WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

NTFP-EP

THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE AND FORESTS

MY VILLAGE

100% RECYCLED

3. Beyond the project, broader challenges in the Eastern Plan Landscape

Fast, un-coordinated and un-sustainable economic growth is leading to infrastructure development that is not incorporating all elements of sustainable development. Striking examples are the road currently under discussion to be constructed across MPF and the mining concessions within PPWS. The current project addresses some of these challenges by developing a spatial plan for the Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL) and Mondulkiri as a whole as well as by proposing sustainable development scenarios to be adopted. The uptake of sustainable spatial planning by all the departments in the government and local authorities will be critical to achieving long term sustainable development for the region.

Law enforcement within the EPL's protected areas is of key importance to protect its biodiversity from illegal exploitation. In Mondulkiri Protected Forest, Forestry Administration (FA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, is responsible for this enforcement but currently do not have sufficient staff for effective law enforcement implementation. While FA tries to solve this problem by drawing support from different line agencies (Border Police, Military Police, and Community Enforcement Rangers), forest protection and biodiversity conservation may face problem when these forces are withdrawn to other assignments by their respective commanders.

In summary long-term support to the region will be needed in order to achieve a sustainable development beneficial for all, which respects and conserves the landscape's unique ecosystems and biodiversity.

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WWF

Why we are here
To stop the degration of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans linve in harmony with nature.

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WWF BRIEFING APRIL 2015

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USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Sustainability

SUSTAINING BIODIVERSITY,

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS IN THE PROTECTED AREAS OF THE EASTERN PLAINS LANDSCAPE OF CAMBODIA

Background

The Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL) is part of the Lower Mekong Dry Forest - the largest intact block of dry forest in Southeast Asia. At the core of the Eastern Plains, Mondulkiri Protected Forest (MPF) and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS) harbour a large diversity of habitats ranging from evergreen hills to open dry forest, and resident populations of many endangered species including Asian elephant, banteng, Siamese crocodile, and Eld's deer as well as several critically endangered large waterbirds and vultures. It has also been recognised as a key tiger recovery area in the region.

Being sparsely populated, the area offers the unique opportunity to secure its forest biodiversity at the landscape scale. At the same time, the forests and their rich biodiversity are under tremendous pressure from commercial land clearance, agricultural expansion and illegal trade in luxury wood and wildlife. Strategic and coordinated actions are necessary to enable local communities to participate and make informed decisions in the use of natural resources, to ensure that sustainable management of natural resources is reflected in provincial and national policies, and to make sure that private companies realize the importance of natural resource for their businesses and contribute to their conservation. Together, these actions contribute to sustaining the region's environmental and social benefits for the future of its people and their nature.

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COVERS 30,000 SQUARE KM

COVERS 4 PROVINCES: RATANAKIRI, MONDULKIRI, KRATIE, STUNG TRENG

TWO PROTECTED AREAS SUPPORTED BY WWF: MONDULKIRI PROTECTED FOREST (363,177HA) - PHNOM PRICH WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (222,500HA), BOTH IN MONDULKIRI PROVINCE

NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING FROM THE LANDSCAPE'S RESOURCES: MORE THAN 60 000 PEOPLE

UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY OF ENDANGERED MAMMALS, ENDANGERED AND CRITICALLY ENDANGERED BIRDS, AND A TIGER RECOVERY SITE

1. The project

In December 2013, WWF in collaboration with NTFP-EP, My Village, and RECOFTC started a joint project funded by the European Union with co-funding from USAID to sustain the biodiversity and ecosystem services of the EPL. The project aims to preserve the environmental and social benefits of two Protected Areas in the landscape in order to support sustainable development of Mondulkiri province. This goal will be pursued through valuation of the protected areas' ecosystem services and integration of these services into official land-use planning, through creating community forests and community protected areas as well as working with community enterprises to generate income and business opportunities from sustainable use of natural resources, and through engaging private companies in the province to contribute to financing the long-term management of the landscape's protected areas. To this end, the project has put forward four expected results:

Progress on establishment of community enterprises

Project partner NTFP-EP in partnership with WWF have been supporting the establishment of 11 community-based non-timber forest product enterprises, mainly honey, resin and bamboo groups located in Mondulkiri. At least eight CBNEs have been implementing its businesses based on their business plans and three other groups have been developing their business plans and started to supply bamboo to Mondulkiri Forest Venture (MFV). A honey shop opened as a branch of MFV to sell different NTFP products in provincial capital Sen Monorom. Sale contracts for 2015 have been signed for bamboo and honey products for supply to two companies.

In addition, four Community Based Resin Enterprises have been developed in Puhung Putung, Srae Y, Krang Tes and Loa Ka villages. Three business plans have been developed and are being implemented by the community groups. Sale contracts will be renewed with Pusethana Company. The members and committees of the resin groups have improved their capacity by at least 70% in sustainable collection techniques, resin processing and quality control.

Furthermore, three honey groups in Puchrey, Krangtes and Sre Y communes have improved their production and management capacities.

These groups supply their products to the Cambodian Federation for Bee Conservation, Community Based Wild Honey Enterprises, and NatureWild. At least five tons of wild honey will be supplied to the buyers in 2015.

Lastly, three Bamboo Enterprises have been established in Koh Nhek District. With the support from NTFP-EP, these groups have developed a business plan for three years, and sale contracts are being drafted with MFV to supply bamboo poles in 2015.

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and for mainstreaming the outputs into advocacy and policy. The Royal University of Phnom Penh collaborates with WWF Cambodia to lead this InVEST work, with participation and support from relevant provincial government authorities. The InVEST-team has already identified and valuated the following priority ecosystem services: Non-Timber Forest Products, habitat quality, water yield, sediment retention, nutrient retention, and carbon stock. In addition, the team undertook ground work to verify the forest cover map 2014 to be used as a fundamental map for InVEST simulation.

Using the collected information, the team developed draft land-use scenarios and maps with participation from key actors and decision makers – government agencies, communities, private sector entities, and non-profit organizations – who have stakes in securing a sustainable future which balances economic, social, and environmental considerations. The team will facilitate discussing the resulting draft scenarios with key government stakeholders (Forestry Administration, Ministry of Environment, and Provincial Council) before finalisation. The InVEST outputs need to be fully recognized by the Government of Cambodia, CSOs, and private sector entities and need to be mainstreamed into government policy and decision making. To this end, the InVEST team has developed a stakeholder engagement strategy and stakeholder database. Moreover, the team has started to engage with key stakeholders, including national government, through workshops and bilateral meetings in order to introduce InVEST findings and to seek government advice on the establishment of an InVEST National Advisory Group.

Challenges ahead: The InVEST tool is innovative and powerful, but also very new to Cambodia. Therefore, the capacity to develop and implement InVEST analyses is still low. Moreover, uptake of results from the government is limited due to the sensitivity of the topic. As a result, the project will need to invest in capacity building and develop a thorough policy strategy to convince key stakeholders to use InVEST and its results for any future development planning processes. To this end, political support for using InVEST will be of key importance.

Engaging the private sector in protecting and paying for ecosystem services

Progress: The first key milestone for this stream of work has been the mapping of the private sector actors in the region to better understand who they are and what they do. The most important and accessible companies from the three sectors Agriculture & Forestry, Ecotourism, and Mining have been targeted, and strategies to engage with them in a greener growth are being developed. The ultimate goal is for the private actors to follow a green growth path that respects the natural heritage of the Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL), to increase private financing to natural capital management, and to embed sustainable management and cleaner production methods in their operations. Extractive industries, agriculture and tourism are key components of building economic growth in Cambodia and the most active industries in the EPL region. Mapping of private sector actors in the EPL included description of latest-market trends and developments in each sector, current issues in social and environmental responsibility, as well as best practices and concrete case studies. In total, 29 companies in the EPL were screened and assessed in terms of environmental and social practices. Of the 29 total screened companies, 9 are of particular interest and hence were selected targets for the engagement strategy. Given the low level of sustainable practices in the EPL region, a step-by-step approach is recommended – ideally to build success stories with potential environmental champions to be replicated by other interested parties in the EPL and beyond.

Challenges ahead: In finalizing the engagement strategy and turning it into an action plan, the main challenge ahead will be to develop a consolidated position on «no-go»'s with key stakeholders from government and civil society, while at the same time continue actively engaging target private sector actors for greener growth.

Engaging the government and local authorities in sustainable land-use planning

Progress: This result is still in its beginning stages. Full implementation will be possible once the final map of ecosystem services and all InVEST scenarios have been produced (see result number one above). Already now, the Ministry of Planning (MoP), a key actor in this work, has demonstrated its interest by participating in the project's inception and in related InVEST workshops. The project team is therefore developing specific plans for engaging the spatial planning team from MoP. Moreover, the team has been engaging with GIZ for its key expertise in land use planning. Further collaboration with GIZ is foreseen.

Challenges ahead: Engaging the government in sustainable land-use planning at national and provincial levels depends critically on effective facilitation and coordination between the different government agencies. In this way, delays and miscommunications can be avoided.

Establishing CCF and CPA and community enterprise

Progress on establishing CCF and CPA: Project partners My Village (MVI) and RECOFTC are currently facilitating the establishment of four Community Forestry (CFs): A Buon Leur CF in A Buon commune, Maloel Kong Pros CF in Norng Khiluk commune and Ou Chhuol CF in Sre Huy commune of Koh Nhek district and Pu Chrey CF in Pu Chrey commune of Pichreada district, Mondulkiri province.

Achievements in working towards establishing the four CF have largely been focused on streamlining coordination, communication and clarifying the details of the existing and new CF areas with all stake-holders. Provincial authorities and the Forestry Administration have given permission for the respective CFs to be established and a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with local authorities where the CFs areas are located.

Several field visits have been conducted to meet CF members, CF management committee members, local authorities including commune chiefs,

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Community takes sustainable advantage from biodiversity resources such honey and resin collection.

commune councils and village leaders, and relevant government agencies to raise awareness on importance of CF and facilitate CF establishment process. This groundwork with the communities has been significant in gaining community commitment and participation of all stakeholders, and will further assist smooth implementation of future activities. Project partner RECOFTC have conducted three "Training of Trainers"-trainings for NGOs, Forestry Administration and Provincial Department of Environment. In addition, an action plan has been developed and agreed among NGO partners and local Forestry Administration in order to conduct field trainings for action with target communities. Two field trainings have already been conducted in two target CFs with good participation from communities, including women.

Challenges ahead: After delays in project implementation in 2014, extensive collaboration between project partners has now made project staff confident of smooth and timely activity implementation in 2015. Still, a number of challenges remains, including concerns of limited staff at Forestry Administration to keep up with the project demands for local authority participation, potential land-use conflict affecting the number of CFs and Community Protected Areas to be developed, and insecurity with regard to official CF guidelines to support CF establishment inside Mondulkiri Protected Forest.

Sustaining Biodiversity in the EPL

- **Result 1:** By 2014, ecosystem services provided by the Eastern Plains Landscape, quantified and mapped and relevant government authorities recognise its value and commit to its protection.
- **Result 2:** By 2017, Protected Areas financing mechanism options identified for Agriculture and Forestry, Mining and Tourism Sectors and 2 private companies implementing them.
- **Result 3:** By 2015, secure government interest and support for land use management planning and implementation of sustainable Protected Areas financing mechanisms at the Eastern Plains Landscape and national level.
- **Result 4:** By 2016, 13 Community Forests (CF)/ Community Protected Areas (CPA) established to ensure security of access to traditional natural resources by 2016 and 12 small-medium Community Enterprises inside those areas established by 2015, with 8 operating sustainably by 2016, providing an increased household income of 20 %.

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A group of banteng in the Eastern Plain Lanscape (EPL)

2.Progress and Challenges ahead

About a year after the start of the project, progress has been made in each of the four expected results. The first year has been characterized by an inception period aimed at setting the right ground for successful implementation of the project activities. This phase included preparatory actions such as a successful inception workshop, staff recruitment, revision of work plans and development of a communication and visibility plan. The project is now on track for the core implementation of the activities, with the below highlighted progress and challenges ahead.

Quantifying, mapping and valuing the ecosystem services of the Eastern Plains

Progress: The project uses the InVEST (Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Trade-offs) tool and methodology, jointly developed by Stanford University, TNC, WWF, and the University of Minnesota. InVEST enables decision makers to best assess trade-offs between different policy options and identify where investments in ecosystem services can enhance both human development and conservation. During the first months of the project, the InVEST team has been set up and began building capacity to create enabling conditions for a successful InVEST analysis,