

## WORKSHOP INFORMATION

# Research study reveals new insights into wildlife consumption in Vietnam

**Hanoi, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014** –Although the level of consumption of wildlife products for food, medicine and ornaments is increasing and has significant potential for further growth in Vietnam, a majority of surveyed consumers said they would be willing to use alternative products if available and proven to be effective. These are some of the key findings from a recent study on wildlife consumption attitudes and behaviours in Vietnam that were disseminated at a workshop in Hanoi today, hosted by Vietnam Environment Administration under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and the World Bank.



Dr. Nguyen The Dong, Deputy General Director of Vietnam Environment Administration opening the workshop

The study was conducted by a research team of the Institute of Sociology under Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences as part of the project “Wildlife Consumption in Vietnam: Reforming policies and practices to strengthen biodiversity conservation” (WLC Project), funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) via the World Bank.

The study focused on Hanoi, which is the demonstration site of the WLC project. The findings are based on direct interviews with over 1,000 adults aged 20-69, and will be used to strengthen communication and law enforcement efforts on reducing illegal wildlife consumption.

*“The study showed that although a majority of people find wildlife products to be expensive or very expensive, they still want to use the products because they have a strong and profound belief in their effectiveness,”* said Dr. Dang Nguyen Anh, Director of the Institute of Sociology. *“Wildlife consumption behavior is largely spontaneous, such as being given wildlife products as a gift, or being invited to consume wildlife products by family or friends. Linked to this, one of the most concerned findings indicates that a large pool of potential consumers would use wildlife products if the opportunity exists or if they felt the need to use the products in the future.”*

*“The study also highlighted the strong social influence on wildlife consumption behavior, as wildlife meat is most popularly eaten with family and friends at restaurants and hotels, while wildlife medicine is most commonly used at the recommendations and advice of family and friends,”* said Dr. Anh. *“Tapping into the power of social influence and trying to change people’s*

*belief about the effectiveness of wildlife products would be one of the biggest challenges for communication efforts today.”*

Perhaps the most encouraged finding from the study is the willingness of a large proportion of people who wished to try alternative products. This would signal and promise a feasible measure to reduce illegal wildlife consumption in Vietnam.



*“The study shows that although most people understand the urgent need to protect endangered wild animals from extinction, there is a low awareness of the connection between buying and using wildlife products, and the direct impact and consequences this has for wildlife populations,”* says Dr. Nguyen The Dong, Deputy General Director, Vietnam Environment Administration. *“It is now our responsibility to move forward with efforts to reduce illegal demand for wildlife products. We need to enhance communication on the negative consequences of unsustainable and illegal wildlife consumption, and to promote and encourage the use of alternative products, to help protect species in the wild.”*

At the workshop, MONRE also released the result of an in-depth review of the current policy and legal framework for the management and conservation of endangered, rare and precious wildlife species.

The legal review was conducted by the Law and Policy of Sustainable Development Research Center, also as an activity of the WLC Project. It analysed the three key laws relating to wildlife protection (Law on Biodiversity 2008, Law on Forest Protection and Development 2004, and Law on Fisheries 2003), and the major regulations under the laws relating to the management of illegal trade, hunting, exploitation and consumption of wildlife. In addition, interviews were conducted with legal experts and senior officials of relevant law enforcement agencies.



One of the most significant findings of the review was the lack of technical guidelines and specific procedures in several critical areas, especially in monitoring and managing wildlife farms, handling wildlife violations, and the rescue and release of wildlife back to nature. The lack of guidelines is preventing law enforcement officials from being able to effectively implement the wildlife protection regulations on the ground. In addition, the review identified various contradictions, inconsistencies and overlaps in the regulations that also cause considerable difficulties for law enforcement officials.

*“The legal review has provided us with an extensive list of recommendations to strengthen the wildlife protection policy and legal framework,”* says Dr. Nguyen The Dong. *“The improvement of current legal framework on biodiversity is urgent and required close cooperation among relevant agencies.”*

*“The sustainable development of Vietnam relies on the conservation and sustainable use of its precious biodiversity and natural resources, including wildlife,”* says Ms. Anjali Acharya, Environment Cluster Leader of the World Bank. *“The strategies and action plans that will be developed as a result of today’s workshop will provide a useful framework to build on Vietnam’s efforts to control and reduce illegal wildlife consumption and trade, and help secure this valuable natural resource.”*

*For more information, please contact:*

**Biodiversity Conservation Agency**, Vietnam Environment Administration, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment  
**Address:** 10, Ton That Thuyet, Cau Giay, Hanoi  
**Contact person:** Ms. Nguyen Thi Van Anh  
**Phone:** +84 4 3795 5471;  
**Email:** [nguyenvanh.bca@gmail.com](mailto:nguyenvanh.bca@gmail.com)

### **About Wildlife Consumption**

Vietnam is recognized globally for its unique biodiversity. It is home to many rare and endangered species, including some that are found nowhere else in the world.

However, illegal wildlife trade and consumption have become major problems in Vietnam. Despite efforts to manage the trade and conserve wildlife, rapid economic growth over the past two decades has contributed to an unsustainable increase in wildlife consumption. Illegal consumption and the associated trade have led to the alarming decline of wild populations of many mammal, bird, and reptile species.

Illegal and unsustainable wildlife consumption not only devastates species populations and destroys ecosystems, but it also has negative consequences for the whole of society, our economy, human health, and even national security. The [WLC Project](#) is part of a range of new initiatives from the Government of Vietnam aiming to address these issues.