

## CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	The Lao Wildlife Conservation Association
<b>Project Title:</b>	Finding the Saola ( <i>Pseudoryx nghetinhensis</i> ) in the Annamite Range in Laos
<b>Date of Report:</b>	August 2013
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Dr. Chanthavy Vongkhamheng Lao Wildlife Conservation Association Tel: 856-20-22207999/54321123

**CEPF Region:** Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot key biodiversity # 50 in the Central Indochina Limestone, which falls under the priority of dry dipterocarp forest

**Strategic Direction:** 1. Safeguard priority globally threatened species in Indochina by mitigating major threats  
2. Develop innovative, locally led approaches to site-based conservation at 28 key biodiversity area

**Grant Amount:** US\$ 20,000

**Project Dates:** 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2012 – 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

- Saola working group of the IUCN/SSC Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group – the project has been designed with SWG priorities in mind.
- Department of Forest Resources Management (DFRM) - national coordinator, and assistant in field implementation.
- Provincial Forest Resources Management of Xiengkhouang – provincial coordinator/field assistant
- District Agriculture and Forestry of Mokmai – district coordinator and field assistant
- Village authorities and members – village coordinator and field assistants.

### Conservation Impacts

***Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.***

The Saola is one of the priority globally threatened species in Indochina. This project produced the first field investigation of Saola in far most northern Annamite mountain range in Lao PDR, providing better understanding about occurrence of species and other important information necessary for developing effective conservation action plan to secure its long-term viable population in natural habitat in the country.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.***

With CEPF support, we aspired to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) Assess the potential occurrence and distribution of Saola in Nam Mo- Nam Thong Provincial Protected Area through village questionnaire
- (ii) Obtain reliable abundance and distribution of Saola in Nam Mo-Nam Thong PPA using ground-truth check by observing signs and collecting scat for DNA analysis.
- (iii) Assess the threats/potential threat to the species and find ways to conserve the Saola population.

All above objectives were fully met by the project. Technical trainings for both government staff and local villagers were provided two times. One is about local expert opinion questionnaire survey, and followed by the ground survey techniques. A series of workshops were organized with local stakeholders, including Lao WCA staff, provincial and district military, police, DAFO, cluster office, and village headman. The first workshop informed local stakeholders about the Critical Endangered Saola conservation status, conservation significance and needs, and purposes of the project. The following workshops were organized to work with local villagers and officials in target villages to gather baseline information on Saola, and also together developed a conceptual model to brain storm local opinion how to save the species by identifying direct and indirect threats, appropriate interventions, and participants in implementation, and provided them recommendations for future actions to ensure their survival in nature.

In conclusion, the project has produced not just only the baseline information on Saola' occurrence and distribution in the last portion of northern Annamite range, it also encourages involvement of variety of stakeholders at different levels (national and local) to pay conservation attention on the critical endangered Saola. Additionally, the project supported the capacity building for government staff and local villagers through; i) formal/informal technical training provided by project, and (ii) learning by doing. Those trained people are now capable of replicating or continuing on field activities if funding sources are available in the future.

***Please provide the following information where relevant:***

**Hectares Protected:** 53,000 ha.

**Species Conserved:** Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*)

**Corridors Created:** None

***Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.***

- Better understanding on current population occurrence of and conservation needs for the critical endangered Saola in natural habitat of the last northern portion of Annamite mountain range in Lao PDR
- Better understanding on potential threats to the Saola in its natural habitat, which is necessary for developing future conservation activities.
- The Saola conservation was first introduced to the local people in remote area and government officials of Xiengkhouang province.
- The project is the first wildlife conservation project in the province, focusing particularly on endangered species
- Local support for conservation of the species is now much better, but funding to continue activities is a big challenge to achieve long-term conservation objectives

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

- Saola restricted to only to the Annamite mountain range along Lao-Vietnam border, and its population status in nature is uncertain. Although the species has been well

recognized internationally as critical endangered species for years, the species is little known on its population abundance and distribution in natural range, particularly in Lao PDR. Now, this project introduced the species into provincial/national conservation profile, and provided baseline information for future conservation planning in its natural range.

## **Lessons Learned**

***Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.***

***Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

The primary purpose of the project was to investigate the occurrence and distribution of critical endangered Saola in its last portion of Annamite mountain range. Therefore, the project design was more likely technical. The project started first with questionnaire survey to gain overall understanding about potential occurrence and distribution across provincial protected area, and then focused ground survey in the target areas where reports of species occurrence provided by villagers. Given experiences suggested that involvement of local people in project implementation was important to build local capacity and participation in conservation, and provided technical training for staff was most important to ensure that they follow properly the survey protocols, and for future replication of activities. Workshops with local people were necessary to build local understanding and conservation partnership at village level.

***Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

- Formal and informal discussion with local government officials at central, provincial, district, and village levels to build better understanding of the species and conservation needs make gain better support for conservation at the ground level.
- Provided sufficient training to staff and villagers was most important to achieve field activities.

***Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:***

- Organizing workshops with local people is most important to build local understanding and gain local support.
- Participatory process need to take into account all of these steps equally such as involve people in thinking, making decision, implementing, taking responsibility, and sharing benefit.
- Working with ethnic minority like *Hmong* community, it may require sometime to build a trust between staff and villagers. So, dedicated staff and personal communication skill of staff is so important in working with local people, who are new to conservation environment.

## **ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

***Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.***

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

**\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

### Sustainability/Replicability

**Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.**

The findings of project presented to national and local authorities in forms of technical report. The information provides a baseline for conservation agencies to develop proper conservation strategy to attract conservation supports and thus secure survival of this endangered Saola in its natural habitat.

**Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.**

The species conservation status is now widely recognized by local government officials and local people so it hopes that the species will be included into local conservation agenda.

### Safeguard Policy Assessment

**Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.**

Local people are key partners for implementation of this project, allowed them to participate in any project activities, and also to express opinion on what they think the most important for securing a conservation and protection of species in its natural habitats. Consulting communities were carried out in target villages, and field ground survey was fully assisted by local villagers.

## Performance Tracking Report Addendum

<b>CEPF Global Targets</b>				
<b>(Enter Grant Term)</b>				
Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant. Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.				
<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	Yes	53,000 ha, Nam Mo Nam Thong Provincial Protected Area	53,000 ha, Nam Mo Nam Thong Provincial Protected Area	Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No			Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes		53,000 ha	Baseline data on occurrence and distribution of the critical endangered Saola
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	No			

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.**





### **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

- More funding to support ground conservation activities at community level is highly needed to continue on local awareness campaign, spatial planning, and law enforcement on the ground.
- Funding is needed to continue conducting field survey to confirm species occurrence and estimate at least a minimum number of animals in the target areas, and also to confirm species presence nearby forested areas.

### **Information Sharing and CEPF Policy**

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

**Please include your full contact details below:**

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