

Social Assessment

25 March 2017

CEPF Application Code: 66323

The Northern Green Lights

***Piloting Community-based Initiatives for Conservation of Hoolock Gibbon in the
Indawgyi Watershed***

Indawgyi Watershed, Myanmar

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization: The Northern Green Lights (TNGL)
2. Grant title: Piloting Community-based Initiatives for Conservation of Hoolock Gibbon in the Indawgyi Watershed
3. Grant number: Application number 66323
4. Grant amount (US dollars): \$55,970 (requested)
5. Proposed dates of grant: 1 February 2017 to 31 July 2018
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: Myanmar
7. Date of preparation of this document: 25 March 2017

8. Indigenous People affected:

Being a pilot project, the project will intervene in four villages in Moenyin Townships of Kachin State, Myanmar. To be specific, the project will target to the community forests nearby those target villages, that they customarily or officially manage and have been identified as the habitats of endangered Hoolock Gibbon. In those villages, Shan, Kachin, and a few numbers of Burmese are indigenous dwellers. Those indigenous dwellers made their livings on agriculture, shifting cultivation, forestry and poaching. Besides, illegal artisanal gold and jade mining are also widespread in this area. Therefore, indigenous forest dwellers and illegal miners will be the ones who will be mostly affected by this community based biodiversity conservation project.

9. Summary of the proposed project:

The project is intended to protect gibbons — an endangered species declined more than 50% of its population over the last four decades— through extending areas for gibbons to inhabit, and empowering communities to take part in habitat area improvement and participatory patrolling in and around 3000 acres of forest lands that the communities customarily manage. Those community forests are scattered around the Indawgyi watershed, which is largely occupied by the Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary, which is regarded as a major habitat of gibbon in Myanmar. In this project, the project will make three major efforts: empowerment of indigenous communities for gibbon conservation and habitat area improvement; community patrolling; and policy advocacy.

The project will address habitat area improvement — conservation of forest area with high attention on gibbons' favourite plant species— and patrolling through empowering communities in those target villages. Conservation of habitat area can also enhance not only the population of gibbon to grow but also natural forests to regenerate naturally. Meanwhile, patrolling can also prevent illegal poaching and illegal logging. In addition, restrictions to protect gibbons will be developed in a participatory way and the project will seek helps from the concerned government departments and international institutions like IUCN if necessary and will try to practise it at least in target villages. However, these are all impossible without community participation. These are the main reasons of why we are trying to introduce community led biodiversity conservation's initiatives such as community patrolling, and habitat conservation and improvement, etc. In addition, the project will also try to address the issue (conservation of Hoolock Gibbons) to become the policy agenda by advocating legislatures at the regional as well as national levels.

10. Potential impacts:

We believe that the positive impacts of this project outweigh those of negative ones. The indigenous communities in target villages will socially, economically and ecologically benefit from the project intervention. Firstly, being a biodiversity conservation project, the forest and biodiversity especially

hoolock gibbons will be regenerated at least in the targeted community forests. In addition, since the communities will be technically and financially supported not only for gibbon conservation but also for livelihood improvement, access to micro credits will be increased for the community members in target villages while their capacities will also be enhanced, that will altogether help them earn extra incomes through new livelihood opportunities during and beyond the project intervention. Last but not least, this community based project will give communities a chance to work together and to get participated in decision making process for the interest of the whole society, thereby increasing trust among them, which is vital for a society to be more resilient.

However, undeniably, there can be some negative spillovers due to project intervention. For example, establishment of CFs and biodiversity conservation areas could somehow limit non FUG members and their entrance into the forests to which they used to have an access.

11. Participatory preparation:

This project has originated from the CF groups in which CF operations are currently being taken place. Biodiversity conservation has been always an issue raised by the community members and been neglected for many years until the last cluster meeting organized in Moe Nyin, in which leaders of forest user groups (FUG) in Moe Nyin made a consensus to pilot a biodiversity conservation initiative in some community forests in Moe Nyin townships. Then, a detailed discussion was made with the members of FUG in some potential villages whereas non-FUG members were also invited to join the meetings and raised their concerns and so it could be said that these meetings are the origins of this project.

12. Mitigation strategies:

We believe that year-long experiences in CF and community mobilization in Kachin context will help the organization fulfil its objectives and goal of this particular project. More importantly, its long-term partnership with government and non-government organizations at regional as well as national level will help the project overcome the potential risks and barriers by seeking technical, managerial and administrative assistances from them whenever necessary. Therefore, we will keep networking with FUGs at the community level and with existing state and non-state partners at regional levels to better meet the objectives of the project.

Moreover, diversity of ethnicity, i.e., a mix of Kachin, Shan, Burmese, etc., is another asset of TNGL to work safely and smoothly in any villages in Kachin State, which can in turn help the project settle in those villages without having any major difficulties.

With regard to specific technical skills, we will closely coordinate with James, the focal of CEPF Regional Implementation Team at IUCN whenever necessary (He has already agreed to provide their technical inputs). In addition, FFI Myanmar will also play a key role, in terms of technical supports, to help us implement the project effectively Their technical inputs will help us identify major habitat areas in the target villages, perform a better habitat area management and patrolling, etc. (especially to perform activities under the Project Component 2 and activity 1.4 in the Component 1).

13. Monitoring and evaluation:

As explained in the item below, contact information necessary for filing grievances will be provided to villagers and community leaders. Should grievances arise, each will be immediately investigated as per the policies of TNGL. The merits of any grievance will be assessed and attempts will be made

to resolve conflicts to the satisfaction of all parties. Each grievance and subsequent outcome will be included in six-month reports to CEPF. Regardless of whether or not any grievances have been filed, inquiries will also be made during regularly scheduled community meetings to identify problems that might not have been reported through regular channels; efforts will then be made to address these issues in a timely manner.

- 14. Grievance mechanism:** All projects that trigger a safeguard are required to provide local communities and other interested stakeholders with means by which they may raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank. Affected local communities should be informed of the objectives of the grant and the existence of a grievance mechanism. Contact information of the grantee, the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director should be made publicly available, through posters, signboards, public notices or other appropriate means in local language(s). Grievances raised with the grantee should be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days, together with a proposed response. If the claimant is still not satisfied following the response, the grievance may be submitted directly to the CEPF Executive Director via the dedicated email account (cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Secretariat, the grievance may be submitted to the World Bank at the local World Bank office. Please describe the grievance mechanism that you will use for your project, and how you will ensure that stakeholders are aware of it.

Communities in the project area are already aware of our conservation efforts and project objectives, although we have yet to discuss the availability of grievance procedures. In keeping with the policies of CEPF, this information will be provided during forthcoming consultations in each village of the project throughout the project. Contact information for TNGL, Myanmar Forest Department, CEPF Regional Implementation Team, and CEPF Grant Director will be made available readily on posters or information materials to be published using the CEPF funds and those posters and information materials will be distributed to target villages and surrounding villages. Moreover, the grievance procedure will be further explained to villagers by project team members during community meetings, reinforcing information provided in printed format.

15. Budget:

An amount of \$5000 in the project budget will be dedicated to insuring compliance with the CEPF safeguard policy. This amount includes \$2700 for local transportation to project villages, \$800 for community meetings and \$1500 for information materials, including on which grievance process will be illustrated.