SAFEGUARDS

Environmental and Social Assessment; Labor and Working Conditions; Gender Mainstreaming; and Stakeholder Engagement.

05/01/2023

CEPF Grant

"Strengthening Capacity for Reporting Impacts on Biodiversity and Mainstreaming Conservation Policies at Provincial Level"

Center for People and Nature Reconciliation

Vietnam

Organization: Center for People and Nature Reconciliation (PanNature)

Total grant: USD182,630.00

Grantee: CEPF

Duration: 30 months

Location: Four provinces in the Sino-Vietnamese Limestone Corridor (Ha Giang, Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Bac Kan).

Contact concerning safeguards issues:

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Project Summary:

This proposed project will focus on providing support for local media and local social organizations at the provincial level to integrate biodiversity in their work. Through connecting national expertise, knowledge, and experience, the project will help these local stakeholders to engage more actively in conservation activities, especially the improvement of capacity in analyzing development policies, plans and programs, evaluate their impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and propose and actively support the application of alternative development scenarios, nature-based solutions and mitigation measures at provincial level.

The project will help local authorities to be more informed about the issues, impacts, and concerns of the local communities on biodiversity protection, nature conservation in the decision-making process through: (1) providing professional support, capacity building, and understanding of issues related to biodiversity, impacts of policies, and development projects to provincial media agencies in the project area; (2) working with provincial associations and local social organizations to perform the functions of research, analysis, consulting, and policy recommendations to contribute to decision-making processes on local issues related to biodiversity conservation; (3) strengthening information on biodiversity conservation at the local level through information dissemination activities, knowledge of the provincial media agencies, and activities of social organizations..

- Date of preparation: 05/01/2023

1. Project location

The Sino-Vietnamese Limestone Corridor, an ecoregion covering part of the Northern mountains of Vietnam and bordering southern region of China. In Vietnam, this corridor includes four provinces Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, Bac Kan, and Cao Bang which are areas with high biodiversity,

with a total area of 1,247,001 hectares of natural forest out of a total area of 1,650,353 ha of forest (General Department of Forestry, 2022). It is home to some of the world's most endangered primates including the Eastern Black Crested Gibbon and the Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey.

However, with complicated terrain conditions, a relatively harsh climate, and many natural disasters every year, this area still faces many difficulties in socio-economic development compared to the common ground of Vietnam. country. This area is also the area with the highest percentage of poor and near-poor households in the country according to the multi-dimensional poverty line for the period 2016-2020, of which: Ha Giang has a poverty rate of 18.54 %, Tuyen Quang - 6.60%, Bac Can - 17.02%, Cao Bang - 18.36% - much higher than the national average of 2.23. (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, 2022). This poses great challenges in harmonizing forest protection and development, and biodiversity conservation with socio-economic development in order to reduce poverty.

As an area with great potential for mining, licensed and illegal mining projects in recent years have been a cause of environmental damage, forest area shrinking and destruction. For example, in the period 2011 - 2015, Ha Giang converted the purpose of using 1,394 hectares of production forests, 525 hectares of protection forests and 39 hectares of special-use forests to serve economic development projects. There are mainly mining, hydropower, and land use conversion for cash crops. Previous studies by PanNature on impact assessment of mining projects also show that mining and mineral processing is one of industries that have a great impact on the environment and ecosystems. In addition to mining and hydropower, other development projects such as industrial tree planting, tourism development, heavy industry... also partly affect the protection of the natural forest status and accompanying biodiversity.

2. Project activities

Component 1: Improving local capacity in biodiversity conservation

- Need-based training workshops: Rapid training need assessment to design tailor-made training activities to respond to the specific needs of local partners and journalists. At least 02 short training courses for each province will be organized to meet these needs.
- Thematic training workshops on biodiversity conservation, development policy analysis, and application of environmental impact assessment tools; At least 03 workshops will be organized for participants from all four provinces.
- Environmental journalism and field investigations for local journalists: PanNature will utilize the national network of journalists to bring in opportunities for local journalists to learn from experienced and renowned peers from national media agencies (who have worked with PanNature in previous activities). At least 02 training workshops will be organized.

Component 2: Collaborative Actions with Local Counterparts

- Carry out joint policy research activities with local partners: Co-design and implement research activities. PanNature will assist local partners with technical expertise during the research and report production. Research results and reports will be used for policy workshops and dialogues in follow-up activities. At least one joint research will be carried out in each province in the corridor.

- Support field work for local journalists: As part of follow-up activities after journalist training, PanNature will work with local journalists to design fieldwork program for them to collect information, investigate and write media reports, stories for publishing on their media outlets. Depending on the need, PanNature can also invite experienced national journalists to join these field trips to share their expertise and perspectives with their local counterparts as an on-the-job training approach.

Component 3: Knowledge Production and Dissemination

- Knowledge production and sharing: Support local counterparts in producing research reports, policy briefs, and other communication materials to share widely with local communities, authorities, and other interested parties.
- Workshops on biodiversity conservation and development: With the results from policy research activities, PanNature will support local partners in each province to carry out at least one provincial workshop or policy dialogue in each province to share findings and recommendations to local authorities on issues around conserving local biodiversity and reducing impacts from development policies, programs. PanNature and local counterparts will jointly organize 01 regional workshop.

3. Safeguards

3.1. Potential Environmental and Social impacts and mitigation plan

Activities and impacts level	Potential impacts/risks	Mitigation solution
Trainings and Workshop Impacts: Very low	E: Negative environmental impacts due to traveling to field work and materials used during trainings. Note that the project aims at a positive impact on environment (biodiversity)	- Reduce travel when necessary, utilize public transportation as much as possible; - Limit printing, digitalize materials used during trainings

	S: Social disorder and insecurity due to temporary visits by strangers to local society	- Proper preparation of visits and introduction of the trainers and other project participants to the local communities; clear guidance on do's and don'ts; monitoring by project officer during visits.
Investigations Impacts: Low	E: Environmental pollution due to travelling for investigations Note that the project aims at a positive impact on environment (biodiversity)	- Utilize public transportation as much as possible
	S: Social disorder due to investiguations and safety for journalists during their investigation	- PanNature will closely monitor the topic for investigation to limit sensitivity, and detailed investigation traveling plan, providing journalists with contact details in case they need support.
Policy research and review Impacts: Very low	Environmental pollution due to materials used Note that the project aims at a positive impact on environment (biodiversity)	- Limit printing, digitalize materials used during research
	Social: None	

3.2. Labor and Working Conditions Safeguards

Activities	Potential impacts/risks	Mitigation solution
Trainings and Workshops Impact: Low	Covid-19 and other infectious diseases transmitted by contact	- All participants must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and have no symptoms of infection before participating in the events.

	Risk of accidents during travel	- Organizers ensure safety conditions according to regulations on Covid-19 prevention and control of the Ministry of Health in the meeting hall and during trips.
Investigations Impact: Low	Covid-19 and other infectious diseases transmitted by contact Safety risks when touching sensitive topics/issues Risk of accidents during travel	- Topics and location for investigations are closely chosen and reviewed by PanNature. - Make hotline/emergency contact for complain and support is available, comprising contact details of PanNature's executive director, project officer, and IUCN's representative in Vietnam for the participants.
Policy research and review Impact: Very low	Covid-19 and other infectious diseases transmitted by contact	PanNature will monitor that the traffic safety regulations are adhered to by the participants.

3.3. Gender mainstreaming

Activities	Issues	Mainstreaming solution
Trainings and Workshops	Gender mainstreaming in training contents	- Journalists are assisted to properly integrate gender content in their content, properly assessing the roles of men and women as drivers of changes in usage, access forest resources and biodiversity values. - Gender and social inclusion will be part of discussion in training and capacity building activities related to development policies. - Balance number of male and female participants and their active contribution/participations in the trainings and workshops.
Investigations	Securities for female journalists	- Carefully review the investigation topics and location;

		- Monitor the travelling and workplan of the journalists and make sure hotline and support available at all times.
Policy research and review	Number of female participants involved and learn from the research	- Make sure at least one female member joins the local research team

3.4. Stakeholder engagement

Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities:

PanNature has worked with both national and provincial journalists in many areas, including the Sino-Vietnamese Limestone Corridor, through training and field activities over the last 15 years. Through training and regular exchanges in our mailing list, PanNature engages with journalists and receives responses, as well as recommendations for issues of interest, capacity building needs. At national level, we maintain close working partnership with leading environmental journalists in major newspapers and media agencies. They have been resource people for our training and capacity building activities for the media over years. PanNature also secured permission for reproducing contents and partnership with over 100 national and provincial media agencies, including those from Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Bac Kan, and Ha Giang (detailed list: https://www.thiennhien.net/ban-quyen/).

PanNature worked with Cao Bang Association for Conservation of Nature and the Environment, Ha Giang Union of Science and Technology Associations in research and policy activities in the past. We still maintain communication and exchange with these organizations. In addition, PanNature also involved other local mass organizations in our field activities and events. As a member of Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA), PanNature shares the same umbrella with provincial Union of Science and Technology Associations in those provinces in the corridor, which is an advantage for collaborative actions.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

- Before the project starts: The project purpose, goals and plan will be fully disclosed through written documents to relevant local government authorities before its implementation. The targeted project participants are invited to join the project through written invitation with the project details.

- During the project: Trainings will be developed based on assessments and participants study. Comments and feedbacks from participants are constantly collected and consulted before, during and after each activity to make sure the trainings and workshops fit the needs and backgrounds of participants and do not bring any unwanted, adverse impacts to the participants. Contact details of trainees, project officers are provided to participants through emails, training materials to provide opportunities for them to request any further information. The project activities will be implemented in a culturally appropriate and simple language.

- After the project: Stakeholders are consulted for the project M&E.

Other engagement activities:

The project activities themselves engage the participants through supporting them to do investigations and policy study after the trainings.

Resources and Responsibilities:

It is important to reiterate that stakeholder engagement is integral to all project activities and all project activities include stakeholder engagement. Therefore, all employees at all levels will be responsible for the involvement of stakeholders with respect to their specific areas of responsibility. Given the way in which stakeholder engagement is integrated in all project activities, no resources are specifically allocated for stakeholder engagement but it is included as part of all budget lines.

Grievance Mechanisms

All project activities will be carried out under the close supervision of PanNature. During the project implementation, if a grievance occurs, the process will be handled according to PanNature's regulations. PanNature will inform partners and stakeholders about these regulations through written and verbal communication. In this event, the Project Manager and PanNature Director will notify CEPF. PanNature will prepare reports in Vietnamese and English to clarify all necessary processing steps as required. In case the claimant does not speak Vietnamese, the Project will arrange a local interpreter to assist.

Grievance related to project staff or project activities should be sent to:

Center for People and Nature

39 Lane 68, Trung Kinh Street, Yen Hoa, Cau Giay, Hanoi

Tel: (+84-0) 24 3556-4001; Email: contact@nature.org.vn

We will share all grievances — and a proposed response — with the regional implementation team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance to the CEPF Executive Director via the CI Ethics Hotline at https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10680/index.html.

Monitoring and Reporting:

Information about each activity and its outcomes will be published on PanNature's website and Facebook Fanpage right after the activity. The outcome of each component and each phase of the project will also be informed in news, pictures and videos. The link of each media work will be shared to all stakeholders by our communication team. Comments and feedbacks on the project outcomes, impacts will be directly and indirectly collected through online and offline platforms.