

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

10 March 2020

CEPF-110337

BirdLife International

Inundated forest conservation through wetland restoration and disease reduction

Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary, Cambodia

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization: BirdLife International Cambodia Programme
2. Grant title. Inundated forest conservation through wetland restoration and disease reduction
3. Grant number. CEPF-110337
4. Grant amount (US dollars): US\$ 179,996
5. Proposed dates of grant: 5/1/2020-4/30/2022
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: Cambodia
7. Date of preparation of this document: 10 March 2020

The Process Framework will describe the project and how restrictions of access to natural resources and measures to assist affected communities. Affected communities should have the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the Process Framework. Typically, the Applicant will prepare a draft Framework that will then be shared and discussed with local communities and other relevant stakeholders. Based on the consultations, a final Framework will be prepared. CEPF may provide guidance on development of the Framework and will review and approve the final Framework prior to approving the final project proposal application. The Process Framework should include the following elements:

A. Project background

Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary (formerly commonly known as Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary) and hereafter SPWS, is located in the Northern Plains Seasonally Inundated Forests and the Sekong River, part of the Mekong River 3S Rivers Confluence flows through the site. This site, inundated for part of the year, includes over 200 ephemeral wetlands known as *trapeangs*. *Trapeangs* are a vital source of food and water for wildlife including important populations of two CEPF priority species the Critically Endangered White-shouldered ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* and Giant Ibis *Thaumatibis gigantea* (Gray et al. 2015, Wright et al. 2012). The site also supports the largest known population of the Endangered Eld's deer *Recervus eldii* a species likely to become Critically Endangered following future assessment. Additionally SPWS supports populations of the Endangered Banteng *Bos javanicus*, and the Vulnerable Gaur *Bos frontalis*. A recently published paper and output from a CEPF supported project, recommended reinforcement and reintroduction of Siem Pang's Eld's Deer and Banteng populations (Gray et al. 2019). Many protected areas in Cambodia, especially in the deciduous dipterocarp landscape are now empty forests, almost entirely devoid of populations of the large charismatic mammals that existed until recently. Re-wilding involving species restoration and reintroduction coupled with habitat restoration are viewed as essential management tools but the factors leading to species' decline must be addressed before such costly efforts can be attempted. This is made more complicated when the ecological roles of extinct wild mammal species, such as Asian elephant *Elephas maximus* and Wild Water Buffalo *Bubalus arnee* responsible for maintaining *trapeangs* have been replaced by domestic cattle and buffalo, which may themselves be carrying disease preventing the rehabilitation of wild mammal populations. Evidence suggests that numbers of domestic livestock are declining at SPWS and insufficient to ensure the ecological integrity of the *trapeangs* so that human manipulation is now required to maintain their suitability as vital foraging areas for the two CEPF priority ibis species present.

The protected area is currently open access and villagers graze their domestic cattle and buffalo widely with no restriction on access, thereby risking disease transmission to wild ungulates.

Gray, T.N.E., W.J. McShea, A. Koehncke, P. Sovanna & M. Wright (2015). Artificial deepening of seasonal waterholes in eastern Cambodia: impact on water retention and use by large ungulates and water birds. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 7(6): 7189–7195; <http://dx.doi.org/10.11609/JoTT.o3935.7189-95>.

Gray, T.N.E., Eames, J.C., Lyon, J.R.A. & Meyerhoff, M. (2019) Rewilding in Southeast Asia: an assessment of conservation opportunities in Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary, Cambodia. *Cambodian Journal of Natural History*, 2019 (2) 98-113.

Wright, H. 2012. Synanthropic survival: low-impact agriculture and White-shouldered Ibis conservation ecology. PhD Thesis. University of East Anglie [UEA], England

Wright, H.L., Collar, N.J., Lake, I.R., Bou Vorsak and Dolman, P.M. 2012. Foraging ecology of sympatric White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* and Giant Ibis *Thaumatibis gigantea* in northern Cambodia. *Forktail* 28: 93-100.

B. Participatory implementation

The project proposes a programme of *trapeang* restoration management in collaboration with local communities. As sources of fish and frogs this will also increase wetland productivity for the benefit of people visiting the wildlife sanctuary. BirdLife has already worked with nearby villages for five years to restore *trapeangs* and to date 28 *trapeangs* have been deepened using locally hired paid labour, recruited on a voluntary basis, additionally providing a much needed source of household cash income. BirdLife has also pioneered controlled buffalo grazing at *trapeangs* to better understand how grazing pressure affects use by large water birds (Eames et al. 2018). In 2019 Rising Phoenix Co. Ltd, (a social enterprise working with BirdLife at the site) have in addition sunk six bore wells so that water can be provided through the dry season at six key *trapeangs*.

Under this new CEPF project 20 *trapeangs* across the protected area will be restored and monitored. Both teams of villagers and mechanical means will be employed to achieve this. The impact of this activity will be monitored utilizing known baselines of key species. The results will be published and protected area managers from elsewhere in the landscape will be invited to visit the site to see the programme, understand its utility and the opportunity for transferring the approach to their sites. A cattle and buffalo vaccination programme against haemorrhagic septicaemia and foot and mouth disease will be conducted in the seven villages surrounding the wildlife sanctuary. This will maintain healthy more valuable herds and help maintain wetland integrity in the sanctuary. Vaccinated animals will be ear-tagged with a long-term goal of eliminating non-vaccinated animals from the sanctuary (not during the lifetime of the project). This will reduce risk of disease transmission to wild ungulates. This activity represents an

expansion of a previous voluntary vaccination programme which proved the receptiveness and demand from local communities to participate and improve the quality of their stock.

Participating families will be asked to sign conservation agreements (similar to those under the Ibis Rice Programme), agreeing to abide by the law in relation to the Sanctuary, and will be monitored by the already established compliance system, established to monitor the Ibis Rice programme on going at these villages.

Existing Village Forums that support farmer initiatives and commit to SPWS protection will be strengthened. Local authorities will be engaged in village forums, providing endorsement and supervision for the animal health care activities.

Eames, J. C., Eang, S., Loveridge R., and Gray, T. N. E., (2018) Impact of experimental domestic water buffalo *Bubalus bubalis* grazing on waterhole dynamics in north-eastern Cambodia
Cambodian Journal of Natural History, 2018, 101–109.

C. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

It must be stressed that participation by villagers in any aspect of this project will be voluntary. Eligible participants will be residents from up to seven villages in Siem Pang District as follows; Khet Krom, Khet Svay, Kampourk, Pong Kreel, Pabang, Nhang Sum, and Lakay. Daily hired labour for *trapeang* digging may be drawn from any of these villages and the cattle and buffalo vaccination programmes will be undertaken in all of them.

D. Measures to assist the affected persons

Villagers electing to participate in the project will receive tangible benefits including, increased availability of fish and frogs, cash income from engagement as wage laborers, improved livestock value and health as a result of vaccination. In return they must declare that they will abide by protected areas law, which in practical terms requires abstaining from hunting, commercial logging and encroachment (all violations of Cambodian law). Some 400 families from the participating villages have already signed the agreement which enables them to participate in the Ibis Rice scheme. The link between the Ibis Rice scheme, increased household income and reduced encroachment and deforestation has recently been established. Research by the University of Oxford and WCS shows that households participating in Ibis Rice increase levels of wealth faster, and enjoy an additional household income equivalent to a family member in fulltime employment or equivalent to owning a hand tractor. Households participating in the scheme clear up to four times less forest (Travis in litt.). Many villagers participating in this new CEPF project are expected to have already signed the agreement. Thus in summary we believe that the positive impacts of participating in this new project and the Ibis Rice scheme, far out way any possible negative impacts.

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Volunteers wishing to be engaged as daily hired laborers to dig *trapeangs* will be recruited after consultation with village head men. It will be explained to them that their participation is voluntary. BirdLife will ensure first aid kits are on site and that adequate food and water is provided, in addition to providing transport to and from the *trapeangs*. Any non-organic food waste or packaging will be removed from the sites or burnt in situ. Any plastic or other waste arising from the buffalo and cattle vaccinations will be removed from the site and burnt.

E. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism.

All projects that trigger a safeguard must provide local communities and other relevant stakeholders with a means to raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank.

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Grievance mechanism

To Whom It May Concern

This document provides a grievance mechanism in relation to the above named project.

Stakeholders will be informed of the objectives of the project and the existence of the grievance mechanism via a public notice posted outside the Birdlife office Siem Pang in Khmer, Lao and English languages. Stakeholders will further be made aware of the objectives of the project and the existence of the grievance mechanism via notices available at project meetings and public announcements at village meetings in Khmer.

BirdLife International Cambodia Programme 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 directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.

Any signboards and posters created as a project output will contain the contact information for BirdLife, CEPF and the World Bank provided below. Anyone wishing to communicate with the grantee, the CEPF Regional Implementation Team and the local World Bank Office on matters relating to this project may do so via the following contact information:

BirdLife International Cambodia Programme, 32 A, 494 Sangkat Phsar Daeum Thkov, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Telephone: +855(0)23 993 631.

Email: admin@birdlifecambodia.org

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CEPF Executive Director: cepfexecutive@conservation.org

F. Implementation Arrangements

The activities included within the project fall within the scope of a memorandum of agreement between BirdLife International and the Ministry of Environment.

Trapeang digging and buffalo and cattle vaccination programmes have been part of BirdLife's Programme of livelihood activities for a number of years already. To date 28 *trapeangs* have been deepened and five hundred and sixty villagers at the target villages have previously been engaged in the earlier programme of *trapeang* deepening and have participated as wage laborers to dig the *trapeangs*. The buffalo and cow vaccination programme have been ongoing for at least five years. For example, in 2019, 1,514 cattle and buffalo owned by 206 families from the seven target villages were vaccinated. Regular consultations with villagers via the existing village forums and during the preparation of this proposal indicated continued support for these activities. The most recent village forum was held on 27 January 2020.

Within the first quarter of project implementation BirdLife in consultation with villagers in the participating villages will prepare a draft Framework that will then be shared and discussed with local communities and other relevant stakeholders. Based on the consultations, a final Framework will be prepared by the end of the first quarter.



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