

Framework for social assessment, consultation and safeguards procedure for the implementation of the CEPF funded project:

Mainstreaming Karst Biodiversity Conservation into Policies, Plans and Business Practices in Myanmar

Identification of indigenous people in the project area.

The *potential* karst sites this project is going to assess, and the *potential* sites for piloting conservation interventions, are spread throughout South-western Shan state, Karen state (straddling the border with Mon state), and the precise sites will not be identified prior to project inception. CEPF will be informed of the location of each project site after it has been selected, and a detailed Social Assessment will be prepared and submitted to CEPF prior to project activities commencing at that site. Separate Social Assessments may be prepared for each site or a combined Social Assessment may be prepared covering multiple sites, according to the timeline of the project. Each Social Assessment will include a summary of the free, prior and informed consultations conducted *prior* to the initiation of project activities, including a record of how consent was provided by the indigenous communities concerned. Project activities will only commence at any site after review and approval of this documentation by CEPF.

Based on a review of literature and ethnic distribution maps we can only state that the karst sites in South-western Shan state are likely to be inhabited by Shan, Danu and Pa-O. Karst areas in Kayin state and bordering areas in Mon state are inhabited by Mon and Karen people.

Assessment of potential project impacts

In Shan state and in Tanintharyi/ Kayin region local communities have often built Buddhist temples in caves or on Limestone Mountains. Such cultural values of karst conservation support the conservation of karst ecosystems. FFI will support such community initiatives for karst conservation. Therefore the impact of the project is expected to be positive. In the event that any project site contains temples or other sites of cultural or religious significance to local communities, FFI will prepare documentation setting out how the project will ensure compliance with the safeguard policy on Physical Cultural Resources. This will include a monitoring mechanism for ensuring that unintended adverse impacts are avoided. Project activities will only commence at any site after review and approval of this documentation by CEPF.

Following the biodiversity assessments and the identification of key biodiversity areas, the project will undertake social assessments to identify any customary indigenous rights, uses and practices in key biodiversity areas, and analyse any adverse impacts of project interventions on indigenous people. Any karst conservation intervention undertaken by the project will be subject to free and prior informed consent by local and religious users, and customary indigenous owners and users. FFI will assess any potential impacts to indigenous people and develop mitigation measures. FFI will engage relevant state government agencies to support management rights for karst and caves by local indigenous/ religious communities who have customary rights or long-established uses.

No involuntary restrictions will be placed on guano harvesting through protected area gazettelement. The project will ensure that guano harvesting rights in caves in protected areas will be recognized through zonation and or exclusion from the protected area. Communities will be advised on sustainable management of guano resources and bat caves, but changes in management will have to be voluntary, based on the principles of free and prior informed consent

Consultation process

The identification of key biodiversity areas will be followed by a public announcement of the results to local stakeholders through village meetings as well as the general public through media publications. Any selection of pilot sites or any conservation interventions will be based on a consultative process with local communities based on the principle of free, prior and informed consent.

Measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits

Measures will depend on the local stakeholder consultation process for the planning of pilot projects/interventions. Interventions related to cave management has to be based on an initial social assessment to identify customary users and current users to be followed by a local stakeholder consultation workshop where conservation interventions are planned and implemented only on the basis of free, prior and informed consent. For example if correctly consulted and implemented management interventions for guano harvesting will have no negative impact on local users. However FFI will only engage with local communities in cave management on a voluntary basis based on FPIC principles.

Monitoring

The project will provide ongoing monitoring of the impacts of any conservation interventions against the initial social baseline assessment to ensure that conservation interventions have no adverse impact.

Grievance mechanism

FFI will assign one office staff in the FFI Yangon office to respond to any grievances. FFI will publicise phone numbers and email addresses under which anybody who wants to express a grievance can contact FFI Myanmar and the CEPF-Regional Implementation Team at Myanmar Environmental Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN). Any grievances will be promptly addressed and responded to and in case dissatisfaction remains, our local rights based NGO partners SSCA and DRA will be asked to mediate. Any grievances will be reported to CEPF within one month, together with a summary of the remedial action taken or planned by FFI.