

**Social Assessment**

**Date: January 23, 2023**

**CEPF Grant: 113597**

**Grantee: Oxfam America**

**Project Title: Strengthen community-based conservation for fishery management  
in KMH29 and KMH33**

**Project Location: Ratanakiri Province of Cambodia (KMH29 and KMH33)**

## **Grant Summary**

1. Grantee organization: *Oxfam America*
2. **Project title:** Strengthen Community-Based Conservation for Fishery Management in KMH29 and KMH33
3. **Grant number:** 113597
4. **Grant amount (US dollars):** 150,000 USD (One Hundred and Fifty Thousand USD only)
5. **Proposed dates of grant:** April 2023 – March 2025 (24 Months)
6. **Countries where activities will be undertaken:** Cambodia
7. Summary of the project [copy and paste Project Rationale and Project Approach from proposal].

## ***Project Rationale***

Threats from illegal fishing to ecosystems in the Sesan and Srepok rivers remain high. Despite the fact that communities have better capacity to manage and control illegal fishing in the community fishery areas along the Srepok and Sesan, communities reported that they still continue to face challenges to effectively controlling illegal fishing. According to Oxfam's interaction with fishing communities in the Srepok and Sesan Rivers, fast fluctuation of water and less catch of fish is affecting their livelihood. Illegal fishing methods such as electrocution and the use of illegal fishing equipment, gear, and nets are the main concerns of the communities. This has caused a significant imbalance between supply and demand. The illegal fish catch is reducing the population of high-value fishes, which reduces the income of fishing communities using legal practices to catch fish. The communities continue to seek collaboration and supports from the fishery cantonment and local authorities to promote law enforcement and conduct more regular patrolling.

From 2013 to 2022, Oxfam in Cambodia implemented the People Protecting Ecosystems in the Mekong (PEM) project. PEM contributed to the conservation of aquatic resources and river ecosystems in the Mekong, Sesan, and Srepok Rivers by strengthening community-based management of terrestrial and riverine ecosystems in highly biodiverse areas of the Mekong and its tributaries. Our teams are looking to build on the outcomes and impacts of PEM project to achieve even stronger management of community fisheries along the Srepok and Sesan Rivers. Through Oxfam's implementation of PEM, communities have organized themselves through community fishery committees, developed community fishery management plans, and good relationship with local stakeholders. The PEM project produced a good base from which we can increase the project's impact. This project could bring the outcomes, impacts, and sustainability of those sites to the next level.

Existing fish sanctuaries are threatened: Through PEM, Oxfam and its partner supported 13 communities to develop site-based management plans for local fish sanctuaries. Communities identified interventions related to conservation, creating new fish conservation areas, community livelihoods, and capacity building. This project will support the implementation of these 13 management plans as well as the creation and implementation of a management plan in a 14th community.

Enforcement of conservation actions remains weak: The project will strengthen the capacity of community fishery committees. The proposed project will build the capacity of the community fishery committees in terms coordination, knowledge sharing, relationship building, and communication in order to deepen collaboration with local authorities who can support patrolling and other enforcement activities. These capacity needs were identified by the committees through the PEM project.

There is opportunity to create new fish sanctuaries: The project will identify and support the creation of eight new fish sanctuaries and deep pools. Communities from 14 Cfis (Community Fisheries) will identify new conservation sites including deep pools and natural wetland areas that have significant biodiversity conservation significance. Communities want to propose 8 new deep pool sites situated along the Sesan and Srepok Rivers to be recognized by relevant national authorities and local authorities. The project will support them to identify and propose those sites to be recognized for conservation.

Promoting the implementation of community fishery management. This project will support the implementation of 13 site-based management plans and the development and implementation of a management plan for one additional site (total of 14 sites). By the end of the project, we want to see communities take greater initiative to conserve ecosystems in those 14 sites.

For conservation efforts to succeed, they must take into account the fact that local communities rely on the conserved areas for their livelihoods. To support the integration of conservation and livelihoods, the project will support communities to develop their plans to promote eco-tourism in one site as well as plans for women-led fishery processing businesses, aquaculture, and flooded forest replanting.

The Srepok River flows from the Central Highlands of Vietnam through Ratanakiri Province and joins with the Sesan River in Stung Treng Province of Cambodia to join the Mekong River near Stung Treng Town. Srepok River's mainstream comprises a total length of 290 kilometers. The river is rich in biodiversity and aquatic resources supporting local communities to meet their food needs and generating income for approximately 6,781 households. According to Asian Development Fund (ADB), fish still provide over 80% of the protein in the national diet in Cambodia. The river's biodiversity is being reduced due to hydropower projects on Mekong River and its tributaries: 70% of capture fisheries in Cambodia are under threat due to 45 dams already built in the Mekong Region. The river basin is facing multiple threats including water pollution and changing water flow due to upstream developments, hydropower dams, illegal fishing methods, and overfishing. Riverine communities living around Sesan and Srepok Rivers are facing threats to their livelihood and food security due to change of water flow, illegal fishing, and water pollution. Communities are dependent on aquatic resources because there are no alternative livelihood options for them to adapt and sustain their lives. Therefore, this project will help in conserving the aquatic resources in 41 deep pools and in adding 8 new pools. Without this project, endangered and high-value fish species will be extinct and depleted.

Oxfam has longstanding presence in the targeted areas along with local partners, and we understand the impact on the lives and livelihoods of people if fishery conservation is not supported. We have successfully concluded a project with the financial support of Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP) which has successfully established a long-term community-based fish conservation and management model focused on empowering communities to take action to protect land, forests, and freshwater aquatic resources (primarily fisheries). The project has established community fisheries, recognized by local governments, who have developed community action plans to take joint actions to protect the ecosystem and aquatic resources. However, lack of funding is obstructing their plans to properly roll out the implementation of community fishery management plans. Community fisheries face a loss of livelihoods and a danger to the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) if these plans are not put into action. Hence, Oxfam has designed this project in close coordination with local partners, government authorities and community fishery representatives to support 14

fishery communities operating along Sesan and Srepok Rivers to take community based sustainable actions to protect aquatic resources and riverine ecosystem.

### **Project Approach**

#### **Long-term impacts:**

1. By 2028, households living in fishing communities along the Sesan and Srepok Rivers have increased income from climate smart fishery management.
2. By 2028, the status (population of species, area of key habitats etc.) of aquatic resources and river ecosystems in the Sesan and Srepok Rivers have improved compared to the 2022 baseline.
3. By 2028, 14 Cfis have improved leadership and governance to protect and conserve aquatic resources and ecosystems in Sesan and Srepok Rivers of Ratanakiri Province.

#### **Short-term impacts:**

1. By 2025, 41 existing and 8 new deep pools along Sesan and Srepok Rivers are formally recognized by communities and local authorities as conservation zones of 14 Cfis.
2. By 2025, populations of endangered fish species in Sesan and Srepok Rivers are stable compared to April 2023 baseline as demonstrated by fish-catch monitoring data.
3. By 2025, 14 plans are submitted by Cfi Management Committee to commune and district council to take joint initiatives to conserve aquatic resources and river ecosystems.
4. By 2025, at least 28 women in 14 Cfi committees have improved leadership skills to mainstream gender into community plans.
5. By 2025, at least 35 households living along Sesan and Srepok Rivers have increased income from climate smart fishery management compared to 2023 baseline.
6. By 2025, at least 4 hectares of flooded forests in the conservation area in Sesan and Srepok Rivers are reforested compared to 2023 baseline.
7. By 2025, co-management model of community-based fish monitoring supported by the project adopted by at least two other CSOs.

The project will focus on promoting governance and a co-management model by increasing community participation in local dialogues and planning processes to increase joint actions for conservation and protection of the ecosystems and aquatic resources in partnership with local government. The project will strengthen leadership of the community fishery committees and sub-committees to implement the conservation activities of 14 existing community fishery management plans. These plans include protecting 41 existing deep pools and establishing 8 new deep pools. The project will also facilitate a community planning process to integrate livelihoods initiatives into conservation activities to improve local community wellbeing.

8. **Date of preparation of this document:** *December 12, 2022*

9. **Indigenous People affected:** This section will describe the Indigenous People in the project area.

The total population in the 14 Cfi sites is about 53,401 (Females: 26,246) and this include IPs which are classified as: i) 30,084 (F:14,737) indigenous peoples (IPs) representing 56.34%; they are Brao, Jorai, Kachac, Kraveth, Kreung, Lun, Tampuan; ii) Khmer-Laos groups 17,103 (F: 8,452) representing 32.03%; and iii) 6,214 Khmer (F: 3,057) representing 11.64%. Their livelihood practices are predominantly subsistence which

depends on natural resources, especially land, forest and fishery resources. They like to practice collective decision on the management of natural resources by using their language and cultural norms and traditional ways of decision making where elderly people have more power to decide. They face multiple forms of discrimination based on their ethnicity, location, economic status and gender. Indigenous women have less access to social services such as education, basic health services and employment as compared to men and are more likely to rely on local language which further reduces their access to information. IPs rely on riverine and forest resources for food and livelihoods is often inextricably linked to culture, customs and community identity. They are facing multiple threats including Agri-industrial development, mining, water and energy infrastructure development and other illegal activities. The protection and conservation of those resources requires their ownership, leadership and active participation from relevant stakeholders.

10. **Potential impacts:** This section will assess expected project impacts (both positive and adverse) on Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

We have considered but do not expect any adverse impacts on indigenous peoples as a result of our project. The project will have positive impacts in that it will contribute to increasing participation, ownership and leadership of IPs, especially women leaders in sustainable management of their riverine resources and ecosystems in the Sesan and Srepok Rivers. The increased institutional capacity and leadership will contribute to sustainable conservation and protection their resources, maintaining their culture, customs, community identity and ways of lives. The targeted communities are empowered to access, take control and protect their resources from multiple threats including Agri-industrial development, mining, water and energy infrastructure development and other illegal activities.

11. **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 during project preparation or will be obtained prior to implementation of project activities affecting Indigenous Peoples.

This project built on PEM III project where community consultation and participation have been in place while indigenous communities have ownership in the management of the fisher conservation sites. However, there are still some gaps related to inclusiveness and upholding the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. This is what the project in relation to direction #4 will address. Nevertheless, during the project design given limited timeframe, Oxfam and 3SPN used recommendations from PEM III Project (July 2019 to May 2022). We have sought the verbal consent from 18 participants including 5 women, 6 Indigenous Peoples, 5 commune councilors who are representatives from the 14 Cfi sites and 2 Fishery Administration Cantonment Officials during a consultation workshop. In the workshop, the participants raised the importance of the proposed project to enable the communities to implement the conservation activities stated in the existing management plans and or other conservation priorities that have been proposed in the project intervention/activities.

12. **Mitigation measures:** This section will outline measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits.

The project will empower community fisheries' committee members, especially women and indigenous peoples (IPs), to exercise their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and it will strengthen indigenous women's leadership to play an active role in fishery

resource protection and conservation, and represents their interests. This includes ensuring access to information and engagement with different level planning and dialogues. The project will also build synergy with other Oxfam's projects (eg. Inclusion Project, Strengthening Climate Resilience etc.) that have paid more attention on promoting various international standards and conventions for advancing the rights of indigenous peoples, and increasing access to hydrological data information.

13. **Timeline and resources:** This section will present an implementation timeline for each measure listed in Section 12, together with an estimate of resource needs.

The project will be implemented for two years from April 2023 until March 2025 with proposed budget of USD 150K.

14. **Monitoring and evaluation:** This section will explain how compliance with Safeguard Policy 7 on Indigenous Peoples will be monitored and evaluated. Monitoring and evaluation methodologies should be adapted to the local context, indicators, and capacity.

The project will empower indigenous peoples (IPs) to exercise their rights to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and IPs women leadership to play active role in fishery resource protection and conservation that represents their interests. Oxfam will work with partner (3SPN) to enforce Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity Rights to ensure inclusion of diverse groups in the project implementation in addition to the 3SPN's gender policy and disability inclusion policy that shall be enforced. Some of the key project activities that will engage and benefit the IPs most include project launching workshop, co-patrolling, tree planting campaigns, annual project reflection workshops, networking and collaboration meetings, support of alternative livelihood, and above all the implementation of the CFI management plans. Below are the key measures and M&E activities:

**1. Measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits to IPs:**

- The project will adopt the CEPF safeguard policy on IPs and provide orientation to partner and Cfi committee members.
- The project will design a meaningful community consultation guideline, using the existing Oxfam's guides and good practices to FPIC principles.
- The project will undertake risk assessment for IPs and child safeguarding and protection against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and develop the mitigation strategies to address those identified risks.

**2. Monitoring and evaluation:**

- Project activities and progress will be monitored regularly through monitoring visits, partner coordination meetings and project progress and completion reports.
- The project will organize annual project reflection workshop with relevant stakeholders to reflection on the project progress against planned activities while IPs and child safeguard aspects will be strictly monitored.
- IPs and child safeguarding aspects will be one of the requirements for the external consultant to evaluate and include in the final report.

15. **Disclosure:** CEPF requires that Social Assessments are disclosed to affected local communities and other stakeholders. Please describe your efforts to disclose this plan.

In addition to the consultation with stakeholders, Oxfam and its partner (3SPN) will disclose related project information to the project beneficiaries, fishery administration and local

authorities. The project launching will be conducted with engaging relevant stakeholders, fishery administration, local authorities and targeted communities to disseminate the project's goal, objective, outputs, budget and timeframe. Oxfam and its partner will create a platform for dialogue including project reflection, share learning and joint monitoring to improve the conservation outcomes of the project.

16. **Grievance redress mechanism:** For all CEPF-funded projects, the grantee must provide local communities and other relevant stakeholders with a means to raise a grievance, and whereby this grievance may be considered and satisfactorily resolved.

This mechanism must include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Email and telephone contact information for the grantee organization.
- Email and telephone contact information for the CEPF Regional Implementation Team.
- The [contact](#) information for the CI Ethics Hotline (telephone: +1-866-294-8674 / web portal: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10680/index.html>).
- A statement describing how you will inform stakeholders of the objectives of the project and the existence of the grievance mechanism (e.g., posters, signboards, public notices, public announcements, use of local languages).
- A statement that you 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 via the CI Ethics Hotline (toll-free telephone line: +1-866-294-8674 / secure web portal: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10680/index.html>).

Following the guidance above, describe the grievance redress mechanism that you will use.

The project will establish a project grievance redress mechanism, based on Oxfam's Speak Up Protocol. This will enable the communities and project stakeholders to report any dissatisfaction to the project team effectively and in a timely manner. This mechanism will consist of clear reporting flow, channels and assigned focal point. The message on grievance tools will be developed in Khmer language, printed onto posters/leaflets, distributed to the project stakeholders, and posted in the communities. The mechanism will include focal points from Oxfam and 3SPN with contact information, telephone numbers, email address and/or hotline so that it will make an ease for the communities and stakeholders to report the case. Communities, local authority and project stakeholders will be constantly informed and encouraged to report through this redress mechanism when they have noticed that staff of Oxfam and/or partner misconduct on child abuse, sexual misconduct, other types of unwanted behaviors, financial misconduct during the course of the project implementation and other un-intended project negative effects on the communities. The assigned focal point will act promptly and ethically to respond to the reported case(s).

Below is a brief process for implementing grievance mechanism for this proposed project:

- The ED of 3SPN will be the first contact point for grievances. His details will be shared on project communications such as posters and leaflets, together with the contact details of the Oxfam project team, and he will be present at stakeholder meetings/workshops to enable face to face communications. He will be based in Ratanakiri Province.

- Any grievances received by Oxfam or 3SPN will be reported to the CEPF Secretariat within 15 days, together with a proposed plan to address the grievance. With approval from CEPF, Oxfam will then implement the plan, reporting back to CEPF on progress
- Oxfam in Cambodia will support 3SPN in resolving complaints. The process will involve discussions with all affected persons and other involved people (local authorities, communities, project teams...etc.) to identify a common solution to which all are able to agree within the law and without negatively affecting others.
- If complainants are not satisfied with the way in which their grievance has been handled by Oxfam, they will be given the opportunity to raise it with the CEPF Executive Director via the CI Ethics Hotline at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10680/index.html>