**More details on ecosystem services:**

**Food for humans:** At least nine species of economically valuable fish are found at U Minh Thuong (see Criteria 8). By providing these services, the U Minh Thuong wetlands make an important contribution to the livelihood security of poor households in the buffer zone (Sage (eds.) 2004).

**Maintenance for hydrological regimes and provision of fresh water:** The *Melaleuca* forest in the core zone of U Minh Thuong National Park plays an important role in maintaining the soil and water quality in the buffer zone by preventing the acidification of topsoil and surface water, filtering groundwater, and storing freshwater during the dry season.

**Climate regulation:** U Minh Thuong National Park has an area of 8,038 ha and supports one of the last significant areas of peatswamp forest remaining in Vietnam and plays an important role in regulation of greenhouse gases, temperature, precipitation and other climatic processes. Peat layer decomposition and degradation due to low water level was described as a main threat for the site. The drying of the peat layer increases the risk of fire in the peatswamp forest. A water resources management plan for the purpose of maintaining moist peat soils all year round was prepared and submitted for approval.

**Recreation and tourism:** The park is protecting natural forests that are typical for the original landscape of the ancient Upper U Minh. Intact forests with large *Melaleuca* trees, the ancient water ways, and mixed grasslands are intermingled creating closed and open habitats that attract a number of domestic and international visitors. This beauty could be a potential for development of ecotourism and wildlife education.

Since 2005, U Minh Thuong started opening for ecotourism activities. However, due to difficult access, tourism development is limited. Most tourists only visit the park during the day, and not many guests stay overnight due to lack of standard accommodation for visitors. The most common activities are line fishing along some canals that are designated for tourism activities and also, visiting open grassland to see the waterbirds.

**Cultural heritage (historical):** In the French and American Wars, U Minh Thuong forests served as the resistant base for the southern army and people. It used to be working place for Southwest Regional Communist Party Headquarters, Southern Resistance Administrative Committee, and Headquarters of Southern Army Zone 9. Where, many top leaders of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG) worked in the war time. From U Minh Thuong, a number of important decisions of PRG were made. The resistant base served as a place for gathering southern military troops, provision of food and supplies, production of weapons, an important hub for the strategic transportation-postal-communication 1C trail to receive assistance from national and regional government for Zone 9 and later distributing to whole delta region. Therefore, U Minh Thuong bears a number of historical values, and is an educational ground for future generations.

**Cultural heritage (archaeological):** Archaeological remains dating back to the Oc Eo civilisation have been found in the area. Because of those reasons, on 28 June 1997, Minister of Culture and Communication issued Decision No. 1768 QD/VH on designation of U Minh Thuong Resistant Base Cultural Relict Area in An Bien, An Minh and Vinh Thuan districts of Kien Giang province with 19 historical relicts in the area.

**Spiritual and religious values:** U Minh Thuong is typical for the flooding region of the Mekong Delta where maintains traditional knowledge on interacting with natural environment. This clearly shows in the local foods, dresses, transportation means, and traditional cultural performances. U Minh Thuong citizens still maintain the materialism offering religions. Most noteworthy of these is the offering to Ba Cau (Water Mother and her two sons) which is only found in U Minh Thuong area. In addition, the locals also give offerings to river-gods and crocodiles.

**Educational activities and opportunities:** Park Management Board has just established a visitor centre to introduce/educate visitors on biodiversity, cultural and historical values of the site, designed 4 tourism routes, produced leaflets for tourists. In 2013, U Minh Thuong National Park received c. 44,000 visitors (97.5% are domestic and 2.5% are foreign visitors), and revenue from tourism activities reached VND 2 billion (USD one million).

The park also has a conservation awareness program targeting local communities and schools to raise their awareness on the importance of conservation of wetlands. This programme includes a socio-economic component to help improve local livelihood through creation of alternative income for local communities.

**Long-term monitoring site:** From 1998 to 2003, CARE International in Vietnam implemented a Danida-funded *U Minh Thuong National Park Conservation and Community Development* project. Under the project, a comprehensive inventory on the biological resources of the park was carried out. In addition, a monitoring system was designed and implemented in the park that include 7 transects for hydrological monitoring, 3 fixed water level meters, 3 vegetation plots (for repeated monitoring every 3 years), and monitoring of the alien invasive species (*Mimosa pigra*) etc.. However, during the severe forest fire in 2002, many facilities established for this system were destroyed.

After forest fire (2002), park authorities in collaboration with Sub-Institute of Forest Inventory and Planning carried out an assessment of post-fire status of forests and peat layers. Monitoring of forest dynamics and facilitation of forest regeneration, and monitoring the populations of otters and waterbirds were put in place.

To 2013, based on the programme set up during Danida project, the park rehabilitated and is now maintaining 6 transects and 4 stations for hydrological monitoring. In addition, 3 permanent vegetation plots were recovered, one more vegetation monitoring plot was added, and 4 vegetation monitoring transects were established (for repeated monitoring every 5 years).

Most of scientific researches in the park are collaborative effort with outside research institutions (Sage (eds.) 2004).