CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report

Organization's Legal Name:	Asian Arks
Project Title:	Conservation of Annamite Biodiversity through a Social Business Model
Grant Number:	CEPF-111960
Hotspot:	Indo-Burma III
Strategic Direction:	1 Safeguard priority globally threatened species by mitigating major threats
Grant Amount:	$149,999.85
Project Dates:	July 01, 2021 - December 31, 2022
Date of Report:	February 28, 2023

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT
- Division of Protected Area Management, National Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: Followed up and submitted the final national protected area upgrade docket. Coordinated with the province to give approvals for overall budgets and activities. Coordinated trainers from the national level. Reviewed and approved project plans to be sure that they were in coordination with the ICBF Project.

- Provincial Department of Agriculture and Forestry: Officially created additional law enforcement teams and helped select team members. Helped put on trainings and official meetings by making invitations, organizing venues, and assisting with administration and finance. Held law enforcement related meetings with key stakeholders.

- Bualapha District Office Agriculture & Forestry: Selected volunteers to join law enforcement teams. Joined camera trapping surveys.

BILATERAL
- ICBF Project & KFW: Helped develop and agree to patrolling sectors and distribution of patrol teams. Supported technical analysis of baseline data. Set and approved environmental and social safeguard guidelines. Worked together to develop a management plan for the park. Supported drafting of application for upgrade of the protected area. Set general guidelines for cost norms for law enforcement teams.

NON-GOVERNMENT
- Saola Foundation: Seconded staff trainees to assist with law enforcement and camera trapping in the final quarter of the project.

- Lao Red Cross: Provided first aid training to law enforcement team members and related staff.

- Wildlife Conservation Society: Provided training to law enforcement team members on SMART. Planned for long-term support and management of the protected area. Provided baseline data analysis.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Planned Long-Term Impacts: 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Within 10 years of establishment, the conservation concession at Khoun Xe Nong Ma (KXNM) will generate at least USD200,000 per year for on-the-ground law enforcement activities.	Although the conservation concession was not approved for Khoun Xe Nong Ma, the project successfully found and handed over to another organization for the long-term management of the site. The project secured $1.5million for the initial handover, which is $250,000-500,000 per year for a 3-5 year project. The project also followed up with the government on identifying an alternative area for the conservation concession that is not located in a strategic area. The government identified an alternate area adjacent to Khoun Xe Nong Ma for the concession and was able to identify all of the key CEPF species found in KXNM, except for one (Crested Argus), as well as two additional key species not found KXNM (Asian elephants and Gaur). The project is in the process of looking for funding for the new, alternative site in Phou Louang National Protection Forest.
Within two years of establishment, the conservation concession will provide at least minimum wages to at least 36 people, including at least 12 women, from local villages.	As the conservation concession was not approved, employment for local people for managing the concession did not materialize. However, the project was able to provide part-time employment with wages paid according to government standards to village militia and porters from at least five communities to support monthly law enforcement activities in KXNM and camera trapping in KXNM and Phou Louang. At least 36 villagers were hired part-time for this work.
By 2030, a research and training center will have been established at KXNM and be providing training to at least 15 Lao nationals per year in biodiversity conservation, natural resource management and protected area management.	The proposed research and training center for KXNM was not established because the concession proposal was not approved. However, the project continued looking into options for developing such a research and training center in the adjacent Phou Louang Protection Forest, which would also hold the potential for benefiting KXNM (by hiring villagers from the KXNM area that are on the border with Phou Louang).
The conservation concession at KXNM will provide a model for greener, more resilient	Although the conservation concession was not approved because of security concerns in the area it

Impact Description	Impact Summary
economic growth, which will be replicated within at least one other site in Lao PDR by 2030.	was proposed along the Lao-Vietnam border, the concept continues to be espoused by the government as a model that it wants to promote. Recently, the government has signed MOUs with two different companies to do feasibility studies of REDD+, with one of those locations being in Laving Lavern NPA just to the south of KXNM, indicating the government's interest in protecting forest resources using a business model. Although it's not clear if the companies who have been awarded these MOUs are up to the challenge, such approvals are positive for future conservation concession proposals.
By 2030, threats to populations of CEPF priority species, especially from snaring, will be reduced to negligible levels within the concession area.	During the last three months of the project from October-December 2022, hunting threats were reduced to negligible levels of an average of 10 hunting threats per month over the entire site. The threats were found along the outer areas of the core zone, indicating that the threats in the most important and sensitive areas were negligible. With greater law enforcement effort by WCS in the future, the site can continue to keep threats to a negligible level through 2030.
Within 10 years of establishment, the conservation concession will contribute at least USD1,000 per year to the conservation and development funds of each of four local villages.	Unfortunately, the conservation concession was not approved and, thus, generation of funds for village development funds was not possible. This is also likely not to happened under the WCS management model, given that it is not a social business model. However, the project is still working to develop a conservation concession in the corridor area of Phou Louang, which would likely generate village funds for some of the villages that are on the Phou Louang-KXNM border, this providing similar positive impacts for conservation in both areas.

Planned Short-Term Impacts: 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
The intensity of snaring within the proposed concession area at KXNM will be reduced by at least 75% (against a 2020 baseline of 1,400 snares removed) over the first year of the project, and be maintained at this level until the end of the project.	Reduced to a monthly average of 10 hunting threats found in the core zone in the last three months of the project, from October - December 2022.
At least three Lao and/or international civil society groups will be engaged during the first year of the project to advise on law enforcement, FPIC, and/or local product marketing.	Civil society groups were not able to be hired for FPIC and local product marketing because the concession was not approved. However, the project did engage three civil society groups to help support law enforcement training and implementation. These included the Lao Red Cross (for first aid training of law enforcement personnel); Wildlife Conservation Society through a joint partnership with the ICBF

Impact Description	Impact Summary
	project (for SMART and law enforcement training); and the Saola Foundation (to second staff trainees and technical advice for implementing law enforcement and camera trapping).
The effectiveness of five law enforcement teams (with at least 30 members) at KXNM National Protected Area will improve over the first year of the project, against a pre-project baseline.	In the year prior to the project starting in KXNM, ICBF patrol teams unofficially patrolled once every 2-3 months (according to reports at the annual KFW review mission in 2021). During the project period, patrol teams patrolled every month and followed all of the patrol plans. Team leaders improved their skills, and by the end of the project team leaders were able to record and analyze patrol SMART data. They were also able to reduce snares from a monthly average of 117 before the project started to a monthly average of 10 by the last three months of the project.
Populations of CEPF priority species will be maintained at baseline levels by the end of the project.	Endline survey data collected through camera trapping conducted by Asian Arks staff from March 2022 to July 2022 is still being analyzed by WCS wildlife monitoring experts contracted by the ICBF project. Therefore, the results of the project regarding changes in CEPF priority species populations are still not available. However, based on monthly reports by Asian Arks staff and initial analysis of the data by the field staff, all CEPF priority species have continued to be detected through the end of the project. Based on the education in threats in the core zone, it is, therefore, expected that the results of the Endline survey will demonstrate maintenance of CEPF priority species populations at the minimum.
The conservation concession will provide at least minimum wages (full-time or part-time depending on the position) to at least 18 non-government people (working on law enforcement teams), including at least six women, from local villages by the end of the project.	The project hired 10 non-government volunteers to help lead law enforcement teams, plus many villagers from Houay Het Village to work as part-time patrol team members. The project also hired villagers from other communities to assist with camera trapping and wildlife surveys in KXNM and Phou Louang. The exact number of part-time helpers from villages is estimated to be more than 18.

Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The project's proposal for a conservation concession of the core zone of Khoun Xe Nong Ma NPA was rejected in December 2022. This was, of course, negative for the implementation of the project and the long-term survival of the area and its wild inhabitants. Rather than repackage the proposal as an aid agreement, the project decided that it would be best for the sake of future conservation concession proposals to not continue in Khoun Xe Nong Ma as a typical development project and instead to handover to another organization.

On the positive side, the project was able to reduce snares in Khoun Xe Nong Ma significantly over the course of the project and handed over the project to the new organization in better condition than at the start. The project was also able to rebuild law

enforcement teams when staff were pulled to work on other projects, thus avoiding any gaps in law enforcement through the life of the project.

Another positive impact was the discovery of important species in Phou Louang Protection Forest, which forms the corridor between Khoun Xe Nong Ma and Hin Nam No. The discovery has brought initial funding to the protection forest and more interest from government and donors alike. Greater conservation activities in the corridor will provide greater conservation to key Annamite and CEPF species in the area by ensuring that the leakage of hunting threats does not spill into nearby areas and reduce populations across the landscape.

PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES

Overall results of the project:
The project protected key Annamite (CEPF) species by effectively implementing law enforcement in Khoun Xe Nong Ma NPA and reducing threats over the course of the project. This was done by:
1) ensuring that the teams had regular technical support in planning;
2) providing training in SMART, law enforcement techniques, and first aid; and
3) recruiting new law enforcement team members when teams were depleted by unexpected staffing changes.

Although the project was not able to get a concession for the protected area as planned, it was able to successfully find another organization, WCS, to take over the project for the long-term. The project was also able to secure roughly $1.5million to support the continuation of the project over the next few years. These actions followed the contingency plan of the project for the event in which a concession could not be secured.

The project also discovered significant key species in the corridor and buffer zone area of Khoun Xe Nong Ma NPA and Hin Nam No NP by conducting camera trapping in Phou Louang-Phou Khao Nok National Protection Forest--an area that had not been surveyed since 1998 and had never been camera-trapped. As a result of these efforts, funding for the area was granted by the UK's Biodiversity Landscape Fund through an FFI/IUCN application. The area has since been receiving greater attention from the government, which also proposed the area for a conservation concession.

Results for each deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1.0	Protecting key CEPF species in KXNM by improving current capacity of Asian Arks interim law enforcement support to the government and developing a law enforcement strategy for effective long-term LE in the conservation concession.	1.1	2 training reports for LE technique and first aid trainings for 5 team leaders and Asian Arks advisors (approx. 14 participants per training), and monthly patrols reports for Asian Arks supported teams detailing patrol area & threats recorded/mitigated.	2 training reports and monthly field reports are completed.
2.0	Setting baselines for key CEPF species for long-term population and habitat management of the Asian Arks conservation concession in KXNM	2.1	Report on basic baseline data collected in Phou Louang-Phou Khao Nok using opportunistic camera trapping and additional surveys (primates & other).	List of keys species detected during opportunistic camera trapping available.
3.0	Creating long-term community conservation partnerships by conducting FPIC for the proposed Asian Arks conservation concession	3.1	DELIVERABLE CANCELLED	
1.0	Protecting key CEPF species in KXNM by improving current capacity of Asian Arks interim law enforcement support to the government and	1.3	Reports of law enforcement activities by community patrol teams within KXNM.	Law enforcement reports and SMART data are available.

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
	developing a law enforcement strategy for effective long-term LE in the conservation concession.			
3.0	Creating long-term community conservation partnerships by conducting FPIC for the proposed Asian Arks conservation concession	3.2	DELIVERABLE CANCELLED	
4.0	Building foundations for income generation and employment for local people by conducting market assessments of local products & strengthening the research and training center plan	4.1	DELIVERABLE CANCELLED	
5.0	Increasing capacity of the organization to manage and implement community-based conservation projects	5.1	Financial Management Manual reviewed and approved by CEPF.	Submitted to CEPF in October 2022. Updated based on CEPF recommendations.
5.0	Increasing capacity of the organization to manage and implement community-based conservation projects	5.2	Compliance with CEPF Social and Environmental Safeguards monitored and reported to CEPF	All CEPF social and environmental safeguard reports were submitted for each quarter.
1.0	Protecting key CEPF species in KXNM by	1.2	DELIVERABLE CANCELLED	

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
	improving current capacity of Asian Arks interim law enforcement support to the government and developing a law enforcement strategy for effective long-term LE in the conservation concession.			

Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:
The project did not pilot any new tools, products or methodologies. However, the lessons learned from the conservation concession proposal will be useful for other projects aiming to employ a similar concession. The Asian Arks conservation concession proposal seemed to be the first such proposal that used the forest ecosystem services concession clause of the forestry law as its basis, and was also likely the first such proposal submitted at the ministerial level focusing on conservation.

PORTFOLIO INDICATORS

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
1	Number of civil society organizations, including domestic organizations, that actively participate in conservation actions guided by the ecosystem profile.	4	We plan to work with 2 local organisations (Lao Red Cross, and other for law enforcement) and 1 international organisations (VFI) to conduct trainings and engage with communities, plus Asian Arks itself will	4	1 local organization (Lao Red Cross) and 3 international organizations (Saola Foundation, WCS and Asian Arks)

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
			support various activities.		
3	Number of key biodiversity areas targeted by CEPF grants that have new or strengthened protection and management.	1	This grant will strengthen current protection of Khoun Xe Nong Ma National Protected Area by supporting our staff to plan and join patrols, training for LE teams, and development of a law enforcement strategy.	2	Khoun Xe Nong Ma (new and strengthened long-term management with the assistance of WCS and funding secured by Asian Arks) and Phou Louang-Phou Khao Nok National Protection Forest (with a new grant by the UK-BLF to support FFI/IUCN to develop ecotourism in the area, which was added to the grant based on information provided by Asian Arks')
1.1	Number of priority species with long-term conservation programs sustained until 2025.	6	6 priority species will have long-term conservation programs well past 2025 if the conservation concession is successful.	6	WCS is taking over management and support to the area, which is envisaged to extend past 2025 based on the typical long-term conservation model of WCS.
1.3	Number of priority species with improved knowledge of status and distribution through research.	6	The grant will support Asian Arks experts to set baselines for 6 key CEPF species based on existing data (and additional surveys if needed).	6	Camera trapping surveys for an Endline survey supported in part by the ICBF Project, with technical expertise of WCS and Asian Arks, and field support by Asian Arks will provide an updated snapshot of CEPF priority species populations

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
					from March-July 2022. Analysis is still in process.
1.4	Number of dollars for species conservation leveraged from innovative sources.	275,000	Asian Arks is discussing funding opportunities with two potential investors, Wyss Academy and Liz Claiborne & Art Ortenberg Foundation, who have both expressed interest in supporting the project in the near future.	235,000	$200,000 from the Liz Claiborne & Art Ortenberg Foundation was secured, as well as $25,000 from the UK Embassy and $10,000 from the Odense Zoo.

GLOBAL INDICATORS

Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID*	Latitude	Longitude	Country	Original Total Size (Hectares) **	New Protected Hectares ***	Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion

*World Database of Protected Areas

**If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

*** This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.

Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

KBA Name	KBA Code	Size of KBA	Number of Hectares with Improved Management

Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

Name of Production Landscape	Latitude	Longitude	Hectares Strengthened	Intervention

Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

Number of Men Trained	Number of Women Trained	Topics of Training
14	0	Law enforcement techniques, making arrests, basic first aid, SMART

- **Cash Benefits:**

Number of Men – Cash Benefits	Number of Women – Cash Benefits	Description of Benefits
36	0	Daily wages for assisting with patrols, snare collection, and camera trapping. This does not include Asian Arks staff or government employees.

Benefits to Communities

View the **characteristics** column below with the following corresponding codes:	View the **benefits** column below with the following corresponding codes:
1- Small Landowners	a. Increased Access to Clean Water
2- Subsistence Economy	b. Increased Food Security
3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples	c. Increased Access to Energy
4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples	d. Increased Access to Public Services
5- Recent Migrants	e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change
6- Urban Communities	f. Improved Land Tenure
7- Other	g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge
	h. Improved Decision-Making
	i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Type of Benefit									Country	Number of Males Benefitting	Number of Females Benefitting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i			

Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

Policies, Laws and Regulations

View the **topics** column below with the following corresponding codes:			
A- Agriculture	E- Energy	I- Planning/Zoning	M- Tourism
B- Climate	F- Fisheries	J- Pollution	N- Transportation
C- Ecosystem Management	G- Forestry	K- Protected Areas	O- Wildlife Trade
D- Education	H- Mining and Quarrying	L- Species Protection	P- Other

No.	Name of Law	Scope	Topics														
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

"Other" Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:

No.	Country/ Countries	Date Enacted/ Amended	Expected impact	Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment

Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices

A company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Name of Company	Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice	Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted

Networks and Partnerships

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/ Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose

Sustainable Financing

Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

Name of Mechanism	Purpose	Date Established	Description	Country/ Countries	Project Intervention	Delivery of Funds?

Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site

LESSONS LEARNED

- Protecting species requires dedicated staff who are willing and able to put in the time to do law enforcement. The most effective part of the project was the law enforcement activity, which was driven by the efforts of our field staff.

- Hiring non-government staff to lead patrol teams is important to make patrols effective. Government-led patrol teams do not seem to be effective without the addition of non-government staff to support them.

- Experts who specialize in wildlife monitoring and detection may not add great value to law enforcement, as their skills and knowledge are quite different.

- Wildlife monitoring methodologies are perhaps too cumbersome and time-consuming to be useful for monitoring populations that are on the brink of extinction. As an example, data collected by the project is still being analyzed more than half a year later, limiting its use in planning.

- Developing a new concept for conservation such as a conservation concession takes time, commitment, skills and backgrounds broader than the typical conservation biologist has, and flexibility.

- Unfortunately, the conservation community and conservation project donors do not seem to have the patience or true interest for new models such as the conservation concession and social business. Donors were more interested in keeping all of their resources in KXNM and supporting a standard conservation project, rather than assisting Asian Arks to pivot to a nearby area for the concession. Donors seem to prefer playing it safe for the sake of meeting immediate goals and objectives--and safeguards.

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

- The project was able to demonstrate that having project, non-government staff join patrol teams was the main factor for their effectiveness.

- The challenges ahead are whether or not WCS will be able to put the time and care into ensuring that good staff are assigned to join patrols in KXNM, given its growing project portfolio.

- Another challenge is whether threats can be reduced over time through non-law enforcement measures, given that the conservation concession and social business model was not approved and is not receiving support from donors for implementation in KXNM or in nearby Phou Loaung.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

Social and environmental safeguards for the project followed the guidelines set by the KFW-ICBF project and employed all of the same standards and procedures of the ICBF project. Law enforcement activities did not trigger any of the social or environmental safeguards, as no arrests were made and no actions deviated from the ICBF project guidelines for patrols.

The project's plan to develop a research and training center never materialized due to the concession never being approved, and, thus, all of the expected social and environmental safeguards that would be triggered by the construction and opening of the center were never triggered.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Evaluation of which areas qualify for CEPF support and which areas do not is not an entirely scientific process. For example, despite Asian Arks finding quite a few key species in Phou Louang, CEPF would not revise its position on the significance of the area. The process for reviewing Asian Arks' project amendment was not entirely transparent.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD)	$1,616,599.00
Breakdown of Additional Funding	$1,381,599.00 - Rainforest Trust $200,000 - Liz Claiborne $25,000 - UK Embassy $10,000 - Odense Zoo

INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

Asian Arks / www.asianarks.org / pauleshoo@asianarks.org