



ZMT Alumnus and Ambassador: Dr. Nguyen Van Quan, Vietnam

What was your position at ZMT?

I joined ZMT under the scheme of NAM S&T fellowship supported by ZMT, joining the junior research group "Human Agency, Resilience and Diversity in Coral Reefs" of Dr. Sebastian Ferse and getting engaged with the Department of Biogeochemistry headed by Prof. Westphal. My research topic focused on the "Ecological challenges faced by the establishment of marine protected areas and the comparison of frameworks and objectives while implementing marine protected areas – a lesson learned from Europe and South East Asia". This topic was very complex, covering natural science and social science approaches to balance the challenges of economic development and natural conservation. I was honored to work with Dr. Sebastian Ferse and his team at ZMT. Together, we were able to deal with the problems of marine coastal protection step by step. He also helped me to figure out how cultural differences are influencing a successful management of marine protected areas. There were two main questions we dealt with: First, how can you improve the acceptance of the local communities living in the surroundings of our project and secondly, how should they be convinced to pay for necessary conservation measurements. This contributed to innovative ideas in the development of a theory for the establishment of the national marine protected areas network in Vietnam.

Notable memories during my time in Bremen include the hospitality of my host - Dr. Sebastian Ferse and other colleagues at ZMT. Attending many scientific meetings, I learned a lot from the experience of my colleagues.

How did you benefit from your time at ZMT?

During my stay at ZMT, I learned how to work in an international environment, including scientific group work and group dynamics. I gained self confidence in sharing experiences with experts and reverse learning from others. Moreover, I acquired knowledge, which I can now use and transform to local settings and situations.

What happened since you left ZMT?

With the experiences gained during my time at ZMT, I have brought back our focus on marine coastal conservation to Vietnam. Reviewing the current status of the national MPAs network, I am now in the position to propose directions to improve the current system. I also contributed to a successful recruitment of consultants to assist the detailed planning of the Bach Long Vy marine protected area, a remote island located at the heart of Tonkin Gulf – North Vietnam. Since 2010, I am the Head of Department of Marine Biodiversity and Conservation being nominated for the position of the Deputy Director of the Institute of Marine Environment and Resources (IMER) in 2014.