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Safeguard document – Process Framework and Social Assessment

CEPF Project Title: Stimulating Sustainable Saola Snare Removal: Leveraging Long-Term Support for Saola Conservation in the Central Annamites of Vietnam

1. Project Background

This project builds upon a number of projects funded to support conservation interventions within the Thua Thien Hue-Quang Nam protected area landscape containing priority Saola habitat. For example, the CEPF project titled “*Safeguarding the Saola within the Species' Priority Landscape in Vietnam*” and the current Carbon Sinks and Biodiversity Conservation (CarBi) Project. Through these projects a wide number of activities have been implemented to support conservation of Saola and other biological values of the landscape, the most innovative and successful to date has been implementation of the Forest Guard (FG) model. Since its inception, this initiative co-managed by WWF and the Saola Nature Reserve (SNR) Management Boards (MBs), has recruited and employed community-based FGs who conduct anti-poaching patrols within in critical Saola habitat.

The goal of the IUCN Saola Working Group (of which WWF is a proactive member) is zero threats to Saola (particularly zero snares) in critical Saola areas. Given that WWF has now recorded the first live, wild Saola detection of the 21st century, there is an urgent need to ensure zero snares in this area and identify what levels of patrolling are needed to achieve zero snares and zero threat to Saola at sites known to support the species. These *in-situ* initiatives are a high priority for continuation. Considerable effort needs to be invested to identify funding sources and to create ongoing funding sustainability.

1.1. The Project Approach

The project will multiply the gains made from previous projects through leveraging new conservation funds related to Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services (PFES), complemented by the corporate and private sector, whilst ensuring that the critical ongoing accountability for conservation results is maintained. Furthermore, WWF and partners will undertake activities within SNRs and outside to mitigate major threats to CEPF priority species in the Central Annamites through leveraging additional, and sustainable conservation funding to expand the FG model. The project is organised into three components:

- 1) Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue Forest Protection Departments provide sustainable long-term funding for community FG deployment through Payment for Forest Environmental Services (PFES);
- 2) Achieve zero threat to Saola and identify what is needed to expand ‘zero snares’ across Saola range (Hue and Quang Nam SNRs); and



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3) Leverage corporate and philanthropic funding for Saola conservation and community led snare removal.

Of the three components, initiatives contained within Component 2 “*Achieve zero threat to Saola and identify what is needed to expand ‘zero snares’ across Saola range*” are those that involve community participation and have the greatest potential to impact these communities. Specifically these include:

2.1: At least 16 days patrolling, to remove snares, undertaken in high priority Saola forest compartments across both Quang Nam and Hue Saola Reserves each month.

Measured through SMART reports.

2.2: Informant Incentive System, with clear and transparent guidelines and confidential list of informants, developed and implemented in, and around, Quang Nam and Hue Saola Reserves.

Activities under 2.1 will provide further support (salaries, operational costs) for the mostly community recruited FG patrol teams in both the SNRs including robust law enforcement monitoring using SMART conservation software. Those activities under the informant incentive system (Activity 2.2) will provide a confidential platform for the dissemination of poaching information.

The strong relationships and trust built through the WWF CarBi Project in Vietnam will provide the enabling environment for government support to achieve this.

1.2. Project Area

The project area is located in the central Vietnam Provinces of Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam, focusing upon two Protected Areas, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam SNRs comprising 32,000 ha (15,600 and 16,400 respectively) and buffer zone of around 50,000 ha. Both SNRs are located in a geographic area known as the Central Annamites.

1.3 Summary of Socio-economic Context

Data used in both sections 1.3 and 1.4 is mostly derived from research conducted by the CarBi Project in 2013 and documented in the “Socio-Economic Assessment Of Buffer Zone Communities located around Bach Ma National Park, Hue Saola Nature Reserve and Quang Nam Saola Nature Reserve”.

There are no permanent human settlements inside the SNRs. Approximately 72 villages are located within the surrounding buffer zone of which most are classified as “poor”. People from local communities include several groups with different lifestyles and culture living together. The overwhelming majority come from the Ka Tu people followed in group size by Ta Oi, Pako and Kinh people.



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The Hue SNR buffer zone contains 9,370 people living in 876 households. The population demography consists of Ka Tu (72%), Ta Oi (23%) and Kinh and Pako 2% and 3% respectively. The Quang Nam SNR buffer zone contains 10,294 people living in 2,227 households with a demographic population of 99% Ka Tu and 1% Kinh. The Kinh people migrated from other regions following the National sedentarisation programme. Therefore, by demographic definition, there is little differentiation that may be made by the use of the words “local communities” and “indigenous communities” and should therefore be considered as the same in the context of this document.

In general, SNR buffer zone communities live in tight knit groups often comprised of three to four clans in one village. Thus, relationships and community networks are very close with many mutual and shared obligations to one another. Due to the high level of poverty in these areas, government support constitutes a substantial contribution through low interest loans, technical agricultural and forestry support and vocational training.

Indigenous knowledge on the use of medicinal plants, handicraft techniques and traditional production tools has progressively been disappearing and now only some elders possess the skills. Some of the spiritual traditions e.g. sacrifices for Giang (God), forest spirits have declined considerably with some still only practiced at a small number of locations. Sharing of forest products among members of village communities has also decreased, as has the overall percentage of people reliant upon forest resources as their principal source of livelihood and family income.

Nowadays harvesting of forest products answers individual needs rather than collectively and those who are able to harvest forest products enjoy the benefits. However, in many communities forest product use cultural traditions (such as wild meat and fish) are still maintained during traditional holidays or festivals. These events form a strong basis of maintaining local ethnic group culture, however, often conflict with laws established to protect and conserve environmental services and biodiversity values.

1.4. Threats to Local Livelihoods

Since establishment of the SNRs significant impacts upon the livelihoods of buffer zone communities (inclusive of indigenous groups) have been observed and recorded. During the establishment planning of the Quang Nam SNR in 2011, two villages were included within the provisional boundaries. However the boundaries of the SNR were then moved to prevent including the villages. However parts of areas previously cultivated remained inside the boundary and there are thus restrictions upon accessing some forest resources. Many buffer zone people have adjusted their livelihood options and become less reliant upon forest resources for their survival and prosperity. However, for those who maintain traditional, yet, now often illegal forest resource exploitation activities e.g. hunting, fishing and NTFPs harvesting, the destruction of their equipment, temporary camps and confiscation of harvested products is annoying and creates some conflict with law



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enforcement patrol teams. According to local culture disturbance / removal of other peoples' traps and camps is socially unacceptable yet required, in some locations, if saola is not to become extinct.

With the declaration of the SNRs and in areas where the FGs will patrol during the project, hunting is illegal. In practice, however, hunting is common throughout the area and this project will certainly negatively impact the income of some local hunters. At first glance, the impacts seem potentially severe as wild meat is an economically valuable resource. Furthermore, hunting is a central element in the Ka Tu culture (Arhem, 2005) and almost all the areas where the project will act to prevent all hunting in fact lie within the traditional hunting grounds of local communities (N Wilkinson, unpublished data from community mapping surveys). However a more detailed examination of the local situation reveals quite a different picture.

It appears that most hunting in the area, especially in areas far from the current village locations i.e. the priority saola areas in which this project will focus, is not undertaken by local people but by professional hunters from district towns and cities such as Da Nang and Hue (Robertson *et al* 2004). In Quang Nam (Long, 2005) and Nam Dong (N Wilkinson, unpublished data) local people complain of the impact of these outsiders and, in 66% of villages surveyed in Quang Nam this was considered the greatest threat to local community harvests (Long, 2005). This means that most of the economic impacts from this project will not be on local people but on outsiders.

Nevertheless, local people do hunt, and do sell almost all the meat they catch, even if the main purpose is sometimes for crop protection (Long, 2005, Arhem, 2005). Extrapolating from Dang & Schuyt's study (2005) to the whole project area would suggest that the total income to local communities from wild meat could be around \$300,000 annually. It is important to note that much of this income is from snares set close to agricultural fields which also fulfil a crop protection function. This project will concentrate on remote forest areas and therefore have minimal impact on these snares. In the long term, capture rates of wild pig near the village would probably be increased by protection of source populations in more distant areas.

1.5. Process of Project Development

WWF Vietnam has been working within the target area since the beginning of the millennium and has a long track record of conducting research, forest restoration, conservation, environmental protection and livelihoods development. For example, through large projects such as MOSAIC, Green Corridor, ADB Biodiversity Corridors Initiative and most recently the CarBi Project, long term relationships have been forged with a wide variety of government stakeholders. Since the inception of the SNRs, local communities have been engaged in a wide variety of forest restoration and conservation



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activities. Therefore WWF and project partners have a good understanding of local socio-economic needs and conditions. The CEPF funding will support and advance an already established framework for long-term conservation and development interventions.

The project has been discussed with proposed government partners, i.e. the SNR MBs and Forest Protection Department (FPD), from Provincial to local levels. In regards to FG initiatives, consultations were made with existing FG teams operating at each SNR. For those activities involving the informant networks, consultations were made in buffer zone villages where WWF is supporting the SNRs to gradually establish community informant networks. This step was essential (and will continue to be so) to determine the most appropriate approaches from community leaders in particular, to implement such activities.

2. Participatory Implementation

As mentioned previously project initiatives that involve community participation and have the greatest potential to impact these communities are contained within Component 2 “Achieve zero threat to Saola and identify what is needed to expand ‘zero snares’ across Saola range” and specifically include activities 2.1 and 2.2. Participation by the community is described below.

2.1: At least 16 days patrolling, to remove snares, undertaken in high priority Saola forest compartments across both Quang Nam and Hue Saola Reserves each month. Measured through SMART reports.

Given that the majority of the FGs have been recruited from communities around the SNRs and the considerable additional financial flow to these communities from the project will provide the framework for the process of Free, Prior and Informed Consultation of all local communities within the project area. This will continue to focus on the indigenous ethnic minority groups such as the Ta Oi and Ka Tu who make up the majority of community members and will also include non-indigenous groups. All local communities will be informed of the project activities prior to their inception and have the opportunity to discuss local community involvement and the implications of the project on local livelihoods. Saola NR and WWF staff have conducted, and will continue to conduct, these consultations with all local communities in the SNRs buffer zones. Consultations to all local communities are conducted in Vietnamese as the vast majority, >95%, of all villagers in the buffer zones speak and understand Vietnamese. However, consultations directly to indigenous ethnic minority groups are conducted in the ethnic minority languages. These meetings also provide an opportunity for villagers to identify potential candidates for employment as forest guards prior to recruitment. Minutes of all meetings, together with signed attendance lists, will be taken and shared with CEPF as part of project reporting.



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2.2: Informant Incentive System, with clear and transparent guidelines and confidential list of informants, developed and implemented in, and around, Quang Nam and Hue Saola Reserves.

As new villages are added to the buffer zone informant network, Free, Prior and Informed Consultation processes will be conducted in all village communities. This includes meetings with village leaders and placement of posters advertising the informant network (developed under the CarBi Project) at key locations within each village and local commune level offices and buildings. The Saola NR will conduct these activities with participation of key local village leaders. Consultations will be in Vietnamese and minutes of all meetings, together with signed attendance lists, will be taken and shared with CEPF as part of project reporting.

3. Criteria for eligibility of affected person

Law enforcement activities and data collected during the WWF's socio-economic assessment suggest that negative impacts to livelihoods will be minimal and most local people will change their livelihood strategies to alternative activities voluntarily if they are affected. Implementing project activities will strengthen restrictions on human use of natural resources within the SNRs. However, as the role of FGs is mainly focussed upon anti-poaching, their impact will be restricted to addressing illegal, unsustainable and destructive activities such as detecting and destroying snares, and other hunting activities and locating and destroying camps used to facilitate these activities. The geographical focus will be within the Strict Protection Zone (Core) of each of the SNRs which correlate in most cases, to remote areas often outside the hunting proximity preferred by local hunters. In addition, significant patrol effort focus will be on areas identified as critical Saola habitat (defined by CarBi Project initiatives e.g. camera-trap and leech analysis results, habitat assessment, and gathering of local knowledge).

Legal and sustainable activities, for example NTFPs collection if not concurrently associated with snaring and hunting by harvesters; sustainable snaring of wild pigs in village areas outside core Saola habitat, will not be impacted.

4. Measures to assist the affected persons.

Local communities will be encouraged to freely discuss with WWF and project partners before and during the project (refer to grievance procedures below) how the project may potentially be, or is, impacting their livelihoods. This process ensures the development of appropriate and timely mitigation strategies in close collaboration with affected persons (individuals, communities, civil society groups) and implemented accordingly.

Individuals or groups of people whose livelihood strategy does not involve illegal, unsustainable or destructive, whose livelihoods however have been negatively impacted by project activities, may be eligible for compensation through the following:



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- 1) Preferential involvement in CarBi forest restoration activities if they live in target areas¹;
- 2) Become eligible in the future WWF / CarBi project activities such as incentive-based community conservation activities currently under development; or
- 3) Benefit through alternative mitigation strategies developed and implemented by this CEPF-funded project or additional funds raised for this purpose.

Given that the majority of the FGs (from a total of 40) are recruited (prior and future) from communities around the SNRs, and the considerable financial flow to these communities from involvement in the project, WWF believes that substantial additional benefits to local people and communities will be provided.

An additional mitigation strategy employed by WWF (CarBi Project) will be one of pre-emptive education. A SNR landscape buffer zone awareness raising strategy has been prepared and field activities will commence later in 2014. As part of village awareness raising activities four key education areas have been defined for dissemination:

- 1) Purpose of each PA, values, local biological diversity and positive benefits of forest conservation;
- 2) PA management activities, functions and PA boundaries;
- 3) Access and use rights, permissible activities and restrictions through interpretation of laws / regulations;
- 4) Forest sustainability and potential benefits from involvement in protecting and conserving forest and other natural resources contained within the PAs

Content on point three in particular will focus upon addressing some of the conflicts associated with cultural sensitivities revolving around removal of snares and destruction of camps used by local people. Further, the opportunity will be used to prepare these people to expect that such occurrences will continue to occur, particularly within the SNR Strict Protection Zones because these activities are illegal, destructive, unsustainable and incompatible with saola conservation.

5. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism.

Grievances and conflicts raised by affected communities, civil society groups or individuals will follow official pathways / channels currently employed by communities and villages in Vietnam. Aggrieved people may inform the SNR MBs and WWF staff of their issues through: a) meetings held between WWF and SNR MB staff; b) field visits by WWF staff and

¹ current CarBi Project Forest Restoration Component threat mitigation and livelihood enhancement within buffer zone communities (inclusive of indigenous communities) includes job creation to generate additional and new income through participation in field activities e.g. household afforestation, natural regeneration with enrichment planting, facilitated natural regeneration, forest protection contracts and community forest management, of which also generate long term benefits.



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SNR rangers to villages; and c) through telephone contact with key contacts from both organisations.

WWF will create a single page project information flyer / poster and distribute it within target villages. The flyer will include the following: a short description of the project and key activities; details of both key WWF and SNR MB staff and IUCN CEPF-Regional Implementation Team (RIT); and a summary of the grievance resolution process. All communities will also be made aware that grievance may be made at any time, to any of the above individuals/organisations. WWF and SNR MB staff will ensure that copies of this complaint communication channel will be kept with Commune Authorities, placed at prominent locations target villages and be made available during the course of project activities and upon request.

WWF will have responsibility to ensure these grievances are dealt with promptly and equitably and will work with project partners especially SNR MBs and local commune authorities 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 CEPF-RIT informed and consulted regarding any grievances that arise and resultant solutions devised and implemented.

6. Mitigation and Indigenous people's plan

In the connection between conservation and local economic development, the importance of the 'Conservation Economy Strategy' is considered to develop the ideas for supporting and improving the livelihoods of local communities within the project area.

Firstly, the project will continue to give priority to newly recruited forest guards who are indigenous people, such as Ka Tu and Ta Oi people,

Secondly, we are investigating links to other WWF projects/components involved in mitigating threats to livelihoods of local people. The current Forest Restoration components under CaBi project has created the job, income, benefits for local indigenous communities through component activities, such as afforestation by households, natural regeneration with enrichment planting, natural regeneration without enrichment planting, forest protection contracts, community forest management.

Thirdly, ideas for extension of CarBi project for Protected Area and Forest Restoration components, the project also concentrate on and strengthen efforts regarding "Conservation Economy Strategy" aimed at the enhancement and diversification of livelihoods through capacity building and job creation (if financially possible).



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Finally, mitigation strategy implemented by CEPF project through fundraising from Government PFES and other sources fundings will be activated the planned interventions on livelihoods of indigenous communities as well as all local communities for long-term impacts.

7. Implementation Arrangements

WWF will take overall responsibility for managing the project; however, will closely collaborate within a WWF / SNR MB / Provincial FPD co-management arrangement to ensure that activities are implemented as intended, and that sought outputs are delivered to meet defined objectives. Further, as part of our overall management responsibility, WWF will ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are taken (when alerted to them) and that the approved version of this Process Framework is distributed and understood among partners. WWF project staff will conduct on-going monitoring of project activities and implementation of this Process Framework and by each partner continuously throughout the project.

The SNR MBs will be the main government counterparts involved in all field aspects of project implementation that have triggered the Involuntary Restrictions criteria. Through this partnership modality, the project will directly support the SNR MBs develop their capacity to resolve issues of conflict between local communities and conservation.

Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue SNRs are responsible for allocating ranger staff to accompany and support FG patrol teams and for directly managing their activities in the field (with support from WWF). Implementation of FG law enforcement plans and activities beyond the lifetime of the project will be jointly held in a co-management arrangement between the SNR MBs and WWF.

Commune People's Committees will be involved to amicably resolve grievances should they arise.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Process Framework

Monitoring the implementation of the Process Framework will occur continuously throughout the duration of the project and include:

- 1) Regular coordination visits at project sites with staff from the SNRs and CEPF staff (where appropriate);
- 2) Regular monthly meetings with staff from WWF, SNR MBs and where appropriate Provincial FPD to discuss issues arising that are incompatible with the Process Framework; and
- 3) Reports prepared by WWF staff outlining issues, recommended actions and responses taken by WWF staff and partners in the event of a complaint being registered by affected persons and undated and communicated to WWF and CEPF.



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