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Exploring Conservation Success in the Eastern Plains and Prey Lang Landscapes



The USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project

The Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project is funded by the United States Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Project began in November 2012 with the goal of improving conservation and governance of the Eastern Plains and Prey Lang Landscapes to mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity, and increase equitable economic benefits to forest communities.

This four-year project is implemented by the Winrock International (WI) in partnership with four strong partners that include Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), East-West Management Institute (EWMI), and The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). The Project is implemented in close cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries through Forestry Administration (FA), and with the Ministry of Environment through the General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection (GDANCP).

Three teams of development professionals employed by the Project focus assistance to the primary stakeholder groups. This assistance includes 1) collaboration and training to government and key natural resource managers at the national and sub-national levels to enhance their effectiveness to sustainably manage forest and conserve biodiversity; 2) collaboration and meaningful assistance to community forest groups, government officers, and private firms engaged in enterprises in or near forests to promote constructive dialogue that promotes better decision making for forest management and to improve economic development in the two landscapes; and 3) collaboration with forest communities and private sector firms to increase equitable economic benefits from the sustainable management of forests.

Through this assistance, the Project aims to strengthen the skills of government officers, forest communities, civil society organizations, non-government organizations, and the private sectors to build wider participation and broader representation within the two landscapes. One of the more practical results will be an improved ability to implement sustainable forest management practices that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conserve biodiversity, and support local livelihoods.

For additional information about the Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project, please visit the Project's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Supporting-Forests-and-Biodiversity-Project>, or visit the Project's Phnom Penh office located at Room 588, Building F, Phnom Penh Center, corner of Sotheros and Sihanouk Blvd., phone us at 023-220-714, or e-mail us at infosfb@winrock.org.

Note: The content of these stories is the sole responsibility of Winrock International and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



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Villagers' Commitments Reduce Pressure on Forests and Wildlife

The healthy and diverse forests surrounding Srae Preah commune in Mondulkiri province have provided livelihoods of more than 170 households. In addition to providing food, the forests provide traditional medicines and other natural forest products. Some of these products are consumed, others are sold for cash or traded for goods and services. The forests also help preserve the culture of the Bunong, an indigenous people, who have lived harmoniously in these forests for centuries.

Srae Preah commune is inside the Seima Protection Forest. These forests have become increasingly threatened by illegal activities such as logging for luxury timber, poaching of endangered wildlife, and land-grabbing wherein the land is converted to rubber plantations. All of these seriously affect the lives of the Bunong and their culture.

In October 2013, the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project team assisted 18 community teams with more than 100 Bunong from three villages in Srae Preah

commune, came together to learn how to better protect their ancestral lands. The villagers received a series of trainings, which included a review of the forest and land laws and procedures for enforcing these laws, methods to prevent illegal activities and instructions for reporting incidents to law enforcement agencies.

These roving community forest protection teams now patrol the forest at all times to guard their land and resources against deforestation and poaching. So far, the teams have seized 44 chainsaws, five motorbikes and one oxcart that were being used inside the community forest to illegally fell trees and transport illegal timber.

Prut Khy, a community patrol team leader from Pou Cha village in Srae Preah commune was delighted after observing how deforestation in the community rapidly declined once the community forest patrols began. The results encouraged him and others in the village to pledge further actions to protect their remaining forests.

"I am very pleased to see our forests being conserved and made healthy again. We are sincerely thankful to USAID for their kind assistance and good training. We are now knowledgeable with the laws and comfortable dealing with these important issues," said Prut Khy.

"The forest is essential for our lives and for future generations of the Bunong people, so we need to work diligently to stop deforestation and protect our important forests," Mr. Phut Khy added.



Prut Khy, patrol team leader, is committed to protecting the forests for his grandchildren.

Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

Livelihood Training Becomes the Catalyst for Change

Mr. Long Ouek, a Cambodian farmer and member of the Bunong indigenous tribe, used to make his living taking from others. He spent years as a wildlife poacher, making small money selling animals and skins in local markets. Recently, Mr. Ouek changed his livelihood and became a respected, contributing member of his community.

The catalyst for Mr. Ouek's life change was a series of training activities sponsored by USAID's Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project. As a result of the training, Mr. Ouek has become an ardent conservationist with a mantra: "Don't Poach, Do Protect."

"The training program offered by USAID helped educate me and my fellow villagers. We learned there is more value in protecting

our forests than in harvesting wildlife and logging all the trees," said Mr. Ouek. *"Our community decided that we could collectively earn more money if we started a community ecotourism business,"* he added.

In addition to being a farmer, Mr. Ouek is now one of a handful of ecotourism leaders in Andong Kraloeng village. Using his extensive knowledge of the area, he leads day-long tours to attractions in the Seima Protection Forest, located in Mondulhiri province.

"With more tourists arriving, we're making a much better living than before. We're learning how to market our forest walks and improve tourist services, too. Last month I led five tours to see wild animals and large trees. We can often observe different varieties of monkeys, as well as, musk deer and wild boars in the wild," said Mr. Ouek.

USAID's partner, Wildlife Conservation Society, conducted the training in the Seima Protected Forest to encourage communities to protect forests and wildlife, while earning valuable income from their natural surroundings.

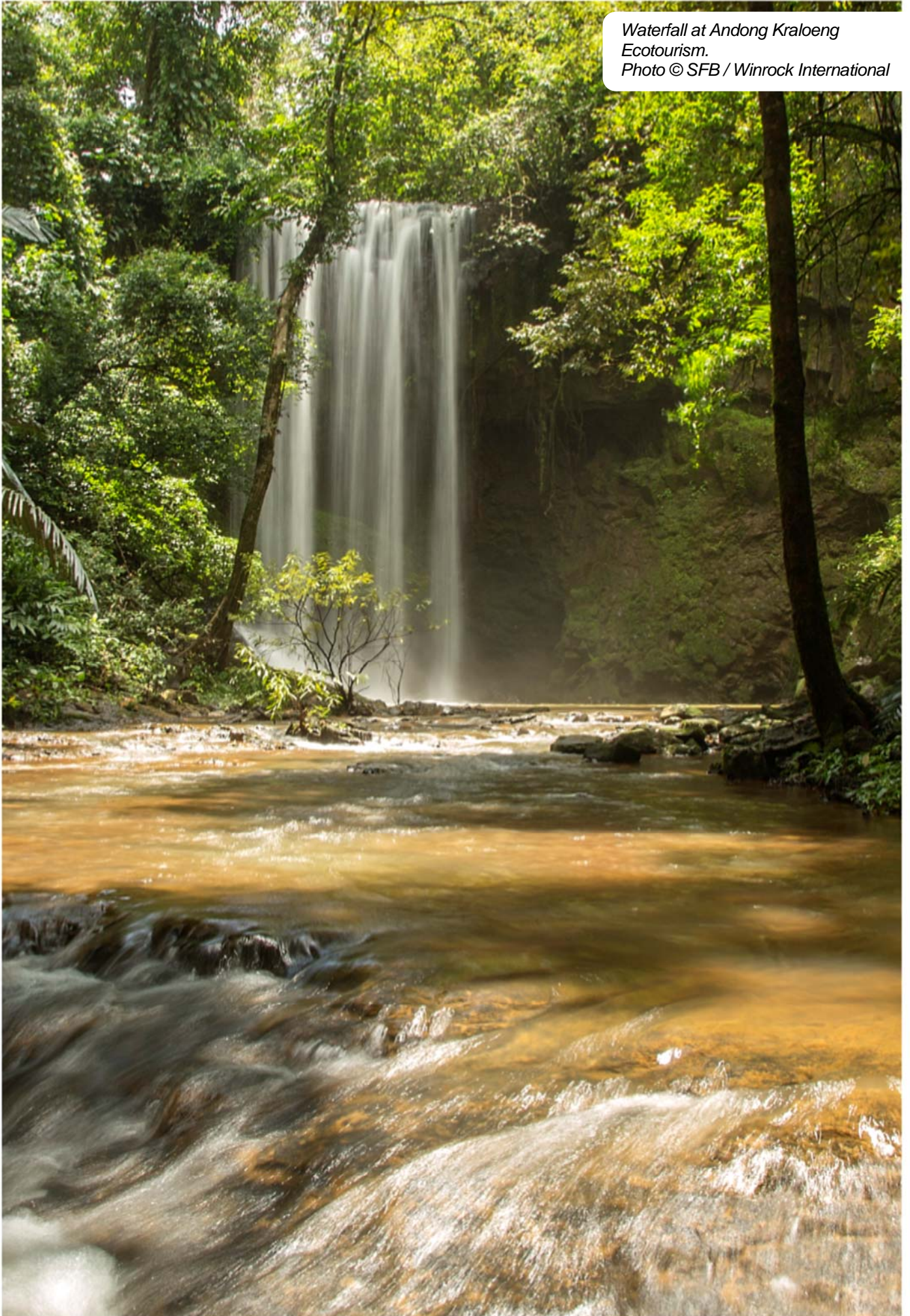
USAID is piloting the ecotourism project in two areas across three villages covering more than 2,400 hectares inside the Seima Protected Forest.

"If we do not preserve our forest, they will be gone," said Ouek, *"and then we will not be able to live so well."*



Mr. Long Ouek (center) educates his fellow villagers about the important ways forests and wildlife provide for the vital livelihoods of the community and the important roles villagers have in conserving forest resources.
Photo © SFB / Winrock International

*Waterfall at Andong Kraloeng
Ecotourism.
Photo © SFB / Winrock International*



Capacity-Building Increases Confidence and Effectiveness

Hang Vutheara, age 31, has spent the past five years conducting training and facilitating meetings in the rural forest areas. He travels to rural villages and approaches local authorities and communities to raise their understanding about the importance of forests and environmental conservation. These activities vitally contribute to reduce deforestation and gets villagers and communities involved.

To improve his technical skills, Vutheara joined a Facilitation Skills Training course sponsored by the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project. *“Until I took this training course, I lacked confidence in my facilitation and training skills. It has been a concern of mine for many years,”* said Vutheara, *“But after joining their training funded by USAID, I am now confident when I conduct and facilitate my training sessions.”*



Hang smiles broadly after successfully completing the facilitation skills training.
Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

Early 2013, the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project found that once villagers were informed of the consequences, they usually reduced deforestation and stopped hunting endangered wildlife. The key to ensuring that villagers were well-informed depended on the facilitator who communicated the message to them.

With funding from the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project, in September 2013, Vutheara and other 24 local trainers from the provincial Forestry Administration office and local NGOs participated in a training course entitled, *“The Art of Designing Effective Training Programs and Improving Facilitation Skills”* organized by Winrock International and the Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC).

The purpose of the training was to improve the abilities of Cambodian trainers to conduct effective awareness activities in forest communities around the Prey Lang Landscape, including the provinces of Kratie, Stung Treng, Preah Vihear, and Kampong Thom. As part of the training, each participant drafted detailed training plans and practices their new skills.

“This is a big success for my career, and I am grateful to the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project,” said Vutheara. *“I continue to conduct environmental awareness activities to local authorities and communities. Once communities and government officers understand the importance of conserving forests and biodiversity, we can usually observe immediate improvement.”*



Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International



Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

Indigenous People Empowered by Permanent Land Ownership

Indigenous people in O’Rona village, Mondulkiri province have lived off their land for generations. They use the land surrounding their village to grow crops to feed their families and earn cash incomes. Forests produce non-timber products, such as resin and honey, which is sold to raise cash to buy additional goods and services.

Indigenous land titles provide security to the villagers against external threats and allow indigenous people to benefit from farming, harvesting forest resources and preserving their traditions.

However, the lands under the stewardship of indigenous villagers is often threatened by the risk of land seizure by politically powerful individuals. Without land titles or other formal proof of ownership, in cases of land grabbing, indigenous families are often forced to relocate from their ancestral lands to new areas where they clear more forest and establish

new settlements. This resettlement contributes to an increasing rate of deforestation.

“More than 100 hectares of our village forestland had already been illegally cleared by outsiders,” said Kverk Sarak, O’Rona Community Team Leader, *“and we feared more would be lost.”*

In 2006, 72 community households in the village formed an indigenous community group to begin the complicated and time consuming process of obtaining an indigenous community land title.

Without the assistance of a knowledgeable facilitator, the process stalled before it could be finalized. In early 2013, the USAID’s Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project facilitated a series of meetings where the community and government representatives completed the land titling process for O’Rona village.

In May 2013, O’Rona community was awarded an indigenous land title, providing the residents with the rights of ownership to more than 650 hectares of forests, farmland and village land.

“Thanks to USAID, we are now more secure,” Sarak said. *“We continue working together to organize forest patrols to prevent illegal activities that steal land, cut valuable trees, and kill wildlife.”*

“We are now less worried that someone can steal our resources. We will commit to using these forest resources in a sustainable manner. They will provide long-term benefits to us now and to our children later.”



Kverk Sarak (left) and Hung Chak proudly show off the indigenous land titles awarded in May 2013.
Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International



Photo © SFB / Winrock International

New Organization and Market Boosts Profits for Resin Collectors

Local communities, mostly Bunong indigenous people in Poupet village, Mondulkiri province faced difficulties after yields from rice farming dropped. They struggled to earn income by collecting resin from the forests surrounding their village.

Because the Poupet village resin businesspersons were not making sufficient incomes to sustain their lives in the village, they were finding it more economical to cut and sell their resin trees and poach wild animals to generate additional cash.

Upon examining the situation, the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project team discovered that although resin traders routinely came to the village to purchase resin, the collectors weren't informed of

market prices and they didn't consolidate their resin to obtain better prices for the larger volumes they had available to sell.

The first step to get better prices was for villagers to form a resin committee and to market their resin to one buyer in larger quantities. In October 2013, with assistance from USAID, resin collectors formed a committee to consolidate the resin from all members. The committee then signed an agreement with one local trading company that was interested in strengthening its social responsibility and working directly with local villagers.

The USAID Project trained the villagers on improved harvesting methods, monitoring resin quality to ensure it met the requirements of the buyer, and improved negotiation practices so they could negotiate better prices. The new skills and practices resulted in a 100 per cent increase in prices received.

People in the village are now more optimistic about their future and have stopped cutting down their resin trees. *"Thanks to USAID for assisting us to form our resin committee and encouraging us to consolidate our resin volumes to sell to a one buyer,"* said Sean Tha, a long-time resin collector from Poupet village.

"I am very happy now. I can earn more than \$200 dollar per month from resin. That's enough to feed my family and pay for school for my three children."

USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project helped improve livelihoods of resin collectors by securing new markets and better prices for their resin.



Sean Tha, a resin collector since 1998, points to resin he collected and sold to the committee to earn cash. His resin business supports living costs of his family and school for his children.

Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International



Photo © SFB / Winrock International

Forest Community Members-Turned-Researchers Boost Forest and Wildlife Protection

Thourn Srow's family suffered in recent years. Traditional rice farming was not producing enough to feed his family of six. Struggling to make a living, he was forced to poach wildlife, including endangered Black-Shanked Douc Languor, a species of gibbon, for food, and for cash income, he collected natural tree resins in the forests surrounding his village of Andong Kraloeng.

With a goal of reducing deforestation, in early 2013, team members from the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project facilitated a series of educational training programs about the importance of forests and wildlife to residents in the village, including Mr. Srow.

After participating in the education training, Mr. Srow realized how much damage he was causing to the community's forests and biodiversity by hunting and killing endangered animals. He stopped hunting wildlife and concentrated on harvesting tree resin for his

income. He also took time to educate others, especially village children, about the negative consequences of poaching wild animals. He encouraged everyone to protect the animals and plants. It was his vision that sometime in the future, if the forest stayed healthy, they could provide livelihood to the community as an eco-tourism site.

Due to his increased awareness and desire to conserve forest and wildlife resources, in December 2013, Srow and a colleague were asked to join a gibbon research team. They were trained on how to scientifically track gibbons and record gibbon movements using modern research tools.

Mr. Srow still spends his days in the forest, but now he goes to conduct research and record the habits of yellow-cheeked crested gibbons as part of an ecotourism initiative for the village of Andong Kraloeng.

The gibbon research has progressed very well, with many sightings of gibbon families, and plenty of useful information collected on the locations, demographics, and daily habits of gibbons.

"Thanks to USAID, I have learned how important animals and forests are for the people in my village," says Mr. Srow. "Now I protect the animals and forests. Every day tourists visit our village to see the gibbons. This helps all of us to earn better incomes."

"I urge my fellow villagers not to disturb or kill the gibbons," he added. "If we protect the animals, they can actually help us create jobs in our village and help us in preserving our way of life."



Thourn Srow, left, recording data after conducting gibbon research in the early morning.
Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

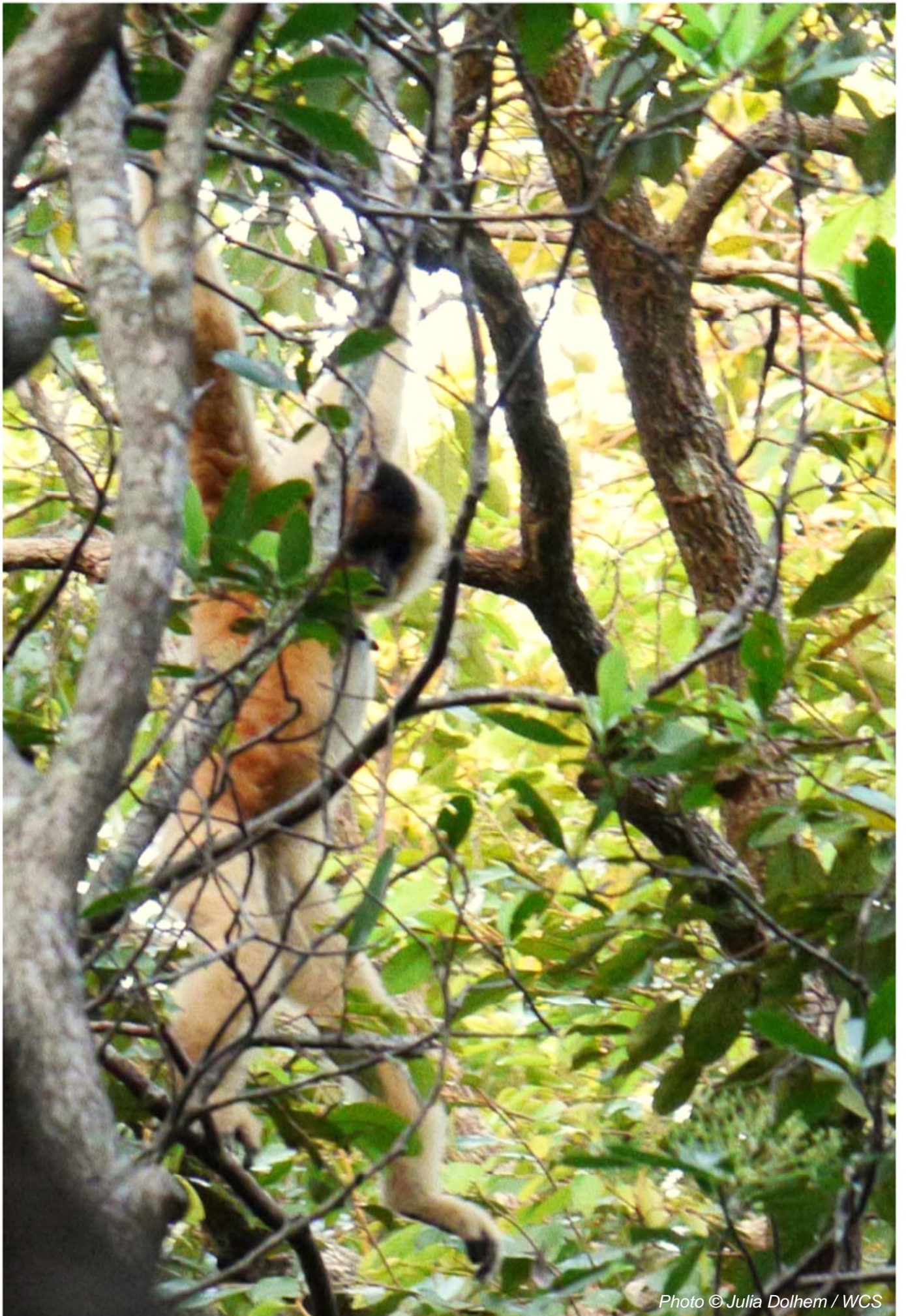


Photo © Julia Dolhem / WCS

Local Communities Empowered by Natural Resource Management Rights

Vai Sai, aged 62, has lived in Pukroch village his entire life. To support his family, he has harvested and traded non-timber forest products from the nearby forests. *“Deforestation has reduced the number of resin trees available. With the reduction in trees has come a gradual reduction in wild honey bees from which we used to collect and sell honey,”* said Mr. Sai. The loss of income has had serious consequences for his family. Mr. Sai now depends solely on the harvest of hard resin from resin trees, the last remaining resource in the village capable of providing sufficient income.

To earn a living, Sai goes to the forests daily, collecting 4 to 5 kilograms (kg) of hard resin. He can earn 10,000 riels (2.50 US dollars) cash per day or trade the resin for 4 kg of rice to feed his seven member family, which includes three school-age children.

Until his community received assistance from the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity



Thoum Srow, left, recording data after conducting gibbon research in the early morning.
Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

Project, these forests and other natural resources were under threat due to illegal logging, poaching, land clearance, as well as new settlements set up by migrants. Collectively, these threats depleted forest resources and endangered the livelihoods of more than 300 households in Pukroch village.

“With USAID assistance”, said Mr. Sai, *“the people in my village formed a community committee so we could better manage and share economic benefits from our forest resources.”* The committee drafted an agreement and submitted it to the Forestry Administration Cantonment in Mondulkiri province for review and approval. In December 2013, the community’s efforts to protect the local forests were recognized through an agreement signed between the Pukroch committee and the Forestry Administration Cantonment.

In January 2014, the USAID Project team consulted with community members about the agreement, its importance, and community forest management process, including the need for forest patrols and effective reporting.

“We appreciated the assistance of USAID in helping us obtain and exercise our rights to manage our natural resources. We are committed to manage and use our forest resources in a sustainable way, so we can pass them to the next generation,” said Mr. Sai. *“We are very pleased with this recognition commit to being good stewards.”*

USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project has assisted local communities to manage and use their forests in sustainable ways.



Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

Conserving Cambodia's Forests Together

As a devoted mother and diligent housewife, Ms. Trob Phar's primary task is to nurture and protect her family. As a strong community leader, she is performing similar tasks for her forest community.

With training and funding from USAID's Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project, Ms. Phar leads a community ranger forest patrol in Srae Ey village of Monduliri province, located in northeast Cambodia. In this role, she's become an ardent forest conservationist. Along with her forest ranger patrol team, they stop community members and outsiders from poaching wildlife and logging illegally throughout the community's forest areas.

"We go into the forest and watch for people cutting down trees and killing animals," says Ms. Phar. "If we see someone conducting illegal activities, we stop them and confiscate their equipment."



Ms. Trob Phar is joined by her four community patrol team members to being their rounds patrolling their community forest areas.

Photo © SFB / Winrock International

Deforestation during the past 30 years has been responsible for more than 2.5 million hectares of Cambodia's forest cover being converted to commercial agriculture or simply degraded beyond rehabilitation. People such as Ms. Phar are an integral part of USAID's initiative to help Cambodia's government and forest communities preserve the nation's remaining forests and wildlife. She is one of 90 community forest rangers who vigilantly guard more than 26,000 hectares located in seven conservation forests and protected areas.

USAID's Project promotes partnerships with the local government and forest communities to establish systems that monitor illegal activities in Monduliri's forests. USAID funding enabled Ms. Phar and her team to receive training from experienced rangers. They can now track poachers and illegal loggers, and respond forcefully when observing illegal activities.

"Being a community forest ranger is empowering, Ms. Phar said. "This is an opportunity for women like me to demonstrate our importance in the community."

Community patrols have been highly successful. Besides stopping crime, they have given Ms. Phar and her community a sense of collective ownership over the forest, fueling a desire to conserve the forest for future generations.

"This is our forest." Ms. Phar said, "no one can come and cut it. We try our best to protect this natural treasure because it is for our children and grandchildren."



Photo © SFB / Winrock International

Assisting Local Communities to Protect their Forests

Mr. Pa Samphorn relies on the forest surrounding Pou Cha village, located in the Seima Protected Forest, to support his seven-person family. Seima is a rare, beautiful forest located in Cambodia's Mondulkiri province. These remaining forests are under constant pressure from illegal logging, hunting, and land grabbing.

With assistance from USAID's Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project, community members collaborated with local and regional government officers to establish a community-based production forest (CBPF). The CBPF designation allows community members, such as Mr. Samphorn, to harvest timber from the forest, for profit, on a sustainable scale while being assured outsiders cannot illegally log, hunt wildlife, or lay claims to the land.

As a result of these efforts, Mr. Samphorn and other villagers have renewed confidence that they can provide the care and protection needed to keep them safe and healthy. "My family is pleased with the result," said Mr.

Samphorn. "We formed this forest community to protect our ancestral lands. For centuries, these forests have provided food to eat as well as products that can be traded for money, such as tree resins, honey, and medicinal products."

The USAID Project's partner, Wildlife Conservation Society, assisted one CBPF, consisting of three villages located in Seima Protected Forest, to establish the first CBPF. The CBPF enables more than 200 community households to protect and directly benefit from 9,000 hectares of forest. All harvesting is performed sustainably.

At the crack of dawn each day, Mr. Samphorn and a few family members head to the forest to collect food, traditional medicines, and tree resin. Tree resin, processed into boat caulking and essential oils, is the primary product from the forest. By sustainably harvesting resin, Mr. Samphorn can earn about \$150 dollars per month, enough to send his children to school and buy medical care when family members are sick.

"Thanks to the assistance from USAID, our community is safe from land speculators and many other dangers," said Mr. Samphorn, "We now more assured that their livelihoods and culture are secure for generations to come."

"We collect resin from the trees for income. After we pay taxes, the money is shared by the community, to build bridges and schools, as well as to support the community health center in our village."



Mr. Pa Samphorn (center), together with two community members, conduct an inventory for their community forest. The forest inventory is an important requirement for the community to receive an official community forest land title.
Photo © SFB / Winrock International

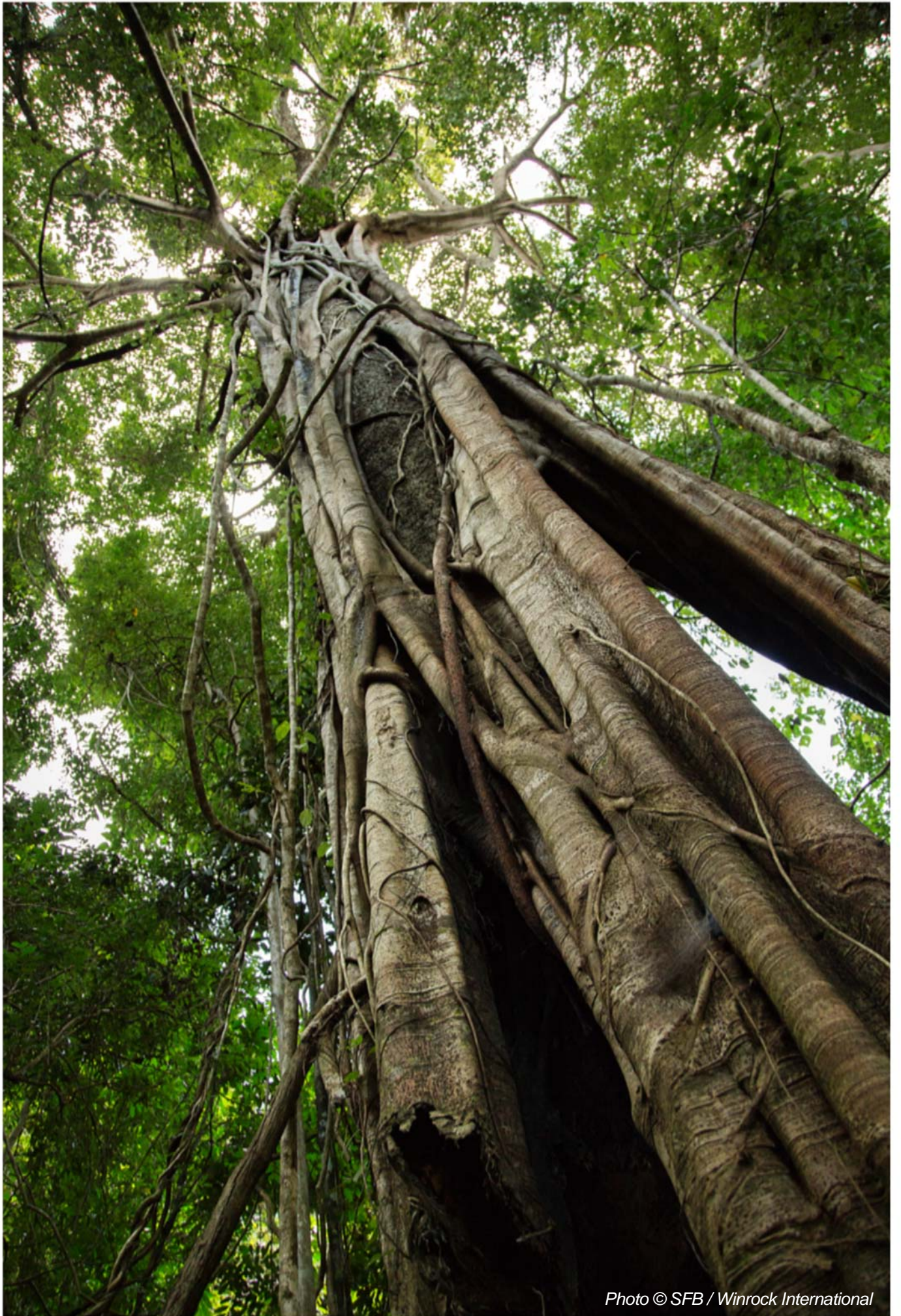


Photo © SFB / Winrock International

Wildlife-Friendly Ibis Rice Reduces Poverty While Improving Forest Management and Wildlife Protection

Located inside the Preah Vihear Protected Forest, Dongphlat is one of the poorest villages in Cambodia's Preah Vihear province. People in the village have relied heavily on rice farming, but this alone could not support their well-being for the whole year. They were forced to poach wild animals for meat and illegally cut timber to earn additional money. This trend led to depleting valuable forest resources and also threatened the survival of endangered wildlife that live in the forests surrounding the village.

With assistance from USAID's Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project and Project partner Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Wildlife-Friendly Ibis Rice was introduced to local people to provide them with an incentive to engage in conservation by offering a premium price for their rice if they agree to abide by conservation agreements. These agreements are designed to protect

the rare water birds and other important species that use the nearby forests.

The agreements include a land-use plan that limits the conversion of wetland areas to rice fields and 'no-hunting' restrictions, which outlaws hunting and collecting of rare birds, eggs, and chicks.

Through this assistance, local villagers are given training to increase rice productivity and improve rice quality. This provides sufficient rice to eat while allowing a surplus that can be sold at a premium price. So far, Ibis rice is grown in nine poor villages and has benefited more than 780 households in Preah Vihear province. This season, the nine villages sold 432 tons of Ibis paddy rice for \$76,000.

"We want to thank the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project for assisting us to improve our living conditions," said Mrs. Saran, aged 48 and a poor farmer from Dongphlat village. She added that she was very happy that her family and others in the village are no longer lacking rice every year.

"For many years living had been very difficult for us. We earned nothing and our rice yield could not feed us for the whole year," she said. *"Now we have enough rice. Last year, I sold a surplus of 4.7 tones for \$1,500. This cash supports my family and allows me to send my children to school."*

The USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project assists Cambodian communities to improve their living standard through increasing rice productivity.



Villagers at Dongphlat are excited to see increased yields for their tasty Ibis rice.

Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International



Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

Boundary Demarcation Is a Critical Measure Forest Communities Use to Protect Their Forests and Wildlife

Forest community member Mr. Chan Bunna, aged 45, lives in Sam Orng village, Kampong Thom province. Mr. Bunna has been earning a living for his family from the surrounding forests for decades. He collects tree resin and sells it to the local market, while his wife gathers some non-timber forest products such as rattan, mushrooms, wild fruits, and vegetables to feed their family.

With approximately 600 resin trees inherited from his ancestors, Mr. Bunna is able to earn about \$150 per month in cash for the six members of his family. Two children attend school.

All of his communities' forest resources have become scarce and are increasingly under threat of logging and land concessionaries. The lack of the clear, documented forest

boundaries has been one of the critical challenges. Without land demarcation, land grabbing, illegal logging and settlement by migrants is a constant danger. In the recent past, Mr. Bunna's family lost 80 resin trees and his forest community lost hundreds of hectares forest due to illegal logging.

In October 2013, with assistance from the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project, the community organized a meeting between local government and villagers and solutions to deforestation were identified. One of those solutions was to install demarcation poles in the community forest to reduce land grabs and deforestation.

At the request of community members, USAID's Project has assisted the installation of demarcation poles in eight community forests around the Prey Lang Landscape, including Mr. Bunna's village. Demarcation has covered a total forest area of more than 12,000 hectares which has directly benefited more than 870 households.

“Before the demarcation, we realized that poaching, illegal logging and land clearance often occurred inside our forest area. Without support from USAID and others, our forest would have been completely logged. This forest is really our lives,” said Mr. Bunna.

“Thanks to USAID's assistance, we've been able to better protect our forests. We are committed to sustainably use these resources and pass them on to future generations,” he added.



Mr. Chan Bunna leads community members to patrol inside their community forest area.

Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International



Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International

Community Awareness Boosts Forest and Wildlife Protection Efforts

Mondulkiri's natural forests are rich in plants and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and teeming with wildlife and biodiversity. These resources play important roles in supporting local livelihoods and economic development. The small indigenous tribal Bunong village of Puloung, located in Mondulkiri province is surrounded by forests. These forests support more than 130 Bunong households, who rely on the forest for NTFPs, including resin, honey, wild fruits, and vegetables for consumption and for sale. In 2008, the villagers agreed to establish the Puloung Community Forestry covering 2,511 hectares.

Unfortunately for the villagers, their forests and its resources are increasingly under threat. The combination of poor environmental awareness among community members, poor forestry management, and a dearth of regular

patrolling has led to considerable illegal logging, land grabbing, and clearance.

To reduce deforestation and further forest degradation, the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project assisted Puloung community forestry to prepare a community forestry agreement, which was submitted to and signed by the Forestry Administration Cantonment. USAID assists to strengthen the knowledge of community members, establish forest patrols, and document and report forest crimes.

Six patrol teams, each with at least 11 members, conduct regular patrols. These teams actively and regularly patrol their community forests to prevent illegal logging and poaching inside their forests.

“Because our community members are patrolling every day, we have successfully deterred many forest crimes and decreased illegal logging and poaching. But we remain ever-vigilant,” said Kras Creng, Chief of Puloung Community Forestry.

“USAID has been kind to provide its technical assistance to train our community members. Because of good training, our forest is now protected and our people are now aware and working together to safeguard our resources for the benefit of our community and the entire country,” he added.

The USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project assists forest communities to reduce deforestation and improve biodiversity.



Kras Creng, age 40, Chief of Puloung Community Forest, is committed to protecting his community's forest.
Photo © Eng Mengey / Winrock International



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