

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

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

Organization Legal Name	International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM)
Project Title	Stung Treng Ramsar Site in Cambodia – Integrating Fisheries Management and Wetlands Conservation (Phase II)
CEPF GEM No.	64046
Date of Report	31 August 2016

CEPF Hotspot: Indo-burma

Strategic Direction: 4 - Empower local communities to engage in conservation and management of priority key biodiversity areas

Grant Amount: USD180,000.00

Project Dates: 2014/4/1 – 2016/7/30

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

a) Community Fisheries (CFi) Organizations and its members are the main partner to deliver the project results. A total of 14 local villages were involved in establishing and managing 5 fish conservation zones in the Stung Treng Ramsar site. Selected community members were involved in initial identification of new candidate sites while others participated in assessing the merits of their designation as additional conservation areas. The 14 local communities actively participated in developing and updating management plan for all the 5 areas and selected members of CFi are engaged in implementing day-to-day activities of the project, particularly patrolling, raising awareness of other local fishers and community member about the importance of the fish conservation zones, and also in sharing lessons from their patrol work. They are also the nucleus of the network of CFi groups in the Ramsar site.

CFi groups have significant number of women in their membership as well as the management committee. Although women have been less active in activities that take place at night time, such as patrolling, they have been involved in reporting illegal fishing offenders. Significant amount of financial contribution has been made from community savings groups, represented mainly by women, to support the CFi operations; thus women have been playing key role in demanding for transparency and accountability on the part of CFi committee to manage the CFi funds and resources.

b) The Stung Treng Ramsar Site Management Unit, the Department of Environment

(DoE) in Stung Treng province, is an essential partner to the project and has been actively working hand in hand with the CFI groups in the project implementation, particularly the joint patrolling. The DoE's rangers for the Ramsar site are the closest collaborators to CFI in conducting joint patrolling of the fish conservation zones and thus an important partner in law enforcement on the ground. Its supervisory agency, the DoE, has provided administrative support to arrange for CFI and rangers to use confiscated boats from illegal fishers in patrolling.

c) Fisheries Administration (FiA), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
The Department of Fisheries Conservation (DFC) at FiA in Phnom Penh, and FiA Cantonment (provincial) office in Stung Treng are essential partners to the project and have regularly participated in the project activities with their continued engagement in periodical project meetings and occasional patrolling with the CFI and DoE rangers. FiA also provides advice on how to improve the design of fish conservation zones and the mechanism for patrolling. FiA Cantonment office in Stung Treng province advises the project on legal and law enforcement issues, including capacity building of CFI groups for enforcement of Fisheries Law, and a joint training was provided to CFI members by trainers from DFC, FiA Cantonment, DoE and to update the CFI members on the fisheries and environmental regulations.

c) Local NGOs – CRDT (Cambodia Rural Development Team) and CEPA (Culture and Environment Preservation Association) have been WorldFish's local partners on a number of projects and their work focuses on providing livelihood assistance to the local communities. CEPA is working on livelihood support through value chain development for agriculture commodities in selected communities in the same target area and beyond. Both NGOs were involved in facilitating local community groups, Savings Groups in particular, to make financial contributions to the cause of community-based fisheries management through supporting CFI groups. This is an important role for the NGOs as the Savings Groups tend to feel that these NGOs are their guardian whose agreement should be sought if they want to share their revenue for other purposes. Engagement with these NGOs was also sought to link the conservation initiative with livelihood support, thus keeping local communities motivated.

d) Local authorities from the participating communes, including village chiefs, commune councilors and chiefs, have been instrumental in moving the project forward. Commune chiefs have provided official letters authorizing CFI members to carry out patrol beyond their respective village boundaries across the Ramsar site. Commune councilors integrated some activities from the site management plans developed by the CFI groups into their annual Commune Investment Plan (CIP). The councilors and village chiefs also directly joined patrolling in many occasions with CFI members and rangers.

All the partners above were involved in designating sites for fisheries conservation and also in development and update of management plans for the sites. CFI groups, the rangers, WorldFish, CEPA, FiA, DPA and My Village (other NGOs active in the area) have now initiated in a joint effort to establish a network of CFI group for the whole Stung Treng province.

Conservation Impacts

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

The project addresses the CEPF's strategic direction 4: Empower local communities to engage in conservation and management of priority key biodiversity areas through actions under investment priority: 4.2 Pilot and amplify community forests, community fisheries and community-managed protected areas, and 4.3 Develop co-management mechanisms for formal protected areas that enable community participation in all levels of management.

The project has built on the success made in its first phase (2011-2014) in piloting CFI groups to establish and manage their fisheries areas. With the project CFIs became more aware of the need for taking initiative and nominated new sites with strong justification for designation as conservation zones, rather than following the project-led actions as often found during Phase I. The project has also mobilized the CFI groups to work together across the Ramsar site to patrol and manage multiple sites as a team in a co-management arrangement, working with Ramsar site rangers as their closest partner, and also with local authorities, the DoE and FiA Cantonment as their supporters.

3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project

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

List each long-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

- The conservation of critical habitats and species within the Stung Treng Ramsar wetland complex and the sustainability of local livelihoods reconciled through ecosystem-based fisheries co-management.
- Replication of a model approach for aquatic biodiversity conservation and protected area management to other freshwater conservation priority areas in the Mekong River system and its tributaries is well taken and successfully implemented.

4. Actual progress toward long-term impacts at completion

- At the beginning of the Phase II, three additional deep pool areas in the main river channel, reportedly representing important dry season habitats for fish and other aquatic animals, were nominated by CFI groups for designation as fish conservation areas, and two were selected by CFI groups from across the Ramsar site and other relevant stakeholders including local authorities. Management plans for each of the new areas were developed while an update was made to the management plans of 3 existing sites, and were implemented by the local communities for the entire project period of 28 months, between April 2014 and July 2016. To strengthen the management of the 5 areas, a common management plan was developed integrating all the individual site management plans for a network of CFI groups and rangers to patrol the 5 sites and the areas in-between the sites jointly. This network effort helped them to respond to recent evolution in illegal fishing when perpetrators carry out illegal fishing in large group and challenge community patrol, as oppose to small number of individuals doing illegal fishing independently

- A practical approach established for all stakeholders to engage in site identification, management planning and implementation, organizing patrolling in particular. Local CFI groups maintain their commitments through their long term partnership with Ramsar site rangers, local authority and other stakeholders. Lessons from project implementation are shared by community representatives as they participated in various meetings and forums, at the community level, within the province, and in other provinces and at the national level. While a network at the Ramsar level is established and functional in identifying and sharing lessons, and issues and concerns in resource management at the local level, a broader network of provincial level CFI groups is being established. Based on issues and concerns raised by community members, inputs to site based management plan by the government were provided at the early stage of the project when comments on Ramsar management were sought for.
- Contributions from some other local community groups, savings groups in particular, have been secured not only as local financial inputs but also a means to raise awareness on local ownership over resource protection. Other incentives provided has also been through engagement of actives members to become beneficiaries of livelihood projects supported by other NGOs such as in Kralapeas, Veun Saen, Koh Snaeng, and Thmei. Other WorldFish project on small scale aquaculture also targets its support to provide in incentives to active community members in Koh Khorndin and Thmei villages.
- Thanks to close collaboration of local community members and rangers particularly in their joint patrol, and the involvement of other stakeholders in planning and advising management implementation strong local ownership is developed. For example Koh Sneng commune chief, Mr. Duong Lean, said “I myself participated in many meetings to help with facilitation for Chaom Thom and Koh Kei communities to agree on the identification and boundary for area to be protected including on how community should go on patrol, the development of a management plan for the site, facilitation to seek solutions to conflict in the initial stages, and dissemination of information”. As perceived by communities, fish biomass and diversity either increases or at least remains the same, in both the conservation zones and also the surrounding waters and this can be reflected in catch and the presence of large fish in their pursue of feed. Although it is still difficult to substantiate those observations with scientific data, the perception of positive impact was widely held among the local stakeholders who continued to support those observations during the lesson sharing and networking workshops in June and December 2015 and also in April 2016. The perceived positive effect has created fairly strong incentives for local participation and continuation of the patrol.
- Active member of CFI groups, the patrol teams, and rangers have reported learning as a result of their engagement in the whole process from site identification, development and implementation of management plan across site. Community learns to respond changing pattern of threats from illegal fishing, by enhancing their physical presence than targeting to arrest the offenders. They also initiated an establishment of physical obstacles in the conservation areas to prevent mobile gears from fishing.

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

List each short-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

- Successful community-based fisheries management for the existing 3 priority conservation areas of the Ramsar site strengthened and expanded to at least 2 new

sites with 5 or more CFi groups, making a total of 15 out of 21 CFis groups engaging in the current management framework.

- The network of 21 villages within the Ramsar site functions as a venue to discuss issues and priorities that require coordination among several villages. The network will gradually expand to include CFi groups outside of the Ramsar site.
- An established community representation in all stages of the upcoming Kratie-Stung Treng Ramsar processes of management planning and actions (led by MoE and WWF), and ensure that community's voice and lessons from their field experiences are sufficiently heard and reflected in the national level policy.

5. Actual progress toward short-term impacts at completion

- Achieved. Successful co-management model from the 3 priority fish conservation areas from Phase 1 was expanded to 2 additional sites and formed a network of 5 conservation areas under co-management arrangement by 14 CFi groups. Along with a common management plan developed for all sites, the CFi groups and rangers conduct joint patrol across all sites. Sign marks and flags are installed and replaced as needed at selected locations to inform of the conservation boundary and restriction from fishing in addition to guard posts at strategic locations.
- CFi networks have been established at 3 levels. A network of active CFi of 14 villages managing the five conservation areas directly supported by the project meet monthly to share progress with management of the areas, emerging issues and lessons learned in the process. Another network consisting of all communities living within the Ramsar site is formed and meet quarterly to discuss concerns and recommendations on local area management from their own experience, to ensure that the information is consolidated and reported at monthly Commune Council meetings. A provincial CFi network to share concerns and lessons in regard to fisheries resource management across the province is being established, through a joint effort of CFi groups, DOE rangers, FiA, WorldFish, CEPA, MVi, and PDA.
- Communities have identified and consolidated their concerns in regards to forthcoming implementation of Ramsar site management led by MOE. Initial comments from them were incorporated in the current management plan at its preparation in the early stage of the present project. The plan was adopted last year and MoE and DoE have recently secured funding for implementation; according to DOE an action plan is to be developed late 2016 for implementation in 2017. Key concerns were shared and consolidated for communication with DOE/MOE during provincial network meetings/workshops organized by the project in May and December 2015, and April 2016. Their concerns include limited understanding of the contents of the new Ramsar management plan, their roles in and benefits from implementation of some of the plan, and recent incidence of fish kills in May, as the local fishers speculate the cause to be either fish poisoning or effect of hydropower dam construction just about a kilometer upstream from the border with Lao PDR.

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

Successes

- Communities and relevant stakeholders actively participated in nominating and selecting new areas for conservation and are now more confident in the participatory process of decision-making and management planning, taking the ownership of their collective decisions;
- The close working relationship between CFi and Ramsar rangers to patrol fisheries, initially for each individual conservation area, has now evolved into a larger collaboration among network of CFi groups and peer support mechanism.
- Community members learn how to coordinate to support each other during patrolling across individual sites and to innovate in dealing with new illegal fishing practices, for example, installment of physical obstacles to prevent the use of long drift nets;
- The community feeling the sense of secured tenure and ownership of the natural resource in their care as a result of taking own decisions on site identification, management planning and implementation process.

Challenges

- The expected livelihood support to be provided by other local NGOs did not reach all participating communities of our project, especially the mostly poor communities, for the livelihood assistance to serve the role of incentives for them to get involved in the project to the extent we would have liked. This was particularly disappointing for a community that was already struggling to sustain its momentum in protecting a fish conservation zone after the phase 1. Despite some amendments to relax the restrictions in the access to fishing ground adjacent to the conservation zone (as a social safeguard to some selected poorer families in the village), a community patrol team could not keep up its team motivation and the team leader also left the village for work in the city leaving the rest of the team discouraged.
- As the project was developed we did not expect the fishing pressure to increase to the extent it did. The change in current fishing and illegal fishing practice in particular, requires more intensive patrol effort with a larger team to counter the perpetrators who have started appearing in larger groups of around 10 boats at a time. This resulted in less frequent patrol as the number of people in the patrol team and their total availability remained the same as before.
- The phase I project and the early part of the phase II project enjoyed close collaboration from fishermen in recording their catch but many discontinued their recording of the fish catch because they went farming away from home or left village for labor migration. In some cases fishermen who were collecting fish catch data voluntarily through our project support felt it was unfair that other fishermen supported by another NGO project in the Ramsar site received monthly cash payment for measuring and recording their fish catch.
- The project objective of engaging all 21 communities in a network in the first place was not easy at the beginning and was only achieved towards the end of the project as partnerships were made with other NGO-supported projects in Stung Treng province to respond to community desire to develop a provincial network of CFi groups.

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

- When CFI groups requested local savings groups to contribute funds for CFI operations the savings groups demanded more transparency in spending regardless of how small their contributions are. This has resulted in improvement in financial accountability of the CFI groups;
- Fish catch recording by local fishers went so well during Phase I and early part of Phase II that it was very disappointing when we found out that local fishers had abandoned the recording due to the reasons described in the “Challenges” above. As a result less we were not able to document project outcome on fisheries productivity as was originally planned;
- Also as the Don Sahong Hydropower Project in Laos just 1 kilometer upstream from the border started construction fish kills were reported in Cambodia and the dwindling sub-population of Irrawaddy dolphins found near the Lao border reportedly went down to only few individuals, just before the end of the project in May 2016. This negative news led the communities to wonder whether their effort would go futile in a future.
- Community reported that they learned a lot from joint patrolling with other CFI groups across the Ramsar site covering all the 5 conservation areas, including how to plan for patrol and how to coordinate the routes so that the teams participating in any given patrol event can provide back up to other teams in a timely manner. They have also learned to deal with certain illegal fishing practices more effectively at their own initiative by placing obstacles in water that damage fishing nets using bamboo trees at 3 out of the 5 conservation areas to deter the use of drift net in these areas by illegal fishers.

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Component 1 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

Component (1) Strengthening and scaling out the fish conservation zone approach within the Stung Treng Ramsar site;

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

Two additional conservation areas were identified and selected through a community led process and with the decision on the selection made with involvement of all relevant stakeholders: all communities managing the first 3 conservation areas, local authorities, and two NGOs active in the area – CEPA and CRDT. As a result two more areas covering additional 181 ha have been designated for conservation and individual management plans were developed and updated for each area. Two more management committees were established with 12 members, making a total number of management committee members for the 5 conservation areas to 25. Two more patrol teams, with 13 rotating members, were mobilized, making up the total 89 members of community patrol team roster for the 5 areas. Flags and other boundary markers have been placed for each of the conservation areas and were periodically replaced as needed.

In 2016 a process of merging the 5 management plans into one plan was completed and the communities now have a patrol teams making joint patrol across the site in addition to their responsibility for each individual area. A training was provided to 24 selected community patrol members and rangers to get them familiar with newly enacted legal instruments relevant to the area and refresh their knowledge on how to conduct an effective fisheries patrol in the area by trainers from national Fisheries Administration (FiA), FiA provincial cantonment and provincial Department of Environment.

Seven savings groups have entered into written agreements with CFis groups from 7 villages including one outside the project area and commit to share proceed from their group lending at 3 to 5% of their interest revenue to support CFi patrolling; in return, the saving groups demanded that the CFi have a transparency in reporting its spendings.

Inconsistent records from local fishers as many of them have to travel for jobs outside of their communities, or engaged in farming in newly reclaimed land far from home it is a challenge to use the records for a meaningful analysis. The project had thus stepped up actions with raising awareness on the benefits of fish catch recording to local communities, negotiated for changes in the practice of other NGO projects, asked for data generated from those projects to complement the available records, and secured more data on perceived changes by community and relevant stakeholders to support its monitoring. Regular field survey to update safeguard document have been also made use.

9. Repeat point 8 above for each Component in your approved proposal

Component (2) Establishing a learning network of CFi in the Stung Treng Ramsar site and beyond;

A network of five conservation areas established with 14 communities active in the area management. The network members, consisting of all community patrol members and selected Ramsar site rangers have a monthly meeting to report on progress within the month, identify emerging issues, share lessons, and plan for their following month.

A network of Ramsar site CFi consisting of the members above and include other stakeholders – such as CFi management committee, village chief and commune councilors, other non CFi members - and other communities, is convened for a quarterly meeting. Members in the network also include those engaged in project facilitated by CEPA. Members of the 14 active communities managing the 5 areas play roles as core group to stimulate discussion to identify issues and concerns within the Ramsar site, particularly in regard to fisheries management, the management of the Ramsar site and issues with development within and in its surrounding area. The network also has its members participate in selected monthly commune meetings to report and share their concerns. The project so far has facilitated in convening the quarterly meetings that are held at the community level, communications through other project to identify members/focal point persons, and framing questions.

Through a coordinated effort with FiA, CEPA, MVi, PFD, a provincial level CFi network was conceptualized with more details discussed and agreed to in the last network meeting held last April at the provincial town participated by communities, local authorities and relevant stakeholders from within Ramsar site and beyond. It is on development now.

Component (3) Facilitating long-term policy engagement of local communities in the Ramsar site management planning and implementation.

A list of concerns and recommendations by communities is generated and used in semi-regular dialogue with provincial DoE while also try to get update on status of Ramsar management plan and share concerns and recommendations from communities, advise on how they should engage communities for a meaningful result in Ramsar site management. Liaise with DoE is made to obtain information on progress and advise on process for adoption of the management plan by provincial council.

Lessons learned from all the project activities have been documented with communities and selected community representations were sent to join in lessons sharing workshops by other WorldFish project and other projects and in revision of current CFI sub-decree in and outside of the province to build their capacity on how they should prepare to negotiate and advocate for their community voice. Community members and project staff also joined in organizing a World Wetland day on 02 February 2016 in O'Svay village.

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

- While facing with constraint in generating consistent data on fish catch for a meaningful analysis, alternative approach has been sought to achieve monitoring purpose. Although this does not have substantial adverse impacts on the overall project implementation, it hindered the development of a community of practice among local fishermen in monitoring their resources which could have helped them gain a stronger voice in their resource management in the future.
- Similarly with the delay in implementation of Ramsar management plan communities simply were not able to have direct interactions to contribute to implementation of the plan and to defense their interest from potential impacts by the plan.

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

- Documented lessons learned; (Attached)
- Fact sheet (in Khmer version, not attached);
- Training materials (Not attached): The materials that are produced in Khmer include:
 - o Recently adopted legal materials: 1) *Prakas* on establishment of management and conservation of Mekong fisheries biodiversity; 2) *Prakas* on Measures to protect brood fish in the spawning season in the Mekong of Stung Treng province; 3) *Prakas* on Updated list of small fishing gears allowed in fishing and non-fishing seasons;
 - o Guidelines: 1) How to patrol in a protected area; 2) Conflicts and how to deal with them in resource management 3) How to file complaints and complaint forms

- Management plan for the five fisheries conservation areas produced in Khmer (Not attached): The content includes: backgrounds for each of the 5 areas, their current uses, past and existing supports, management activities and progress with CEPF support, management prescriptions for 2016-2017, financial sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation; plus a collection of tables of key biodiversity in the areas, criteria for site sections, members of community management committees and patrol team members, rules for patrol, form of fish recording, and key consideration for livelihood safeguards.
- A Digital presentation (Attached)
- Final social safeguard report (Attached)
- In their hands: Communities act to save fisheries in Cambodia;
<http://blog.worldfishcenter.org/2016/07/in-their-hands/>
- Video: Integrating fisheries management and wetland conservation, Stung Treng Ramsar site, Cambodia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxO4yjOdqG8>

Benefits to Communities

12. Please describe the communities that have benefited from CEPF support

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

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit												
	Subsistence economy	Small landowners	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists / nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Other*	Size of Community				Increased access to clean water	Increased food security	Increased access to energy	Increased access to public services (e.g. health care, education)	Increased resilience to climate change	Improved land tenure	Improved recognition of traditional knowledge	Improved representation and decision-making in governance forums/structures	Improved access to ecosystem services
								50-250 people	251-500 people	501-1,000 people	Over 1,001 people									
Thmei	x									x										x
Koh Khordin	x		x							x							x	x		x
Kham Phan	x								x								x			x
Khe	x								x								x	x		x
Koh Sneng	x		x								x						x			x
Koh Sralau	x		x								x									x
Kaoh Kei	x		x						x											x
Choam Thum	x								x											x
O'Svay	x		x								x						x	x		x
O'Run	x		x								x						x			x

Veun Sien	x		x						x				x						x
Koh Hib	x		x						x				x						x
Koh Chheutealtouch	x		x							x			x					x	x
Krala Peas	x		x							x			x					x	x

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

Lessons Learned

13. Describe any lessons learned related to organizational development and capacity building.

Where the sense of ownership to the project is built among the local communities, communities and stakeholders are more likely to develop their own initiatives and bring own ideas forward to improve the project implementation. On the other hand, they are mostly constrained by lack of resources and limited appreciation, particularly by higher authority. . In an effort to develop a joint patrol across site covering the 5 conservation areas, communities were encouraged to design how they patrol only with minimal financial support provided by the project and administrative support extended by local authority to realize their plan. And with the challenges they faced while on duty they learned how to make better coordination so they can provide backup support to each other in time of need. They also learned how to work together better than when they had to only patrol their individual conservation area when not much interactions among them were required.

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

The participatory process as a primary approach throughout the project implementation with the local communities in Stung Treng Ramsar site ensured that the people and other stakeholders to have their say in negotiation for selection and planning for more areas to be set aside for conservation. Although not all of the community members were able to participate directly in the consultation process because of their day-to-day livelihoods, regular village meetings held at different levels and frequency as part of the project design provided additional opportunities for more voices to be heard. Where communities are knowledgeable and experienced enough with their resource management issues it made more sense to simply ask them to come up with own ideas and have them negotiate with each other with regards to key decisions, with minimal facilitation of WorldFish staff. The project was designed as an adoptive management process, which provided a more open space for community interactions in their own way and was thus more inclusive in the decision making process.

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

Allowing community to voice their concerns and recommend how to deal with them and share responsibility between local community and project in taking community recommendations forward would not only deliver intended outcome but also build local ownership and reduce reliance/dependence on only external support.

16. Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

Because the local communities are engaged from the beginning of the project even when they found out later on that some of them are impacted from the conservation rules they themselves had set they were able to come together and find solutions. This however needs local leadership with recognized authority over all communities around an area including those who claim to have been negatively affected by the project. With commune chief playing leading role in convening community meetings, both those who felt adverse impacts and those benefited from the project could renegotiate their interests and find a new balance in the conservation regime in their areas. This way of resolving conflicts worked very well because the communities felt that they were bound by their commitments made since

the beginning of the project when they agreed to set aside the area for conservation where access restrictions were agreed to by all parties.

Sustainability / Replication

17. Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated

The main focus of the project was to build the community capacity to secure financial resources and in-kind support for CFI operations on their own, from local sources. The communities participated in the project had previously experienced “lean times” when they did not receive external project support for a few years but were still able to sustain their patrol activities at a minimum level with some support from commune chief. An independent mid-term project review commissioned by WorldFish in February 2016 confirmed that the communities are committed to continue patrolling the conservation zones after the project support ends. In the current patrol arrangement, the patrol teams are organized to work together as a network for the 5 areas collectively, involving those communities that had survived lean time in the past and new ones to work in a joint patrol. They have now built a bond that they need each other for a patrol to be effective and they do respond to call by others requesting back up. Many of the community patrol teams are built with a structure that involved not only community members but also Ramsar site rangers and even members of local authority – village headman and/or commune councilor. The team is thus accountable to mandate by CFI organization, the Ramsar site management, and local government which are all re-enforcing each other. It is thus highly likely that they will be able to support each other once any of the three receives support. For example, more funding should be available in the coming few years to the commune through decentralization policy, or fund should be made available next year to DoE for enhancement of patrol through WWF funded project. Through this project DoE has already come up with its own initiative requesting the MoE to allow Community/Ranger team to use boats confiscated from illegal fishing for patrol purpose. This successfully provided incentive for the Ramsar rangers and community to work together more closely. As of July 2016, seven Savings Groups have entered into formal written agreements certified by commune chief to provide between 3 and 5 percent of their proceeds from loan repayments to finance CFI patrol activities. Efforts continue with other NGOs that support establishment of other Savings Groups in the area to encourage their contribution to CFI activities. The participatory process adopted by the project is consistent with current government policy and practices by all stakeholders. These provide firm ground that the project is highly likely sustained and replicated.

However, there are some challenges ahead. The pressure of fisheries resource is mounting and illegal fishing will not be easily curtailed unless it is addressed within a larger framework of whole resource governance involving more than just fish and fisheries. The community approach with the support of local government can be successful in deterring illegal activities on the ground but when the scale of offense is large and organized, it has to be more consistently addressed through judicial actions at higher levels of government authority. Financial contributions made by local interest groups such as Savings Groups remains too small, for their capital is also small, to cover the cost of CFI operations. More robust mechanisms to generate revenue directly for CFI organizations are needed.

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

WWF-MoE has secured a project to provide support for management of Stung Treng Ramsar site and ground activities had not been materialized yet but according to the DoE it may come late at the end of

2016. The project activities will dedicate on building capacity of Ramsar rangers to patrol and enforce the rule for protection of the site.

The Partnership Programme to Support Forestry and Fishery Communities in Kratie and Stung Treng Provinces, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), has started implementation jointly by NTFP-EP, WWF, RECOFTC, and CEPA in 30 communities in the two provinces, including seven villages in Ramsar site. The program focus is on development of community forestry, fisheries and community processing enterprises. WorldFish has negotiated for our partner CFI groups to become beneficiaries of the SDC project. The project has also appreciated the network approach and structure developed under the CEPF-funded WorldFish project and this resulted in a joint effort on the development of a provincial network of CFI.

Safeguards

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

The main focus of the social safeguard strategy of the project was to prevent potential impacts from designation and implementation of the fish conservation areas and to amend management rules to address negative impacts reported by communities in the process of implementation. For example, the project avoided selecting an area for conservation if that would potentially cause significantly negative impacts on local community livelihoods. In addition, where some impacts are foreseen measures are put in place to mitigate as much as possible or alternative fishing grounds for the poor are identified.

The project has engaged local communities and stakeholders through a participatory process for a deliberation on proposals by communities to select two new areas for conservation. The set of criteria used in Phase I was revised to take advantage of the lessons learned from the Phase I. The buffer zone of the selected areas was designed to allow for the affected communities to continue accessing the area for fishing and other uses. Not only the communities living next to the area were consulted but also those fairly distant but have the history of using the areas in the past were also consulted and engaged in the planning and implementation process. In addressing grievance expressed by some local community members, local authorities were invited to lead the investigation and broad community members were engaged to validate the claims and to arrive at solution that most, if not all, were able to accept.

Monthly visits were conducted by the project team to follow up with communities living around each of the five conservation areas in addition to raising questions during patrol team meeting to update on emerging issues. In both quarterly network meetings at the community level and the lessons sharing workshops/ network meetings at the provincial level involving representatives of all communities participating in managing the 5 areas, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders the community members were also asked if there had been any negative livelihood impacts to the poor families within the communities as result of the project. While some villagers reported challenges with lean times during the year they confirmed that it was not because of the project.

In two instances where some community members reported adverse impacts on their access to fishing, consultation was made with the community chiefs leading the effort. One of the cases was solved by readjustment to the boundary restriction while the other was confirmed by the community members as

not being the impacts on small scale fishers but rather on large-scale commercial fishers whose gears were illegal and thus should not be allowed in any fishing grounds in the first place.

An external mid-term review was conducted in February 2016 covering all five conservation areas and interviewed poor families living nearby specifically on those issues. The responses were generally that the safeguards already in place were sufficient and that although fishing was banned in the designated conservation zones, their fish catch improved because of the overall decline in illegal fishing operations in the area.

Additional Funding

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

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Fondation Ensemble	A	EUR80,000	

* Categorize the type of funding as:

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

Additional Comments/Recommendations

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

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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