

## CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Project Title:	Establishing Sustainable Management at Key Wetlands for Sarus Crane in the Cambodian Lower Mekong
Date of Report:	14/10/13
Report Author and Contact Information	Andy Graham andy.graham@wwt.org.uk

CEPF Region: Indo-Burma

Strategic Direction: 1. Safeguard priority globally threatened species in Indochina by mitigating major threats

Grant Amount: US\$239,998

Project Dates: 1 October, 2010 to 31 July, 2013

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

Chamroen Chiet Khmer – CCK were our local partners at Boeung Prek Lapouv and worked closely with the local community and local government and its agencies. They also co-operated closely with the LCG to enforce laws and regulations and raise awareness of the protected area status of BPL, its wildlife and value to local people. Amongst many other activities, CCK worked with WWT to undertake the ecosystems services appraisal at BPL (and also at AP) and have been instrumental (with WWT and others) in driving forwards the initiation of a community fishery which will be fundamental to sustainable management of wild food resources in the protected area. Mlup Baitong – MB was our local partners at Anlung Pring (aka Kampong Trach) and worked with WWT to raise awareness of the protected area, enforce laws and regulations (in tandem with LCG). They also established self help groups and a community based eco-tourism initiative which received its first paying visitors in early 2013.

Cambodian Institute for rural research and development – CIRDR led the development of alternative funding mechanisms at AP and produced the report on development and marketing of sustainable rice and the creation of a co-operative system for its management.

Royal Government of Cambodia – The government has the legal authority to manage the protected areas and worked closely with WWT on matters of policy and strategy for site management but also on the practicalities of daily conservation of the reserves. A senior FA staff member was seconded to WWT for the duration of the project.

### Conservation Impacts

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

- *Safeguarded priority globally threatened species by mitigation of major threats: the project has put in place systems to combat over-exploitation of natural resources (e.g. begun the establishment of a community fishery at BPL, set-up a community-based eco-tourism project at AP),*
- *Empowered local communities to engage in conservation and management of priority key biodiversity areas: WWT and partners have undertaken awareness raising and capacity-building activities programmes that have begun to involve local communities in protecting their wetlands and managing them more sustainably with positive impacts on Sarus crane populations.*

*During the 3 years of the project, crane numbers have increased slightly at AP and remained stable at BPL.*

*Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.*

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

- Safeguard priority globally threatened species in Indochina
- Mitigate major threats to the non-breeding population of Sarus Crane in Indochina
- Establish long-term sustainability of conservation of Boeung Prek Lapouv and Kampong Trach IBAs by implementing management plans, establishing long-term financing mechanisms, and ensuring the support of local people

Actual Progress toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

Although crane populations are subject to many pressures (many of which are external to the two protected areas), surveys of crane numbers undertaken by project staff, partners and community volunteers have indicated a small increase at AP and an end to year on year declines at BPL. Clearly, more work needs to be done but these survey results represent a promising start and suggest that there are good foundations to build upon.

Working through the LCGs at both sites, communities are now more aware of the protected area status and the conservation value of the birds and wider wetlands. This

increased awareness and capacity to participate in discussions and the decision-making process has also been enhanced by the excellent work of partners in liaising with communities on an almost monthly basis. As a result of such effective communication, many more people are aware of the wetlands and their values than before.

In consultation with local people and government agencies, draft management plans have been agreed and produced; these are now in the process of being endorsed by MAFF and will form the basis of management for the next 5 years (Jan 2014 to Dec 2018). Similarly, long-term financing mechanisms have begun (CF at BPL and CBET at AP) which will bring financial benefits to people and at the same time deepen the roots of sustainable management at the sites.

Because of this, there is now a great platform on which to cement long-term gains for the cranes, the wetlands and the local people in future work programmes; we have established the basis for sustainable long-term conservation of the sites.

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

- Fully establish and conserve two key protected areas for Sarus Crane, Boeung Prek Lapouv IBA (9,276 ha) and Kampong Trach IBA (1,106 ha), representative of lower Mekong floodplain wetlands
- Contribute to their long term sustainable management by developing and/or revising management plans, submitting proposals for long-term financing mechanisms, and demonstrating increased support by local people for site conservation

Actual Progress toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

At project inception, BPL had already been formally protected by the government as a Sarus Crane reserve. AP was designated as such in 2011 meaning a total of 10382ha of seasonally-inundated grassland is now formally protected and under conservation management within Cambodia.

This is of great benefit to Sarus Crane populations, the wider wetland bird community and local people who greatly-depend on the wetlands for their livelihoods.

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

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

Successes include; the formal protection of AP, initiation of the community fishery at BPL, the community eco-tourism project at AP, raised awareness within communities and partners of laws, regulations and how the wetlands support human well-being (we were obviously aware of the importance of the sites for cranes but the measure of dependence of some local villages on the wetlands especially at BPL was salutary).

Challenges include; reversing ongoing conversion of wetland to agricultural land particularly in the protected areas (conversion still continues; evidence that more work needs to be done to engage with local people and government), investigating the impacts of itinerant rice-growers from Vietnam and identifying potential solutions (resolving these impacts will be key to the future of the protected areas especially at BPL). In large measure, these two challenges are related; it is apparent that much of the conversion within the buffer zone at BPL is carried out by rice growers, Cambodian and Vietnamese alike. We will need to involve Vietnamese people in working out solutions to this issue if we are to safeguard the sites in the long-term (this is a key finding of the external project evaluation carried out by independent consultants on behalf of WWT).

An additional challenge has been to facilitate closer working practices between government and local people so that all stakeholders are aware of the value of the wetlands and the need for embedding sustainable management. WWT and partners have put in place effective liaison and communication practices that allow knowledge-sharing and joint decision making where appropriate. One pleasing outcome of management planning workshops held towards the end of the project has been the suggestion made from provincial government staff that liaison panels be set up so that stakeholders can meet to talk and share experiences and knowledge and plan the future of the sites together. WWT supports this idea and has built this into the draft management plans and future work programmes.

That said, most if not all of the successful projects/programmes initiated by WWT and its partners have shallow roots and so need careful nurturing if these activities are to become truly self-sustaining and co-managed by the community. This is a key challenge for the future.

#### Project Components

*Project Components: Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned:

Conservation planning of Boeung Prek Lapouv (BPL) and Kampong Trach (KT) embedded within national and local organizations

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

1:1 Legal protection for AP/strengthened institutional protection for both BPL and AP - legal protection for AP achieved in 2011; 40 boundary markers installed at AP and inspected during government site visit in 2011. Government staffs at national, provincial and local levels have visited both sites on several occasions to monitor conservation management activities

1:2 developing and updating management plans for both sites – extensive consultations were undertaken with government and local communities including a series of workshops in 2013. Draft plans were produced on the basis of the outputs of this consultation and submitted to FA; we are currently awaiting their endorsement by MAFF ready for beginning their implementation in January 2014.

Component 2 Planned:

Conservation management actions strengthened at BPL and KT

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

2:1 Global biodiversity and other values (food, fuel, water) resulting from management of the sites maintained or improved –

- landcover and vegetation mapping undertaken and results fed into conservation management and development of site management plans
- eco-hydrological surveys undertaken at both sites and report produced detailing *inter alia* recommendations for water level management planning in the future
- regular water level monitoring now being undertaken by LCGs and data being used for informing water level management planning
- data also collected on illegal activities, biodiversity (inc cranes) and impact of human activities on wetlands and associated wildlife
- Ecosystem services appraisals (cultivated and wild food resources) undertaken for both sites and draft reports produced. This activity has given us great insight into the extent to which local people depend on the sites to support their well-being. Data collected have been used to shape design of future planned activities. Final reports to be produced.
- water hyacinth and mimosa control programmes undertaken at BPL using local labour paid on a per diem basis. These activities have reduced the threat posed by invasive species to native wildlife.
- Sarus crane surveys over the 3 year project show an increase in numbers at AP and that the decline in numbers at BPL has been arrested.
- reserve demarcation undertaken which raised awareness of the local boundaries of the protected areas helping local people to comply with regulations

2:2 Capacity of site staff to undertake conservation activities increased.

A study tour to Ang Trapang Thmor in Cambodia and to Vietnam (various wetland sites) was undertaken with delegates from the LCGs for both sites and project staff attending. Additional specific training for LCGs including crane and biodiversity surveys, use of GPS and hydrological monitoring was provided on an ongoing basis and depending on a training needs assessment. The training programme has been effective in raising the standard of implementation of conservation activities.

As well as training to build capacity to deliver, site staff were supported throughout the programme through provision of equipment and consumables including maintenance of site accommodation, purchase and maintenance of boats, engines and other equipment.

Component 3 Planned:

Innovative long-term funding mechanisms promoted

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

Deliverable 3.1: Long term financing mechanisms piloted at the sites

A community based eco-tourism (CBET) project has been set up at Anlung Pring and is now generating funds which are placed in a community bank account. Profits from this activity will be equally shared between supporting conservation of the protected area and undertaking community projects (e.g. maintenance of local school building etc).

At BPL, CCK and WWT have worked to initiate the establishment of a community fishery (also the subject of a separate CEPF small grant). Although not yet fully designated in law, when operational it will allow for the development of micro-businesses such as equipment production and repair (nets, boats etc), added value fish products (e.g. fish paste, smoked fish etc). The CF members will lead the design and implementation of these activities with technical input from others including WWT.

Work undertaken by CIRD on production and marketing of “wildlife-friendly” products (e.g. rice but other products too) means that at AP in particular, there is now an audience of local people who have raised awareness of the potential for such products and whom we hope to engage with in the coming months and years to deliver products into the local and national markets.

Deliverable 3.2: mechanisms to promote sustainable financing of the sites advocated with donors and governments

The report produced by CIRD was disseminated to partners including local, district and provincial government and a workshop held with local people to explain findings of pilot

study. This report and its findings will be used in the next phase to set up sustainable farming groups at both sites.

**Component 4 Planned:**

Results from projects delivered by WWT, Mlup Baitong, CCK and CIRD coordinated and disseminated

**Component 4 Actual at Completion:**

**Deliverable 4.1: projects were delivered in a co-ordinated way**

Progress on activities of the consortium were reported regularly at steering group and coordinating committee meetings throughout the course of the project generally speaking at quarterly intervals although on occasions reporting took place monthly. These meetings were the fora not only for reporting but also for knowledge exchange, training and awareness activities and as a means to disseminate news throughout the wider community. Frequently, LCGs were used as a conduit for getting news and ideas (and receiving feedback) to local people.

For key documents (e.g. management plans), these have been translated into the local language to obtain greater input from local people.

**Deliverable 4.2: capacity building and support for project partners**

Training needs assessments were carried out during the project for LCGs and other key personnel and training activities delivered as appropriate. For example, LCGs at both sites received training in biological survey (including Sarus crane ecology and monitoring) and data recording; patrolling for illegal activities, use of GPS and data logging and water level monitoring.

In addition, CCK received training from WWT in undertaking ecosystem and resource use appraisals, undertaking attitude surveys of local people and control of invasive species. Mlup Baitong also received training from WWT including in eco-tourist management, Crane ecology and monitoring and hydrological monitoring.

**Deliverable 4.3 Compliance with CEPF social safeguard policies monitored and semi-annual reports submitted to CEPF**

Compliance with all CEPF safeguard policies was monitored and all reports submitted to CEPF (please see below for summary).

Deliverable 4.4: raised awareness of site management issues for Sarus Crane conservation

Issues of crane ecology and site management requirements were highlighted at the various community fora throughout the course of the project and specific training activities were targeted at our NGO partners and LCGs (see above). During the management planning workshop programme crane ecology and site management were discussed in detail with both government and local stakeholders. In addition, study tours within Cambodia and to wetlands in Vietnam attended by delegates from government and other partners have done much to raise awareness of wetland management for cranes at the two sites.

*Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?*

*All components were delivered according to the original contract (please see above)*

*Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.*

The project has not produced original tools or methodologies nor was it intended to however it has generated many reports on its activities. Key documents include:

- Ecosystem service appraisals (cultivated food, wild harvested goods) draft reports for AP and BPL
- Eco-hydrology report for both sites
- External independent project evaluation
- CIRDA report on marketing “wildlife-friendly” rice and other products at AP
- Draft site management plans (currently being endorsed by MAFF)
- Study tour reports

#### 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 consortium approach with WWT identified as responsible for project co-ordination has proven very effective but required much effort by field staff and UK staff to ensure its smooth delivery. The communications strategy WWT and partners put in place has meant that we have been able to develop a strong relationship with people around both protected areas such that they are highly aware of the project and its objectives and how they can participate in decision-making. However, we will look to streamline this approach insofar as we can without jeopardising effective communication in the next project phase.

Some essential baseline data requirements were not identified in the original programme of activities e.g. data relating to eco-hydrology and wetland resource use. These data were collected in year two and three of the project and have proved of great use in understanding the wetlands and how local people depend upon them. In retrospect, they would have been even more useful had they had been available from year one.

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

The way in which the four partners worked together to deliver the four components was in large part due to effective co-ordination. This has a high cost in terms of resource and time requirements but its contribution to the success of the project cannot be understated and should be central to any project where multiple partners are delivering side by side.

We have become aware through the independent evaluation process that some villagers have been dis-satisfied with the complaints/feedback procedures put in place for the LCGs to receive, assess and feedback to respondents on concerns they have relating to the protected area at BPL. Essentially, some villagers who have contacted the LCG on issues (notably regarding alleged illegal land conversion by itinerant Vietnamese rice growers) have not had their concerns addressed to their satisfaction. The evaluation report recommends that in future, there should be a clearly defined process put in place that allows local people's concerns to be addressed in a timely and comprehensive manner with an effective record keeping system underpinning it. WWT is happy to take this recommendation and instigate such a system at the first opportunity and back this up with adequate training of LCG staff and other key personnel.

*Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:*

Generally speaking, communication between WWT and MB was effective however when working with CCK at BPL, we were sometimes hampered by the fact that CCK personnel cannot speak English and WWT personnel cannot speak Khmer. In retrospect, it would have been useful to provide support for key CCK staff to develop English language skills and vice versa. WWT and CCK have committed to this in the next phase.

**Additional Funding**

*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 the CEPF investment in this project.*

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
WWT	In-Kind -A	\$9,100	WWT staff management time not claimed for from CEPF (equivalent to one day/month for 30 months)
WWT	In-kind - A	\$14,900	WWT overheads not claimed for from CEPF
WWT	In-kind - A	\$21,375	WWT provided support for the management costs of BirdLife Cambodia (which housed the project staff)

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

- 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.)*

**Sustainability/Replicability**

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

*Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.*

Initiating sustainable financing mechanisms has proved challenging although we have met with success too. At Anlung Pring, the establishment of the CBET has seen the first funds arrive into a community bank account in 2013 but getting to this point was not straightforward. Led by MB and key individuals from the local community, the project is now beginning to flourish but issues surrounding “ownership” and membership of the CBET hampered progress initially. A key lesson learned is that eco-tourism needs to be founded in the community if it is to be sustainable and so taking time to understand the needs and abilities of local deliverers of eco-tourism is important so too is understanding where capacity to deliver needs to be developed.

It was not our intention to focus on developing community fisheries at the outset of the project however an opportunity to do so presented itself when the Cambodian government abolished all fishing concessions. WWT and its partners reacted quickly to begin the process of designating a CF as we understood that the lack of a concession also posed a threat to any hopes of developing a sustainable fishery at BPL. This process is still in train and we will continue working with partners to develop a sustainable and co-managed CF on the next few years.

#### Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

To meet CEPF social and environmental safeguard policies WWT prepared a process framework (PF) for involuntary restrictions explaining how it would ensure implementation of these safeguards. In the PF, six-monthly community forums were suggested as a means to conduct a community wide assessment of involuntary restrictions. However, in the early stages of the project it was considered that each of the planned quarterly community forums would provide a better opportunity to assess involuntary restrictions and that these should be done in collaboration with local partners working on community development, ideally with them taking the lead in implementing the community forums as it is especially the impacts of the WWT led project that would be discussed and assessed. In March 2011 guidelines for conducting community forums that could assess involuntary restrictions were prepared and the first community forums at both sites were held (these then continued at quarterly intervals throughout the project).

#### **Community forums in Boeung Prek Lapouv**

Summary of the key issues brought up by local people during the project:

- 1) People predicted that, if current trends continued, in ten years time the increase in rice cultivation will have caused the wetland to substantially reduce in size and the wild fisheries to become unproductive.

2) Wealthy people are buying farmland from local communities and renting to Vietnamese farmers (local farmers will also rent out their land). Local people felt that farmers used a more intensive model of rice cultivation which was having serious impacts on water quality, fisheries and people's health. Furthermore, the demand for farmland was causing continuous encroachment on the wetland thus exacerbating the issues of pollution.

3) The view was also expressed that Vietnamese farmers were more likely to be involved in other unsustainable activities such as illegal fishing and hunting.

Related to this last point, there was a FiA crackdown on illegal fishing place on 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2011.

The issue of itinerant Vietnamese people cultivating rice and undertaking other activities (sometimes illegal) within the reserve during dirty season is clearly a source of great concern for many local people. This community of people was very hard to reach during the course of the project and in fact the communication strategy did not include direct contact with them. However, given the strength of feeling and the potential for serious inter-community tension and direct impacts on the wetland, WWT will seek to enable discussions to take place with them and allow for their participation in community forums in the next phase.

Another key safeguarding issue arose around the broadcast of a report on Radio Free Asia of local authorities (the LCG) stopping local people from farming their land. This was in fact a case of illegal wetland conversion but WWT were contacted by Adhoc, a civil rights group, who expressed their concern that we were preventing people from farming areas traditionally used for rice cultivation. During our meeting we were able to explain this to Mr. Un Thannon (a Director of Ad Hoc). At the end of the meeting the following recommendations were made by AdHoc:

- The project should work provide benefits to local people to reduce pressure on the wetland.
- Work to ensure that benefits accrue to local people that depend on the BPL area and not wealthy businessmen or others from outside the local communities.

We were happy to agree to these points although we did make our intention to consult with Vietnamese people about the protected area and their activities clear to the Director who accepted this.

A final key safeguarding issue arose in December 2011 when the Cambodian Prime Minister issued an order to suspend and then abolish all fishing lots in Takeo and several other provinces (this followed an earlier suspension of the Tonle Sap fishing lots). This

led to a series of land-grabbing incidents and illegal fishing within the core zone of the reserve.

In response to this, a small fish sanctuary of only 262 hectares was designated within the former fishing lot; although not optimal this restricted access by people to certain areas, including the core zone of BPL. Without the sanctuary, continued open access could easily have translated in to increased land encroachment, habitat degradation, illegal/unsustainable activities and disturbance within the core zone (land grabbing within the core zone occurred in April 2012 but was successfully dealt with by the LCG and provincial fishery authorities).

WWT response to this was to work with partner NGOs and local people to legally establish a large community fishery covering most of the reserve (and including an enlarged fish sanctuary) with the help of a \$20k grant from CEPF. This community managed fishery, when fully established, will benefit local people and help put in place sustainable fishery management.

### **Community forums in Anlung Pring**

Several community groups were established by Mlup Baitong at Anlung Pring during the course of the project. The most useful of these, the Communities and Livelihoods Development management committee (CLDMC) met quarterly to discuss conservation and livelihood issues and was formed to oversee all other community groups and to meet on a scheduled basis with the LCG to discuss conservation issues. In reality, the membership of the groups overlapped and we regularly met members who were the most active and capable people in the community and who had a respected position within their society. They were the best people to talk with about conservation issues and to communicate issues from either conservation or livelihoods points of view. In all the meetings with this group, there were no reports of issues affecting local people's livelihoods as a result of project activities.

Additional Comments/Recommendations
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## 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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The one month project extension to July 31<sup>st</sup> was used to undertake an independent project evaluation and complete an attitudes survey. No work took place with the local communities or in the protected areas.

\*\*\*If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages\*\*\*

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(Enter Grant Term)

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.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2013 to May 30, 2014. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	no			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?	none			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.	no			



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 1below.	n/a			

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



Total																			

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit: