

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions  
& Social Assessment**

**Project Title:** Promoting a Community-based Limestone Biodiversity Conservation Network in Guangxi, China  
**Organization:** Fauna & Flora International  
**Application Code:** 64079  
**Date:** March 2014

Based on CEPF feedback on the submitted Letter of Inquiry, we confirm that the proposed project does work in areas where indigenous peoples live in and the proposed activities might change their behaviors and schemes in relation to natural resources management and utilization. As required, together with local partners and stakeholders, FFI China has prepared this document to demonstrate the project will comply with CEPF's Safeguard Policies on Indigenous Peoples and Involuntary Resettlement.

### **1. Project background**

The CEPF Sino-Vietnamese Limestone corridor is significant for its rich limestone-specific biodiversity and high vulnerability to human disturbances including poaching, agricultural encroachment, forest product over-exploitation and over-grazing. Meanwhile, the corridor is particularly important for the conservation of some most endangered primates and plants in the world. This project will empower local communities to engage in the conservation of **five CEPF priority species** including Cao Vit gibbon (*Nomascus nasutus*), white-headed langur (*Trachypithecus poliocephalus*), Francois' langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*), *Vatica quangxiensis* and *Cycas debaoensis* in southwestern Guangxi, China. Among them Francois' langur is endangered and the other four species are all critically endangered globally in the IUCN red list (IUCN, 2013). These species not only have intrinsic ecological values in their habitats but also able to act as charismatic flagship species to raise the interest, awareness and commitment of local stakeholders to the limestone biodiversity conservation.

The overall goal of the project is **effective conservation of five globally threatened primate and tree species and their limestone habitats in south-western Guangxi** in the Sino-Vietnamese Limestone Priority Corridor, by promoting a robust community-based conservation network consisting of both formal reserves and community-managed protected areas (CPAs).

The project objectives include: 1) The decline of Francois' langur subpopulations in three reserves along the Sino-Vietnamese border is halted through establishing an anti-poaching patrolling and monitoring system ; 2) the known population of *Vatica quangxiensis* (100%), two main subpopulations of *Cycas debaoensis* (about 50%),

two subpopulations of Francois' langurs (about 10%) and one subpopulation of white-headed langur (about 4%) will be effectively protected by six Community-managed protected areas (CPAs); 3) Multi-level co-management approaches will be demonstrated in four government designated protected areas and can be replicated and adapted throughout the region; 4) Six CPAs developed with best practice approaches that can be widely disseminated and; 5) Capacity of key personnel from nature reserves, surrounding local communities and CPAs is strengthened and collaboration among protected areas is greatly increased;

The proposed project sites include Bangliang National Nature Reserve (Bangliang NNR), Chongzuo National Nature Reserve (Chongzuo NNR), Encheng National Nature Reserve (Encheng NNR), Xialei Provincial Nature Reserve (Xialei PNR) and six CPAs in the corridor in Guangxi.

Guangxi is a Zhuang Autonomous Province where Zhuang indigenous people are the majority in the rural area. Zhuang is the second largest ethnic group in China after Han, and the largest minority with 18 million people in China. All proposed project sites are traditionally inhabited and/or customarily used by the Zhuang ethnic group. Although the above four reserves have been established and uses of natural resources there are restricted, the lands of the reserves are all collective forests which belong to the local communities. To establish a reserve on the land of local communities, co-management agreements have to be signed with relevant communities to allow the reserve take over the management rights. In return, the collective forest is designated as National Ecological Public Welfare Forest and the communities will be compensated by the government every year for protecting it from logging and obeying the reserve management rules. Meanwhile, local forestry bureaus or the reserves recruit rangers from local communities to patrol the reserve every month mainly for preventing forest fire.

The main approach of this project is to enhance community participation in the reserve management through establishing a multi-level co-management framework for the formal reserves and empower local communities to establish and manage their own CPAs to against incompatible development initiatives on a wholly voluntarily basis.

The key project partners include Guangxi Provincial Forestry Bureau (GPFB), Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association (BRC, a local NGO), Chongzuo White-headed Leaf Monkey Conservation Association (CWCA, a local NGO), Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCA) Consortium, the management bureaus of Bangliang NNR, Chongzuo NNR, Enchang NNR and Xialei PNR. Guangxi Environmental Protection Bureau (GEPB), Guangxi Forestry Planning Institute (GFPI), five main forestry bureaus in Jingxi, Chongzuo, Daxing, Napo and Debao and relevant local communities are key stakeholders of the project.

In general, some households in the project sites may face challenges if they change their behaviors of incompatible agricultural encroachment, unsustainable fuel-wood collection, over-exploration of forest products and livestock over-grazing no matter it is on a voluntarily basis or subject to altered management regime of pilot CPAs. However, mitigation measures have been designed in the project to avoid any adverse impacts and local communities may even benefit from the project activities. The sustainable use of natural resources will also benefit local communities in the long-term. The project activities aiming to against illegal hunting of the Francois' langur will not have any adverse impacts because it was mainly conducted by outside poachers and businessmen for market and wildlife hunting is illegal in any case.

## **2. Socio-economic context and potential impacts on indigenous people**

About 11 local communities will be involved in the project with differing levels of intervention. At majority sites, this project will supplement on-going and well-established interventions where FFI and partners have well established working relations with the communities. At the other new sites, FFI and partners will collect more social-economic information and carry out detailed survey to “pave the road” for further conservation actions.

All of the following four components of project will include involvement of local communities more or less;

1. Standardized and effective patrolling and monitoring system established by four nature reserves and two CPAs against poaching of Francois' langur;
2. Local communities actively engaged in the habitat restoration of Cao Vit Gibbon;
3. An effective community co-management model demonstrated for the White-headed langur conservation outside the reserve;
4. A local CPAs consortium is created for the effective conservation of four endangered trees and primates species;

To a certain extent, all communities engaged with by the project are characterised by some similar generic socio-economic characteristics. The livelihoods of these communities rely on the cultivation of sugar cane, tobaccos or other crops with the supplementation of raising livestock such as chickens, pigs, buffalo and goats. The communities adjacent to the reserves will collect non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as traditional Chinese medicines for market. The local communities are Zhuang ethnic groups that are the majority group in the area. Local villagers are relatively poor compared with the urban area due to poor access to market and public services including good education and healthcare. Many adults work as migrant workers in big cities and leave the elder and children at home most of the year.

Below is a summary of the social context information available on project sites:

### 1) Chongzuo NNR, Encheng NNR and Xialei PNR (Francois' langur)

According to the latest survey of Francois' langur conducted by GPFB and FFI in 2012-2013, a total population of over 290-354 individuals is highly fragmented and distributed in at least 18 localities in Guangxi, among which 106 individuals are located in the Nonggang NNR (FFI, 2013). Nearly one third of the langur population in Guangxi is distributed in four main villages in the above three reserve (please see the table for details). Illegal hunting by outside poachers is considered as the biggest threat to langur and has resulted in population declining in the three reserves in the past 20 years. Anti-poaching patrols was considered by all key stakeholders as the most urgent and effective actions to address the above threat. The experiences from the Nonggang National Nature Reserve showed the effectiveness of this action.

The three reserves all have management bureaus, staff and operating fund to carry out langur patrols and monitoring. They also have recruited rangers from those villages to patrol the forest. The project will provide technical support to the reserve and improve the capacity of reserve staff and community rangers for operating an anti-poaching patrol and monitoring system. The project therefore will not have any adverse impacts because poaching is not conducted by the communities for subsistence or cash and wildlife hunting is illegal in any case.

Project Site	Subpopulation Size	Main distribution
Chongzuo NNR	50-55	Guanghe Village of Zuo Zhou Township and Jihua Village of Laituan Township, Jiangzhou District, Chongzuo Municipality
Encheng NNR	24-31	Huguo Village of Encheng Township, Daxing County
Xialei PNR	5-8	Longyu Village of Xialei Township, Daxing County
In total	104-124	

### 2) Four Candidate CPAs for Francois' langur conservation

- Two langur localities in the Zhonghua and Nongdeng villages, Changping Township, Fusui County

According to the latest survey, the langur subpopulations in Zhonghua and Nongdeng are of 15-18 and 12-15 respectively. These two sites used to be located in the reserve but were removed when the Chongzuo reserve was upgraded. The local communities have a certain extent of awareness of langur conservation. Meanwhile, the local forestry bureau has recruited two community rangers from two villages to patrol the collective forest. FFI staff conducted interview survey in these villages in

2012 and illegal hunting by outside poachers is considered as the biggest threat to the species.

According to the information provided by the reserve, 95% of villagers in Zhonghua and Nongdeng are Zhuang people and sugarcane is the main cash crop of local people. Zhonghua village has 534 households and 2087 people, and all household use bio-gas as daily energy supply. However the population in Nongdeng Village is much denser due to the quick population increase. Since the arable land of Nongdeng is just 0.12ha per capita, there is a great need of local villagers for land and over 50% of villagers relied on fuel wood collection for daily energy supply. The langur habitat in Nongdeng is also threatened by incompatible agricultural encroachment, fuel-wood collection and over-grazing of goat.

- One langur locality in Beijiao Village, Fuxing Township, Tiandeng County  
This site is not located in any formal reserve but has quite rich biodiversity according to the latest survey. A group of langurs (7-8 individuals) was discovered in the collective forest of this village. Majority people are of Zhuang ethnic group. The main incomes are from agricultural crops including sugarcane, rice, maize and cassava. The local people have relative high willingness and awareness of langur conservation according to the latest langur survey. There are no obvious anthropogenic threats to langur there. This site is located in the corridor area among Gulongshan Nature Reserve, Encheng NNR and Xiaolei PNR.

- One langur locality in Wenhua village, Binshan Township, Longan County  
According to the latest survey, there is about 8-17 langurs in this locality. The village has 11 communities with 412 households and 2262 individuals. Majority is Zhuang people. The main crops are rice and maize. Goat grazing becomes an important livelihood since 2002. The biggest threat to the langur is illegal hunting. This site is located in the corridor area between Longhushan Nature Reserve and Encheng NNR.

The project will select two local communities from the four localities to establish two CPAs for langur conservation. The establishment of CPAs might change community governance regime and enhance the management of natural resources through local customary laws. Therefore, some villagers may be adversely impacted if their livelihoods rely heavily on the unsustainable use of natural resources and the project will not provide any alternatives. The project is designed to make local villagers benefit from the effective management of CPAs by conserving their natural and cultural heritages and obtaining more support from various local government stakeholders on its sustainable development. Alternatives will be provided to avoid any potential adverse impacts. The capacity of local communities in sustainable development will also be greatly improved by the project.

### **3) Bangliang National Nature Reserve, Jingxi, Guangxi Province**

According to the Bangliang NR PRA survey report (2010), the reserve is surrounded by 19 villages of four townships. Majority villagers are Zhuang people. The livelihoods of Bangliang and Minma villages of Rezhuang Township, and Daxing village of Yuexu Township are closely associated with the habitat restoration of Cao Vit gibbon because these villages are very close to the gibbon habitat and the overgrazing of their goats is considered as the main threat to the gibbon and its habitat restoration. However these villages were generally poor and remote. Their major sources of income are agriculture and livestock raising (FFI, 2013):

Bangliang village is the closest one to the gibbon habitat with 425 households and 1968 people, among which 20 households raise and herd goats of 393 in the gibbon habitat. Minma village has 482 households and 2210 people, among which 8 households raised and herd goats of 395 in the gibbon habitat. Minma has relatively high demand on fuel wood from the reserve. Daxing village has 416 households and 1915 people among which 7 households raise and herd goats of 402 in the gibbon habitat. The PRA survey in 2012 showed that only rich households can afford raising goats. FFI and the reserve conducted an interview survey in the villages in 2012 about the awareness of villagers on the impact of goat-herding and the willingness of giving it up voluntarily. The results showed that goat raising was not the main but an important income source of the families. They know the negative impacts of goat to forest and majority of them were ready to give it up if alternative livelihoods such as medicinal plants cultivation are provided.

Eight demo-plots selected for piloting habitat restoration belongs primarily to the Minma village and the project will thus mainly engage this village in the habitat restoration. The eight goat-raising households will be negatively impacted only when they voluntarily give up this livelihood but do not have any other alternatives. The project will thus provide the seedling of medicinal plants as an alternative livelihood based on the market prices of goats and seedlings. If some households are not ready to give it up, the project will look for ways for them to herd goats in other ways or places to avoid direct threats to the gibbon and demo-plots for habitat restoration.

Villagers may even benefit from the project instead. They will be paid for their labour input in the proposed habitat restoration activities. The nursery proposed by the project can be used to germinate and provide seedlings of Chinese traditional medicine plants to villagers, which is considered as a potential alternative livelihood (FFI, 2013). In addition, the villagers will obtain the skills in nursery management, seed germination and habitat restoration. Forest/habitat restoration in and out of the reserve is a long-term task and has attracted many investments from governments at all levels and international donors. If local communities have enough skills in habitat restoration, it will become an income source for local people as well.

#### **4) Qunan Community, Kunlun village, Shanyu Township, Fusui County (White-headed langur)**

Qunan holds 110 households and 450 Zhuang people. The community owns farmlands of over 230ha, 90% of which are for sugarcane plantation. Over 518 ha collective forest of the community has been categorized as National Ecological Public-welfare Forest and compensations are paid to each household every year. The collective forest of Qunan village locates very closely to the Chongzuo NNR. According to the latest census conducted by the reserve in 2010, 50 individuals of white-headed langur were found in the collective forest, among which 10 individuals of two groups visit the village quite often. The villages have a certain extent of conservation awareness but some households have high potentials to encroach the forest for extending sugarcane plantation or collect non-timber forest products which may cause langur habitat degradation and loss.

Since it is easy to observe langur in the village, the Chongzuo NNR brought in many students to visit the village every year for environmental education on the langur conservation. Nevertheless, the villagers did not benefit much from it due to the lack of participation and no capacity to host and guide visitors. The local community may benefit from the proposed project activity and generate income from hosting and guiding students/visitor to conduct environmental education activities on langur conservation every year. Their awareness and capacity in biodiversity conservation will be greatly improved, which might enable them to reconcile conservation and economic develop by eco-tourism development in the future.

#### **5) Two existing CPAs and two candidate sites for new CPAs (endangered trees)**

- Shangpingtan community, Pingtan village, Baihe Township, Napo County  
The community owns a CPA on *Vatica guangxiensis*, a critically endangered tree that can only be found in this CPA with only 65 individuals left in the world. The total area of this CPA is about 13.69 ha and agricultural encroachment was considered as the main threat to this species. The baseline survey of 2008 showed that the community had 50 households and 212 Zhuang people. They had farmland of 10.8 ha and the average annual per capita income was 1752 RMB (equivalent to 290\$). Their major income comes from anise, spruce and cassava plantation. The former EU project supported the community to develop ecological recycling agriculture consisting of pig and chicken raising, bio-gas and fruit tree plantation in exchange for the voluntarily conservation actions by the villagers.

- Nongdong community, Dingye village, Longhe Township, Napa County  
The community owns a CPA on *Cycas debaoensis* conservation which was established in 2009 by the former EU project. The CPA is about 481.8 ha and has about 100 mature individuals of the cycad. The major threat was farmland encroachment and illegal collection of the cycad for market. The baseline survey showed that village has 10 households and 51 Zhuang people in 2006. The

community was quite poor and majority adults worked as migrant workers in big cities (EU-China, 2008). The former EU project supported the community to ecological recycling agriculture consisting of cow raising, bio-gas and tree plantation in exchange for the voluntarily conservation actions by the villagers.

- Shangping community, Fuping village, Debao County, Guangxi

Shangping is a poor Zhuang community with 380 local residents. Agriculture is the main income source. According to the survey by the Huanglianshan PNR in 2013, there are about 400 adult individuals of *Cycas debaoensis* distributed in the dragon forest (scared forest protected by customs), fruit tree plantation and shrub of the community. Illegal collection for market as horticulture tree, fuel wood collection and over-grazing are considered as main threats to this species there.

- Cewai village, Banshui Township, Youjiang District, Baise Municipality

According to the information provided by the local forestry bureau, there are about 100 individuals of *Cycas debaoensis* scattered in the dragon forest of this village. The population of cycad once suffered from over-collecting driven by commercial purchase by outside businessmen. The left individuals are partly protected by the local traditional customs of Zhuang ethnic group. The village is relative poor and agriculture is their main income sources.

The project will enhance the management of existing CPAs and support the establishment of new CPAs on a wholly voluntary basis. Nevertheless, negative impacts may still occur if the communities will change their governance regime for sustainable use of natural resources and some households may have to change their behaviors accordingly. However, the proposed project activities will support the communities to develop a management plan for the CPAs first. Both negative and positive impacts will be fully discussed within the community and action will be designed to avoid any adverse social-economic impacts. The project will provide small grants to support the priority project identified the community and bring in other stakeholders to support the communities.

### **3. Consultations and participatory implementation**

At majority proposed project sites, there has been engagement of local communities for several years in conservation activities and FFI and the project partners have a good understanding of local socio-economic needs and conditions. In most cases CEPF funding supports on-going activities at each site within an already established framework for long-term interventions. During the implementation of this project, FFI and partners will ensure the fully consultation and participation of these communities through the establishment and operation of multi-level co-management framework for the reserves, within which senior representatives of communities will participate in both working groups and CACs. Local communities will be empowered to have adequate and equal chances and rights in the discussion and decision-making in this



framework. Meanwhile, co-management agreements will be signed between the reserves and local communities to secure the benefits to the local communities and clarify responsibilities and accountabilities of both sides.

Most of candidate sites for new CPAs development have been visited before and local communities have been interviewed about their general socio-economic status and development needs. To ensure that local communities make reasonable decisions on the CPAs establishment on a wholly voluntary basis, the project will provide adequate information to them and improve their relevant capacity by organizing baseline socio-economic and ecological survey, training workshops and exchange tours to other CPAs. They will be facilitated to go through the process of management planning and implementation if they are ready to establish and manage CPAs.

#### **4. Mitigation measures and Monitoring Plan**

The engagement of local communities in the proposed conservation actions will be conducted on a wholly voluntary basis with full community consultation and participation. The main project approach is to empower local communities to establish own-managed protected areas to conserve their natural and cultural heritages and reconcile development and conservation needs. It may change the governance regime of local communities and enhance their consensus and commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Nevertheless, it may bring challenges to a specific group of villagers in the communities whose livelihoods have high dependence on the unsustainable use of natural resources in the past but have limited resource and capacity to develop alternative livelihoods.

To avoid potential adverse impacts, the project will conduct detailed socio-economic survey (of both men and women equally) beforehand to understand the current use pattern of natural resources in the communities and identify the vulnerable groups that may be affected by the proposed project activities. The potential negative impacts will be fully assessed with a compensation scheme developed and proposed to the affected groups by working closely with the leaders and key representatives of the local communities. The project will make sure the compensation scheme will be fully discussed, adjusted and agreed by the vulnerable or affected groups before the launch of any project activities that might have potential impacts. For example, one option we will explore is providing seedlings of medicinal plants and follow-up technical support as an alternative livelihood in exchange of the voluntarily giving up of goat-raising by the total 8 households in Minma Village based on the experiences we learned from the successful goat replacement programme in Vietnam. As for the CPAs, the project will only award small grants to community-proposed actions that have integrated the needs of vulnerable groups and without any adverse socio-economic impacts on them.

The traditional knowledge, customs and culture of local Zhuang communities on natural resources management, especially the ones on Dragon Tree and Dragon Forest, will be fully studied, recognized, respected and considered during the planning of CPAs. The relevant actions to revive the relevant cultures will be encouraged to be considered and integrated into the CPAs management plans.

To ensure the smooth implementation of above measures, a sociologist will be recruited by the project to provide relevant technical support to the baseline survey and management planning. Meanwhile, a set of indicators will be identified, together with the communities and other partners, to monitor the potential socio-economic impacts in the beginning of the project. The working groups of all project components will be trained to monitor the impacts and report it during their monthly reviewing meetings and annual CACs workshops. By the end of the project, an external evaluation will be conducted to evaluate the conservation effectiveness and potential socio-economic impacts on local communities. A final evaluation report will be submitted to CEPF as well.

## **5. Grievance Mechanism**

In the beginning of this project, a Free, Prior and Informed Consent with relevant local communities will be developed together with relevant partners and stakeholders. This consent will provide the guiding principles during the project implementation. FFI and all partners will make sure this consent is agreed by, satisfied, available and accessible to local communities, and also adaptive to changing situations.

During the project implementation, a multi-level grievance mechanism will be established. Within the community, all the management regulations and benefit sharing mechanism should be formulated and agreed by the majority of community members through community member workshops and public voting. The needs and interests of vulnerable groups will be fully considered and integrated into the CPAs management planning and implementation. An effective public monitoring and reporting mechanism will be developed by the community members. The working groups of each component will conduct on-site monitoring and solicit comments from community members, especially the vulnerable groups, if there are any adverse impacts or grievance on a regular basis. Meanwhile, at the socio-ecological landscape level, the comments and grievance of local communities will be solicited and discussed with solutions agreed in the CACs meetings.

Local communities where the project will be implemented will be provided with contact details of the CEPF Regional Implementation Team (in this case, staff of Kadoorie Conservation China), with whom they could raise any concerns that they were uncomfortable to broach with the project team in Chinese. CEPF and the Regional Implementation Team will be informed of any grievances within 30 days, together with a plan for remedial action by FFI and partners, if any is required.