

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING COMMUNITY FORUMS

TO ASSESS INVOLUNTARY RESTRICTIONS

that may occur during implementation of the

**CEPF project “Enabling continued protection of the Boeung Prek
Lapouv and Anlung Pring Sarus Crane Reserves”**

1. THE CEPF SOCIAL SAFEGUARD

The Letter of Inquiry (LoI) to the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for the project, *Enabling continued protection of the Boeung Prek Lapouv and Anlung Pring Sarus Crane Reserves*, outlines the continuation of patrolling of two legally designated protected areas (Boeung Prek Lapouv and Anlung Pring Sarus Crane Reserves) by Local Conservation Groups (LCGs). These activities have the potential to trigger CEPFs safeguard policy to address social impacts from restrictions of access to natural resources as per the World Bank's Involuntary Resettlement Policy (OP 4.12).

There is an LCG active at Boeung Prek Lapouv. The LCG carries out law enforcement activities, upholding relevant provisions of the laws of Cambodia, such as the Forestry Law, Fisheries Law, Decree on Wildlife Protection and the official national sub-decrees for the existing protected area and the proposed new community fishery for Boeung Prek Lapouv. The CEPF safeguard policy is not triggered when dealing with illegal activities.

However, it is possible that a person or persons may be inappropriately denied access to natural resources, in which case their complaints need to be heard and adequately mitigated, while solutions sought to avoid any future unlawful restrictions. As the project is also preparing management plans for the protected areas there is potential for communities to lose access rights and face increasing restrictions on resource use.

2. ASSESSING INVOLUNTARY RESTRICTIONS

The project will provide a platform for local communities to voice any complaints they may have about activities undertaken during the project implementation period and thereby enable periodic assessments of whether mitigation measures are necessary and adaptations to project implementation need to be considered.

The project leader, Chamroen Chiet Khmer (CCK) which works with communities surrounding Boeung Prek Lapouv, already holds regular meetings with community members as part of its role in the current CEPF project lead by WWT. For the small grant project, CCK will hold, at quarterly intervals, community forums which will be held at appropriate locations so that all stakeholders from local villages are able to attend. The first community forums will be held in November/December 2012 followed by a further three before project end.

CCK is a suitable organization to facilitate the community forums as it is well-respected locally for the work it has already undertaken as part of the *Establishing Sustainable Management at Key Wetlands for Sarus Crane in the Cambodian Lower Mekong* project, and have the communities interests at heart. For example, as well as regularly holding community forums already, it has jointly lead with WWT, on facilitating the Ecosystems Services Appraisal at BPL.

Members of the Local Conservation Groups will not attend these forums, nor will any other member of government that is not a resident of that particular village. The community forums will be built on regular end of the month meetings CCK with community groups that they have formed under current and previous CEPF grants, i.e. Village Volunteer Committees, Self-Help Groups, Community Livelihood and Development Management Committees, but all members of the community can participate in the forum and the time and date of the forum will be announced beforehand.

The main aim of the forum will be to obtain information on involuntary restrictions caused as a consequence of implementation of the *Enabling continued protection of the Boeung Prek Lapouv and Anlung Pring Sarus Crane Reserves* project, however the forum will also be used to assess community awareness of the project.

It is important that the reason for involuntary restrictions, should they occur, being imposed on an individual or group is properly assessed. Often local people are not aware of the law, *i.e.* what is illegal. It will therefore be helpful if staff from CCK that will be facilitating the meetings have sufficient understanding of the laws that apply to natural resource collection and wetland reserve conservation. To that end it will be helpful if the LCG groups hold a brief refresher session explaining and reviewing laws pertaining to natural resource extraction and to the conservation areas immediately ahead of the community forum. This will help raise awareness of the appropriate laws among communities and avoid cases of involuntary restrictions imposed legally by the LCG being brought up during the forum. After the awareness raising session, the LCGs will leave and the community forum will commence under direction of a CCK representative facilitator.

A member of CCK will take minutes during each community forum so that these can be shared with project partners (including WWT and community stakeholders) and CEPF.

Valid involuntary restrictions brought up in community forums will be flagged and the project will document mitigation measures taken. Subsequent community forums will be used to assess if the issue has been dealt with appropriately.

Appendix 1. List of target villages where quarterly community forums will be held

No.	Village	Commune	District	Province
1	Dei Leuk	Chey Chouk	Borei Chulsa	Takeo
2	Banteay Sloek			
3	Sangkom Meanchey			
4	Banteay Thlay	Prey Khla	Koh Andet	
5	Kaev Kamphleung			
6	Chroy Pon	Kropum Chhuk		