



WWF

REPORT

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THE SUPPORTING FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

Four years of achievements
in the Eastern Plains Landscape

Introduction

The Eastern Plains Landscape of Cambodia is one of the key areas of wildlife conservation in Cambodia. The region comprises two protected areas: the Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS) and the Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS), which lay home to a large diversity of habitat and endangered species. The forests in the Eastern Plains Landscape represent the largest, most intact tropical dry forest in Southeast Asia and many of the indigenous communities living within this region supplement their incomes through the natural resources found here. The vast swathes of forest also provide key habitats for many endangered species of wildlife but they are under increasing pressure from illegal logging, land-clearance, illegal trade and unsustainable activities.

Between 2012 and 2016, WWF-Cambodia implemented the Supporting Forests and Biodiversity (SFB) Project funded by USAID. The project aimed to improve conservation and governance of priority forest landscapes, to mitigate climate change and conserve biodiversity. It helped improve the effectiveness of government and other key natural resource managers to sustainably manage forests.

Within these four years, WWF-Cambodia reached several milestones for the Mondulkiri forests' protection.



Supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia in Sustainably Managing Forests

Development of Protected Areas

WWF-Cambodia has a longstanding relationship with the Royal Government of Cambodia and works closely with the Forestry Administration (FA) and the Ministry of Environment (MoE). In order to strengthen the governance of the forests, WWF-Cambodia provided technical support to the Government, for the development of the two Protected Areas (PAs) management plans and zoning. As of 2016, these two PAs have both been approved by the highest legal bodies in the country and will ensure the forests' natural resources protection.

Monitoring the biodiversity



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Monitoring the Biodiversity will assist the government in future land use planning and management decisions.



WWF-Cambodia has a strong emphasis on biological research and data collection, in order to progress with effective conservation practices. In order to monitor the biodiversity found within the Phnom Prich and Srepok Wildlife Sanctuaries WWF-Cambodia deployed camera traps within the two Protected Areas. To date these camera traps have been used to collect current data on species presence in areas of proposed or previous development. Data analyzed is then disseminated to the relevant Ministry so they can make informed decisions based on accurate data. The WWF research team undertook biodiversity assessments on two revoked ELC's located in a critical corridor between the two PAs. Previous biodiversity assessments within these and adjacent areas highlighted the biodiversity importance of these areas with significant records of multiple globally threatened birds and mammals.

Conducting distance based line transects simultaneously across 3 Protected Areas, allowed the team to calculate Banteng population size estimates for each individual Protected Area. These estimates were then added together to estimate the 1st banteng population size for EPL producing the base-line estimates of 2,074.

Through support from the USAID SFB project, WWF and WCS replicated the distance based line transects to produce a population size estimate of 3,138, thus demonstrating stability of the population due to improved forest management.

Support for law-enforcement activities



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WWF-Cambodia has successfully strengthened the law-enforcement capacities in the Eastern Plains Landscape by providing training to law-enforcement officials.

Through this support over the course of four years, more than a hundred rangers have been technically trained in the use of SMART book record, GPS use, map reading and judicial and crime scene management. The law enforcement teams have also patrolled more than 9,000 days covering more than 120,000 km.

Thanks to their commitment, thousands of snares have been collected, piles of illegally felled logs have been confiscated and wildlife has been released, leading to 176 warning letters issued to the perpetrators.

Promotion of sustainable decisions by providing valuable information

The collaborative approach provided hope that a 'Green Economy' path could be taken, a path that respects biodiversity, while encouraging sustainable development.



WWF-Cambodia engaged closely with local and national government officials to better understand the importance of specific ecosystem services found within Cambodia's forests. This was done using the implementation of the InVEST tool in Mondulhiri Province with the support of the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

The InVEST (Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Tradeoffs) tool is used to map and value ecosystem services. This process improves land use decision-making, by highlighting the location of ecosystem service hotspots.



Working with indigenous communities inside the protected areas to ensure a sustainable use of resources

Environmental Education



WWF-Cambodia has put a large emphasis on Environmental Outreach and Education of the local communities, and as such the promotion of forests and their natural resources have been brought to the forefront of people's minds.

Lessons in local schools, eco-clubs in villages, and teacher training for the effective continuation of such environmental education has been organized and implemented by WWF-Cambodia to raise awareness on wildlife and biodiversity protection.

WWF-Cambodia provided environmental lessons to 641 students (357F) and 35 teachers (8F) in 10 schools in Mondulkiri Province. WWF-Cambodia also conducted environmental night shows under the cover of darkness, in 10 villages located close to the target schools, with 1,388 participants (682F).



Community land rights established

WWF-Cambodia works closely with the government to assist forest communities in obtaining the legal rights to manage the land they have lived on for generations. As part of the SFB project the four Community Protected Areas (CPAs) of Chiklob, Putung Puhung, Srae Thom and Srae Y have received legal agreement, and three of them now have a management plan which they are implementing to ensure the sustainable use of resources.

Increase in access to sustainable livelihoods



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Livelihoods in the Eastern Plains Landscape are represented by farming, the collection of forest products, and off-farm activities (such as casual labor, village trading).

The SFB annual income survey highlighted that communities in the Eastern Plains Landscape have increased their income by 51% during the project life.



WWF-Cambodia has been working since 2006 with the local indigenous communities in the landscape; building capacity for these communities to have sustainable income alternatives with solid results to date.

This is the result of a steady technical support to more than 1,800 beneficiaries, with the development of contracts with the private sector for the resin production; and an income of \$2,300 per group in 2015 for the honey production. These incomes come directly from the sustainable use of non-timber forest products (NTFP) and are supporting the livelihoods of the poor ethnic minorities of SWS and PPWS. A proportion of this income is then able to be reinvested by the communities into conservation funds that contribute to the protection of the forest (patrolling, replication of NTFP activities in villages, and education about wildlife conservation).

IN STRIVING TO PROMOTE EQUITABLE ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR THE TARGET COMMUNITIES AND BROADEN THE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES, WWF-CAMBODIA HAS DIVERSIFIED ITS SUPPORT FOR BUILDING LIVELIHOODS IN COMMUNITIES.

In early 2015, a bamboo pilot activity was started in three villages of PPWS. The bamboo found in Cambodia, and more precisely in Koh Khnek District, is of a superior quality to other strains of bamboo but also a unique species.

WWF-Cambodia has facilitated and supported the partnership between Bambusa Global Ventures (private bamboo company) and the local communities in order to sustainably harvest their bamboo clumps. Communities have now started harvesting and Bambusa transforms the raw bamboo material to be sold in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Additionally, agroforestry will be a key contribution to mitigating climate change impacts and ensuring food security. Agroforestry will provide an income from forest-friendly products, being a farm-based enterprise which reinforces conservation and the stewardship of forests.



Payment for Ecosystem Services in Putung Puhung village

Putung Puhung Community Protected Area (CPA) has set up a resin enterprise, which retains a share of its profit for a conservation fund. The fund serves for supporting the community patrolling team (e.g. gasoline, small equipment, per diem) and providing for other forest protection initiatives.



Over four years of implementation, the Supporting Forests and Biodiversity project funded by USAID, has allowed WWF-Cambodia to actively engage 6,858 (2,933F) people in improved forestry management practices over 595,471ha of forests. We have built a great model of conservation in the EPL including the PPWS and MPF management plans, strengthening of law enforcement practices in the protected areas, and led the way for the development of a Green Economy path.

All the hard work has allowed for the protection of some of the most endangered species: the Asian Elephant, Banteng, Gaur, Sambar Deer, Yellow-Checked Crested Gibbon, and Cambodia's national bird the Giant Ibis. We have also supported 2,300 indigenous people in increasing their income by 51% with the help of sustainable livelihoods (honey, resin, bamboo, agroforestry) and the establishment of crucial land agreements.



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About WWF-Cambodia - WWF was established in Cambodia in 1995 as a part of the WWF Greater Mekong Programme. WWF's mission in Cambodia is to ensure that there will be strong participation and support from all people to conserve the country's rich biological diversity. Through the encouragement of sustainable use of natural resources, WWF-Cambodia promotes new opportunities for the benefit of all people, enhancing local livelihoods and contributing to poverty reduction in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Go to cambodia.panda.org for more information.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

cambodia.panda.org

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