

**Social Assessment**

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**CEPF Grant 112762**

**NatureLife Cambodia (NLC)**

***Build the network of conservation NGOs  
to address the rapid declining of Eastern  
Sarus Crane Population***

**Project Location: CAMBODIA**

## **Grant Summary**

1. Grantee organization: **NatureLife Cambodia (NLC)**
2. Grant title: Build the network of conservation NGOs to address the rapid declining of Eastern Sarus crane population
3. Grant number: 112762
4. Grant amount (US dollars): **49999 USD\$**
5. Proposed dates of grant: **1 July 2022 – 30 June 2024**
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: **Cambodia**
7. Date of preparation of this document: **17<sup>th</sup> March 2022**
8. **Indigenous People affected:** *This section will describe the Indigenous People in the project area.*

There are around 24 different Indigenous groups recognised in the Cambodia, numbering an estimated 250,000 to 400,000 people, the majority of which are found in the 'highlands' of the North and East of the country<sup>1,2</sup>. Due to imprecise or incomplete census recording of Cambodian Indigenous groups, and sometimes subjective estimates of where linguistic boundaries lie, the number of groups may vary<sup>1,2,3</sup>.

Within under this proposal, three areas of work are included. The area in Southern Cambodia, Boeung Prek Lapouv Protected Landscape (BPL), and the area in the Northwest of Cambodia, Anlung Pring Protected Landscape (AP) are not inhabited by people classed as Indigenous. The area of work in the Northeast of the country, Lomphat Wildlife Sanctuary (LWS), however contains a number of scheduled Indigenous groups.

National-level research conducted by conservation NGO's and published via open-source data platforms suggests that there are two Indigenous Groups in the wider Lomphat area. The Bunong Indigenous Group are settled mostly to the south of Ratanakiri Province and widely throughout Mondulakiri Province; and the Khmer-Laos Indigenous Group, who are settled along two large Mekong tributary rivers called the Sesan and Srepok. There are two more groups on the periphery (both to the northeast) of the work area; the Brao/Praov and the Tampuan/Tompuonn. This data is shown below in Figure 1: Indigenous Groups in Cambodia<sup>4</sup>.

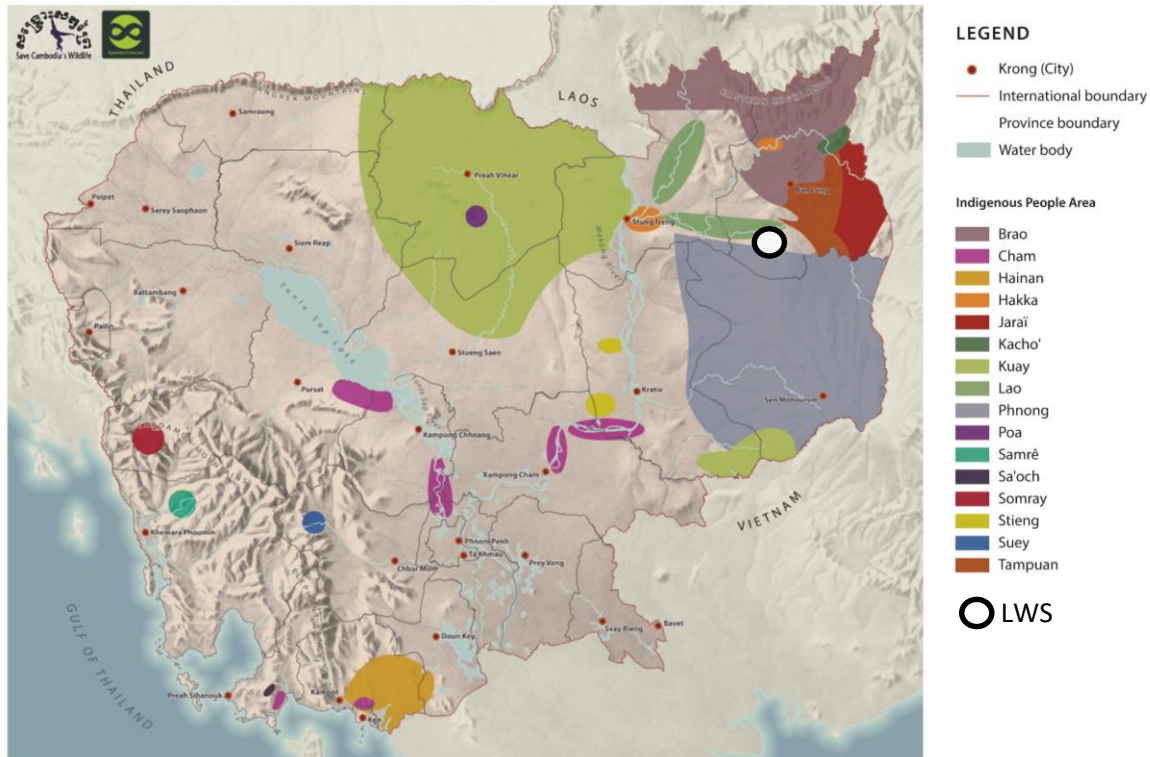


Figure1: Indigenous Groups in Cambodia<sup>4</sup>,

NatureLife Cambodia, and also under its former incarnation as BirdLife International Cambodia program, has worked in Lomphat Wildlife Sanctuary for many years, and also has conducted research in the past as to presence of Indigenous groups. According to this past research, and based on self-reporting of ethnicity/group, there were five groups reported across the area of work; Cambodian or Khmer make up 65% of households, and the Indigenous groups the following percentages: Khmer-Laos (14%), Bunong (14%), Mil (4%), and Kuy (3%)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>.CIPO, 2022. "Indigenous Peoples Data." Cambodia Indigenous Peoples' Organization (CHRO). Accessed on 15 March 2022 at <http://cipocambodia.org/our-work/developing-indigenous-peoples-center/#1585208858312-76224c71-df89>

<sup>2</sup>.Moul, P. and Seng, S., 2012, 'Country Technical Note on Indigenous Peoples' Issues – Kingdom of Cambodia'. IFAD/AIPP. Accessed 17 March 2022. [https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40224860/cambodia\\_ctn.pdf/02148186-48e9-4c08-bc09-b3565da70afb](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40224860/cambodia_ctn.pdf/02148186-48e9-4c08-bc09-b3565da70afb)

<sup>3</sup>.Bourdies, F., 2014. Indigenous Groups in Cambodia 2014: An Updated Situation. Published by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact.

<sup>4</sup>.Figure 1: Indigenous Groups in Cambodia. OpenDevelopment Cambodia / Save Cambodia's Wildlife. [Used here under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License]. Accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 from-

[http://archive.opendevdevelopmentcambodia.net/download\\_maps/Indigenous-people/?post\\_type=download\\_maps](http://archive.opendevdevelopmentcambodia.net/download_maps/Indigenous-people/?post_type=download_maps).

<sup>5</sup>.Ny, N. and Gray-Read, O., 2022, Veterinary Diclofenac & Other NSAIDs Survey. 2021 Report. Unpublished Report by NatureLife Cambodia.

**9. Summary of the proposed project:** *This section will describe what you plan to do and how you plan to do it, with a particular focus on activities implemented in areas inhabited and/or used by Indigenous People.*

This project will drive and facilitate the establishment of the Sarus Crane Working Group - whose constituent members are expected to be organisations working at key Sarus Crane nesting sites in Cambodia. The Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) is among Southeast Asia's most charismatic birds, the world's largest species of crane and an important flagship species representative of the floodplain wetlands of the Lower Mekong basin. The naturally-persisting Indochinese population of the eastern sharpii subspecies is now practically limited to Cambodia and Vietnam, and with continuing population declines is also considered to be among the most threatened of the Sarus Crane populations across its global distribution.

The proposed project aims to halt and reverse these declines by addressing the current conservation challenges and gaps by working with the Government and key conservation NGOs to convene a formal, multi-stakeholder working group (The Sarus Crane Working Group). By bringing together organisations, stakeholders and technical experts this overdue and necessary step will create a collaborative conservation and communication platform to safeguard the subspecies. NatureLife Cambodia is placed to take on the leadership role coordinating this group. Within this framework, NatureLife Cambodia will also support and promote local conservation groups to become sarus crane conservation champions, and assist them in implementing the priority site-based conservation actions at key sites, guided by continued extensive monitoring of populations and threats.

In particular relevance to the Indigenous groups and communities in the wider Lomphat area as described above, training and workshops will take place in or near their communities, and the on-job training of sarus crane nest monitoring teams may well include people from Indigenous groups. Sarus cranes may nest in forest areas that are either used by Indigenous for collection of forest products, or in or near areas or features that are either considered sacred or have cultural significance by Indigenous People.

**Potential impacts:** *This section will assess expected project impacts (both positive and negative) on Indigenous People.*

There's a number of expected and/or potential positive impacts on Indigenous People that the Lomphat Wildlife Sanctuary site project may create, all of which are related to the initial and on-job training of sarus crane nest monitoring teams will create.

1. At the Lomphat site the project will consult with local Indigenous groups about the proposed work, and later include Indigenous community members on the teams that receive the training and subsequently carry out the monitoring work. This should increase the sense of connectedness and environmental stewardship between Indigenous People and the forest habitats in which they live.
2. By their inclusion on the sarus crane nest monitoring teams this will provide a source of paid employment for a small number of local Indigenous People.
3. By their inclusion of local Indigenous People on the sarus crane nest monitoring teams this can be expected to foster and promote closer links, and better relationships between Indigenous People and conservation organisations and protected area managers.
4. The protection of a flagship species with the potential to attract eco-tourist bird-watching groups will enrich the environment in which Indigenous People live, and help to preserve their natural heritage.

This project does not expect to have any significant negative impacts on Indigenous People. This project does expect that it will significantly reduce disturbance, persecution, hunting or egg/chick theft of breeding pairs of sarus crane within the project area, but as the acts are all clearly and explicitly illegal, and also unsustainable and destructive, this isn't considered further.

In terms of restricting access to forest areas where Indigenous People may collect forest products, the project here does not include any components that would restrict Indigenous People's movement or access to natural resources. It would be the case that access to sarus crane nests would be partially restricted, but given this would be a very small area, probably not more than a couple of hundred metres radius centred on the nest, and sarus cranes necessarily nest in places where people very frequently go.

Under the circumstance that Indigenous People were excluded from consultation about the project activities or from participation in the training or monitoring activities this would damage both the Indigenous community's attitudes towards the project, and the likelihood of local Indigenous communities cooperating with the project.

**10. Participatory preparation:** *This section will describe the participation of affected communities during the project design process (i.e., prior to submission of the full proposal), and explain how Free, Prior and Informed Consent was obtained.*

Through our other projects and operations, NatureLife Cambodia has been working closely with the communities of the wider Lomphat landscape for a number of years. These communities also include the communities that live closest to the natural areas in which the local resident sarus cranes use as nesting habitats. This has allowed us to integrate

consultations and participation feedback for the proposed project design into existing activities from the start of the design stage.

Having first identified six administrative village areas, from which training groups of sarus crane nest monitoring teams would be selected, during recent village meetings the proposed project was raised for discussion. NatureLife Cambodia project coordinators first outlined the details of the proposed project, held open discussions to gather feedback, and requested feedback from all participants as to whether they were for, against or neutral to the idea. Furthermore, they were asked to discuss and disseminate the proposed project design within their local networks, and to raise any other points with the NatureLife contact points.

At the meetings local village administration role-holders were invited and generally present, and were representatives of the households that regularly access areas where the sarus crane nest sites are approximately located. So far, all participants have expressed positive feedback towards sarus crane conservation. A widely-held position is that being that as the proposed brings training and additional income to community members in the monitoring teams, without imposing any additional restrictions on communities, then they are fully supportive of the project design, and have uniformly expressed their consent. The six meetings were held in six village areas across 5 communes in the Lomphat landscape between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, with a total number of participants of 125 people. The names of the six village administrative areas where the meetings took place are: Sre Chouk, Phum Thmei, Sre Chrey, Sre Pork Thom, Roveak, and Kang Sann.

**11. Mitigation strategies:** *This section will outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits.*

The project has been designed with the Indigenous Peoples of the wider Lomphat area full participation in mind, and it's expected that the project will not yield any negative impacts on local communities.

The only point which might result in negative feelings or negative impacts would be if training or monitoring employment opportunities were withheld from Indigenous members of the various communities. To prevent this, before selection and formation of training and monitoring personnel groups, investigations will be made by NatureLife Cambodia project coordinators to establish if or which Indigenous groups are present in the communities from which personnel will be drawn.

These Indigenous groups will be invited to participate in planning meetings and consultations, and every effort will be made to ensure they receive representation on training/monitoring teams at a minimum level of proportionate with their representation in the local community. These consultations and invitations will be recorded and documented. As a further part of our mitigation strategy, when any area where training or monitoring will take place in or near Indigenous community forest, we will request a point of contact within the Indigenous community and maintain a direct communication channel with the project team, allowing for any issues to be raised easily in a timely manner.

**12. Monitoring and evaluation:** *This section will explain how compliance with the safeguard policy on Indigenous Peoples will be monitored and reported to CEPF and/or the regional implementation team. Monitoring and evaluation methodologies should be adapted to the local context, indicators and capacity.*

As the project is carried out there will be frequent progress assessments between organisational management and project staff, and during each of these issues related to Indigenous People will be raised and reported on; should any issues have arisen that need coactive measures, these will be implemented.

In the cases where Indigenous communities are present in areas where project activities will be carried out, these groups will be described in a section in the project activities reports, alongside the level of inclusion/participation in training and monitoring teams. Monitoring feedback will be requested from the representatives of Indigenous People groups at periodic intervals, the intervals being quarterly or less.

To evaluate progress monitoring will be also be carried out directly with Indigenous communities via local village and community meetings. The results of these will be included in the CEPF quarterly project reports.

**13. Grievance 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.*

We will set up a grievance mechanism to receive, review and address concerns and complaints raised by communities affected by this project. This grievance mechanism will be fully explained to communities during consultations and initial village meetings, and a copy of the grievance mechanism procedure given to Village Chiefs and Protected Area managers in the relevant areas. We will also put up a printed copy of the grievance mechanism at village hall noticeboards and operate mailboxes at CPA headquarters to receive any letters of concern/complaint. All notices will be written in the Khmer language, as local Indigenous languages, such as Mnong/Bunong and Kuy, use Khmer for written forms.

The first point of contact for the raising of grievances will be either directly during village meetings, or to the full-time Lomphat Project Manager for NatureLife Cambodia. The NatureLife Cambodia Lomphat Project Manager will be present at local meetings to enable face to face communications and also can be contacted through the following details:

- Email: [adm@naturelifecambodia.org](mailto:adm@naturelifecambodia.org)
- Office phone: +855 23 993631

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 directly to CEPF Regional Implementation Team by email or by surface mail.

- IUCN/CEPF: Indo-Burma Regional Implementation Team
- Phone: +66 2 662 4029
- Email: CEPF-Indoburma@iucn.org
- Address: 63 Sukhumvit Soi 39, Wattana, Bangkok 10110, Thailand

**14. Budget:** *This section will summarize dedicated costs related to compliance with the safeguard policy on Indigenous Peoples. These costs should be incorporated into the budget of the CEPF grant and/or covered by co-financing.*

The costs of compliance the safeguarding policy on Indigenous People will be included under the budgets for 2.3 and 2.4 which deal with the provision of introductory and on-job training.