintaining and enhancing local elephant populations;	2025-2026	2025-2026	2025-2026	2025-2026	2025-2026	2025-2026	NGOs; Asian Elephant specialist group; Representative of elephant distribution countries; Research institutions, universities;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> List of evidence-based conservation solutions/ interventions; Pre-feasibility study on proposed solutions.
b. Organize national and international technical consultation workshops on proposed solutions;								Recommendations of elephant experts and national management agencies on proposed solutions collected
c. Pilot the science-based solutions/ interventions proposed at (b) using an adaptive approach;		2026-2029	2026-2029	2026-2029	2026-2029	2026-2029	Local and international experts on elephants; Embassies and potential donors; Forest owners;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The conservation solutions/interventions are piloted; Reports on the pilot period is completed.
d. Evaluate the implementation of the conservation solutions;	2030	2030	2030	2030	2030	2030	Local communities.	Reports to evaluate the effectiveness of the piloted conservation solutions/interventions
e. Decide whether to continue, adjust or cancel the piloted conservation solutions/interventions.	2031-2035	2031-2035	2031-2035	2031-2035	2031-2035	2031-2035		Decision to adjust/amend the conservation solutions made and issued
Priority rate		****	****	****	****	****		

Objective 1.4 Enhance the legal framework for the conservation of elephants and other endangered species

Mission/Strategy 1.4.1: Develop a support mechanism for personnel involved in elephant conservation

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results	
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam			
Solution/Action 10. Develop policies outlining duties, authorities and incentives for local staff engaged in elephant conservation								Elephant conservation staff’s duties and authorities verified, and a mechanism to encourage their works developed	
a. Review the duties/functions and responsibilities of government agencies involved in elephant conservation, intergrate the monitoring elephants, elephant habitat and human – elephant conflicts into their regular duties/mandate functions.	2025-2026	Collaborating with national level agencies						Related national - and provincial-level state agencies; NGOs or donors interested in the action;	A report reviewing policies related to duties and benefits of forest rangers and staff working on elephant conservation compiled
b. Develop and pilot incentive mechanisms to encourage forest rangers and related staff to actively engage in elephant conservation efforts.	2026-2028								1. A draft mechanism to encourage active participation of forest rangers and elephant conservation staff compiled. 2. A report to evaluate the pilotet application of the mechanism to encourage active participation of forest rangers and elephant conservation staff completed.
c. Review and propose adjustments to policies regarding duties and authorities, and incentive mechanisms for forest rangers and staff involved in elephant conservation.	2028-2030						A report to propose policy changes on duties and authorities, and incentives to form a mechanism to encourage active participation of forest rangers and elephant conservation staff compiled.		
Priority rate	****								

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 11. Obtain the endorsement and active support of provincial leadership for elephant conservation initiatives							Pu Mat National Park; Leaders of provincial agencies related to elephant conservation in Nghe An province; Network of agencies related to elephant conservation and population development in Nghe An province; National and international elephant conservation experts; NGOs working on elephant conservation.	Leaders of Nghe An province are equipped with full information, explanation on values and importance of elephant conservation as well as challenges faced by the conservation
a. Prepare technical documents that clearly specify the challenges and hinder the implementation of elephant conservation and increase efforts and propose appropriate solutions					2024-2035			Technical reports and presentations compiled
b. Hold 04 thematic workshops on elephant conservation and implementation of VECAP 2022 with participation of provincial leaders (once every 2-3 years)								<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical meetings or workshops are held with the participation of key provincial leaders; 2. Provincial authorities take action to address the challenges in the implementation of VECAP 2022.
Priority rate					***			

GOAL 2 Manage and Improve Elephant Habitats

Objective 2.1 Ensure the maintenance and expansion of elephant habitat areas or the improvement of habitat quality, and prevent habitat encroachment and fragmentation

Mission/Strategy 2.1.1: Enhance understanding of elephant home ranges, habitats, and movement corridors

SOLUTION/ACTION	Agencies in charge of implementation and Timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 12. Identify elephant home ranges and movement corridors of elephants through GPS collaring techniques								Reports on home ranges and movement corridors of GPS-collared individual elephants or herds are compiled and made available.
a. Pilot the first phase of GPS collaring for elephants		2024-2026					NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities.	1. A pre-feasibility study (including legal basis) for the elephant collaring initiative is completed; 2. A consultation report with relevant stakeholders is compiled; 3. A collaring implementation scenario report (including a check-list of tasks, risk management measures, and official approvals by responsible authorities) is compiled; 4. A list of national and international experts involved in the initiative is established; 5. A list of required equipment permitted/approved for use in the implementation of the initiative is established; 6. A formal decision by the Provincial People’s Committee authorizing implementation of the initiative is issued.
b. Evaluate the effectiveness of the first phase piloted collaring	2027-2028	2027-2028						A lessons-learned report on the initiative’s implementation by the responsible agency is compiled.
c. Decide on the continuation, adjustment, or termination of the elephant collaring initiative		2028-2035						A decision by the People’s Committee to discontinue, continue, or modify the collaring initiative is issued
Priority rate		****						



Solution/Action 12. Identify elephant home ranges and movement corridors of elephants through GPS collaring techniques



Technical recommendations:

- a. Identify candidate elephants for collaring, including their movement patterns and potential sites for safe approach and collaring fitting;
- b. Select experienced specialists to carry out the collaring initiative;
- c. Conduct site inspections at planned collaring locations to assess feasibility and safety;
- d. Determine, train and prepare local personnel to provide support services, ensuring the safety of both humans and elephants;
- e. Develop contingency plans to address unforeseen incidents during the collaring process;
- f. Compile an implementation plan report detailing the steps, responsibilities, and safety protocols;
- g. Obtain an official decision from the Provincial People's Committee authorizing the initiative, specifying timeframe, locations, responsible agencies, and roles;
- h. Make logistics arrangements, including procurement of necessary equipment (e.g., tranquilizers, dart guns), permits for international experts, and other legal approvals required under Vietnamese law;
- i. Execute the collaring operation as planned;
- j. Monitor the collared elephants to ensure proper functioning of the collars and health of the animals;
- k. Transfer/hand over monitoring responsibilities and data to the designated implementing agency as per the official decision;
- l. Conduct regular data analysis and reporting to track movements and behaviors;
- m. Prepare a final report presenting data on home range, movement corridors, and behavioral patterns to inform elephant conservation and management strategies within the province.

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 13. Identify elephant distribution areas by SMART patrol data							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on SMART; Forest owners; Local communities.	A map of wild elephant distribution and movement corridors generated from SMART patrol datas
Identify distribution areas and movement corridors of wild elephant populations/herds through the analysis of data collected from SMART patrols		2024-2035		2024-2035				
Priority rate		****						

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop patrol and monitoring plans using SMART tools;
- b. Establish patrol units to monitor wild elephants;
- c. Train those patrol unit members in the use of SMART tools;
- d. Conduct patrols and monitor elephants using SMART tools;
- e. Process and analyse data collected via SMART tools;
- f. Generate/produce maps of wild elephant distribution and movement corridors;
- g. Compile final reports.

Mission/Strategy 2.1.2: Prevent habitat encroachment and degradation

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 14. Collaborate with related authorities/stakeholders to prevent encroachment and degradation of elephant habitats							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephant habitat management; Forest owners; Local communities.	Wild elephant habitats are protected
a. Develop and implement coordination/interagency collaboration mechanisms with forest owners in protecting and ensuring wild elephant habitats within distribution areas and movement corridors		2024-2035	2025-2035		2025-2035			
b. Advocate for the inclusion of elephant and its habitat conservation as a priority criterion in district/province land use planning.					2025-2026			
Priority rate		****			***			

Technical recommendations:

- Review and identify relevant forest owners and enforcement agencies for collaboration in wild elephant and habitat conservation;
- Develop a coordination/interagency collaboration mechanisms with identified forest owners to conserve and protect elephant habitats, distribution areas and movement corridors, and to prevent land use conversion that changes elephant habitats;
- Sign interagency collaboration agreements or minutes of understanding;
- Conduct joint patrols and/or establish information-sharing channels;
- Regularly assess/review the effectiveness of collaboration.

Mission/Strategy 2.1.3: Interventions to improve habitat quality for elephants

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 15. Improve wild elephant habitats							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities;	Habitat quality for wild elephants is enhanced by supplementing their home ranges with food, water, salt, and essential minerals.
a. Review, assess and identify habitat areas and key ecological elements in need of enrichment/improvement				2026-2027				A report presenting scientific evidence to support habitat quality improvement measures
b. Grow grass or appropriate vegetation, which are enrich the quality of elephant habitats		2025-2035	2024-2035		2025-2035	2025-2035		1. Improved habitat conditions actively contribute to the persistence of elephant populations in the targeted areas;
c. Provide mineral supplements								2. Regular evidence-based reports are compiled to assess the impacts of habitat improvements/enrichments (including documented elephant use of the enhanced habitat features)
d. Restore or improve waterholes								
Priority rate		**	****	**	****	***		

Technical recommendations:

- Conduct baseline assessments before recommending elephant habitat improvement measures/interventions, including: 1. Mapping types of elephant habitats commonly used by elephants within the province; 2. Analyzing frequencies and extent of elephant use across different habitat types; 3. Identifying and justifying the need for specific improvements (e.g. grass planting, waterhole restoration) based on evidence;
- Propose appropriate habitat improvement measures;
- Pilot selected improvement measures on a moderate scale;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the piloted habitat improvements;
- Scale up or discontinue the piloted habitat improvement measures based on the evaluation results.

Mission/Strategy 2.1.4: Expand elephant habitat areas based on scientific evidence of elephant distribution and habitat use

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 16. Establish Connectivity of movement corridors for fragmented populations							NGOs; Research institutions, universities. Local and international experts on elephants. Forest owners; Local communities.	Solutions to connect fragmented populations are identified and developed
Propose and implement plans to connect geographically fragmented elephant populations (between districts)	2026-2030			2026-2030	2026-2030	2026-2030		1. A report proposing plans to connect isolated areas with recorded elephant presence, (including evidence of their distribution; consultation with relevant stakeholders on the potential impacts of such connections); 2. A pre-feasibility study conducted on the proposed habitat connectivity measures.
Priority rate				**				

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop proposals for connecting fragmented elephant habitats based on data collected and analyses conducted during the first phase of elephant monitoring;
- b. Engage international experts with relevant experience in addressing fragmented elephant populations to conduct surveys and prepare pre-feasibility studies, for connecting the areas as Viet Nam currently lacks practical experience in this particular field;
- c. Organise consultation workshops with national and international experts, as well as relevant agencies responsible for land use planning and management;
- d. Conduct consultations with affected local communities;
- e. Implement the connectivity measures upon official approval;
- f. Regularly evaluate the practical effectiveness of the implemented solutions.

Objective 2.2 Strengthen international cooperation in elephant conservation

Mission/Strategy 2.2.1: Promote and strengthen cross-border collaboration in elephant conservation

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 17. Develop and/or amend/integrate elephant conservation articles to existing memorandums of understanding (MOU) on collaboration between bordering provinces of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia; study the possibilities of elephant habitat connecting between those provinces							NGOs; Related enforcement agencies of bordering provinces; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants.	Cross-border collaboration on elephant conservation consolidated/improved, actively contributing to the recovery and development of elephant populations of related countries;
a. Develop content and amend elephant conservation to MOU on collaboration between bordering provinces of Viet Nam, Laos Cambodia	2024-2035	2024-2035		2024-2035	2024-2035			Elephant conservation is amended/integrated and prioritized in MOUs/MOAs on collaboration between bordering provinces of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia
c. Study the possibilities of connecting elephant habitat areas of borderig provinces	2024-2035	2024-2035		2024-2035	2024-2035			A technical report on the feasibility of connecting elephant habitats across bordering provinces is completed and disseminated.
Priority rate	***	**		**	**			

Technical recommendations:

- a. The national level reviews international agreements that Viet Nam is member party or sign in, in order to identify provisions related to transboundary elephant conservation;
- b. Provincial authorities review existing MOU and compare them with findings provided by the national review to identify gaps and areas for amendment, ensuring alignment with international commitments and local elephant conservation needs;
- c. Develop and incorporate revised content on elephant conservation into MOUs, and submit to the competent authorities for approval;
- d. Organize a signing ceremony for the updated MOUs;
- e. Initiate the implementation of newly adopted provisions.

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 18. Conduct study visits and facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, and technical knowledge on elephant conservation between bordering provinces							NGOs; Related enforcement agencies of bordering provinces; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants;	1. Cross-border collaboration on elephant conservation is enhanced; 2. Transboundary problems/ challenges related elephant conservation are timely resolved/ addressed; 3. Technical capacity and knowledge of related transboundary elephant populations are enhanced;
Propose, coordinate, and organize study visits to to facilitate the exchange of information and experiences on elephant conservation between bordering provinces	2024-2035			2024-2035	2024-2035			Business trips and knowledge-sharing activities on elephant conservation are implemented.
Priority rate	***			***	**			

Technical recommendations:

- a. Appoint focal point persons after the signing MOU on collaboration between bordering provinces;
- b. Propose a plan of information exchange (objectives of exchange, annual or regular exchanges, time and sites of meetings, participants of the meetings);
- c. Implement the agreed exchange plans;
- d. Compile reports on each study visit, information exchange activity and regular progress reports to ensure continuous implementation of cross-border collaboration on elephant conservation.

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 19. Conduct joint border patrols between bordering provinces							Related enforcement agencies of bordering provinces;	Joint border patrols are conducted; and patrol reports are compiled and submitted to relevant authorities;
Make plans, allocate needed resources and reach agreements on implementation of the plans, execute the joint patrols between related enforcement agencies of bordering provinces				2027-2035	2024-2035			Co-signed reports on joint border patrols (particularly on areas of elephant conservation) are compiled;
Priority rate				***	**			

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop detailed plans for joint border patrols (objectives, participants, timing and locations, agreed standardized reporting templates);
- b. Implement the joint patrol plans;
- c. Compile patrol reports and submit them to the relevant authorities.

GOAL

3

Manage human-elephant conflict and promote human-elephant coexistence

Objective 3.1

Apply prevention, avoidance, and mitigation measures for human-elephant conflict, aiming at harmonious coexistence

Mission/Strategy 3.1.1: Enhance understanding of human-elephant conflict

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 20. Enhance understanding of the causes, frequency, locations and severity of human-elephant conflict through monitoring the conflicts in the provinces							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities;	Comprehensive information on the severity, frequency and other related factors of human-elephant conflicts is obtained. Capacity to forecast conflicts and develop appropriate response measures/solutions is enhanced;
a. Review and revise reporting templates, and implement the first phase of human-elephant conflict monitoring	2022-2025	2024-2025	2022-2024	2022-2025	2024-2025	2024-2025		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questionnaires for recording data on human-elephant conflict is unified and adjusted; 2. Provincial reports on the status of human-elephant conflict by 2025, including recommended response measures, are compiled; 3. Maps identifying the conflict-prone areas and levels of the conflicts are completed.
b. Hold a consultation workshop, sharing national experience on management of human-elephant conflict	2026							<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A consultation workshop is held; 2. Provincial and national reports on human-elephant conflict are completed; 3. Recommendations for managing human-elephant conflict in the next phases are developed.



Solution/Action 20. Enhance understanding of the causes, frequency, locations and severity of human-elephant conflict through monitoring the conflict in the provinces

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
c. Identify and experiment solutions to reduce human-elephant conflicts		2026-2035	2025-2035	2026-2035	2026-2035	2026-2035	1. A list of recommended solutions/interventions is developed; 2. Selected solutions/interventions are piloted; 3. Regular monitoring and evaluation reports on the piloted solutions/interventions are compiled; Regular monitoring and evaluation reports on the piloted solutions/interventions are shared among elephant range provinces and related stakeholders; A national human-elephant conflict database is developed.	
d. Regularly share the provincial reports for experience exchange		2026-2035	2025-2035	2026-2035	2026-2035	2026-2035		
e. Develop a database on human-elephant conflicts to forecast the trends	2024-2035							
Priority rate	****	***	****	***	***	***		

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop standardized templates to collect information on human-elephant conflict;
- b. Collect data on human-elephant conflict cases/incidents using the templates developed in (a);
- c. Enter the collected data into an Excel spreadsheet;
- d. Analyze the data and determine the density and contributing factors in the relevant provinces;
- e. Identify and implement appropriate mitigation measures for human-elephant conflict;
- f. Monitor the effectiveness of implemented human-elephant conflict mitigation measures and adjust them if necessary.

Mission/Strategy 3.1.2: Implement human-elephant conflict mitigation measures promote harmonious coexistence

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 21. Provide equipment and maintain, operate and upgrade facilities to support human-elephant conflict mitigation efforts							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities.	Demand for equipment are met; facilities supporting human-elephant conflict mitigation are effectively operated;
a. Procurement of required equipment				2024-2026				Proposal for the purchase of required equipment is prepared, accompanied by an explanatory reports;
b. Establish infrastructure to facilitate human-elephant conflict mitigation			2024-2025					Proposal to construct/establish facilities supporting human-elephant conflict mitigation is prepared.
c. Maintain, operate and ensure regular upkeep of facilities supporting human-elephant conflict mitigation			2022-2035	2024-2035	2024-2035			Facilities constructed for human-elephant conflict mitigation are operated in compliance with the technical specifications approved for their design and function.
Priority rate			****		***			

Technical recommendations:

- Prepare a procurement list of equipment suitable for the specific human-elephant conflict context, considering existing mitigation measures and locally applied conflict management methods;
- Develop explanatory reports for proposed constructions serving the purpose of human-elephant conflict mitigation. Ensure that these constructions do not negatively impact the forest ecosystem, do not increase the risk of injury to elephants and other species, and fully comply with all legal regulations;
- Carry out procurement, construction, and service provision in accordance with current Vietnamese law;
- Supervise or evaluate the implementation in the field.

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 22. Maintain a distance that ensure human and elephant safety								Facilities established to separate people and elephants are effectively operated, contributing to management of human-elephant conflicts
a. Develop proposal to establish facilities to separate elephant and people (electric fence, biofence)							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities;	A draft of report proposing construction of buildings/facilities to separate elephant and people
b. Arrange technical consultations with national and international experts on management of human-elephant conflicts (electric fence and bio fence); community consultation (community-based fence);								Report on acceptance and/or explanation of feedback from relevant stakeholders regarding the proposal
c. Submit the proposals (for electric fence and biofence)			2026-2035		2027-2035	2024-2035		Pre-feasibility study reports are compiled
d. Develop a pre-feasibility study (electric fence and biofence)								Regular reports on the pilot implementation and monitoring of the piloted facility effectiveness compiled;
e. Pilot proposed solutions/interventions at suitable size to evaluate the impacts of the solutions (community-based fence and biofence)								Reports to evaluate the effectiveness of and the contribution of the constructions to the management of human-elephant conflicts
f. Evaluate effectiveness of proposed solutions								

Technical recommendations:

- a. Review the results report from Solution/Action 20 concerning the status and severity of human-elephant conflict. Only consider constructing human-elephant separation structures when the conflict reaches a certain level of severity;
- b. Develop proposals for constructing human-elephant separation structures (electric fences/community-based electric fences/bio fences, etc.). Ensure that these constructions do not negatively impact the health of elephants or other animals within the forest ecosystem. Pay special attention to the potential risk of electric fences causing harm to human life in the area. Do not apply this proposal to community fences;
- c. Conduct expert consultations with national and international experts on human-elephant conflict management (for electric fences and bio fences); consult with communities regarding their willingness to participate (for electric fences and community electric fences);
- d. Propose adjustments as necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the mitigation measures under pilot implementation;
- e. The evaluation of pilot separation measures should involve the participation of relevant international experts.

Mission/Strategy 3.1.3: Support response to human-elephant conflict

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 23. Maintain the operation of rapid response teams							NGOs; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities; Local authorities at commune/district levels;	Operation of rapid response teams actively contributed to management of human-elephant conflicts where they are established
a. Establish rapid response teams in provinces where they have not yet established								Rapid response teams are established and frequently operated
b. Maintain the operation of rapid response teams		2024-2035	2024-2035	2025 - 2035	2023-2035			
c. Develop and pilot a model of coordinated rapid response teams in Dong Nai			2024-2026					The model of coordinated rapid response in Dong Nai is piloted, evaluated and considered to apply nationwide
Priority rate		****	****	****	****			

Technical recommendations:

- Define the criteria that justify the need of rapid response team establishment for addressing human-elephant conflict;
- Provinces that have not yet established such teams should study the operations, functions, and organizational structure of the rapid response teams already operating in Dong Nai and Dak Lak provinces;
- Develop proposals for establishing rapid response teams in provinces where they are needed and that meet the criteria defined in point (a);
- Provide training on safety principles and essential skills for responding to human-elephant conflict;
- Maintain the operation of rapid response teams based on the frequency and severity/duration of human-elephant conflict incidents.

Objective 3.2 Improve livelihoods and develop a mechanism to mitigate losses of related communities

Mission/Strategy 3.2.1: Develop mechanisms/policies to support compensation and mitigate losses caused by human-elephant conflict

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 24. Develop policies/mechanism to support local communities facing losses caused by human-elephant conflicts							NGOs; Related national agencies; Local communities;	A mechanism to support local communities facing losses caused by human-elephant conflicts regulated and applied nation-wide
a. Review and study actual implementation of current mechanism to support people facing losses caused by human-elephant conflicts (Dong Nai, Dak Lak, Nghe An provinces)		2022-2026	2022-2026		2022-2026			A reports reviewing the application of policy to support people facing losses caused by human-elephant conflicts in provinces (Dak Lak, Dong Nai, Nghe An)
b. Develop a mechanism to support people facing losses caused by human-elephant conflicts, which could be legally applied national-wide								A draft of regulated mechanism to support people facing losses caused by human-elephant conflicts to be submitted to relevant authorities;
Priority rate	****	****	****		****			

Mission/Strategy 3.2.2: Develop appropriate livelihoods for villagers/communities in human-elephant conflict areas

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 25. Develop and pilot livelihood models suitable for communities in human-elephant conflict areas							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities;	A livelihood model piloted, evaluated, and prepared for replication in other areas.
a. Search and pilot a model of livelihood development that is suitable with the existence of elephant populations	2024-2035		2024-2035	2025-2035	2024-2035	2026-2035		A new livelihood model introduced and tested with local communities.
b. Combine and/or develop ecotourism activities based on the existence of elephant populations								
Priority rate	****		****	****	****	****		

Objective 3.3

Raise awareness and promote behavior change among local communities regarding elephant conservation and human-elephant conflict

Mission/Strategy 3.3.1: Provide training and capacity building

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 26. Organise training courses on human-elephant conflict, with a focus on promoting human-elephant coexistence.							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities;	Awareness of human-elephant conflicts among relevant individuals and stakeholders is improved; appropriate knowledge and skills for conflict mitigation are provided;
a. Organize training for the general public.	2024-2035		2024-2035					1. Training workshops/courses conducted; 2. Necessary information on elephant conservation and human-elephant conflicts disseminated to targeted audiences.
b. Provide training for relevant human-elephant conflict response personnel (excluding rapid response teams.)		2024-2035		2025-2035				
c. Conduct training for local communities and forest owners.		2024-2035	2024-2035	2025-2035	2024-2035	2024-2035		
Priority rate	****	****	****	****	****	****		

Technical recommendations:

- Identify specific objectives for each workshop/training session and the training needs of the target audiences;
- Develop workshop/training content that aligns with the identified training needs and the specific sociocultural context of the location;
- Organize workshops/training sessions in a manner that maximizes the active participation of the local community and relevant stakeholders involved in elephant conservation efforts;
- Share communication messages or materials for potential adaptation and use in other locations.

Mission/Strategy 3.3.2: Communication and publication of materials

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 27. Arrange communication events and/or publish communication materials							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities; Communication experts;	Messages and precise knowledge on elephant conservation developed and distributed to the targeted audience
a. Organise communication activities to raise awareness of people and communities on human-elephant conflicts, coping with the conflicts	2024-2035	2023-2035				2023-2035		Relevant communities/people equipped with precise knowledge on elephant conservation, human-elephant conflicts and coping with the conflicts
b. Publish communication materials		2023-2035		2024-2035	2024-2035			Communication materials published and distributed to the targeted audience
c. Develop and execute communication strategies towards co-existence with elephants								Communication strategies on co-existence with elephants developed and implemented
Priority rate	****	****		****	****			

Technical recommendations:

- Clearly and accurately identify the target audience of communication efforts;
- Develop communication messages, content materials, and communication strategies that are tailored to the specific socio-cultural context of the local communities;
- Ensure that all communication and publishing activities comply with relevant regulations and current laws;
- Maximize the use of community-based communication systems (e.g. village/hamlet public announcement systems)

GOAL 4 Enhance research, enforcement, and management capacities among relevant stakeholders

Objective 4.1 Strengthen insitutional capacity and cooperation mechanisms in elephant conservation

Mission/Strategy 4.1.1: Enhance capacity for relevant officers

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 28. Improve the capacity of key stakeholders and individuals directly involved in elephant conservation							NGOs; Research institutions, universities; Local and international experts on elephants; Forest owners; Local communities.	Increased attention and commitment to elephant conservation; Personnels directly involved in elephant conservation are equipped with accurate knowledge and essential skills to address conservation-related challenges.
a. Raise awareness among key personnel about elephant conservation			2025-2027					Key personnels are updated on the status of elephant populations, elephant conservation issues, and human-elephant conflicts within their managing areas.
b. Train staff directly involved in implementing elephant conservation activities		2023-2035	2023-2035	2024-2035	2024-2035	2024-2035		Individuals directly implementing elephant conservation activities are trained in relevant competencies, such as communication, human-elephant conflict management and other essential skills.
c. Train collaborating personnel (e.g., forest owners, police, border guards, etc) on elephant conservation techniques and human-elephant conflict management			2025-2027	2024	2024-2035	2024-2035		Collaborating staff (e.g., forest owners, police, border guards, etc.) are provided with complete and accurate information on elephant conservation and human-elephant conflict management
Priority rate		****	****	****	****	****		



Solution/Action 28. Improve the capacity of key stakeholders and individuals directly involved in elephant conservation**Technical recommendations:**

- a. Conduct a training needs assessment to identify skill gaps and capacity weaknesses at the local level;
- b. Develop a tailored training plan and identify appropriate subject-matter experts;
- c. Organize exchange visits or training courses that address the specific needs and context of the local communities;
- d. Diversify information delivery methods to maintain participant engagement and avoid redundancy.

Mission/Strategy 4.1.2: Establish necessary cooperation/coordination mechanisms

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 29. Complete a collaboration mechanism between enforcement agencies (forest rangers, border guards, police, local authorities and forest owners)							Relevant enforcement agencies; Local authorities; Forest owners; Local communities.	A collaboration mechanism established, facilitating an effective implementation of elephant conservation
a. Develop collaboration agreement between related parties			2024-2035	2024-2035	2024-2035			A collaboration agreement signed between enforcement agencies related to elephant conservation
b. Collaborate to implement elephant conservation actions that requires participation of different agencies								Conservation activities that requires full participation of related enforcement agencies executed
Priority rate			***	***	***			

Technical recommendations:

- a. The agreement should ensure the prioritization of elephant conservation efforts and designate dedicated personnel responsible for this work within relevant authorities;
- b. Dedicated personnel within relevant authorities should be assigned to elephant conservation work for a sufficient period to accumulate experience and effectively utilize the information and knowledge acquired through training programs.

Mission/Strategy 4.1.3: Enhance capacity through professional forums/networks

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 30. Establish technical networks of researchers and enforcement personnel (organized and coordinated by the national level)							Relevant enforcement agencies; Local authorities; Forest owners; Local communities.	Technical networks are established, effectively supporting enforcement personnel in their implementation of elephant conservation
a. Set up networks of elephant conservation researchers and enforcement personnel	2024 -2035	2024 -2035	2024 -2035	2024 -2035	2024 -2035	2024 -2035		1. A network of elephant and elephant conservation researchers established; 2. A network of technical staff executing elephant conservation established;
b. Maintain the operation of the networks (experience and information sharing, meetings)								1. Members of the networks actively contribute to discussion, experience and information sharing; 2. The networks become an important source, providing knowledge and practical experience to elephant conservation in Viet Nam; 3. Organise regular offline meetings in provinces of elephant distribution;
Priority rate	***	***	***	***	***	***		

Technical recommendations:

- a. Develop an incentive mechanism to encourage participation in the networks;
- b. Ensure that the networks function as platforms for experience/information sharing, provide technical support and operate effectively in accordance with the intended purpose.

Mission/Strategy 4.1.4: Improve working conditions for local elephant conservation forces

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 31. Building capacity by improving working facilities for local elephant conservation staff in provinces							Relevant enforcement agencies; Local authorities; Forest owners; Local communities.	Elephant conservation staff in provinces work more effectively, being supplied full equipment and better working facilities
a. Supply equipment which are essential for the implementation of elephant conservation				2025-2035	2024-2035			Equipment essential for implementation of elephant conservation fully provided;
b. Construct working facilities						2024-2035		Working facilities (office, office equipment) established in Quang Nam Elephant and Elephant habitat Protected Areas
Priority rate				****	***	****		

Mission/Strategy 4.1.5: Enhance capacity through international cooperation

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 32. Look for financial support for elephant conservation activities							Relevant enforcement agencies; Local authorities; Forest owners; Local communities.	Some elephant conservation activities implemented with international financial support
	2024-2035			2024-2035	2024-2035			
Priority rate	****			****	****			

Objective 4.2 Advocate for the implementation of elephant conservation research programs

Mission/Strategy 4.2.1. Enhance national and local capacity for elephant conservation and development research

SOLUTION/ACTION	Implementing agencies and timeframe						Collaborating agencies	Expected Results
	National level & others	Dak Lak	Dong Nai	Ha Tinh	Nghe An	Quang Nam		
Solution/Action 33. Engage scientists, research institutes to actively participate in wild elephant conservation research and applications							Relevant enforcement agencies; Local authorities; Forest owners; Local communities.	Some in-depth researches on elephant and elephant conservation are implemented, contributing to elephant conservation in Viet Nam
Advocate for the participation of scientific institutions in practical elephant conservation initiatives		2024-2035						
Priority rate		**						

CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS



VISION

By 2050, ensure optimal welfare for elephants and promote the sustainable development of captive elephant populations in Viet Nam.



OVERALL GOALS BY 2035:

1. Enhance the welfare of captive elephants
2. Ensure the availability of infrastructure, equipment, and facilities necessary for the rescue, healthcare, and reproduction of elephants
3. Promote captive breeding towards the sustainable growth of captive elephants
4. Contribute to overall elephant conservation efforts

Enhance the welfare of captive elephants

Solution/Action	Timeframe												
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Solution/Action 1. Develop guidelines on welfare (relevant factors for welfare), serving as basis for the development of standard welfare of captive bred elephants													
Solution/Action 2. Undertake pilot implementation of the elephant welfare guidelines in Dak Lak province													
Solution/Action 3. Encourage the implementation of the elephant welfare guidelines as a regulation/standard for captive elephants, based on results of the pilot implementation of the guidelines													
Solution/Action 4. Execute regular health checks every 6 months for captive elephants in the Dak Lak province													
Solution/Action 5. Provide adhoc health care services for sick elephants in Dak Lak and other provinces													

**MISSION/
STRATEGY**

3

Conserve and develop captive bred elephant populations towards the purpose of conservation of wild elephants

Solution/Action	Timeframe												
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Solution/Action 11. Identify those female captive elephants that are able to reproduce in Dak Lak Province.													
Solution/Action 12. Organize an international workshop/ conference seeking advises from experts on setting up an elephant captive breeding program in Dak Lak													
Solution/Action 13. Undertake pilot initiatives of the captive breeding program on 5 elephant individuals													
Solution/Action 14. Research and take part in international and regional programs for elephant exchange/ lease in order to bring 4 female elephants of their best breeding age for reproduction to Dak Lak													
Solution/Action 15. Use captive elephants to collect data and rescue wild elephants													

CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS

MISSION/
STRATEGY

4

Improve capacity to care for elephants and elephant-friendly tourism

Solution/Action	Timeframe												
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Solution/Action 16. Annually send 5 staff and veterinarians abroad for training and workshops abroad on elephant veterinary, nutrition and reproductive health.													
Solution/Action 17. Annually organize 4 thematic workshops at 02 sites in Dak Lak province on elephant health care, such as nutrition, hygienic works.													
Solution/Action 18. Set up international study tour on elephant-friendly tourism models (i.e. Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, etc.)													
Solution/Action 19. Train staff on use of health care equipment (such as X-ray machine, ultrasound machine, examination equipment)													
Solution/Action 20. Rescue captive elephants within and outside Dak Lak province as requested (including individuals whose owners have refused to continue keeping them)													
Solution/Action 21. Establish a national-level mobile rapid response team tasked with rescuing and providing emergency veterinary care for captive elephants across the country													

Implementation Process of VECAP 2022

(Implementation – Monitoring – Evaluation – Adjustment)

The implementation of the aforementioned tasks will be periodically monitored and evaluated, with corresponding adaptive management adjustments as needed to ensure the effectiveness of the VECAP 2022 throughout its duration. Provinces and relevant stakeholders have agreed upon several key milestones in the implementation process as follows:

2025 -
2026

Completion of the first phase of monitoring programs.

2028 -
2029

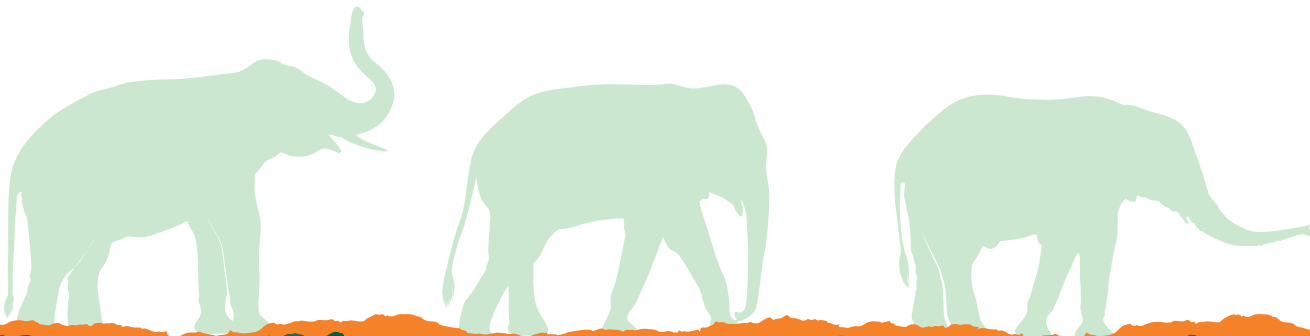
Review of implementation progress; consideration of the amendment or removal of certain activities.

2032

Second review and adjustment of the VECAP 2022 plan (if necessary).

2034 -
2035

Final evaluation of VECAP 2022 implementation. Propose the development of a new species conservation plan for the new phase (if needed).



PART IV

COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENT VECAP 2022

After a period of developing the Plan, with the special attention of the central government, the strong responsibility of the lead agency (the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry VNFOREST), the support of expert groups, NGOs, scientists, and the valuable contributions of local authorities, the Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan has been approved by the MARD. The People's Committee of Dak Lak Province hereby commits to making every effort to effectively implement elephant conservation activities in the province, contributing to the successful achievement of the objectives outlined in the VECAP 2022.



People's
Committee of
Dak Lak
Province

The issuance of the VECAP 2022 demonstrates the interest and collaboration of all stakeholders in elephant conservation. Dong Nai province is honored to participate and contribute to the development of this Plan. Dong Nai commits to implementing and coordinating with relevant parties to achieve the defined goals for elephant conservation within the province, thereby contributing to the successful execution of the Elephant Conservation Action Plan in Viet Nam.

People's
Committee of
Dong Nai
Province



Commitment to elephant protection
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The Quang Nam Elephant Species and Habitat Conservation Area is honored and proud to participate in the implementation of the VECAP 2022. We commit to executing the plan fully, rigorously, and responsibly to maintain and develop the wild elephant population and their habitat in Quang Nam. Our goal is to transform the human-elephant relationship from conflict to harmonious coexistence.



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People's Committee of Quang Nam Province

People's Committee of Ha Tinh Province

People's Committee of Nghe An Province

We commit to fully, seriously, and responsibly implement the plan to maintain and sustainably develop the wild elephant population and their habitat in Ha Tinh. Concurrently, we will effectively coordinate with relevant stakeholders to ensure successful elephant conservation efforts within Ha Tinh province.



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The Viet Nam Elephant Conservation Action Plan to 2035, Vision 2050, will create opportunities for the sustainable development of wild elephant populations in Viet Nam. Provided with sufficient and timely funding, we commit to fully, seriously, and responsibly implement this plan to maintain and sustainably develop the wild elephant populations in Nghe An. At the same time, we will cooperate and coordinate closely with organizations and relevant parties to effectively carry out elephant conservation efforts within Nghe An province.



Captive elephants in Yokdon National Park © Animals Asia



NGO Sector:

Humane Society International (HSI) congratulates the government of Viet Nam for this laudable effort and its dedication to protecting Asian elephants now and into the future, and we stand ready to continue to assist in the implementation of the National Elephant Conservation Action Plan, working toward peaceful coexistence with Viet Nam's wild elephant populations.

Jeffrey Flocken
Humane Society International

Scientific Community:

We are honored to be part of the HSI effort and have had the privilege of collaborating with the HSI Viet Nam team to assist the Vietnamese government in developing a science-based VECAP, with comprehensive consultation from various stakeholders. Furthermore, as the Chairman of the IUCN SSC AsESG Viet Nam Working Group, I express my sincere interest and commitment to help implementing the newly approved VECAP in the near future.

Dr. Prithviraj Fernando
Chairman of CCR, Sri Lanka
Member of IUCN SSC AsESG;
Lead Technical Support for Viet Nam Working Group

Printed in 300 copies, size 21 × 29.7 cm, at AK STAR Co., Ltd.
Printed under Publishing License No. 2705/QĐ-NXBTN dated November 13, 2024.
ISBN: 978-604-41-5345-2.
Confirmation No: 4378-2024/CXBIPH/25-141/TN.
Published and deposited in the fourth quarter of 2024.
Design & Creative: akstarstudio.com





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