

## CEPF Final Project Completion Report

*Instructions to grantees: please complete all fields, and respond to all questions, below.*

<b>Organization Legal Name</b>	<i>World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Laos</i>
<b>Project Title</b>	Enhancing Integrated Spatial Development Planning (ISDPs) as an Effective Conservation Tool: Safeguarding Lao's last Eld's Deer ( <i>Rucervus Eldii</i> ) Population
<b>CEPF GEM No.</b>	64125
<b>Date of Report</b>	December 2016

**CEPF Hotspot:** Indo-Burma

**Strategic Direction:** 1 - Safeguard priority globally threatened species by mitigating major threats

**Grant Amount:** 199,985.00 USD

**Project Dates:** 04/01/2014 – 12/31/2016

**1. Implementation Partners for this Project (*list each partner and explain how they were involved in the project*)**

- Department of Forestry (Government of Laos) - Providing policy and technical advices, project monitoring and assessment
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Government of Laos) - Supporting monitoring and project assessment in accordance with the Project's Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Laos.
- Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (Government of Laos) - Direct planning and implementation of the Project.
- District Agriculture and Forestry Office (Government of Laos) - Direct planning and implementation of the Project.
- WCS - International Non-Government Organization – Provision of technical support, particularly during the early stages of the Project.
- The media (press, television, and internet) were also an important partner, providing coverage of project activities, including a television spot on Lao Star Channel and coverage in the Vientiane Times Newspaper.

**Conservation Impacts**

**2. Describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF investment strategy set out in the ecosystem profile**

The only known population of the globally endangered Eld's deer in Lao PDR occurs within the Savannakhet Eld's deer sanctuary, founded in 2005 in partnership with the Savannakhet Provincial government and NGOs. The site is currently managed in partnership with local

communities with technical and financial support provided through WWF-Laos and CEPF. The site therefore represents a rare example of a community-managed, species-focused protected area in Indo-Burma. However threats to the ecological integrity of the landscape in which the Eld's deer sanctuary is located have been escalating over the past. Communities in the target area have been approached by foreign investors for setting up plantations of agricultural commodities, in particular sugarcane and cassava. These investments have the potential for jeopardizing, via rapid habitat conversion, the dry forest-low-intensity agriculture mosaic. Habitat conversion and unsustainable land-use change is largely driven by poorly informed and poorly integrated planning at the village, district and provincial levels. In many cases local development plans and concessions are granted without considering the best use of valuable forest resources or the needs and the interests of the villages in the area. Similarly, villagers expand agricultural areas or burn forest to create livestock fodder without consideration of the long term impacts and loss of more valuable resources from their land. The result is unsustainable forest use and conversion and ultimately a continued decline in Eld's Deer numbers. The project has mitigated such negative dynamics building the capacity of local government staff in charge of land use decisions, informing and raising the awareness of communities and developing integrated sustainable development plans (ISDPs) which set up the land plan for the communities for 5 years in a way that does not threaten the thriving of the Eld's Deer.

### **3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project**

The target species of the Eld's Deer has now surpass 100 individuals in the Sanctuary and the area is on track to be gazetted as National Protected Area. The reduction in threats, especially industrial land use conversion, contributes to the conservation of the overall ecosystem of the dry dipterocarp forest.

#### **Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)**

*List each long-term impact from Grant Writer proposal*

- Dry forest habitat within the Eld's Deer Sanctuary secured for Eld's deer conservation and community livelihoods
- Reduction of threats to the Eld's deer population.
- National level gazettement of the 93,000 hectare Eld's Deer Sanctuary as a National Sanctuary
- Improved capacity of local government and communities in Integrated Sustainable Development Planning and protected area management
- Replication of the ISDP process as a conservation tool for other forest areas of Lao PDR

### **4. Actual progress toward long-term impacts at completion**

- The dry forest habitat in the Eld's Deer Sanctuary is secured, with 7 key local communities near the core zone of the sanctuary having available ISDPs which provide them with schemes for land use. The understanding and knowledge of the local communities and Government officials of the area have increased as result of the project activities; this further reduce the likelihood of badly thought land conversions.
- Thanks to activities of biodiversity monitoring and field surveying the knowledge of threats to the Eld's Deer has increased, while the actual threats reduced due to the continuous patrolling activity by part of the Village Conservation Teams. It is now

estimated that the number of individuals of Eld's Deer has increased to surpass 100 individuals at the end of the project.

- The gazettement of the area as National Protected Area is proceeding and it is expected to happen in the upcoming years. The success of the project and the advocacy work of the organization have contributed to this progress.
- The capacity of government staff and local communities in carrying out ISDPs has visibly increased with Government staff leading the ISDP process for 6 villages, being able to produce GIS products and feeling confident in their capacity.
- The participatory approach to ISDP has been presented to various stakeholders at provincial and national level at the end of the project. The success of the project and the final assessment of the ISDP process are likely to be the first steps to replications in other areas of the country.

### **Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)**

*List each short-term impact from Grant Writer proposal*

- Reduction in primary threats to the remaining Eld's deer populations including poaching, habitat encroachment, illegal logging, over harvesting of forest resources, agriculture expansion. Robust Eld's deer population estimate, and monitoring capacity, produced
- Increased local support and capacity by Communities for natural resource management and Eld's deer protection as part of their own village plans
- Increased support and capacity of government agencies of Eld's deer, forest protection and sustainable natural resources management
- Sustainable development for villages in and around the sanctuary through a clear spatial development plan which is based on the best use of the available resources as well as increased capacity for local resource management
- Improved understanding of the Eld's Deer Population in the Savannakhet Eld's Deer Sanctuary including a robust population baseline
- Piloted ISDP process in one critical biodiversity area in Laos including lessons learned and reporting to facilitate replication
- Increased understanding by local government agencies in Savannakhet Province of the ISDP Process and capacity to replicate the process in other areas
- ISDP Plan for the Core Zone of the Eld's Deer Sanctuary Integrated into the Eld's Deer Management Plan, and the District Spatial Development Plan

### **5. Actual progress toward short-term impacts at completion**

- Primary threats to the Eld's Deer have been reduced via continuous patrolling by part of the Village Conservation Teams with around 45 volunteers active.
- Population estimate for the Eld's Deer are now available. The number of individuals surpasses 100.
- Capacity has been built in local communities and government officials for natural resource management and sustainable development. 12 ISDPs have been approved; 6 led by WWF Staff and 6 led by Government staff.
- The Government of Laos has demonstrated interest and increased support to the area. New funding has been provided and the gazettement of the Sanctuary as National Protected Area is expected for the upcoming years.

- End of project ceremony has showcased the ISDP approach and its success for conservation and livelihood improvement. Participants have acknowledged and understood it. Capacity has also been built with trained government staff being promoted and being able to complete more difficult tasks.

## **6. Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impacts**

The project has achieved remarkable success in terms of increasing the population of the key target species Eld's Deer and of developing and diffusing a sound approach to conserve habitats from land conversion, i.e. ISDP, while empowering communities. After multiple years of engagement, target communities highly trust WWF staff and Governmental partners and this have set up the foundation for successful ISDP processes.

With regards to sustainability, ISDP processes done in a participatory way are sustainable by definition as communities are able to provide contributions and express their needs during the process. Eventually, the communities will endorse the final plan. Nevertheless, the level of success of the plan is also determined by how much the communities will actually respect the plan and avoid encroachment to the conservation area. Alternative livelihood activities are an effective way for doing this and the villagers have more than once express their desire to engage in such activities. Still, the project had limited fund for doing so.

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

The Project has witnessed the galvanization of local-level political power (at the community, District and Province) to maintain the integrity of the Sanctuary against the drivers mentioned above. The project has also achieved broader impacts throughout the Lao PDR by enhancing the capacity of government staff to execute integrated spatial development planning as a tool for reconciling conservation and development objectives for forest in Lao PDR. The project supports particularly the National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and Action Plan to 2010, National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy 2004, National Forestry Strategy to the Year 2020.

### **Project Components and Products/Deliverables**

#### **Component 1 (as stated in the approved proposal)**

*Dry forest habitat within the Eld's Deer Sanctuary secured for Eld's deer conservation and community livelihoods.*

#### **8. 1. Describe the results from Component 1 and each product/deliverable**

At the end of the project period, 12 communities have a valid and approved Integrated Sustainable Development Plan. This results in more than 11,000 people benefitting from the plans. All the seven communities around the core zone of the Eld's Deer Sanctuary are among the 12 with ISDPs which means a secure habitat for the Eld's Deer.

Moreover, target communities have a good understanding of the benefits of conservation, specifically the ones related to the Eld's Deer. This is testified by the villagers joining as volunteers the Village Conservation Teams and, more in general, by the continuous participation to project's activities.

The gazettement of the Eld's Deer has progressed, although it was not approved during the project period. Other partners and stakeholders are now advocating for the upgrading of the

status. When the national Government of Lao PDR will have approved the Sanctuary as National Protected Area, the management of the protected area will have available an additional and more effective set of tools. This will further secure the habitat of the Eld's Deer.



(Photo: Consultation Meeting for Gazetting the Eld's Deer Sanctuary in Xonnabouly District)

## **Component 2 (as stated in the approved proposal)**

*Reduced poaching of Eld's deer and habitat encroachment into the Eld's Deer Sanctuary.*

### **2. Describe the results from Component 2 and each product/deliverable**

Poaching and other primary threats to Eld's Deer have been reduced via regular routine patrolling in the core zone and surroundings by 45 villagers in three teams from three target villages, 4 government staff 2 DONRE and 2 militarys to stop illegal activity; i.e., encroachment into core zone, illegal logging, hunting and NTFP collection, improper use of land in managed zone.

All have received training on field wildlife surveys and patrolling techniques, including data recording, navigation tools (GPS, compass, maps), actions to be taken when encounter illegal activities (e.g. warning, apprehension, confiscation, reporting). Each team is equipped with field uniforms, data forms to allow for systematic recording of patrol data, GPS, Compass, maps. Each team is responsible for patrolling within the village patrol boundary with a particular focus on core zone. WWF, PAFO, and DAFO assist the Village Conservation Teams in planning and logistics of the patrols, and in some cases also join the teams to supervise the patrolling and monitoring efforts.

SMART data are collected during the patrolling and analyzed at district level. Protected area management is discussed during monthly meetings of the abovementioned team. Eventually, the sanctuary has achieved a METT score of 55% (57 over 102 points) showing a significant improvement compared to the score of the former assessment (46%).



**Photo:** training on Smart GIS



**Photo:** Training on Line transect survey



**Photo:** Village conservation team set up line transect



**Photo:** Training on material survey

**Component 3 (as stated in the approved proposal)**

*Increased awareness and capacity of a selected team of government staff and local communities in Integrated Sustainable Development Planning for sustainable development and species conservation.*

**3. Describe the results from Component 3 and each product/deliverable**

Six government staff from district, province and WWF Eld's deer project manager (1 PONRE - Mr. Somjith; 2DAFO - Mr. Khamphai, Kunya; 3 DONRE -Mr. Korakan, Mr. Xaisana, Mr. Vongvilai; WWF - Mr. Phayvieng) have been trained on ISDP process, biodiversity monitoring and management and GIS software. Their capacity and confidence in it has been measured by the staff capacity assessment at the end of the project. The assessment shows that the capacity has been built, although differently among the different persons. Nevertheless, the group as a whole present the set of skills necessary for replicating ISDP and biodiversity monitoring activities elsewhere.

Volunteers from the villages have also been trained. However, the level of capacity they reached is lower compared to the one of Government officials and they would still need support from them.



**Component 4 (as stated in the approved proposal)**

Eld's deer population status and trends understood.

**4. Describe the results from Component 4 and each product/deliverable**

Line transect survey has been completed and the results have been analyzed. The research activity has improved the understanding of the behavior of Eld's Deer in the sanctuary and of the distribution of threats to it. An example of finding is that it is more likely to find Eld's Deer in the proximity of the villages. The final paper is now under revision from the technical supervisor and it is expected to be published later on.

Camera traps have also been set up in the sanctuary to further understand the behavior of the Eld's Deer. In particular, local communities have requested to monitor rice field raiding activities.



**Photo:** Set up camera traps

#### 4.1 Training village conservation teams on the principles of wildlife conservation and Eld's deer monitoring techniques

The purpose of this training was to provide a basic concept on Eld's deer conservation, field survey techniques (occupancy and line transect), using navigation tools (i.e. compass, maps, and GPS) and threat data collection.



#### 4.2 Establish forty-one lines transects in the Eld's Deer Sanctuary.

Set up line transects in the Eld's deer sanctuary, each Transect has 2 km in length and at 1 km interval between lines. The primary goal of using transects is to estimate Eld's deer population in the Eld's deer sanctuary for monitoring changes in the Eld's deer population (or density) in the sanctuary. This allows us to evaluate the effectiveness or impacts of current conservation in the core area, which is a subset of the sanctuary. This work also represents the first robust estimates of Eld's deer density from anywhere in South East Asia.

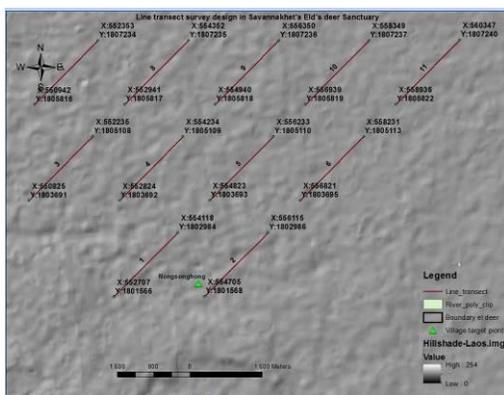
Lines transects markers to mark every 50 meters along each transect so that villagers and teams can follow easily.



### 4.3 Eld's Deer Population Estimation (Line transect surveys) On May to July 2015

We completed set up 41 line transect, Each line transect of 2 km in length. covering approximately 328 km from and Line transects survey 4 times during May to July 2015. All transects will be walked in the early morning between 6:30 to 8:00 am and between 15:00-18:00 pm. To ensure robust data collection the following assumptions are met during surveys:

- (1) *Animals on the line are detected with certainty, i.e. no animals on the line are missed by observers.*
- (2) *Animals are detected and their location recorded before they move, i.e. observers must see an animal before it sees them and flees.*
- (3) *Measurements are exact. Training and appropriate equipment must be used to ensure accuracy of distance measurements.*
- (4) *Group sizes are accurately recorded.*



### **Component 5 (as stated in the approved proposal)**

ISDP approach as a valid sustainable conservation and development tool promoted and appreciated across government departments and development agencies in Lao PDR.

#### **5. Describe the results from Component 5 and each product/deliverable**

The ISDP approach has been documented by an external consultant with a field assessment of three target communities during the final semester of the project. The final report presents lessons learned and recommendations for the future. To sum up, the report highlights the high level of satisfaction of the stakeholders, in particular of the target communities, with the ISDP process yet recommending the coupling of alternative livelihood activities together with ISDPs to enhance the sustainability of the plans. The findings of the report have been presented to Government departments and development agencies of Lao PDR during the closing ceremony of the project.

The ISDP process and the way of building local capacity for leading the replications across the areas have been appreciated by Government departments and development agencies of Lao PDR.



**Photo:** Integrated Spatial Development Planning with community

#### **6. Repeat point 8 above for each Component in your approved proposal**

See above sub-points of point 8.

#### **7. If you did not complete any component or deliverable, how did this affect the overall impact of the project?**

All completed.

#### **8. Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results**

## Benefits to Communities

### 9. Please describe the communities that have benefited from CEPF support

Please report on the size and characteristics of communities and the benefits that they have received, as a result of CEPF investment. Please provide information for all communities that have benefited **from project start to project completion**.

Community Name	Community Characteristics								Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit											
	Subsistence economy	Small landowners	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists / nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Other*	Size of Community				Increased access to clean water	Increased food security	Increased access to energy	Increased access to public services (e.g. health care, education)	Increased resilience to climate change	Improved land tenure	Improved recognition of traditional knowledge	Improved representation and decision-making in governance forums/structures	Improved access to ecosystem services
								50-250 people	251-500 people	501-1,000 people	Over 1,001 people									
Ban Amphavung	X	X	X								X					X			X	
Ban Naphaeng	X	X	X					X			X					X			X	
Ban Keokhamlee	X	X	X						X		X					X			X	
Ban Xaysomboun	X	X	X						X		X					X			X	

Ban Sengjalernt	X	X	X								X		X				X			X
Ban Nongboulao	X	X	X								X		X				X			X
Ban Sanamxai	X	X	X							X			X				X			X
Ban Dongmod	X	X	X							X			X				X			X
Ban Nongsonghong	X	X	X							X			X				X			X
Ban Loungmala	X	X	X							X			X				X			X
Ban Tangvainam	X	X	X								X		X				X			X
Kaluem-Vungkhae	X	X	X								X		X				X			X

\*If you marked "Other" to describe the community characteristic, please explain:

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## Lessons Learned

### **10. Describe any lessons learned related to organizational development and capacity building.**

The project has paid attention to build the capacity of Government partners in order to ensure replicability and sustainability. In particular, it has identified a high potential individual, Mr. Khamphay, that has been trained and supported to achieve higher level education. Mr. Khamphay has then been promoted to be the head of the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO). He is in good relations with the target communities and he is now able to replicate project activities.

### **11. Describe any lessons learned related to project Design Process (*aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)**

The project's success was dependent on the cooperation with Province, the District and local communities. Under the leadership of a full-time Project Manager and WWF-Laos Landscape manager to implemented all activities.

### **12. Describe any lesson learned related to project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)**

The project staff has been working in the area for over 8 years, developing strong ties and relations with the communities and eventually gaining their trust. These were essential conditions for the success of having the villagers to participate in the ISDP process and to reach successful and agreed final plans.

### **13. Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community**

Community understanding in the management of resources, and that of other stakeholders at various levels (from local communities, district and provincial government) have been intimately involved during every stage of the project activities. Monthly meeting have been held with stakeholders at the village level to ensure their close cooperation and buy-in, and to solicit their feedback regarding management systems and project progress.

## Sustainability / Replication

### **14. Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated**

In terms of sustainability, the project staff has achieved high level of engagement of the local communities and made them fully aware of the benefit of conservation. Moreover, the project target area has secured large funds from other donors (UNDP-GEF, see details in section 17). The new funds will implement additional alternative livelihood activities, such as ecotourism, that the target villagers have expressed to start. These additional activities will secure the sustainability of the project.

In terms of replications, the project has fully documented the approach used for the ISDP process, documenting lessons learned and elements of success. Provincial and national stakeholders have shown interest in it. Local Government staff was trained and is now capable of leading the process autonomously. There have been 6 replications of ISDP process in villages nearby the project led by trained Government staff (see more details in the final assessment report of ISDP). Nevertheless, replication in other areas of the country is not assured as it involves capacity and funds available as well as political willingness to engage in such process.

**15. Summarize any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability**

Project staff has provided support in terms of knowledge inputs and final validation to map High Conservation Value Forest in the project area. This map has increased the knowledge of the area as well as the communicability of its importance. The map is likely to be useful for the gazettelement of the Sanctuary or for better land use decisions in the future.

**Safeguards**

**16. If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social and environmental safeguards that your project may have triggered**

See the separate safeguards report.

**Additional Funding**

**17. Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of CEPF investment**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
GEF-UNDP	C	12,000,000 USD	Dry Dipterocarp Forest project

\* Categorize the type of funding as:

- A *Project Co-Financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this 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 funded project)*
- C *Regional/Portfolio Leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)*

**Additional Comments/Recommendations**

**18. Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF**

### **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.

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