



# ICM Solutions

## Coastal Tourism in Danang, Vietnam: Promoting a Win-Win Situation for Achieving Conservation, Economic, and Social Goals

- The Danang Master Plan Towards 2030 with Vision to 2050 details measures to transform the city into a major tourism hub.
- The Master Plan and the coastal use zoning plan designated specific areas for tourism development, necessitating the relocation of residents and noncompatible activities from the area. This was successfully achieved through a negotiation and compensation process led by the City Government.
- Resettlement, livelihood assistance, and skills development programs provided to the fishing communities and coastal residents enabled their transition to other livelihoods. Social benefits generated from tourism development included improvements in the people's income and improved access to education and health services. This raised the standard of living of the communities and helped to reduce their dependence on the coastal resources for livelihoods.



# Context

The districts of Ngu Hanh Son and Son Tra in Danang, Vietnam, are endowed with rich coastal and marine resources that offer huge tourism potential. The rapid growth of coastal tourism along the coasts of these districts resulted in increased solid waste generation, sewage discharges and beach erosion. Public security at swimming beaches and seafood safety were also issues of high concern.

Aside from unregulated tourism activities, both districts were also used for maritime transport and port operation, fishing and aquaculture, coastal industry and infrastructure, as well as residential development. These activities put additional pressures on the environment and contributed to the degradation of habitats and resources in the two areas. Lack of integrated planning compounded the problems. The limited participation of stakeholders in the consultation process for the implementation of land use and development plans of the City made it difficult to implement regulated and permitted activities in designated areas, resulting in conflicting uses.

In addition, the management of important coastal ecosystems, such as coral reefs and sea grass beds that are present in Son Tra Peninsula were not mentioned in the master plan for socioeconomic development of the City. There was also lack of multidisciplinary approach in identifying appropriate management strategies, thus the pressure on the use of space and resources in the coastal areas constantly arose, leading to habitat degradation, loss of landscape, and loss of livelihood among the coastal communities.

In 2000, Danang developed and implemented the National ICM Demonstration Site Project. One of the key outputs of the project was the coastal use zoning plan, which was approved by the People's Committee on 10 October 2005 through Decision No. 7825/QDUB.

## Tourism facts in Danang

- Tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2015 showed a 17.3% increase compared to the same period in 2014, according to the Department of Culture, Sport, and Tourism.
- An increase of 14.7% and 18.9% were recorded for foreign and domestic holiday-makers, respectively, as compared to the same period in 2014.
- Revenue from tourism also rose 30.9% to VND 2.62 trillion (US\$ 123 million).
- The city ranked sixth in the list of the world's 10 most improved cities that tourists should visit in 2015 published by the website The Richest.
- Trip Advisor rated Danang as the World's Top Traveler's Choice Destination on the Rise in 2015

Source: "Danang records strong increase in tourist arrivals." Vietnam Tourism. March 30, 2015. <http://www.vietnamtourism.com/en/index.php/news/items/9155>

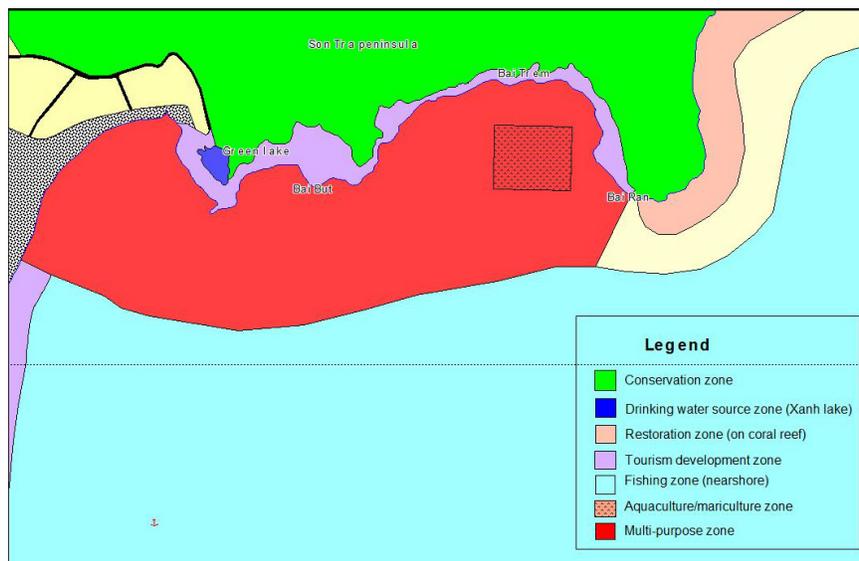


Figure 1. Multiple use zones in South Son Tra.

Integrated planning, as espoused by ICM, and applied in the development of the coastal use zoning plan of Danang, and its subsequent mainstreaming into the socioeconomic development plan of the City helped address governance issues and management concerns. It was instrumental to the effective implementation of the policies of the city on tourism development. Some of the useful approaches undertaken by the City in developing and implementing its tourism plan are enumerated below.

***Promote a participatory and multidisciplinary approach in the development and implementation of strategies and plans***

A participatory and multidisciplinary approach was adopted in the development and implementation of plans and programs of the City Government. In the development and implementation of the strategies and plans of the City Government, a steering committee was established comprising of representatives from the relevant departments and the local units as members and the People's Committee as chair. The steering committee provided policy guidance and oversaw integration and coordination of the implementation of activities with the involvement of all the stakeholders. This ensured mainstreaming of sectoral interests with the priorities of the City Government for sustainable coastal development.

***Implement the coastal use zoning plan in line with the planning and investment priorities of the City Government for tourism development***

The coastal use zoning plan for Danang City was developed with the objective of enhancing the spatial planning of the city, thus resolving use conflicts and promoting the rational use of the coastal areas and resources. The implementation of the tourism development zone is guided by the following policies ([www.danangcoastalink.org.vn](http://www.danangcoastalink.org.vn)):

- the carrying capacity of the coastal areas;
- the protection and conservation of landscapes and ecological values of the coasts;
- the prohibition of activities that can disrupt the stability of the coast and cause risk of erosion, flooding, and groundwater degradation;
- limited and controlled development in high-risk areas; and
- facilitating/maintaining access by the local communities to the beaches.

**Prohibited/restricted uses of beaches in Danang:**

- No alterations to beaches adjacent to conservation or low intensity use zones, unless the objective of the activity is to preserve or enhance the areas as a natural habitat for native plants and wildlife
- No unplanned/unregulated shelters and restaurants to cater for tourist needs
- No construction of new structures other than access ways, walkways, and beach facilities in the setback zone
- No mining, filling, removing or grading on beaches, dunes and undeveloped barrier beaches, unless the primary purpose of alteration is to preserve or enhance the wetland as a conservation area or natural buffer against storms
- No removal of beach materials such as sand, gravel, etc., for construction
- No disposal/burial of solid waste; discharge of wastewater

### ***Issue supporting legislations for the protection of the coastal and marine resources***

In order to protect and sustain coastal habitats, including coral reefs stretching from Hon Chao to South Hai Van and Son Tra Peninsula, the City issued new legislation covering:

- fisheries and protection of coastal aquatic resources, especially those that affect the reproduction and growth of marine species;
- the management of fishing and aquaculture in inland waters; and
- the management of related business and service activities with regard to protection of environment and preservation of landscape along the beaches ([www.danang.gov.vn](http://www.danang.gov.vn)).

To further ensure protection and conservation of resources, key decisions and regulatory issuances were issued as follows: (1) Decision No. 06/2005/QD-UB, which regulates organized fishing; (2) Directive No. 08/CT-UBND, which prohibits the use of rakes in fishing and other illegal fishing activities in Danang City's coastal area; and (3) Decision No. 8329/QD-UBND, which seeks to develop and protect the City's aquatic resources beginning 2010 and onward to 2020.

The City has also issued legal documents regulating the use of areas slated for tourism. For example, construction is permitted to cover up to 30% of the total area, while the remainder is used for planting. Appropriate development of coastal resorts has changed the landscape and marine environment of Danang into a green, clean, and beautiful setting.

### ***Conduct public awareness raising campaigns***

The City Government and related sectors have implemented effective propaganda and community education campaigns as part of the awareness raising program to convey the importance of protecting the coastal and marine resources and the benefits to the community's livelihood. The awareness raising campaign also tackled the critical issue of communicating to the public the priorities of the City Government on tourism development and the programs that have been put in place to assist the communities in transitioning to other jobs created by the tourism and services sector.



*Public awareness activities involving the various sectors in Danang*

### ***Ensure the smooth resettlement of affected coastal communities***

The City Government spearheaded the negotiation process with coastal communities that were affected by the tourism zoning scheme in the two districts including options for resettlement, livelihood programs and other support services, such as access to education and health services. Consensus among the fisher folks living the coast was reached and the resettlement operation proceeded smoothly. Skills development was provided to those who expressed interest to change jobs to the services sector. Alternative livelihood options for fisher folks were also provided to augment their income from fishing.

## **Rehabilitate the coastal areas to support tourism development and continually maintain environmental quality**

Numerous restaurants and luxury hotels are now located along the beach areas in the two districts. The beach areas have always been kept clean and worthy of being recognized by Forbes Magazine as one of the 6 most beautiful beaches in the Planet in 2005. This is a result of the great effort of the City leaders in implementing strict measures for waste management along the beaches. Wastewater from the hotels and restaurants is collected and treated at the City's centralized sewage treatment facilities. Wastewater is not allowed to be discharged to the sea. Regular monitoring of water quality is being implemented by the government to ensure that water quality is within standards. Projects that aim to conserve and protect the coastal ecosystems and aquatic resources, such as coral reefs and sea grasses along the Son Tra Peninsula and Ngu Hanh Son District, have been implemented and maintained.

## Results

### **Improved standard of living among coastal communities**

The City's tourism development has resulted in the improvements in the lives of the people in coastal communities in Son Tra and Ngu Hanh Son Districts – increasing their income, raising socioeconomic standards, and reducing their dependence on coastal and marine resources. Danang City linked up with various organizations and enterprises to build 183 houses for poor people in the coastal areas, and assisted in the implementation of three welfare projects, including conduct of meetings and festivals, and building shelters for poor people during typhoons valued at more than VND 8.2 billion (US\$ 390,476). Many fishers were trained and became staff of resorts, while some participated in training courses on fine arts, handicraft, and others were involved in various services, based in hotels, restaurants, and parking places at the beaches.

According to Mr. Dang Van Phu Em, resident of An Hai Tay commune, Son Tra District, who participated in the program, each fishing trip of 6-7 days has generated a gross profit of VND 400 million (US\$ 19,048) and net profit of VND 260 million (US\$ 12,381) after excluding all production costs and interest rates. The new group fishing scheme has been introduced and replicated in other coastal districts of the city.



*Fisheries landing site*



*Fishing boats in Danang Bay*



*Fishing activity along the coast of Danang Bay*

For those who opted to continue fishing, five new ships for offshore fishing worth VND 3.2 billion (US\$ 153,000) were fabricated with support from the People's Committee of Danang City. In addition, the following assistance was provided: (1) insurance premium to some 3,000 crew members of fishing vessels with a capacity of over fifty CV; (2) construction of a sea products storage facility; and (3) aid to fishers switching jobs or support equivalent to roughly VND 4 billion (US\$ 191,250). The City's program comprised of 660 fishing boats, with forty-two existing boats having been upgraded for offshore fishing, and was further enhanced with the construction of four safety stations.

### ***Increased investments in Tourism, increased revenue for the city, more job opportunities for the people***

The construction and rehabilitation of the coastal roads and beach areas have transformed former shoddy beaches into a beautiful waterfront with new wide coastal roads and green cover. Along the sides of these roads are world-class vacation resorts with green, clean, and beautiful beaches.

The rehabilitation of the coastal roads has also provided added advantage in promoting the Central Vietnam Heritage Road with Danang serving as gateway to four UNESCO-designated World Heritage Sites: the sixteenth-century silk route trading port of Hoi An; My Son Valley, the sacred remains of the ancient Cham civilization; the ancient imperial city of Hue and impressive Phong Nha cave, a matrix of 65 km of caves and underground rivers.



*Beach area along Son Tra Peninsula*

Both Son Tra and Ngu Hanh Son Districts have attracted numerous foreign and domestic investors to build 4-5 star vacation resorts of international standard. As a result, a significant increase in tourist arrivals has been recorded over the years (see box 1 for information on tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2015), which provides tremendous job opportunities for local people and brings revenue to the district as well as to the City.

### ***Reduced dependence of communities on coastal and marine resources***

Policies and plans for improved fish production also require protection and conservation of the coastal and marine resources. The effective implementation of these interventions hinged primarily on the excellent reception of the stakeholders, especially the fishers.

To help fishers change jobs and reduce the pressure on the marine resources, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has implemented job-transition support program from August to December 2011. The program has provided nearly VND 400 million for six pilot households of fishers from Son Tra district to change their current jobs from fishing to the services sector.



*Beach area before and after rehabilitation*

### ***Increased appreciation of the benefits of a clean environment***

The former residential areas along the coast contributed to the degradation of the environment in terms of loss of landscape and polluting the coastal waters. The rehabilitation of the coastal roads has improved the quality of coastal water and sediment, and restored the habitats in Danang Bay. Some wetland areas along the rivers that were previously pollution hotspots and caused diseases have now become modern residential areas with parks for public relaxation.

Beaches that are designated for public use are regularly cleaned, with more trees planted and equipped with trashcans and public toilets. The city also issued legal documents regulating the activities on the beaches encouraging collective effort for maintaining a clean, green and safe environment.

## Lessons Learned

1. Ensuring that the long-term vision of the local government to uphold a healthy balance of economic growth, social progress, and environmental protection requires high level of commitment and investment over a long period of time. The Danang Peoples Committee approved the start-up of the City's ICM program in 2000 and has invested more than US\$ 900,000 in protecting and sustaining the coastal and marine resources of the City over the past fifteen years. These natural attributes figure prominently in the development strategies, plans and programs of the city, including tourism development. Buoyed up by the confidence gained from the ICM program, Danang is the first city in Vietnam that aims to become an Environmental City by 2020 through the implementation of the Environmental City Initiative.
2. The tourism industry can be a good partner in managing and sustaining natural resources of an area where they are investing ... in most cases the future of their business depends on those very resources. This requires regular communication on the part of the government, the importance of protecting the environment and natural resources to the services sector, and requiring the incorporation of environmental protection measures in the development of tourism services. A stable and consistent regulatory environment and supporting infrastructure and programs provides the tourism industry with the assurance that their investment is protected in terms of fair competition and protection of the natural capital.
3. Consulting with and engaging sectors of the community that are being displaced by tourism development benefit both sides. The affected coastal communities are given a voice to convey concerns and interests, including security for their families. The government is then able to develop livelihood programs and socioeconomic packages such as improved access to health care and education, housing, and compensation schemes that can efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the communities in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

### Keywords

coastal tourism, beach management, alternative livelihood, stakeholders mobilization and participation, coastal use zoning, spatial planning

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