

## **Social Assessment – Highlanders Association proposal to CEPF**

### **1/. Identify Indigenous Peoples in the project area;**

The actual number of indigenous persons in Cambodia is difficult to estimate, as the last Cambodian national census in 2011 did not contain any questions on ethnicity, but instead focused on languages spoken. Around 200,000 persons (or 1.2%) stated that they spoke indigenous languages, and can be considered to have identified themselves as indigenous. There are a total of 24 identified indigenous groups in Cambodia.

HA focuses directly on indigenous peoples in Ratanakiri Province, which contains the highest number of indigenous population in Cambodia. HA works with 7 of the 24 identified indigenous groups in Cambodia; these groups include: Tampoun, Kreung, Brao, Jarai, Kachok, Kavet and Loun ethnic groups. They reside in areas that are being encroached upon by economic land concessions. The indigenous groups HA collaborates with are part of a network of 94 indigenous communities in 18 communes (sub-districts) in Ratanakiri.

### **2/. Assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on them;**

The project is expected to have numerous positive impacts on indigenous communities in Ratanakiri. These include:

1. Recognition of indigenous languages, as Indigenous Peoples (IP) working groups are going to be organized by language;
2. Empowerment of indigenous communities, who will be represented in the working groups, and eventually in a province-wide network;
3. Articulation and expression of the concerns and interests of indigenous communities, which include the need for protection and conservation of land, forests, waterways and other natural resources;
4. Empowerment of indigenous youth, and their increased involvement in resolving issues affecting indigenous communities; and
5. Preservation of IP tradition and culture nationwide, through research done by the Ratanakiri Indigenous Peoples Alliance by Language (RIPA), and through linkages between the RIPA and other indigenous groups in Cambodia.

Because of the direct involvement of indigenous communities in this project, from planning to implementation of activities, there are no negative impacts envisaged on indigenous peoples. The main goal of the project is to empower indigenous communities through the creation of a network that can represent them and advocate on their behalf, particularly when it comes to threats to the forest and other natural resources.

### **3/. Describe how free, prior and informed consultations have been carried out with affected communities during design of the project (i.e. prior to submission of the full proposal);**

This project is a result of consultations with indigenous communities in Ratanakiri, through an evaluation of the work of HA conducted by indigenous persons from January to March 2013, and a follow-up workshop participated in by indigenous communities in November 2013. 340 indigenous community members (148 men and 192 women) participated in the workshop, where they raised the issues that should be addressed by the project. Participants discussed governance and programs of HA and made

suggestions on what should be prioritized by HA. When consensus was reached, the suggestion was recorded in writing and given back to the communities for their review and final approval.

All throughout the project, indigenous communities themselves will be organizing themselves, strategizing and advocating for their rights.

**4/. Outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits;**

As mentioned above, no adverse impacts are expected.

**5/. Explain how these measures will be monitored;**

N/A

**6/. Detail a grievance mechanism.**

The project is designed to strengthen traditional indigenous practices, including the strengthening of indigenous elders, who are generally responsible for the resolution of issues in their communities. There will be regular meetings of the various Working Groups and the network, at which grievances can be raised.

HA will be evaluated by indigenous communities, during which time, any issues or problems will be raised as well.

Moreover, the contact details of the project team and the CEPF Regional Implementation Team at IUCN will be given to participating communities, so the communities may contact them in case of any grievances. CEPF and the Regional Implementation Team will be informed of any grievances within 30 days, and will also be informed about HA's response to any such grievances.