

Indigenous People Planning Framework

Assessing the Status and Distribution of Eld's Deer in Western Siem Pang Dry Dipterocarp Forest, Stung Treng Province

This Indigenous People Planning Framework was prepared by Department of Natural Resource Management & Development of the Royal University of Phnom Penh that has implemented the project on Assessing the Status and Distribution of Eld's Deer in Western Siem Pang Dry Dipterocarp Forest, Stung Treng Province with funding support of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). This Framework highlights the brief demographic features of indigenous people, their livelihoods, customary use of the natural resources, and the vulnerable groups who may be impacted by the project. Because the nature of this project is a research and awareness raising basis, we might not look at in detail all issues related to indigenous people in the project site. However, the Framework does emphasize the impacts and response measures to vulnerable group of indigenous in the western Siem Pang Forest area.

Project Background

The project will carry out the assessment of population of eld's deer, and conduct the awareness raising for local community in Western Siem Pang Forest, also known as Western Siem Pang IBA. This area is believed to host the largest assemblage of Eld's Deer (*Cervus eldii*) within Cambodia and it is in the CEPF's priority region which needs urgent conservation and protection. BirdLife International is actively undergoing conservation activities in the area, not only to protect the eld's deer, but also terrestrial endangered birds such as Giant Ibis, Vulture, and other threatened water bird species (BirdLife International, 2012). Recent study suggested that eld's deer is rated to be vulnerable species (IUCN, 2003) and some biologists believe that it is a globally endangered species, and it almost becomes nearly extinction. The decline of this species has especially attributed with loss of habitat which is irreversibly converted to agro-business plantations, tourism and road infrastructure development, and poaching for commercial and domestic uses (McShea et al., 1999; Leimgruber et al., 2003). In Cambodia, approximately 100 Eld's Deers were recorded in Siem Pang District in Stung Treng, Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Kratie, Kompong Speu, and Banteay Meanchey Provinces (Walston et al., 2000; Owen, 2009). A GIS study by McShea et al. (2005) concluded that Cambodia has about 11% of forest area suitable for Eld's deer habitat. Western Siem Pang dry dipterocarp forest covering an area of 138,137 ha is believed to have contained Eld's deer population. This forest is situated in a stretch between Mekong mainstream and Sekong River, and borders Lao to the north. The project activities mostly undertake on the forest plots that are known to be habitat of eld's deer, especially those of O Khampha, Trapeang Ang Krong, Viel Kriel, Trapeang Thlok, Trapeang Chrong Thom, and Trapeang Thmea that are outside the residential area of

indigenous people.

Indigenous People In Western Siem Pang Forest

The project area covers two communes of Siem Pang district, Stung Treng province, namely Prek Meas and Thmor Keo communes. According to commune statistics 2013, the total population of Prek Meas and Thmor Keo are about 3,492 and 2,949 persons, respectively. The population is composed of minority ethnic groups of Laotian and Khmer Khe. These people are fairly treated same as Cambodia people in general. Moreover, they have almost integrated themselves into the modern society of Cambodia, including life style, way of living and culture. During the 1960s of King Norodom Sihanouk regime, people from flood plain were encouraged to settle down in the Siem Pang district, and these people continue to stay in the area, especially along the Sekong river until present. They have adapted their living and culture similar to those of ethnic minority group. In addition, people from lowland area have recently migrated to the area for livelihood opportunity and settlement thanks to available land for farming and natural resources.

No	Commune/Village	No. of Family	Total Population	Remark
I	Prek Meas	605	3,492	commune
1	Khes Svay		1,018	village
2	Khes Krom		917	village
3	Pong Kriel		896	village
4	Kham Phouk		661	village
II	Thmor Keo	601	2,949	commune
1	Nhang Sum		982	village
2	Pha Bang		1,246	village
3	Lakay		721	village

Source: Commune chiefs (2013)

The main livelihood activities of these people are farming, NTFP collection, and logging. Their farmland is spread all over the area and they farmed since generation. Because of high price of luxury wood, many villagers have engaged their time after farming for the gathering rosewood within the area and encroach to Laos land.

Rural Livelihoods and Impacts and Threats by the Project

As mentioned above, the community people in the Western Siem Pang live on agriculture and forest resources. The agricultural crops are mostly rice and subsidiary corn that are subsistence farming and rain fed cultivation practice. They cultivate one crop per year by using primitive farming techniques such as draught animals, particularly water buffalo. The farmlands are very small and squatters around their village settlement. Some other

farmlands are located further inside Western Siem Pang forest area, many of them around the Trapeang (where is a water source for eld's deer and other wildlife during dry season). Beside the paddy farming, the local community collected NTFP products to supplement their livelihood, including mushroom, rattan, resin, and vegetable for domestic consumption, and sometime hunting wildlife for food and commercial purposes. Because of high market demand for luxury wood (above all rosewood) many local community people forced themselves to commit illegal loggings inside the western Siem Pang forest, and at present there is no more luxury wood, they instead encroach into Laos land to collect the rosewood timber. It was reported that many people who immigrated from downstream provinces like Kratie, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, etc. have carried out these businesses.

As the project focuses on the survey of eld's deer and provides awareness raising to local community, their livelihood activities have not significantly been impacted by the project implementation activities. The project does not address the restriction of community access to utilization of natural resources and not impact on their culture and tradition they have exercised for generations. In addition, their involvement with the project would provide them with benefit and knowledge on improving their livelihood through involvement in conservation and protection of eld's deer and related wildlife dwelling in the project area. They gained direct benefit from involving with the research team such the survey and the project activities later on.

Furthermore, the awareness raising activities will equip the local community to understand the importance of eld's deer conservation and protection. We have trained these members about the importance and conservation of eld's deer. The key community members involved with survey team of RUPP will continue to carry out the awareness raising activities to their members in the surrounding villages of the project area. They volunteer to protect the eld's deer for their future generations. This won't specifically impact their traditional livelihoods from awareness raising activity by restricted access to natural resources and their cultural practices.

Consultation With Indigenous People during Project Preparation and Implementation

Because the project is on study to estimate the Eld's deer population and awareness raising during a short period of time and there is no significant impact believed to have affected on local community, consultation prior to project implementation was not carried out with indigenous people. However, they also involved in the project activities like field survey; social survey to capture the historical changes of population, habitat and threats to eld's deer and wildlife; and awareness raising to their relative and children. Therefore, specific measures to deal with the potential impacts by the project have not been figured out. And the activities to address the Indigenous People Framework at the project site may not be a reality and necessary.

References

- BirdLife International. (2012). The biodiversity of the proposed western Siem Pang Protected Forest Stung Treng Province, Cambodia. BirdLife International Cambodia Program.
- Men S., Suon P., Sin P., & Walston J. (2008). A guide to the mammals of Cambodia. Forestry Administration, Phnom Penh.
- Walston, J., Davidson, P. & Men S. (2000). A wildlife survey of Southern Mondulkiri Province, Cambodia. The Wildlife Conservation Society.
- McShea, W.J., Leimgruber, L., Aung, M., Monfort, S.L., & Wemmer, C. (1999) Range collapse of tropical cervid (*Cervus eldi*) and the extent of remaining habitat in central Myanmar. *Animal Conservation* 2:173–183.
- McShea W.J., Koy K., Clements T., Johnson A., Vongkhamheng C., & Aung M. (2005). Finding a needle in the haystack: Regional analysis of suitable Eld's deer (*Cervus eldi*) forest in Southeast Asia. *Biological Conservation* 125:101–111.
- Leimgruber, P., Gagnon, J.B., Wemmer, C., Kelly, D.S., Songer, M.A., & Selig, E.R. (2003). Fragmentation of Asia's remaining wildlands: implications for Asian elephant conservation. *Animal Conservation* 6:347–359.
- Owen, M. (2009). Habitat suitability modeling for Eld's deer (*Rucervus eldii siamensis*) in Northwest Cambodia. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science and the Diploma of Imperial College London.