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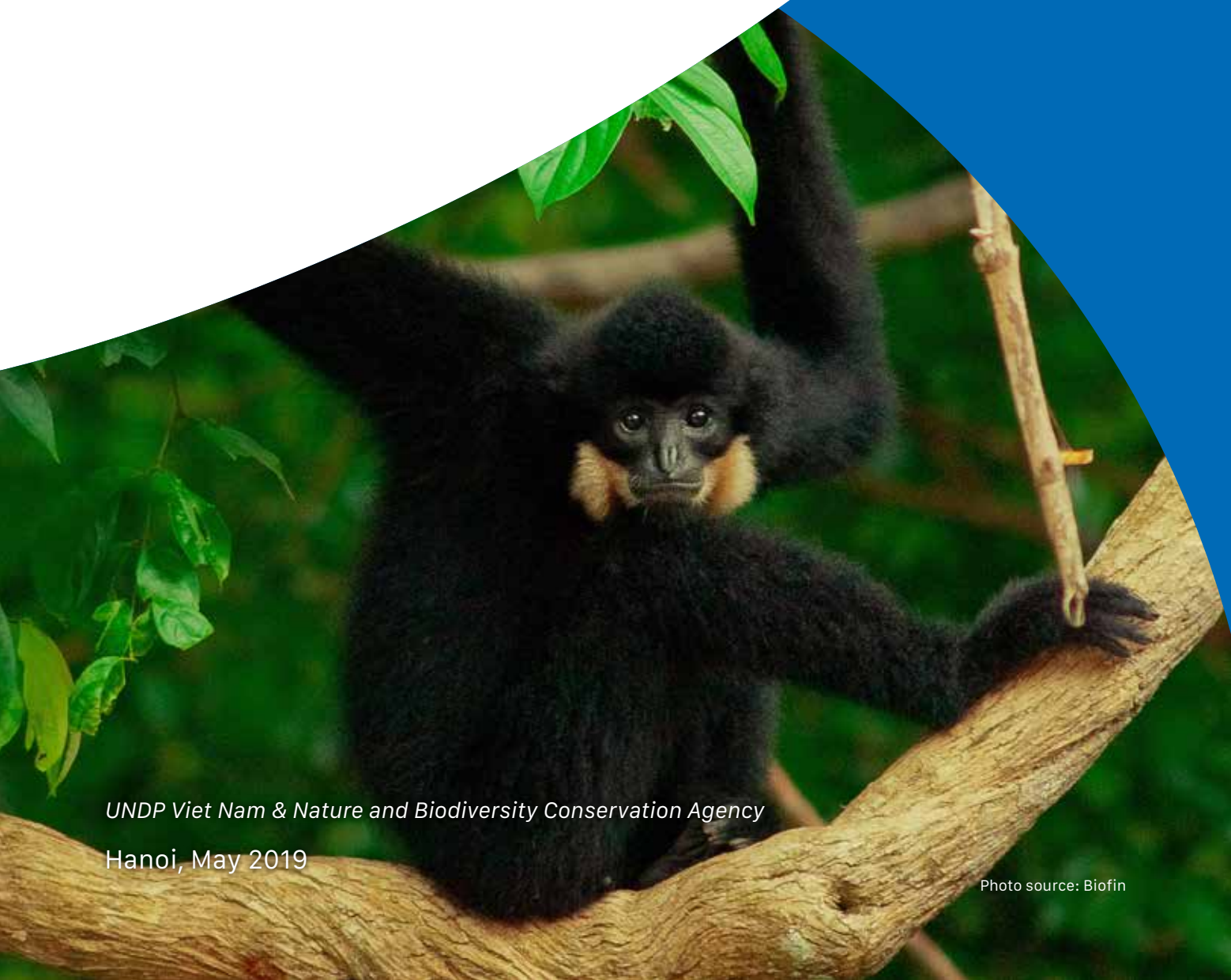
Financial Needs Assessment

Policy Brief



UNDP Viet Nam & Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency

Hanoi, May 2019

Photo source: Biofin

KEY MESSAGES

The FNA assessed the finance needs for the optimal management of biodiversity in Viet Nam to 2030 against 2 scenarios: (i) Finance needs for optimal biodiversity management in Viet Nam to 2030 based on the PA network established prior to 2018; and (ii) Finance needs for optimal biodiversity management in Viet Nam to 2030 based on an annually expanding PA network.

The financial needs and gaps calculated in the FNA report can serve as the suggested numbers for policy makers in each sector to find feasible solutions for capital mobilization.

The FNA concludes that under both scenarios analysed, the gap between forecasted actual financing allocated and the finance needs for optimal management of biodiversity in Viet Nam will remain in the short, medium, and long-term. Accordingly, financing will remain insufficient to achieve the targets adopted in the VN NBS, unless new financing can be allocated.

Disclaimer: *This policy brief was prepared based on the Biodiversity Policy and Institutional Review and Biodiversity Expenditure Review compiled by independent consultants for the BIOFIN project in Viet Nam. The opinions expressed herein are those of the report's authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of United Nations Development Programme or Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA).*

Photo source: Cuc Phuong National Park

INTRODUCTION TO THE FNA

The Viet Nam **Financial Needs Assessment** (FNA) was undertaken as part of the global Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) project, managed by UNDP in partnership with the European Commission and the governments of Germany, Switzerland, Norway, and Flanders. The overall goal of BIOFIN is to explore national- and subnational-level biodiversity expenditures by different government organizations, agencies, ministries, NGOs, and private sector actors, providing inputs for the better implementation of actions to reach national biodiversity targets both technically and financially.

The FNA aims to estimate the financial needs to fulfil all biodiversity conservation activities as outlined in the *Viet Nam National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, Vision to 2030* (VN NBS). It was prepared with the guidance of the BIOFIN Workbook (2016) using the results of the 2018 Biodiversity Finance Policy and Institutional Review (PIR) and Biodiversity Expenditure Review (BER), specifically with regards to Viet Nam's standards of budget expenditure.

In addition, the FNA conducted extensive consultations with experts to clarify which important sub-strategies could be quantified, as well as to define a feasible Viet Nam-specific FNA framework. Based on discussions with the BER expert, the methodology of unit costs has been adjusted and customized to fit within the Vietnamese context.

Acronyms

BC	Biodiversity Corridor
BER	Biodiversity Expenditure Review
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
FNA	Financial Needs Assessment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOV	Government of Viet Nam
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPA	Marine Protected Area
PA	Protected Area
PIR	Policy and Institutional Review
TPA	Terrestrial Protected Area
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	US dollar (currency)
VN NBS	Viet Nam National Biodiversity Strategy
VND	Vietnamese dong (currency)
WPA	Wetland Protected Area

ABOUT THE FINANCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

National Context

Viet Nam is ranked 16th among the Earth's most biodiverse countries and is one of the ten richest centres of biodiversity in the world. It is characterized by the occurrence of an abundance of ecosystems, including terrestrial forests, wetlands, and marine ecosystems, a high number of species that includes 11,458 fauna and 21,017 flora species, and varied and unique genetic resources.

Recognizing the importance of biodiversity, the Government of Viet Nam (GOV) has made great efforts towards its conservation, protection, and strengthening. To date, some achievements towards biodiversity conservation have been recorded, but many barriers remain to achieving notable and sustainable progress. One significant barrier is the lack of sufficient financial resources. While other financial resources are also available beyond state support, the overall amount available remains insufficient for the full, efficient, and effective implementation of biodiversity conservation targets agreed to in the VN NBS.

Purpose and Objectives

The Financial Needs Assessment under BIOFIN is the report estimating the anticipated financial needs to implement the VN NBS, which formulates the national policy on biodiversity conservation including viewpoints, a vision, an overall target, specific targets, major tasks, priority programmes, and institutional implementation arrangements.

Detailed analysis of the VN NBS shows that not all objectives are sufficiently quantified to allow for their costing. After consultations, it was decided to focus the Viet Nam FNA report on estimating the finances needed to maintain and expand the country's system of Protected Areas (PA), including terrestrial PAs (TPA), marine PAs (MPA), and wetland PAs (WPA).

The specific targets of the VN NBS are further elaborated in a number of supportive documents, most notable among which for the purposes of the FNA are:

- Decision 45/QD-TTg, dated 08 January 2014, on approval for the *Master Plan of Nation-Wide Biodiversity Conservation by 2020*, considered the most comprehensive legal document about the network of TPAs and WPAs up to the start of the BIOFIN project in Viet Nam.
- Decision 742/QD-TTg, dated 26 May 2010, approving the *Plan on the System of Viet Nam's Marine Conservation Zones Through 2020*, which includes a detailed list of existing and planned MPAs.

Following expert consultations, the FNA was narrowed to address feasible targets, i.e. targets with clearly quantified objectives to be achieved, and for which sufficient and reliable data was available, in order to allow for the calculation of financial needs to achieve the quantified objectives as laid out below:

1. By 2030, terrestrial PAs will account for 2,554,817.87 ha (7.7%) of Viet Nam's land area.
2. By 2030, wetland PAs[1] will account for 336,827.6 ha (1%) of Viet Nam's land area.
3. By 2025, marine PAs will account for 270,271 ha (0.24%) of the sea area, to be increased to 290,271 ha (0.26%) by 2030.

Approach

The Viet Nam FNA selected a **bottom- up approach** to cost the financial needs for achieving the quantitative targets defined above. First, the direct financial needs of the Viet Nam PA system—terrestrial, wetland, and marine—were estimated. Subsequently, the costs for the administration and management of biodiversity conservation at the provincial and central levels were estimated, using an incremental approach to costed biodiversity expenditures as presented in the BER report. Finally, both cost categories were summed to obtain an assessment of the total financial needs for biodiversity conservation in Viet Nam based on the targets formulated in the VN NBS.

Scenario Analysis

The FNA assessed the financial needs for the optimal management of the Viet Nam PA network against two scenarios:

1. Scenario 1 is "**lower-optimum**" scenario, estimating financing needs for optimal biodiversity management only for PAs existing in 2018, equal to 7.5% of the country's surface area. It was adopted as the minimum future annual financial investment required if, for any reason, the anticipated financing related to the expansion of the PA network will not become available.
2. Scenario 2 is the "**optimum**" scenario, presenting the financing needed to cover all costs related to optimal management of maintaining the 2018 PA network, with the addition of newly-established PAs as planned to be set up in the medium term (2020-2025) and in the long term (2030).

As such, the two scenarios separately estimate (i) the minimum financial resources needed for the optimal management of the 2018 established PA network, and (ii) the maximum financial resources needed for the optimal management of the Viet Nam PA system expanded in line with adopted legislation.

The total amount of financing needed under each scenario has been calculated based on the unit-cost-per-hectare obtained from a balanced selection of sample PAs and upscaled for the total area in hectares, adjusted in accordance with anticipated inflation rates.

1 Although WPAs were not specifically listed as a target in the VN NBS, considering the important role of wetlands for the conservation of biodiversity as well as for socio-economic development, as well as the GOV's attention towards expanding the WPA network, it was decided to add the quantified WPA target to the FNA following discussions with MONRE.

Photo source: Biofin

RESULTS OF THE FINANCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The FNA's scenario 1 assessed the financial resources needed to maintain Viet Nam's PA system as existing in 2018 to ensure sufficient resources for optimal biodiversity management.

Table 1 Scenario 1: Financial needs to 2030 for optimal management in Viet Nam's 2018 existing PA network

	2018	2019	2020	2025	2030
Terrestrial PAs	6,835,545	7,108,966	7,393,325	8,995,110	10,943,927
Marine PAs	1,039,018	1,080,579	1,123,802	1,367,277	1,663,502
Wetland PAs	88,399	91,935	95,612	116,327	141,530
Total	**7,962,962 (346,22)**	**8,281,480 (360,06)**	**8,612,740 (374,47)**	**10,478,715 (438,07)**	**12,748,958 (554,3)**

Unit: million VND (million USD)

Table 1 shows that, under the scenario 1:

- **Total financial resources needed** for maintaining Viet Nam's PA system are estimated at **VND 7,963 billion** (USD 346.2 million) in 2018, gradually increasing to **VND 12,749 billion** (USD 554.3 million) in 2030, in line with an expected annual inflation rate of 4% per year.
- The largest percentage of financial resources for optimal biodiversity management is needed in existing terrestrial PAs (86%), followed by marine PAs (13%) and wetland PAs (1%).

Table 2 Scenario 2: Financial needs to 2030 for optimal management in Vietnam's expanding PA-network

	2018	2019	2020	2025	2030
Terrestrial PAs	6, 835, 545	7,108,966	7,393,325	11,075,188	12,338,435
Marine PAs	1,039,018	1,080,579	3,101,662	1,897,920	2,475,249
Wetland PAs	88,399	91,935	95,612	1,521,654	1,880,426
Total	**7,962,962 (346,22)**	**8,281,480 (360,06)**	**10,590,599 (374,47)**	**14,494,762 (630,21)**	**16,694,110 (725,83)**

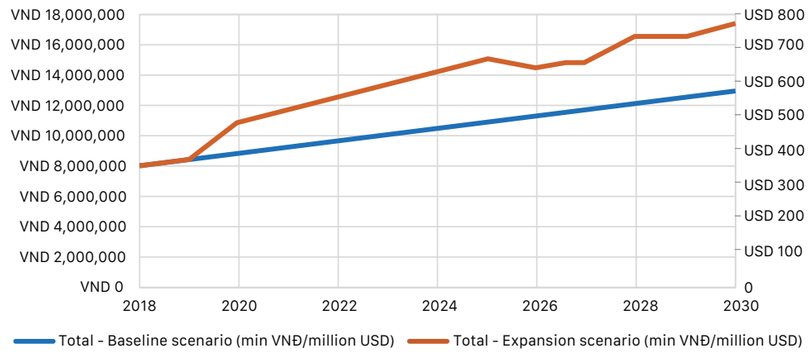
Unit: million VND (million USD)

Table 2 shows that, under the scenario 2:

- By 2030, overall financial needs for optimal biodiversity conservation management in Viet Nam's PA network will move from **VND 7,963 billion** (USD 346.2 million) in 2018, and gradually increased to **VND 16,694 billion** (USD 725.83 million) in 2030, in line with an expected annual inflation rate of 4% per year.
- The largest percentage of financial resources for optimal biodiversity management is needed for terrestrial PAs (76%), followed by marine PAs (15%) and wetland PAs (9%).

Comparing the financial needs to ensure optimal biodiversity conservation management in the 2018 existing PA network until 2030 (Scenario 1), with the financial needs for optimal management in the expanding PA network (Scenario 2) shows that between 2020 and 2030, annually **on average about an additional VND 3,171 billion** (USD 137.9 million) is needed, varying from about VND 2,170 billion (USD 94.4 million) in 2020 to about VND 4,016 billion (USD 174.6 million) in 2025, which is the result of the large area of land planned to be gazetted as new PAs during this period (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1 Annual financial needs for optimal PA management under two development scenarios



The finance needed to ensure optimal biodiversity conservation of the expanding PA network to 2030 (Scenario 2) exceeds the finance needs for optimal management in the 2018 existing PA network (Scenario 1), in total by about VND 34,877 billion (USD 1,516 million). As shown in Figure 1, the difference in finance needs between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 is in response to the annual differences in the surface area of the newly gazetted PAs under Scenario 2, accounting for varying finance needs, specifically for one-time investments in infrastructure and facilities.

Total Estimated Financial Needs

To obtain a total estimate for the financial needs to fulfil all biodiversity conservation activities and achieve the targets as outlined in the VN NBS, the estimated financing needed to ensure optimal biodiversity conservation management in Viet Nam's PA system is summed with the estimated needs at the central and provincial levels.

In line with the adopted approach, the **total financial needs** are calculated for the two scenarios identified above.

The total financial needs in **scenario 1** increase gradually through the years to 2030, the result of inflation correction being applied to the estimated financial needs for optimal biodiversity management for existing PAs and the incremental growth of the financial needs for biodiversity management at the central and provincial level in accordance with expected GDP growth rates and inflation correction. As a result, without new PAs being gazetted, the total financial needs increase from about VND 8,717 billion (USD 379.0 million) in 2018 to about VND 14 998 billion (USD 651.66 million) in 2030 (Table 20; Figure 7, Section 3.3.3).

In **scenario 2**, the financial needs for optimal biodiversity conservation in Viet Nam, in the short term, are identifical to scenario one, as the FNA assumes that up to 2020 no new PAs will be gazetted. Subsequently, from 2021, the FNA assumes a gradual annual gazetting of new PAs in line with adopted government policies. With the majority of planned new PAs scheduled for gazetting between 2020 and 2025 (in total 568,466 ha, or 82% of all new PAs), the financial needs are increased sharply, up to about 15,930 billion (USD 692.6 million) in 2025. After 2025, the financial needs for optimal biodiversity management are envisioned to increase further, to about VND 18,933 billion (USD 823.2 million) in 2030, due to the envisioned further expansion of the PA network by 128,710 ha, or 18% of all new PAs gazetted since 2018, as well as increasing financial needs to cover annual recurring costs for operations and biodiversity conservation activities in the expanding network of PAs.

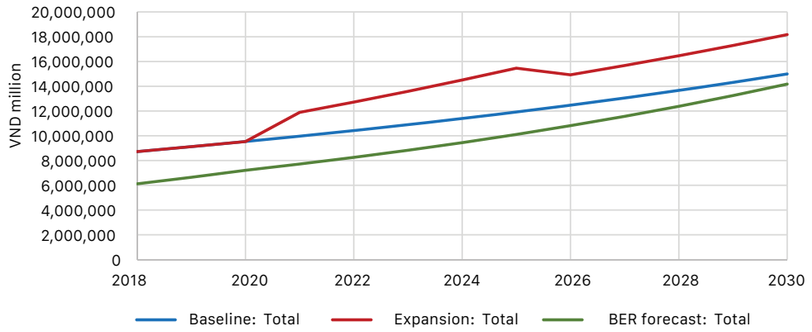
Based on the assumed contribution rates of different sectors to biodiversity finance in Viet Nam (Table 6, section 2.4), inferred from the observations on trends as described in the BER report, the FNA calculated the anticipated contributions to biodiversity conservation finance from the individual sectors up to 2030 in line with the two scenarios formulated (Table 21; Figure 8, Section 3.3.4). The estimated contributions by the different sectors may support policy makers to consider adopting appropriate measures to ensure sufficient allocation of anticipated financial means for biodiversity conservation in Viet Nam.

FINANCIAL GAPS

Total Financial Gaps

Accounting for the economic analyses of HSBC (2012), JCER (2017), and the World Bank (2018) presenting the figures forecasting the average GDP growth rates of Viet Nam for the period 2018-2030, in the BER report the future biodiversity expenditure of Viet Nam was estimated based on actual financing assessed for the period 2011-2015 (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2 Financial gaps between BER, baseline scenario, and PA expansion scenario



Comparing the forecasted financial needs for optimal management of Viet Nam's existing PA network under the **scenario 1** with the anticipated financial means allocated annually up to 2030 as estimated in the BER report, it is noted that the observed gap in 2018 of about VND 2,600 billion (USD 113.06 million) up to 2030 gradually decreases to about VND 1,809 billion (USD 78.66 million) and to about VND 818 billion (USD 35.57 million) in 2030. The decrease of the gap over time may be the result of increasing budgets being allocated to the existing PAs to achieve their biodiversity conservation targets, aligned with maintaining the effective general biodiversity management activities, at the central and provincial level. The total biodiversity finance gap for the period 2018-2030 under Scenario 1 is estimated being VND 23,939 billion (USD 1,041 million).

Under the **scenario 2**, the annual finance gap in 2018 and 2019 is equal to that in Scenario 1, as no new PAs are gazetted in these years. Subsequently, due to the significant expansion of the PA network in the period 2020-2025, the annual biodiversity finance gap to achieve optimal biodiversity management in Viet Nam more than doubles, from about VND 2,476 billion (USD 107.6 million) in 2019, to approximately VND 5,825 billion (USD 253.3 million) in 2025. This is a consequence of the envisioned expansion of the PA network during this period. Between 2025 and 2030, the PA system further expands, but less rapidly, and as such, the annual finance gap to 2030 slightly reduces to about VND 4,763 billion (USD 207.1 million). The total biodiversity finance gap for the period 2018-2030 under scenario 2 is estimated as VND 58,8161 billion (USD 2,557 million).

The gap between estimated finance needs for optimal biodiversity management in Viet Nam under both scenarios, and estimated future finance allocations for biodiversity management, is largely explained by the minimal to no financing currently in practice specifically allocated to biodiversity conservation measures in PAs; currently financing is only provided to PAs in support of covering cost categories for salaries and operational costs. The FNA strived to obtain realistic quantified estimates for all cost categories, even if at present PAs do not receive financing for such costs.

Photo source: Shutterstock

Financial Gaps for PA Financing

Considering the attention paid in the VN NBS on achieving the conservation of naturally important ecosystems as well as endangered, rare and previous species, specifically through improving the quality and increase in the area of land under formal protection, the FNA also paid specific attention to estimating the annual finance needed for optimal biodiversity management in the Viet Nam's existing and planned PA network.

Quantitative data on actual annual financing allocated to Viet Nam's PAs was estimated as part of the Viet Nam BER process. This was based on data of the average expenditure per hectare calculated from a sample set of 30 PAs having provided quantitative data on annual financing received between 2011 and 2015.

The BER report only projected the future total annual finance needs for biodiversity conservation in Viet Nam, without specific considerations for the finance needs for maintaining the country's PA system either existing in 2015 or its planned expansion. Therefore, to obtain a quantified estimate for the anticipated future biodiversity expenditure in support of Viet Nam's PA system under the BER's "business-as-usual" scenario, the FNA extrapolated the actual annual finance allocated to PAs in 2015 towards 2030, using the forecasted inflation rate and GDP growth rate, mimicking the forecasting approach of the BER.

The FNA identified the future persistence of a large gap between finance needs for optimal biodiversity conservation in Viet Nam's PAs and forecasted actual finance allocations to the PA network under both scenarios. This is caused by the fact that 2011-2015 finance allocations largely covered only costs for salaries and operation & maintenance, with very limited to no budget allocated for recurring biodiversity conservation costs, while the FNA's assessment of finance needs for optimal management specifically included estimates for all cost categories.

Figure 3 Finance gaps between forecasted actual and optimal PA finance under two scenarios

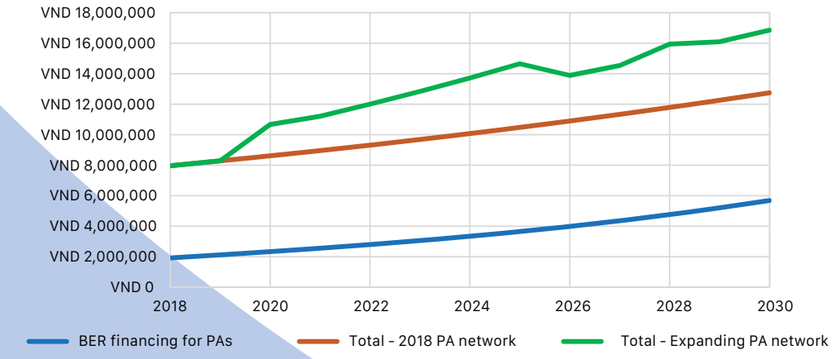


Photo source: Cuc Phuong National Park

Despite the anticipated trend of increase in future finance allocations to the PA system, as estimated from BER data provided, **big gaps will persist in PA financing in all three periods**: short term 2018-2019, medium-term 2020-2025, and long term 2026-2030.

Therefore, to achieve the specific targets of the VN NBS on PAs, urgent action is needed in public sector decision making on considerations to strengthen public finance allocations to the country's PAs, specifically increasing financing of biodiversity conservation related costs. Thought should be given to diversify the provision of financial support to PAs, by adopting policies and incentives in support of alternative sources and mechanisms of finance, including from social and private sector players, being promoted in providing support to PAs in Viet Nam.

Financial Needs for Biodiversity Corridors

In addition to the List of PAs for gazetting by 2020 and 2030, Decision 45/QD-TTg, dated 8 January 2014 also stipulates specific objectives regarding the establishment of Biodiversity Corridors (BCs):

- By 2020: Establishing and putting into operation 4 Biodiversity Corridors in the Northeast (1) and South Central (3) regions with a total area of about 120,000 ha to connect habitats and enhance the capacity to respond to climate change of the ecosystems and species.
- By 2030: Continuing to establish and put into operation the protected areas, biodiversity conservation facilities and Biodiversity Corridors that have been proposed.

While by 2018 no BCs were yet formally established, and no financing was yet allocated, the FNA conducted an initial assessment of the financial needs for optimal biodiversity management in BCs, using available information and biodiversity expert opinions, serving as reference information for government decision makers.

Accordingly, to estimate finance needs for establishing the Biodiversity Corridors planned under Decision 45/2014/QD-TTg, the FNA adopted the percentages and unit-cost-per-ha values from the BCC project. Assuming (i) an annual cumulative expansion of area under recurrent patrolling; (ii) one-time annual investments in forest restoration and forest enrichment to 2020 and 2030, respectively, and; (iii) incorporating the estimated annual inflation rate of 4%, an initial estimate of the finance needs for biodiversity management in Biodiversity Corridors planned under Decision 45/2014/QD-TTg is as follows:

Table 3 Finance Needs of Biodiversity Corridors

Finance Needs (USD)	2019	2020	2025	2030	Total (2018-2030)
BC patrolling (recurrent)	21,864	45,477	158,433	318,198	1,867,428
BC forest restoration (one-time investment)	888,710	924,258	838,178	1,019,771	10,415,076
BC Forest enrichment (one-time investment)	101,787	105,859	96,000	116,798	1,192,880
Total Annual Finance Needs	**1,012,361**	**1,075,594**	**1,092,610**	**1,454,768**	**13,475,384**

Unit: million VND

Photo source: Biofin

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The FNA report was created in close relationship with the BER report. The results of financial needs and gaps are calculated objectively from investigation and data collection. The results are presented in the two scenarios in which the scenario 1 is focussed on the existing PAs only, while scenario 2 has taken into account the future establishment of planned PAs. In the short term, the financial needs considered most necessary are those needs of the existing PAs. In the medium and long term, the two scenarios provide suggestions of the maximum and minimum financial needs of the biodiversity targets. Based on the range of the financial needs and gaps, finance plans and financial mechanisms were studied to define the most feasible solution to meet PA requirements in the future.

Studying all objectives of the VN NBS, only some objectives are quantified, such as the target of 9% of territory for terrestrial biodiversity conservation or 0.24% of surface density for marine conservation. These objectives are detailed with the framework of developing the PA system based on the statistics of Decision 45/QD-TTg (2014). The other unquantified objectives are assumed to remain as they are in the present time by the assigned governmental organizations.

The **key recommendations** from the FNA can be summed up as follows:

1. An in-depth follow-up analysis will be required, which will need to include data collection from a larger set sample of PA's, as well as a critical review of the quantified cost categories by independent experts. Attention should be specifically paid to analysing options that reduce the high costs for one-time investment in infrastructure and facilities of new PA's.
2. As the FNA was conducted as a financial analysis, no attention was paid to the links between financing needs and the positive impacts on biodiversity. Therefore, it is recommended that further research is conducted of the links between biological financing and on-the-ground conversation, in PA's and beyond, to incorporate efficiency and effectiveness into the FNA.
3. It is anticipated that state budget is insufficient to increase biodiversity financing with such amounts as estimated by the FNA, working towards closing the estimated gap. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to strengthen currently available finance instruments and introduce appropriate alternative effective finance instruments. This analysis will be the topic of the Biodiversity Finance Plan prepared under the BIOFIN-Viet Nam project.

The Biodiversity Finance Plan, in the next step of the project, can be based on the conclusions in the FNA report. Particularly:

1. In the short term (2018-2020), the "lower optimal" scenario (Scenario 1) and the optimal scenario (Scenario 2) are mainly focused on the maintenance and development of the existing PA network, which includes the financial needs of the existing PAs and the necessary administration costs at the central and provincial levels. Yet, the comparative analysis of the financial means expected to be allocated annually up to 2030 as estimated under Scenario 2 shows that between 2020 and 2025 the annual biodiversity finance gap more than doubles, from about VND 2,476 billion (USD 107.6 million) in 2019 to about VND 5,825 billion (USD 253.3 million) in 2025, a consequence of the envisioned significant expansion of the PA network by almost 570,000 hectares. Therefore, **the financial mechanisms should focus on the transformation of the national budget process**, with higher expected distribution rates for biodiversity activities. The other mechanisms may come from the social and private sectors, with some more expected contributions in enhancing community awareness or through pricing mechanisms.

2. The financial gaps in the medium and long term are more realistic with the optimal scenario when the plan of establishing new PAs is completed, as addressed in the Decision 45/QD-TTg (2014). **The financial gaps are high due to the need for initial investment in the infrastructure of new PAs**. Subsequently, while between 2025 and 2030 the PA system is planned to be further expanded by almost 130,000 hectares, and accordingly the financial needs for optimal biodiversity management continues to increase annually, there is a reduction for one-time investment in infrastructure for the new PAs, which causes the finance gap in 2030 to slightly decrease to about VND 4,763 billion (USD 207.1 million), compared to 2025.

3. When financial mechanisms are studied in order to mobilize capital for the optimal scenario, the financial needs for infrastructure of the new PAs will be a priority issue. Detailed infrastructure needs may be calculated for each type of PA in a specific region. Therefore, **a detailed timeline depends on a detailed master plan** in which the central biodiversity agencies and the provinces should study the prioritized list of new PAs constructed each year. From there, the financial needs and gaps calculated in the FNA report can be the suggested numbers for policy makers in each sector to find feasible solutions for capital mobilization.

In summary, the FNA concludes that under both scenarios analyzed, the gap in between forecasted actual financing allocated and the finance needs for optimal management of biodiversity in Viet Nam will remain in the short, medium, and long-term. Accordingly, financing will remain insufficient to achieve the targets adopted in the Viet Nam NBS.

Consequently, if additional financing cannot be made available through strengthening public, social and/or private sector finance mechanisms, and the volume of future financing for biodiversity continues to be comparable with the present-day practice as analyzed in the BER report, corrected for inflation and GDP growth, biodiversity in Viet Nam will continue to be under significant threat. The significant gap estimated in the FNA between actual anticipated financing allocated in support of biodiversity conservation and the finance needs for optimal biodiversity management will hamper the ability to properly address the root causes of biodiversity degradation and loss resulting directly in negative impacts on biodiversity.

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