

Involuntary restrictions – Process Framework Safeguarding the Saola, WWF

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

This project seeks to conserve the priority population of the Critically Endangered Saola in Vietnam. The project is located in two Provinces of the Central Annamites, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam, focusing on 3 Protected Areas important to Saola: Bach Ma National Park extension, Thua Thien Hue Saola Nature Reserve and the proposed Quang Nam Saola Reserve. WWF and partners will undertake a number of different activities within each PA which have been designed to address the principle threat to Saola; overexploitation by unsustainable and illegal hunting. These activities include,

- 1) establishing a standardised intensive enforcement system, involving joint patrolling teams consisting of local community members, Forest Protection Department Rangers, Army and Police
- 2) capacity building of FPD rangers and Protected Area staff in enforcement patrolling and monitoring of Saola and other key species;
- 3) awareness-raising amongst local communities specifically on the location of PA boundaries and legal use of forest resources;
- 4) providing support to proposed and existing Protected Areas, including assisting with developing an Operational Plan for Bach Ma NP, a management plan for Hue Saola Nature Reserve and a feasibility study for the Saola Nature Reserve in Quang Nam;
- 5) Participatory mapping of resource use by local communities around the 3 PAs;
- 6) establishing standardised monitoring methods for Saola and other priority species; and
- 7) fundraising for future Saola conservation action.

Several of the activities will have potential implications on the resource use of local communities, predominantly as this relates to unsustainable, illegal and destructive hunting practices. Snaring and hunting with dogs is the principle threat to Saola and widespread throughout the landscape in Vietnam. Saola are indiscriminate bycatch of these modern day hunting techniques which typically target more common species such as Wild Pig and Muntjac for the illegal wildlife trade. Strengthening capacity of Protected Area and FPD staff, improving enforcement systems and assisting the management of Protected Areas, are designed to reduce these unsustainable, illegal and destructive hunting practices, which threaten the Saola's survival.

The livelihoods of other local community members may also be affected, through reduced access to forest resources (e.g NTFP collection), which may not be illegal, unsustainable or destructive. The project will identify these peoples through a process of community consultations and seek to mitigate the negative impacts of the project by providing alternative income generation. In some instances this support is already being provided by the SWITCH rattan project, but in areas where the SWITCH project is not operational this CEPF-funded project will need to conduct direct

mitigation. The favoured option would be to employ these individuals to work on the joint patrolling and monitoring teams, but if this is not appropriate, it may be necessary to introduce incentive-based conservation schemes (e.g. livestock/fish farming/bee keeping, have all been discussed with selected communities as alternatives to harvesting forest resources) which are likely to require additional funding. The appropriate mitigation strategy will be identified in close consultation with the affected community members and groups and any necessary additional funding sought during the lifetime of this project.

Direct positive impacts of the project will include, employment of at least 6 local community members to partake in enforcement patrols and monitoring activities. Monitoring activities, awareness-raising and participatory mapping of resource use will not have negative effects on local communities, but rather, the latter two will clarify the legal situation of resource use within the Protected Areas, determine the potential economic impacts of PA establishment and improved enforcement on local communities, and identify potential mitigation strategies, such as livestock provisioning and incentive-based programmes.

This project was designed in collaboration with the IUCN SSC Saola Working Group and is therefore in line with SWG priorities for Saola conservation. The Forest Protection Departments of Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam and Bach Ma National Park maintain their strong history of cooperation with WWF related to species conservation for this project. Both FPDs have provided technical advice on activities, in particular related to management plans and enforcement activities, and the budget for activities involving FPD was developed in close consultation with both provinces.

The Darwin Initiative Project (University of Kent, UK) have been involved in designing this project, to ensure coordination between organisations working in the same area with the same goals. Broadly speaking, the Darwin project was designed to undertake research activities related to saola conservation, whilst the CEPF project will support on-the-ground conservation activities. Both projects have a strong involvement of local communities and focus on capacity building of stakeholders as an important element for Saola conservation.

The project will also consult with a wide range of stakeholders in Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam provinces, to seek technical advice and the potential for collaboration. Including but not limited to: representatives of Watershed Protected Forest, communities and community based organisations such as unions (Woman, Youth and Farmer) and Vietnamese Universities (Hue, Vinh, Quang Nam). WWF have already facilitated many village workshops in the project area to arrive at solutions for forest land use, more generally as part of initiatives centred on establishing sustainable management through providing secure use rights to local people. This effort has not been comprehensive within the project area but the experiences gained are extremely valuable in planning further consultation. We do not believe that a comprehensive series of consultations across the whole set of villages (ca 75) that use the area could be done in sufficient depth or be made genuinely

participatory at this stage. Instead we believe that further in-depth research and consultation work in a sub-set of villages, coupled with comprehensive description of hunting patterns across the project area will be more helpful in developing solutions with local communities. These draft ideas can then be discussed at village meetings in all villages as a prompt to more genuine discussion of the benefits, costs and potential mitigation measures for local communities.

B. PARTICIPATORY IMPLEMENTATION

The project will provide support to protected area management, including a strong enforcement component which is crucial to save Saola from extinction. Project activities will comply with enforcement of wildlife laws, by removing and discouraging illegal hunting practices (particularly snares and dogs) from the core zone of each of the 3 protected areas, and on a finer scaled focused on areas within the protected areas that are particularly important for Saola. WWF and the linked Darwin Initiative project will conduct thorough consultations with all local communities surrounding the 3 protected areas. Consultations and participatory mapping will yield information on patterns and locations of resource use by communities, economic benefits/losses by increased enforcement of wildlife laws and potential mitigation strategies for loss of livelihoods (hunting) that could be implemented by subsequent projects, despite the illegal, unsustainable and destructive nature of these hunting activities. Individuals whose livelihoods are negatively affected by project activities who are not conducting illegal, unsustainable or destructive activities (e.g. NTFP collection), will also be identified during these consultations and appropriate mitigation strategies identified.

Furthermore, WWF are already actively implementing a separate project in the two focal provinces, which is focusing on providing alternative and sustainable livelihoods for local communities by supporting them to sell sustainable rattan products.

C. CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY OF AFFECTED PERSONS

Very few affected persons are likely to be eligible for mitigation/compensation measures as involuntary restrictions will be predominantly placed on activities which are clearly illegal, unsustainable and destructive.

However, WWF and partners are seeking to establish a sustainable conservation model which not only benefits the the conservation target, but local communities as well. This approach aims to provide an alternative value to the wildlife and an incentive for conserving Saola populations. Participatory mapping and community consultations, along with other previous WWF project activities, will contribute substantially to the design of such conservation models.

All local communities will be consulted during these activities, through a process of free, prior and informed consent, and hence all villages/villagers surrounding the 3 PAs could be eligible in the future, to partake in an incentive-based conservation approach funded by subsequent projects. Furthermore, any individuals whose livelihoods have been negatively affected by project activities, and these livelihoods

are not unsustainable, illegal or destructive, will be eligible for compensation, through the WWF SWITCH project operational in the area or through alternative mitigation strategies developed and implemented by this CEPF-funded project or additional funds raised for this purpose.

D. MEASURES TO ASSIST THE AFFECTED PERSONS

The community consultations will determine whether any persons are affected and considered eligible for mitigation/compensation measures. Mitigation measures will be discussed and developed with the affected persons and community groups.

Other WWF activities in this area will provide some mitigation to a number of the villages in the project area (see social assessment for information on the EU-funded SWITCH project for Establishing a Sustainable Production System for Rattan). However, any negatively affected persons living outside of the SWITCH project areas will be eligible for other mitigation strategies implemented directly by the CEPF-funded project or subsequent funding sources. These may include, livestock provisioning, fish farming, bee-keeping and other similar options and will be determined through close consultation and discussion with the affected persons and community groups.

E. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINT MECHANISM

The awareness-raising component of this project has been included, to ensure all local communities are aware of the location of the protected areas, and the implications of the establishment of these new protected areas, on their natural resource use. There will be opportunity for communities to consult with the Forest Protection Department on these matters which will likely involve village leaders and other civil society groups discussing key issues. WWF will facilitate these discussions and meetings.

The participatory mapping process and community consultations will provide substantial information on the patterns of resource use of local communities, which will inform the awareness-raising programme of which groups/individuals need to be targeted and will therefore be affected most by restrictions on resources. We hope that this logical proceeding of activities and the consultation and involvement of local communities in the project, will minimise any potential conflicts and grievances.

Grievances and conflicts raised by affected communities, civil society groups or individuals, can be brought to the Protected Areas, the district FPD, WWF staff, the BirdLife CEPF-Regional Implementation Team, or CEPF. WWF will provide communities with the contact details of the WWF team, the BirdLife CEPF-Regional Implementation Team and CEPF. All communities will be made aware that grievances can be made at any time, to any of the above individuals/organisations. WWF and FPD should be the first point of call. Should any of these organisations receive a grievance, they will be required to report this to WWF immediately.

WWF will have responsibility to ensure these grievances are dealt with promptly and will work with project partners to achieve this. Upon receipt of a grievance, WWF and project partners will hold meetings with local communities or individuals, to discuss the issues and develop amicable solutions which will be implemented by the project. WWF will keep the BirdLife CEPF-Regional Implementation Team informed and consulted regarding any grievances that arise and to develop the solutions that will be implemented by the project.

Mediation for grievance reporting and consultations can occur through representatives from People's Committees, project partners but perhaps particularly through civil society groups involved in the project (e.g. Farmer's Union, Women's Union), to ensure restrictions, eligibility criteria and mitigation measures are understood and appropriate to local communities.

F. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

WWF are responsible for overall management of the project, but will require close cooperation with Provincial FPD and Protected Areas in particular. Quang Nam, Thua Thien Hue FPD and Bach Ma National Park are responsible for allocating appropriate rangers for project activities and managing their activities in the field (with support from WWF). Joint responsibility will be necessary for WWF and Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue FPD, to develop a Feasibility study (QN only), Conservation Needs Assessment, and Operational Plan. Implementation of these plans past the lifetime of the project will be the responsibility of FPD and the protected areas. WWF will assist with implementation during the project as it relates to improving enforcement and monitoring activities in particular. Local community members will assist in implementation of enforcement and monitoring activities by joining joint patrolling teams, also with the Police and Army, as well as district FPD.

The Darwin Initiative Project and WWF are jointly responsible for implementation of enforcement and monitoring activities and participatory mapping, associated community consultations and development of potential conservation models and mitigation strategies.

WWF are responsible for the capacity building component, including providing training in awareness-raising techniques, which will subsequently be implemented in local communities by FPDs. The fundraising component will be implemented with the IUCN SSC Saola Working Group, who will also provide technical advice and coordination for the whole project, with other organisations working on Saola conservation throughout the lifetime of the project and beyond.