WWF

REPORT

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REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS & PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY IN THE GREATER MEKONG

6 month summary

MAKING PROGRESS IN THE GREATER MEKONG

Since the inception of WWF's biggest project ever in South East Asia the Carbon and Biodiversity Project (CarBi) forest guards have spent 304 patrol days on the ground removing 2,553 snares, destroying 43 illegal logging/ hunting camps and confiscating 10 cubic meters of illegal timber.

CarBi, intended to halt deforestation and degradation in the border areas of Southern Laos and Central Vietnam, so as to preserve carbon sinks and the area's rich biodiversity, has made significant progress since its operational inception just over 6 months ago. Guards have been trained, outposts have been built, the CarBi staff unit has been assembled and governments and communities have been engaged.

CarBi aims to reduce global emissions of CO_2 by an estimated 1.8million tonnes

Progress made goes some way toward the programme's four indicators of success:

1. GHG emissions from forest degradation will be reduced by 1,800,000 tons in 5 years.
2. Mammal species diversity and numbers, in particular, for ungulate species will increase.
3. Trans-border trade of illegally cut timber will be reduced by 40 % by 2014.
4. Sustainable management and mechanism to compensate for the losses by restricted use and effective management.

Pioneering conservation technology

We will pioneer a novel survey technique using the results of genetic analysis of haeomophagus leeches collected by the forest guards to detect the presence of the very shy and elusive large mammals of the ever-wet forests, such as the very rare saola and Annamite striped rabbit. Preliminary trials have already demonstrated the potential of this methodology for detecting cryptic species like the Troung Son muntjac.

Protocols have also been developed for monitoring Nomascus gibbon within the CarBi project sites.

New discoveries

Expeditions into Xe Sap National Protected Area (NPA) in Laos have confirmed the potential significance of the area for globally threatened biodiversity. Local villagers have reported populations of red-shanked Douc and Nomascus gibbon, whilst a number of Indochinese and Annamite endemic bird species, including the near threatened Austen's brown hornbill (1st record for Xe Sap NPA) and the Blyth's kingfisher have already been confirmed.

Red-shanked Douc (*Pygathrix nemaeus)*

WE ARE ENSURING THAT SUSTAINABLE FOREST USE BENEFITS COMMUNITIES

Building strong trans-boundary partnerships
A workshop held in Hue, in December 2011, initiated the process towards prioritization of conservation interventions by key role players, as well as trans-boundary cooperation agreements. There was a lot of goodwill shown by both countries, and consensus regarding a formal process towards the cooperation agreements.

The meeting was the first of its kind (NGO facilitating between Laos-Vietnamese agencies), and touched on highly sensitive issues. The workshop was a brilliant opportunity to build a better understanding of the timber-tracking component of CarBi for various stakeholders but also established the next steps that we will take together.

Community engagement
Carbi has embarked on a focused intervention strategy to establish a conservation economy in its planning domain, in pursuance of the enhancement of the livelihoods of the relevant communities in and around the CarBi protected areas (Saola Hue and Saola Quang Nam in Vietnam, and Xe Sap in Laos). Besides the direct involvement of communities in the restoration component of CarBi, facilitating the restoration of the buffer zones of the 2 Saola NR's and establishing a biodiversity corridor in the area, 10 target villages have also been identified in and around Xe Sap for specific community biodiversity interventions, aimed at decreasing unsustainable resource utilization, and promoting alternative livelihood options

A list of villages/communes that belong to the biodiversity corridor in Aluoi (Thua Thien – Hue province) and Taygiang (Quang Nam province) in Vietnam, are now being selected for restoration, community forest management and protection contracts, using scientifically based decision support systems.

40%

Trans-border illegal timber trade will be reduced by 40% in the project region

Timber legality
Two separate scoping studies to get some fundamental data on the situation of illegal timber trade/logging in the project area, have been completed. Roughly 70% of the expected data has been collected, and reported on.

A German M.Sc. student from the university of Frankfurt has acquired 2011 rapid-eye hi-res satellite imagery, and the desk-based analysis of logging roads has been concluded, using this technology. The study identified preliminary 'hotspots' for illegal logging activities in the project area and has now moved to the final ground truthing stage.

For the future
CarBi has seen great progress since its recent inception but the extensive and complex nature of this very challenging trans-boundary assignment will continue to push the limits of conventional biodiversity management principles and systems. Our CarBi team, in close collaboration with the extended WWF Greater Mekong family, is committed to exploring the options available through innovation and lessons learnt in other parts of the world to maintain and grow its value offering in the region. A few current priorities are being addressed :

Extensive timber trade leakage study will be activated soon, in partnership with the relevant government counterparts in CarBi's planning domain in pursuance of mitigation of international leakage through timber tracking and control in order to introduce systems which make the timber trade in Vietnam and Laos more transparent and which reduce international leakage in the context of REDD.

A REDD+ feasibility study will be conducted soon to address the following in consultation with the relevant government counterparts:


Members of a community in the CarBi domain

- Output 1: An assessment of the legal and technical feasibility of developing a trans boundary forest carbon project for the CarBi project area across Southern Laos and Central Vietnam.

- Output 2: An assessment of the overall feasibility, of developing the CarBi project as a REDD+ project for the voluntary carbon market, including consideration of the potential to generate carbon credits and the potential for long-term financial sustainability.

- Output 3: If output 1 shows that a trans boundary PDD is not possible, and output 2 shows that developing the CarBi project as a REDD+ project is feasible, we will beneficiation provide clear analysis and recommendations as to the optimal project site(s).

An extensive management planning process has been activated in partnership with the relevant government counterparts to draft best practice management plans for the 3 CarBi protected areas.

Forest Rangers will be recruited soon for Xe Sap National Protected Area in Laos to ensure that the successful Vietnam model is rolled out in this priority area as well. This will have a significant positive impact on the understanding and management of the biodiversity challenges in the area.

The production of a suite of communications materials to create publicity to mark the 20th anniversary of the discovery to science of the saola, so as to influence key audiences, including government and donors, is making good progress. The products, co-funded by CarBi, include a policy brief /report, a feature story drawn from storytelling and the oral history of communities who possess traditional knowledge about the saola, interviews with key individuals involved in saola conservation and community members, and an online diary and updates, internet connection permitting, generated during the consultant's travel to the field. Photographs, and if possible, video for use online through slideshows, YouTube and other appropriate channels will also be provided.

kfw ENTWICKLUNGSBANK
On behalf of
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
of the Federal Republic of Germany