

# CEPF Final Project Completion Report

<b>Organization Legal Name</b>	Center for Water Resource Conservation and Development (WARECOD)
<b>Project Title</b>	Impacts of Khau Ca Species and Habitat Conservation Area Establishment on the Livelihoods of local people - An assessment from the community perspective
<b>CEPF GEM No.</b>	CEPF-052-2016
<b>Date of Report</b>	31 December, 2016

**CEPF Hotspot:** Indoburma Hotspot. Vietnam, Ha Giang Province, Bac Me District. Within the Sino-Vietnamese Limestone priority corridor

**Strategic Direction:** SD4 "Empower local communities to engage in conservation and management of priority key biodiversity areas". Investment Priority 4.1 "Raise awareness about biodiversity conservation legislation among target groups at priority sites".

**Grant Amount:** US\$ 20.000

**Project Dates:** April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## 1. Implementation Partners for this Project

*The Division of Natural Resources and Environment of Bac Me District:* was our key partner and supporter in this project. During the preparation stage, we had discussed with Bac Me Division of Natural Resources and Environment to get inputs for the proposed project. We had also consulted with them in some of our activities. They sent their staff to support us when we needed, especially at the beginning when we needed to gain trust from the local residents.

*Bac Me District and communes' People Committees:* supported us with administrative procedures. They provided us with reports and documents on the socio-economic conditions of the District as a whole, and more specifically, of the Ming Son commune. They also advised us about ideal research locations within the project area..

*Division of Agriculture and Rural Development of Bac Me District:* provided us with information related to agricultural activities in the research site. They also helped us identify the potential negative impacts that local communities faced when Khau Ca SHCA was established. They discussed with us about potential solutions to help villagers stabilize their livelihoods and strengthen the conservation activities.

*Khau Ca Species and Habitat Conservation Area:* provided us with information related to conservation such as the personnel who is responsible for patrolling and protecting the conservation area, the financial resources needed to maintain it, the roles of conservation officers, as well as the conservation situation within the community. They also shared with us the potential difficulties and challenges that our project could be faced with during the implementation process.

*Ha Giang Department of Natural Resources and Environment:* helped us understand the policies and programs related to conservation that had been implemented in Ha Giang Province and Bac Me District. They provided us with the list of organizations working on conservation in Ha Giang Province.

*Fauna & Flora International:* allowed us to discuss with a project officer of FFI in Bac Me District to ask them about their experience. They shared with us difficulties and advantages when they worked in Phia Deng.

### *Conservation Impacts*

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

Phia Deng is a village in Minh Son commune, Bac Me District, Ha Giang Province, which belongs to the Sino-Vietnamese Limestone corridor, the priority site of CEPF's priority region. Phia Deng is in the buffer zone of Khau Ca SHCA, where there is habitat of Tonkin snub-nosed monkeys. Project implementation in Phia Deng village has contributed to enhancing people's awareness and knowledge about conservation, helped them understand the role and value of conservation to their lifestyles, traditional customs, and community relations.

## **3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project**

### *Overall results:*

Utilizing the Thaibaan research method which incorporates local community participation, our project identified that the Khau Ca SHCA establishment has impacted daily living and agricultural production of Phia Deng village. The research findings showed that Khau Ca SHCA establishment has reduced rice productivity, and their crops were affected by disease outbreak and animals in the forest. Moreover, 1 out of 15 households left their rice field fallow because of the need for space for livestock, lack of money for buying fertilizer, and land reclamation. They lack enough space for cattle and chicken raising; land productivity is reduced and the local community saw a loss in income from non-timber products.. Further, the reduction in non-timber products caused conflict among local community members in exploiting these products.

### *Impact:*

Using the Thaibaan research method has helped local researchers enhance their capacity and has raised awareness in the local community's daily life. Participating in the project has made Phia Deng villagers more confident, proactive and responsible for their own community. Some changes brought by the project are as follows:

- ❖ Villagers are committed to and responsible for their work and their fellow community members.
- ❖ Villagers took the project's work very seriously. They arranged their housework and farming activities to allow them to participate in conducting the research. They were willing to share stories, impacts from Khau Ca SHCA, as well as communicate about the role and importance of nature conservation.

- ❖ The villagers' capacities have been enhanced, for both women and men in the research group. They collectively became very confident and the group representative was able to clearly present their findings in front of many participants in the workshops.
- ❖ Villagers have embraced their talent and rediscovered the Dao songs. Before participating in the project, women in Phia Deng village were shy to share or sing Dao's songs, or even talk to strangers. After the project ended, they are confident in talking, singing, etc. Women in the Thaibaan research group did a great job as they composed songs in the Dao language and performed confidently in front of many people. The song lyrics are "In the past, there were many trees and animals in the forest. Local people came into the forest to exploit trees and trap animals. Then, the project came to work with them, they understand that they must protect the forest and should not come to forest to exploit and trap anymore."

### *Planned Goal*

The conservation of Khau Ca Species and Habitat Conservation Area (SHCA), Ha Giang province includes participation of local communities, and does not negatively impact their livelihoods.

#### **4. Actual progress toward Goal at completion**

The goal has largely been achieved. After the project, we conducted a survey on villagers' awareness about the importance of biodiversity conservation. The results show that 100% of villagers understood the issue (increased from 38.9% before the project) and agreed to join conservation work. Of these, 83.3% had a very clear understanding about the issue, compared to 16.7% before the project. Our research also showed that 100% of household have been affected by the establishment of Khau Ca SHCA, due to a reduction in farming land and other livelihood activities. If anything we can do next is to help villagers with their livelihood activities and support them in terms of providing more training on conservation and guide them in setting up and maintaining their conservation club so they can keep working with neighbouring villages on this important issue.

#### **Planned Objectives (as stated in the approved proposal)**

1. The impacts of Khau Ca SHCA's establishment on the livelihoods of local people have been identified, analyzed, and well understood.
2. The importance of Khau Ca's biodiversity in general, and specifically the results of this project, are well understood by local and provincial-level stakeholders.

#### **5. Actual progress toward Objectives at completion**

Both objectives have been fully achieved.

#### **6. Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its goal and objectives**

Local researchers understood the impacts of Khau Ca SHCA to their life, especially to production activities and income sources. However, local researchers understood the value of conservation and were strongly aligned with local authorities about conservation activities and proposed solutions to the local authorities to help them improve and stabilize livelihoods in the future. The project was implemented in only one site while there are many communities located in the buffer zone of the conservation area. Thus, one of the challenges and limitations of this project was its limited impact on the large scale.

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

None

## Project Activities and Deliverables

Objective	Deliverable
<b>Objective 1:</b> The impacts of Khau Ca SHCA's establishment on the livelihoods of local people have been identified, analyzed, and are well understood.	
<b>Activity 1.1:</b> Hold an opening workshop to introduce the project to the community, and establish the Thaibaan research team (10-12 volunteers (at least 30% women) with diverse backgrounds, careers, and ages).	Workshop held. Outputs documented in workshop report. Thaibaan research team established.
<b>Activity 1.2:</b> Train the local research team over 3 days in topics including listening, note-taking, teamwork, documenting, questioning, and communication skills.	Training conducted.
<b>Activity 1.3:</b> The local research team conducts Thaibaan research on topics including the history of the village, socio-economic conditions, main livelihoods and resources, changes in access to and management of natural resources, the local flora and fauna, and the local livelihoods of pre/post establishment of Khau Ca SHCA.	Research conducted. Results documented in research report.

### **8. Describe the activities implemented and deliverables met under Objective 1**

To meet Objective 1, WARECOD collaborated with Minh Son CPC to organize an opening workshop to start the project (reintroduce contents of project, project objectives, time frame, etc.). After the opening workshop, a Thaibaan research team was established consisting of 15 villagers (9 women and 6 men) to implement the research.

Before conducting research, the Thaibaan research group was trained with necessary skills, including team work, group discussion, note taking, presentation, questioning, taking photos, etc. These skills continued to be reinforced for the research members during the research.

The research group under the support of WARECOD staff developed monthly research plans. The research group implemented the different research topics chronologically beginning with the Village history, then customs and culture of Dao people, their current livelihood conditions, the impacts of Khau Ca SHCA to their agricultural production, daily living routines and finally, other aspects (culture, traditions, etc). The research group also had a number of group discussions to identify relevant solutions that could potentially help them improve their lives and livelihoods.

Objective	Deliverable
<b>Objective 2:</b> Residents of local communities have increased capacity to engage in conservation of Khau Ca SHCA, and engage with local authorities to better mitigate negative impacts on their livelihoods.	
<b>Activity 2.1:</b> Organize a media event at the village or commune level with participation by the district’s Division of Culture, in order to promote biodiversity conservation and raise awareness among a wider audience.	Media event held. News covered by provincial newspapers and probably VTV2.
<b>Activity 2.2:</b> Organize a closing workshop to share the results of the Thaibaan research with relevant stakeholders such as the Khau Ca SHCA Management Board and other local authorities.	Workshop held, including at least 20 representatives of local villagers and authorities.

**9. Describe the activities implemented and deliverables met under Objective 2**

Instead of collaborating with local authorities such as Bac Me DPC, Bac Me's Division of Natural Resource and Environment, Minh Son CPC, and Forest Protection Dept. of Bac Me to organize the closing workshop, we decided to collaborate with our other projects in the Lo - Gam river basin (fishery co-management at Na Hang District, Tuyen Quang Province, integrated water resource management project in Bac Me District, Ha Giang Province) to co-host the closing workshop and coordinate a series of communication events in Tuyen Quang City. It helped bring the project’s results to a wider audience.

Media events (act 2.1) were also changed. According to the project design, media events should be held in a conventional way in Phia Deng village or Minh Son CPC to attract attention from other communities in the commune and communicate about the conservation. However, Phia Deng villagers proposed implementing their media event through the pictures and their folk songs while attending the workshop in Tuyen Quang. Their activities in Tuyen Quang Province received much attention from other communities in the basin.

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

N/A

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

Thaibaan research was the main method in our research project. This method has helped villagers document indigenous knowledge. They were trained in various skills, were able to develop monthly plans, identified monthly discussion topics and conducted research according to the plan. This method was applied and reinforced during the research process. At the conclusion of the various trainings and capacity efforts, local researchers know how to conduct research, how to develop the research contents, and maintain strategies to analyze relevant data for their own report.

Another tool that was applied in our project is called the “indicators of resilience in socio-ecological production landscape”. By applying this tool, our research mapped and identified the ecological area before and after the Khau Ca SHCA establishment. Through this research method, we identified a quantifiable change of income, land size, and resilience capacity of local community before and after Khau Ca SHCA establishment.

**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	Other
								50-250 people	251-500 people	501-1,000 people	Over 1,001 people									
Phia Deng village			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.**

Through the project activities, project officers much better understand key aspects of conservation, as well as the constraints and advantages of adjacent local communities dependent on natural resources found inside conservation zones.

The project officers also had the opportunity to enhance their skills and capacity in working with the communities who are living in protected areas and are wary to communicate with strangers. Eventually villagers warmed up to the project officers. By encouraging villagers to actively join in project activities, the staff became more confident working with different ethnic minority groups in the Lo - Gam river basin

### **14. Describe any lessons learned related to project Design Process**

WARECOD's approach in designing the project has always been bottom-up. From our experience, we have learned that the project success depends very much on the project design process. It means that to design a good project, we need to have consultations with local authorities and communities beforehand about potential activities and how those activities may affect communities in both ways. More carefully, we also forecasted potential difficulties, challenges, risks that could occur during the project implementation process and proposed relevant solutions to solve them.

### **15. Describe any lesson learned related to project Implementation**

The project uses Thaibaan method for the research, which requires villagers to be at the center of the work. During the research, project staff spent a few days each month staying with the villagers and learned about their life and culture. Staying at their house in the village has helped build up and strengthen the relationship between the villagers and the project staff. At the same time, it made villagers feel more comfortable discussing problems they are facing as well as sharing their thoughts with the presence of outsiders.

It was beneficial that local researchers were able to tell their stories and share their ideas related to living condition and agricultural production at the workshop. Thus, it would have been better if they were able to join different events other than just the sharing workshop.

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

In order to do good conservation at the community level, we found that it was most important to discuss with them at the beginning of the project to see how they understand the role and value of conservation and how it is relevant to their life. Subsequent activities should be modified or adjusted accordingly to gain the best results.

The second lesson learned was about the importance of organizing activities to increase the excitement and networking amongst different communities because it helps foster the conversation about conservation.

The last lesson learned is related to livelihood activities. Villagers are likely to more actively participate in protecting natural resource when they are able to engage in other economic activities that help boost their income. Thus, local authorities must have relevant policies and/or supported programmes to help them maintain their income and production activities.

## *Sustainability / Replication*

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

For our project, the knowledge and awareness of local communities in protecting and conserving natural resources have been enhanced. After the project, villagers have become more confident. Indeed, they confidently proposed solutions and recommendations to local authorities and asked for support, especially in terms of how to stabilize their livelihood and how to support them in some communication activities to protect natural resources.

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

Research findings were shared with local communities and authorities in Lo - Gam river basin through the workshop at Tuyen Quang City. Local communities and authorities of Tuyen Quang Province, in particular, and of other provinces in the Gam river basin can learn and develop community groups in their own locales to protect natural resources, as well as carry on communication activities for communities to enhance their awareness.

## *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**

After establishing the Thaibaan research group, we developed working regulations and an agreement between WARECOD and the research members that highlighted working time, behaviour, and the roles of research members in group. Thus, during the research process, research members and WARECOD staff complied with the regulations and there was no undesirable behaviour.

The contents of Thaibaan research mention many aspects of daily living, some of which were quite sensitive such as custom, traditional, festival of Dao people or hunting/gathering activities that they had in the forest. But with patience and understanding when working together, there were no misunderstandings or arguments between WARECOD staff and local researchers.

Thaibaan research has helped them understand the role of conservation and they confidently proposed recommendations to local authorities for more sustainable livelihoods that do not force them to stop their activities or have negative impacts on their income.

The Thaibaan research group included representatives of all families in Phia Deng village and they responsibly and respectfully participated in our research. Everyone had the chance to express ideas and opinions. Thus, during the research time, researchers and villagers were in solidarity and did not experience any conflict caused by the project.

## *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**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
None			

### *Additional Comments/Recommendations*

- 21. Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF**  
None

#### **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.

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