CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Wildlife Conservation Society
Project Title:	Conserving a Suite of Cambodia's Highly Threatened Bird Species
Date of Report:	15 August 2013
Report Author and Contact Information	Dr. Tom Clements – Director Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Cambodia Program tclements@wcs.org PO Box 1620, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Tel: +855 (0) 23217205

CEPF Region: Indochina

Strategic Direction: 1. Safeguard globally threatened species in Indochina by mitigating major threats.

Grant Amount: US$699,125

Project Dates: 1 October, 2009 to 30 June 2013

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Cambodia Program has worked closely with a number of local NGO and government partners to ensure successful implementation of the project. A large part of the project approach was to build on long-term relationships with two NGO partners, the Sam Veasna Centre for Conservation (SVC) and Samson Mlup Prey (SMP).

SVC supported and marketed the project's ecotourism activities. Originally a research and conservation body, the SVC was re-launched with the help of WCS in 2006 to promote and provide an alternative sustainable livelihood from ecotourism for the local communities at the sites that WCS prioritizes for conservation. The project supported the training of four SVC ecotourism guides. SVC staff also trained local guides and cooks at project sites (www.samveasna.org). SMP was created in 2009 specifically to promote and market wildlife-friendly products grown or crafted in the communities located in all protected areas in Cambodia. Its work links wildlife conservation to improving the livelihoods of villagers living in remote areas with limited market access or opportunity to expand their operations. Under the project SMP purchased, milled, certified, marketed and sold Ibis Rice. (www.smpcambodia.org). Both of these organizations have been supported financially and institutionally by WCS since establishment. The project provided an opportunity to scale up that level of support and consequently SVC and SMP organizations grew significantly during the project, providing benefits to local people over a wide area of rural Cambodia as a result of their participation in activities that protect or promote wildlife.

The project built on an existing relationship with Centre d'Etude et développement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC) to improve agricultural efficiency of farmers taking part in the Ibis Rice scheme. CEDAC was founded in 1997 and today is one of the preeminent Cambodian organizations in the fields of agricultural and rural development, and is especially recognized for its farmer-led extension services, agricultural innovation trainings, support for farmer organizations and publications.

At all project sites we worked closely with the relevant government agencies under Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Ministry of Environment (MoE). We enjoy an excellent relationship with the Forestry Administration (FA) of MAFF and the General Department for Administration of Nature Conservation (GDANCP) under MoE and this enabled us to successfully scale up Bird Nest Protection, Ibis Rice and ecotourism activities across the two landscapes.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

In the original call for proposal there was a clear need for projects that simultaneously addressed threats for a suite of species. The project falls under "Outcome 1 – Globally threatened species in Indochina safeguarded from major threats' under the first listed action – Core populations of priority species identified and secured from over-exploitation and illegal trade by implementing targeted, high-impact projects.

The project directly addressed threats to nine CEPF priority species, namely Bengal Florican, White-shouldered Ibis, Giant Ibis, Masked Finfoot, Greater Adjutant, Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Green Peafowl, White-winged Duck, Milky Stork, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle. The areas where the project operated support core populations of all of these species. The project interventions targeted the key threats to the species, particularly those of 'over-exploitation and illegal trade' that are specified in CEPF Outcome 1. Where population data are available on specific species it is clear that the project stabilized or increased populations of these species at project sites. Detailed results from population monitoring will be reported below.

The project built on existing interventions, both at the sites at which it operated and within partner organizations. It was implemented as part of a long-term WCS conservation intervention in Cambodia's Northern Plains and Tonle Sap Lake and Inundation Zone with similar objectives to the project. As such, structures that ensured successful implementation and high quality results were in place prior to the project, strengthened by the project and, with additional investment, enable conservation interventions to become sustainable. An independent evaluation of the project, conducted just prior to completion, reported that the project was "implemented very successfully and to the highest technical and management standards" (Edwards 2013). There can therefore be little doubt that the project made a very significant contribution towards the implementation of the CEPF Ecosystem Profile.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Two Cambodian landscapes, the Tonle Sap lake and floodplain and the Northern Plains, retain an assemblage of large-bodied, wide-ranging, highly threatened bird species.

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

The project made a tangible contribution towards the conservation of large-bodied, wide-ranging, highly threatened bird species across two landscapes, the Tonle Sap Lake and Inundation Zone and the Northern Plains. Within these landscapes populations of priority species increased in the Tonle Sap Lake, remained stable (e.g. Sarus Crane) or increased (e.g. White-shouldered Ibis) in the Northern Plains. Bengal Florican experienced a range-wide decline in the Tonle Sap Inundation Zone, but remained stable at some project sites.

The project formed part of a long-term investment by WCS in the conservation of threatened species in the two landscapes, and in the development of the two civil society partners. The project allowed WCS to build on firm foundations that were established prior to project inception. To a large extent the reason why the project could achieve its long-term impacts was because it formed part of a long-term conservation intervention. The project is grounded in science – the direct payments schemes that are used have been objectively tested and refined – and populations of threatened species, which act as indicators, are annually monitored. Partnerships with the relevant government agencies have been key to its success. Project activities are community led, and built on relationships and trust that has been built over many years. Conservation activities have continued after the CEPF-funded project ended, and we will continue to build on the framework that we have established until project interventions reach sustainability. We believe that this is the only way that we can ensure that the two landscapes retain their characteristic assemblage of threatened bird species.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Populations of three Critically Endangered (Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, and Bengal Florican), four Endangered (Greater Adjutant, Green Peafowl, Masked Finfoot and White-winged Duck) and six Vulnerable (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Milky Stork, Manchurian Reed Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle) bird species are successfully conserved at four separate project sites (the Ang Trapeang Thmor Reserve (ATT), the Integrated Farming and Biodiversity Areas (IFBAs – note that these were renamed Bengal Florican Conservation Areas BFCAs during the project), the Northern Plains and the Prek Toal Core Area of the Tonle Sap lake) through a series of innovative conservation interventions that focus on making direct payments to local communities. These interventions comprise payments for birds' nest protection activities, improved value-chains for 'wildlife-friendly' produce, ecotourism development and capacity building for local civil society organisations. These interventions target three key threats: trade-driven hunting and chick/egg collection at nest sites, agricultural intensification and expansion, and a lack of institutional capacity amongst civil society organisations charged with protecting these species.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

As a result of the project, populations of Priority Species increased or remained stable at most project sites. Some species, such as Manchurian Reed-warbler, could not be monitored specifically but are assumed to have benefitted from the project owing to conservation of habitat at project sites. Graphs showing trends in priority species populations at project sites are displayed under relevant Components below. These conservation gains were achieved through three innovative direct payments schemes that were piloted and proven prior to the project commencing. The project has expanded these three separate incentive schemes, in which villagers or communities can participate, exchanging certain agreed behaviors for direct financial reward. The project built the capacity of two local civil society organsations, SVC and SMP, to promote and manage these schemes. Data on the number of CEPF priority species nests protected annually in the Northern Plains is indicative of the progress of the project toward short-term impacts (Figure 1).

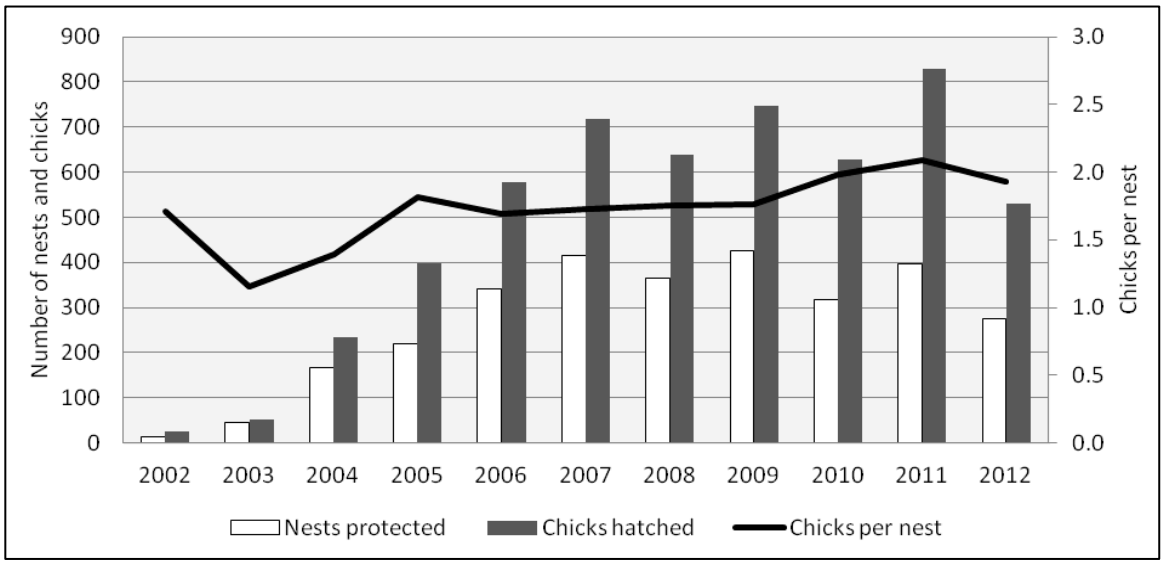

Figure 1. The number of nests protected and chicks hatched from threatened species nests as part of the Bird Nest Protection Scheme in the Northern Plains.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected:

500,475. The project strengthened biodiversity conservation and natural resource management at 8 KBAs by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and increasing protection of key species. These included KBA 32 Stung-Chi-Kraeng-Kampong Svay (53,543 ha of which project activities improved management of 7,448 ha) and KBA 35 Stung Sen-Santuk-Baray (109,081 ha of which project activities improved management of 9,883 ha), KBA 1 Ang Trapeang Thmor (12,659 ha), KBA 27 Prek Toal (39,873

ha) and KBA 9 Chhep, KBA 21 OSkach and KBA 37 Upper Stung Sen Catchment (totaling 857,835 ha of which the project improved management of 430,612 ha).

Species Conserved:
The project had a significant positive impact on core populations of Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, Masked Finfoot, White-winged Duck, Green Peafowl, Greater Adjutant, Lesser Adjutant, Milky Stork and Sarus Crane. It also positively impacted populations of the following globally threatened species: Manchurian Reed-warbler, Imperial Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Indian Spotted Eagle, Yellow-breasted Bunting, Pale-capped Pigeon, Great Slaty Wooodpecker, Pileated Gibbon, Silvered Leaf Monkey, Asian Elephant, Eld's Deer, Hairy-nosed and Smooth Otters.

Corridors Created:
None.

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.
The project was successful in reaching its short and long-term impact objectives because it used objectively proven schemes that created clear linkages between conservation outcomes and financial rewards. Not only could communities take part in these schemes, but the schemes are designed in such a way that those involved have direct control over the service that they provide (e.g. tourism, rice production, nest protection), and therefore over the financial rewards as well. Continuing provision, which is linked directly to a healthy conservation status of the target species, is strongly in the interest of those participating, and is therefore very likely.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?
In addition to benefiting the birds, the project directly benefitted over 450 households across the landscapes. Although this is not unexpected, it is not a specific indicator or stated impact of the project.

Project Components

Project Components*: Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned:
Two Critically Endangered species (White-shouldered Ibis and Bengal Florican), one Endangered species (Greater Adjutant) and four Vulnerable species (Sarus Crane, Milky Stork, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle) successfully protected in the ATT Reserve through expansion of community-based ecotourism scheme.

Component 1 Actual at Completion:
The project successfully expanded community-based ecotourism at Ang Trapeang Thmor, brought it under local management through establishing a Community Management Committee (CMC) and maintained stable populations of the priority species.

Photo: Sarus Cranes foraging in a fallow rice field at Ang Trapeang Thmor.

Under the project a Community Management Committee (CMC) consisting of five members (including one woman) was established at Sambour village in Ang Trapeang Thmor in 2011. This committee is responsible for coordinating ecotourism activities at Ang Trapeang Thmor. It functions as an intermediary between the service provider – SVC – and the Forestry Administration which is responsible for management of ATT. As such it has some influence in site management, for instance the CMC is also responsible for coordinating bird monitoring and environmental education. Through the project WCS provided training to the CMC, including development of rules and regulations for ecotourism, book keeping and developing criteria for recruiting villagers as local guides. The project supported SVC to provide training in bird identification and guiding etiquette to six local guides. SVC worked with the CMC to fix prices for services such as guiding and selling of snacks and drinks. The project also supported SVC to produce an attractive leaflet advertising trips to Ang Trapeang Thmor, this has been placed in many hotels in Siem Reap. SVC also improved its website, promoting Ang Trapeang Thmor to a wider audience.

The CMC are also responsible to the community for the use of the Ecotourism Fund – all visitors brought to Ang Trapeang Thmor by SVC pay $10 into a fund that can be used by the community for activities that improve the village or enhance the ecotourism facilities, according to regulations developed by the CMC and WCS. The CMC ask the villagers for their ideas for spending the money, and then reach agreement through further consultation. By the end of the project the CMC had already spent $1,470 on improving the road that runs through their village. The CMC made suggestions for expanding ecotourism at Ang Trapeang Thmor, to increase community benefits.

The Sarus Crane population at Ang Trapeang Thmor was stable throughout the project (Figure 2). The site remains perhaps the most important location for Sarus Crane in Cambodia during the non-breeding season.

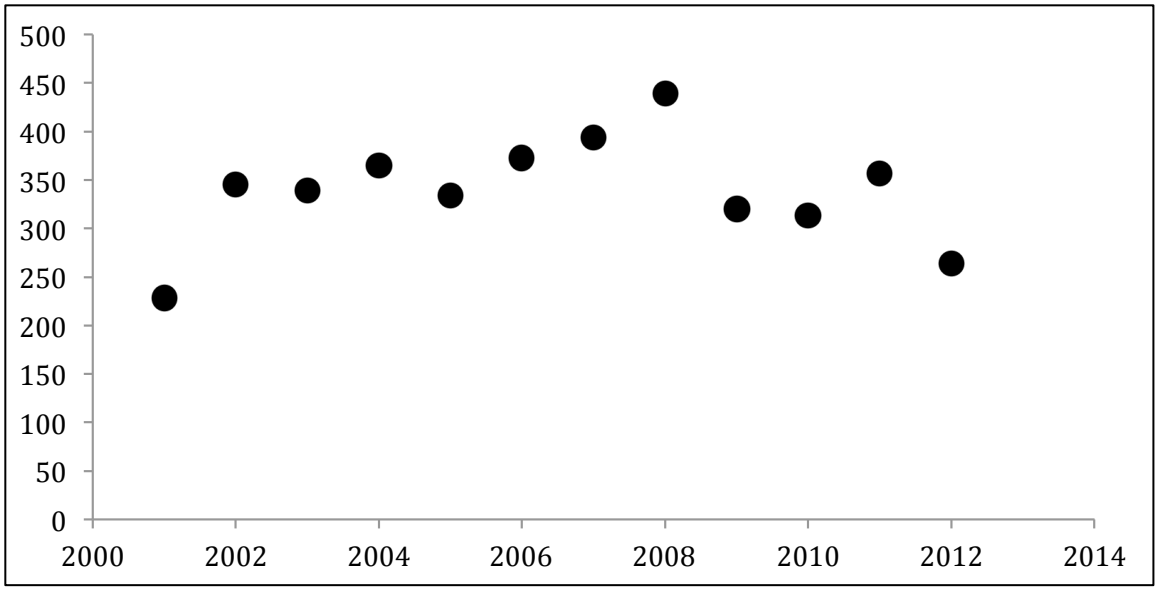

Figure 2. Peak March counts of Sarus Crane at Ang Trapeang Thmor.


Photo: Sarus Crane circling over Ang Trapeang Thmor.

Component 2 Planned:
Two Critically Endangered species (White-shouldered Ibis and Bengal Florican), one Endangered species (Greater Adjutant) and five Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Manchurian Reed Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle) successfully protected in the BFCAs through implementation of 'Wildlife-friendly' produce scheme.

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

The project piloted wildlife-friendly farming in key villages close to the BFCAs. Although still small the scheme grew in size during the project, but should be scaled up. Bengal Florican numbers were stable in BFCAs located in communes where Ibis Rice was operational, indicating that these BFCAs benefitted from increased support from local communities. Other species populations were not monitored but are likely to have benefitted from habitat protection and prevention of hunting which are conditions of the agreements signed by families taking part in the Ibis Rice scheme.

The project established a supply chain for Ibis Rice, linking participating farmers in the Tonle Sap Inundation Zone with points of sale in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. WCS and SMP worked together to form Village Marketing Networks (VMNs) at two villages located close to Stoung and Chikraeng BFCAs. By the end of the project 61 farmers from Kampong Veang and Chhhouk villages had joined the scheme. CEDAC provided training to participating farmers to improve agricultural efficiency and profitability of the crop.

In early 2013 SMP purchased almost 17 kilos of rice from 17 farmers in Kampong Veang village. Another 13 families initially took part in the scheme, however they did not keep to their conservation agreements and there rice was not purchased from them. Because the scheme was not expanded to Chhouk village until 2012/13 rice will not be bought from those farmers until late 2013. The premium paid to farmers that adhered to the signed agreements was between 100-150 Riels per Kg, which is c. 10% above market price. Farmers were also able to use their own scales to weigh the rice prior to sale, which is believed to result in a 15% increase in benefit because middlemen cannot cheat. In addition, increased competition has caused traders to increase their floor price by 50-100% across all villages.

Photo: filling a sack with Ibis Rice.

Component 3 Planned:

Two Critically Endangered species (White-shouldered Ibis and Bengal Florican), one Endangered species (Greater Adjutant) and five Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Manchurian Reed Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle) successfully protected in the BFCAs through expansion of community-based ecotourism scheme.

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

The project enabled WCS to pilot community management of ecotourism at the BFCAs. Communities gained an increased income from grassland conservation and at sites where ecotourism was operational Bengal Florican populations are thought to be stable (Figure 3). Other species populations were not monitored but are likely to have benefitted from habitat protection and prevention of hunting.

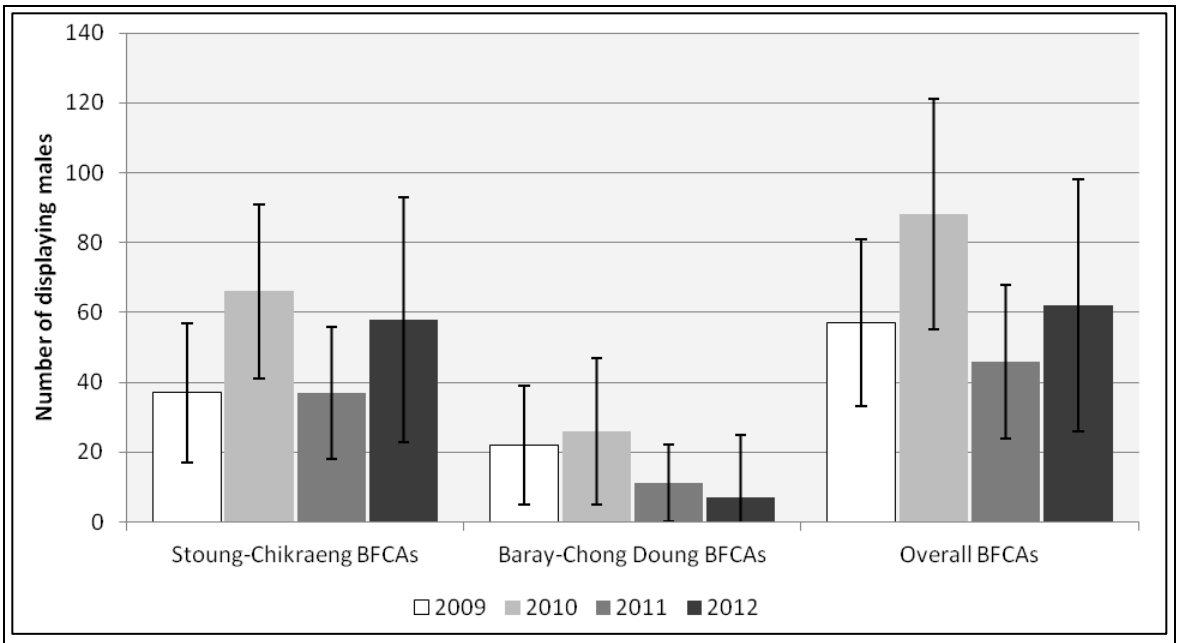

Figure 3. Number of displaying male Bengal Floricans within the BFCAs (with 95% confidence intervals).

Under the project, consultation meetings took place at ten villages located close to the BFCAs, namely Kompong Vieng, Prey Kla and Chouk in Prolay Commune, Romchey Chros and Balang in Lveang Russei Commune and Baray Thom and Thnol Thmei in Baray Commune. Owing to greater numbers of Bengal Florican at Stoung and Chikraeng BFCAs (compared with Baray BFCA) and their proximity to Siem Reap it was decided to promote ecotourism activities in Prolay and Lveang Russei communes only. WCS formed CMCs in both of these communes, with representatives from each of the villages and at least one woman in each committee. As at Ang Trapeang Thmor the CMCs are responsible to SVC for organizing ecotourism at the sites, whilst they are responsible to WCS and the Forestry Administration for other aspects of site management, such as biodiversity monitoring and reporting encroachment and other illegal activities.

SVC worked with the CMCs to train three guides and three assistant guides at each site in guiding etiquette and birding finding skills. They fixed prices with the CMC for services such as guiding and selling snacks and provided feedback from tourists. During the last few years of the project the local guides were able to locate Bengal Florican, the species that most birdwatchers come to the BFCAs to see, on 100% of visits.

Photo: A member of the CMC and a Bengal Florican at Stoung BFCA

SVC promoted trips to see the Bengal Florican at the BFCAs on their website and almost all tours lasting more than four days feature a visit to the BFCAs. During the project the number of tourists visiting the BFCAs increased to 162 in 2012/13. As at other sites where SVC operates each tourist pays $10 into an Ecotourism Fund if they see the Bengal Florican. By the end of the project the community had already spent some of the fund on books for two libraries and repairing a pagoda wall.

Component 4 Planned:

Two Critically Endangered species (Giant Ibis and White-shouldered Ibis), two Endangered species (Greater Adjutant and White-winged Duck) and four Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Greater Spotted Eagle and Green Peafowl) successfully protected in the Northern Plains through expansion of 'Wildlife-friendly' produce scheme.

Component 4 Actual at Completion:

The project enabled WCS and SMP to expand the Ibis Rice scheme to ten villages in the Northern Plains (Figure 4). The scheme was piloted at Tmatboey prior to the project, and expanded to Prey Veng, Dangphlat and Narong shortly afterwards. It was expanded to Robhn and Chomsre in 2011 and Antil, Kungheap and Reaksmey in 2012. VMNs were formed at all villages and conditional agreements signed with participating families. VMNs consist of 3-5 people including at least one woman. They are responsible for explaining the rules to farmers joining the scheme, purchasing rice from participating farmers and verifying that the farmers have respected the conservation agreements. Although people typically try to break these agreements in the first year of the schemes operation at a given site, when they realize that they cannot cheat and still benefit from the higher prices that they get for Ibis Rice they keep to the agreements in subsequent years.

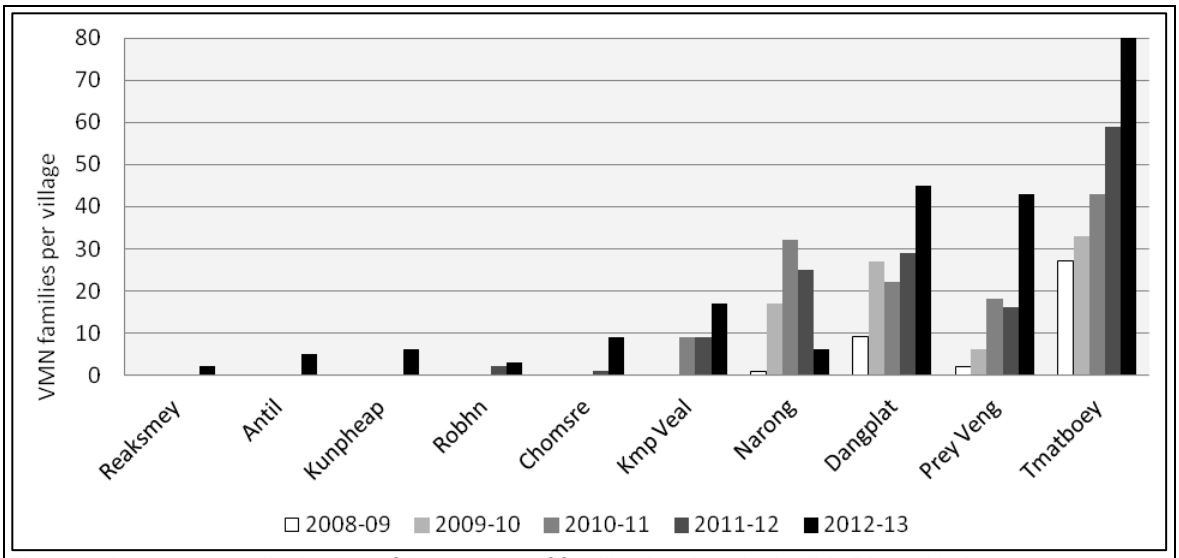

Figure 4. Increase and distribution of the number of families involved in the Ibis Rice Initiative.

In November 2012 SMP purchased Ibis Rice from 199 families in nine villages (Figure 4). The premium paid to farmers that adhered to the signed agreements was between 100-150 Riels per Kg, which is c. 10% above market price. Farmers were also able to use their own scales to weigh the rice prior to sale, which is believed to result in a 15% increase in benefit because middlemen cannot cheat. In addition, increased competition has caused traders to increase their floor price by 50-100% across all villages. The Ibis Rice scheme has not yet reached financial sustainability, however with continued investment and support it is predicted to reach this point within the next five years.

Ibis Rice reduces hunting and habitat loss around target villages. As a result of reduced hunting and habitat loss, and direct protection of nests, populations of priority species were stable or increased. These three measures in tandem have had significant impacts on the populations of species. Perhaps the best example of this is the White-shoulderd Ibis population at Tmatboey village, where the three incentive schemes are most advanced (Figure 5). We anticipate that when the incentive schemes are scaled up across the landscape we could see similar impacts on other threatened species.

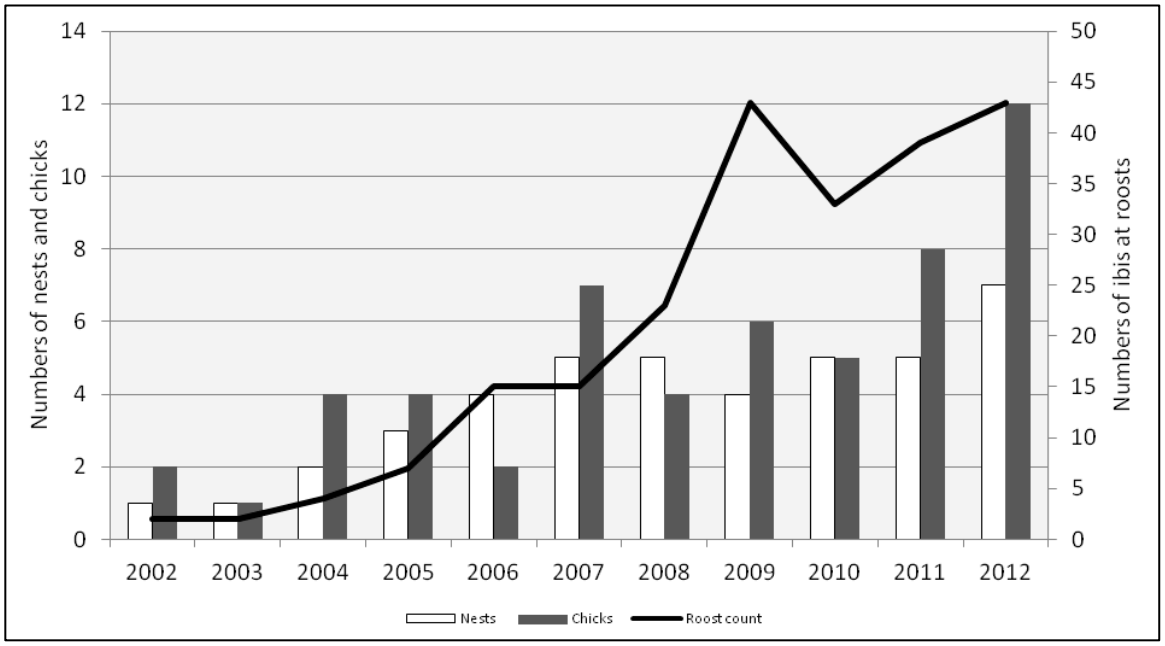

Figure 5. Breeding success and roost size of White-shouldered Ibis in Tmatboey, KPWS.

Component 5 Planned:
Two Critically Endangered species (Giant Ibis and White-shouldered Ibis), two Endangered species (Greater Adjutant and White-winged Duck) and four Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Greater Spotted Eagle and Green Peafowl) successfully protected in the Northern Plains through expansion of community-based ecotourism scheme.

Component 5 Actual at Completion:
The project expanded community based ecotourism to Prey Veng, following the successful Tmatboey model. SVC brought the first tourists to Prey Veng in 2009. By the end of the project the number of visitors to Prey Veng was 26 (in 2013), more than visited Tmatboey at a comparable stage in its development.

Under the project, a consultation meeting took place at Prey Veng village and subsequently a CMC was formed. The CMC consists of five members including one woman. As at other ecotourism sites the CMC is responsible to SVC for organizing ecotourism activities, whilst they are responsible to WCS and the Ministry of Environment for other aspects of site management, such as biodiversity monitoring and reporting encroachment and other illegal activities. Ecotourism and the CMC are novel concepts in a remote Cambodian village setting; to enable villagers to understand these activities better the project organized an exchange visit to Tmatboey.

SVC worked with the CMC to train four guides and three cooks at Prey Veng. Guides were trained in guiding etiquette and birding finding skills. SVC fixed prices with the CMC for services such as guiding, putting up tents, providing food and maintaining the camp and provided feedback from tourists to improve services. Currently tourists visiting Prey Veng stay in large safari style tents erected by the villagers in advance of their arrival. Over the next five years we plan to build on early success at Prey Veng and construct accommodation for tourists, probably similar to that at Tmatboey. This will increase the number of tourists who visit the site and, more importantly, increase the benefits to local communities. As at Tmatboey it is expected that when incomes from ecotourism reach a certain point the CMC will begin to take responsibility for other aspect of conservation, such as the Bird Nest Protection Program, that increase populations of species that birdwatchers visit the site to see. At Tmatboey the CMC have begun to organize nest protection for species such as White-shouldered Ibis and pay for it out of the Ecotourism Fund (tourists pay $15 into the fund if they see one ibis species and $30 if they see both).

Photo: A woman protecting a White-shouldered Ibis nest.

SVC promoted trips to Prey Veng on their website. It is one of the most reliable locations in Cambodia for seeing White-winged Duck and has an attractive Angkorian temple, as well as a suite of bird species typical of the Northern Plains, such as Giant Ibis. SVC produced a leaflet and distributed it to hotels throughout Siem Reap.

By the end of the project ecotourism was making a significant contribution to conservation in the Northern Plains, both through the nest protection discussed above and through the vulture restaurant at Dang Phlet village. For at least one third of each year the costs of operating the restaurant and monitoring the vulture population were covered by tourists brought to the site by SVC. Over the next five years we plan to further empower the CMCs to increase the extent to which they are involved in protected area management, increase local community incomes from conservation and in doing so bring conservation interventions such as ecotourism, Ibis Rice and the Bird Nest Protection Program to a point of financial and organizational sustainability. In doing so we will institutionalize community participation in the successful conservation of threatened birds across two landscapes.

Component 6 Planned:

Two Endangered species (Greater Adjutant and Masked Finfoot) and two Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant and Milky Stork) successfully protected in the Prek Toal Core Area through an extension of the Bird Nest Protection Program.

Component 6 Actual at Completion:

At Prek Toal Core Area the Bird Nest Protection Program enjoyed a high level of success as a result of the project. The number of community rangers increased to 34 by the end of the project – as the bird colony has grown so has the number of community rangers needed to protect it. Of the species mentioned above, Greater Adjutant has experienced the most impressive growth in numbers, from 77 nests in 2007 to 198 nests in 2012 – a 157% increase. Prek Toal now supports the largest population anywhere in the world of this, the world's least abundant stork. Lesser Adjutant has shown a less impressive increase, and the population now numbers 289 nests. There are no data for Masked Finfoot, whilst numbers of Milky Stork remain at 10-20 nests per year. Figure 5 gives trends in the populations of priority species. Population trends of other waterbirds breeding at Prek Toal have further demonstrated the success of the Bird Nest Protection Program, for instance numbers of Oriental Darter increased from 4,053 to 6,875 between 2007 and 2012.

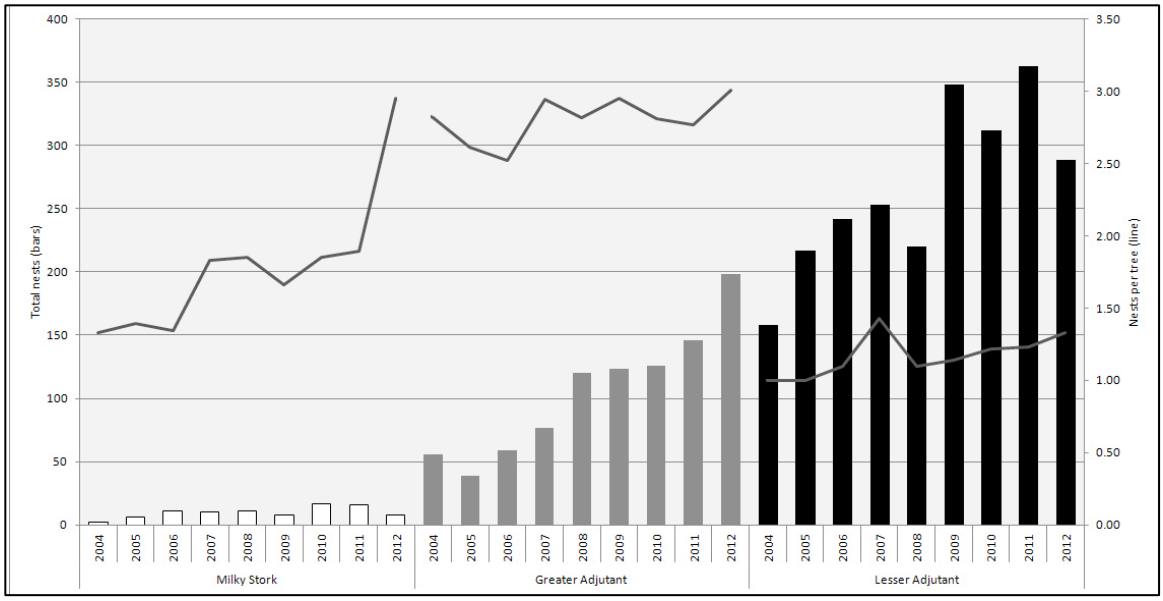

Figure 5. Breeding success of priority species at Prek Toal: number of nests and nest density.

MIST reports were produced monthly, quarterly and annually throughout the project, and refresher training for community rangers was provided annually. This has been maintained after the project and later in 2013 the MIST system will be replaced by SMART, a new, more versatile, improved version of MIST.

The deep reform of the fisheries sector in early 2012 led to the cancellation of the fishing lots that had characterized fishing on the Tonle Sap Lake for many years. The fishing lot that formerly almost completely overlapped with Prek Toal has now been replaced by a Fisheries Conservation Area, under the management of the Fisheries Administration (Prek Toal Core Area is under the management of the Ministry of Environment). New Community Fisheries were created at the same time, adjacent to the new Fisheries Conservation Area. This new institutional arrangement creates opportunities as well as challenges and responding to these to continue the successful expansion of the waterbird colony and enhance community benefits from the core area will be the focus of our work over the next few years in Prek Toal. The Bird Nest Protection Program implemented by community rangers will remain an integral part of these plans.

Photo: Nesting Greater Adjutant at Prek Toal Core Area.

Component 7 Planned:

Three Critically Endangered species (Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis and Bengal Florican), two Endangered species (Greater Adjutant and White-winged Duck) and six Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Manchurian Reed Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle and Green Peafowl) successfully protected in the BFCAs and Northern Plains as a result of increased capacity within CEDAC, SMP and SVC.

Component 7 Actual at Completion:

The project built the capacity of SVC and SMP and both organisations grew impressively (see Components 9 and 10). CEDAC found that they could not differentiate Ibis Rice from their own product and after one year their involvement in the project was terminated.

Increased capacity within SVC and SMP lead to the expansion of Ibis Rice to 11 sites, increased involvement of local communities in the management of ecotourism at four sites and the development of ecotourism at one new site. Through greater involvement of local communities in site management the project has successfully protected core populations of priority species across two landscapes. Figure 6 shows the growth in production of Ibis Rice and the increase in benefits to participating farmers.

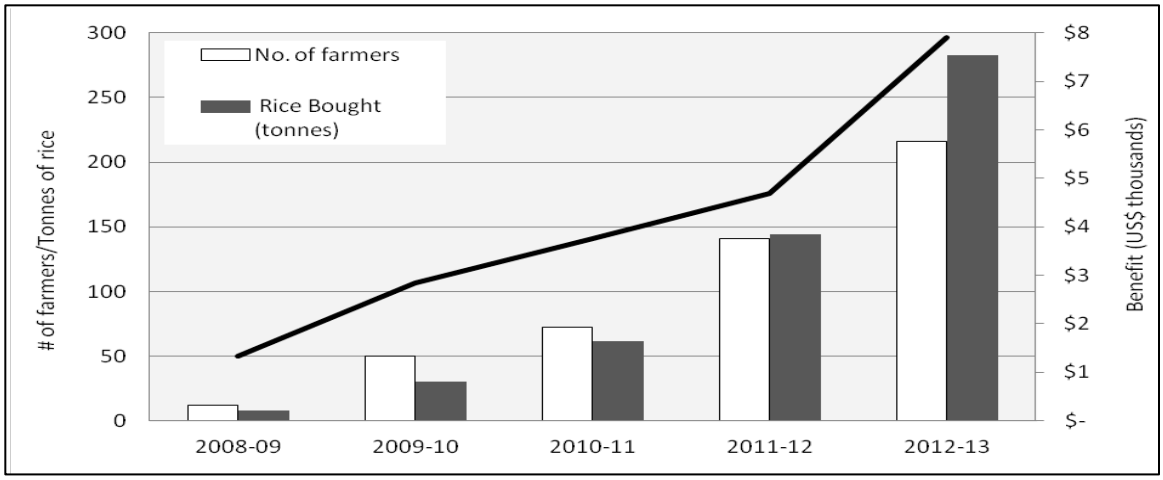

Figure 6. The growth of Ibis Rice.

Component 8 Planned:
Two Critically Endangered species (White-shouldered Ibis and Bengal Florican), one Endangered species (Greater Adjutant) and five Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Manchurian Reed Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle) successfully protected in the BFCAs through the expansion of the 'Wildlife-friendly' produce scheme, overseen by CEDAC

Component 8 Actual at Completion:
The Wildlife-friendly produce scheme – Ibis Rice – expanded dramatically during the project (see Component 10 below). CEDAC provided technical support to farmers in villages located close to the BFCAs early in the project. SMP has since taken over this role from CEDAC at those sites.

Component 9 Planned:
Two Critically Endangered species (White-shouldered Ibis and Bengal Florican), one Endangered species (Greater Adjutant) and five Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Manchurian Reed Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle) successfully protected in the BFCAs and Northern Plains through expansion of community-based ecotourism scheme by SVC

Component 9 Actual at Completion:
Under the project community based ecotourism grew to the point where it is close to organisational and financial sustainability. Over the next five years we hope to achieve sustainability in these key areas, enhance community participation and benefits from ecotourism at current sites, and expand to additional sites as appropriate. All ecotourism sites exhibited sustained growth in the numbers of tourists visiting, and the amount of revenue generated by these visitors has also risen. Figure 7 shows the increase in tourism numbers across all sites at which the project was active.

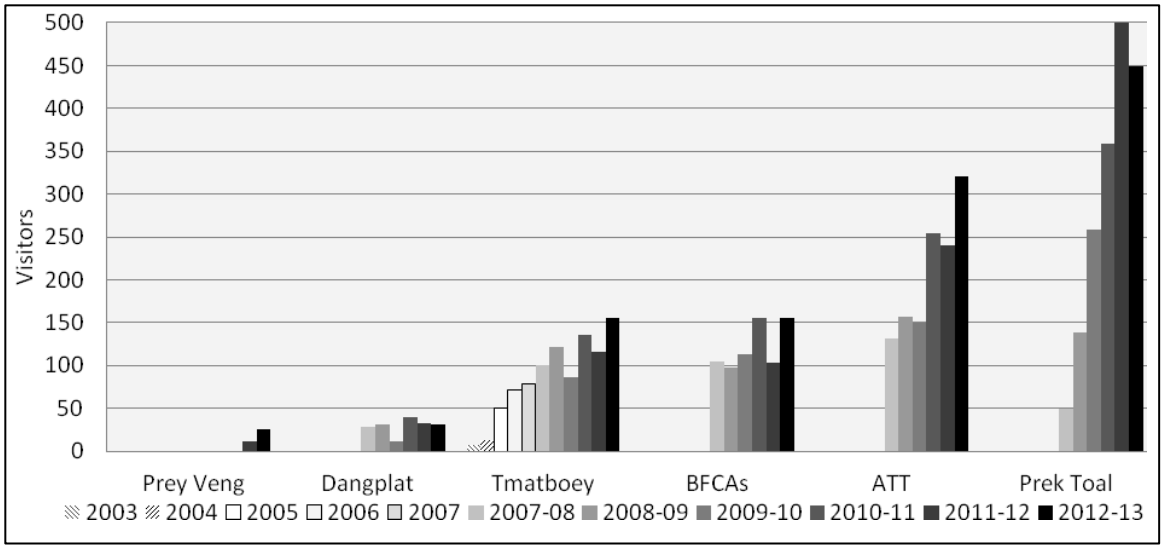

Figure 7. Number of tourists visiting ecotourism sites with SVC.

The capacity of SVC has increased concurrently with growth in tourism numbers. SVC now has four tour leaders, one senior and four junior guides and one guide training manager. All the staff, including the director, are Khmer. The website is excellent and provides details of sites, species, guides and how SVC directly contributes to conservation. Printed leaflets are available for most sites.

Component 10 Planned:

Two Critically Endangered species (White-shouldered Ibis and Bengal Florican), one Endangered species (Greater Adjutant) and five Vulnerable species (Lesser Adjutant, Sarus Crane, Manchurian Reed Warbler, Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle) successfully protected in the BFCAs and Northern Plains through expansion of 'Wildlife-friendly' produce scheme, overseen by SMP

Component 10 Actual at Completion:

Under the project SVC has developed a popular product with a strong and growing customer base (Figure 8). Ibis Rice has received certification from the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network so it can now be marketed under the 'wildlife-friendly' trademark. By the end of the project Ibis Rice was on sale in 29 restaurants and hotels (19 in Siem Reap, ten in Phnom Penh), 31 supermarkets and is purchased regularly by 20 other commercial customers (12 in Siem Reap and eight in Phnom Penh).

SMP is now entirely Khmer staffed, with some foreign technical support from WCS. Capacity development is still needed in some key areas to achieve organisational sustainability. Financial sustainability should be achieved within the next five years.

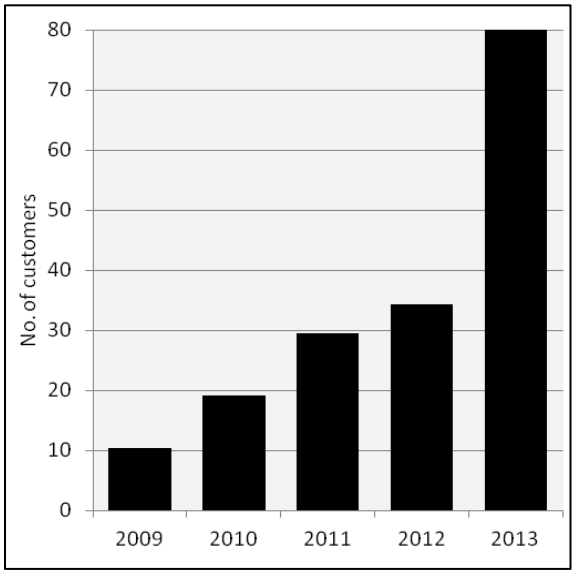

Figure 8. Growth of SMP's customer base

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

No, although Component 8 was changed to bring Ibis Rice in the BFCAs under the management of SMP to improve implementation of the project.

Because the project forms part of a long-term programme of work in the Northern Plains and Tonle Sap Lake and Inundation Zone most project activities are ongoing, and will be maintained until they are self-sustaining or no longer required.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

We have submitted the report of the final project evaluation mission, conducted by an experienced independent evaluator. The evaluator concluded that "the project has been implemented very successfully and to the highest technical and management standards." (Edwards 2013). We submit monitoring reports for multiple years that track the progress of the Bengal Florican population in the Tonle Sap Inundation Zone and the growth of the waterbird colony at Prek Toal Core Area on the Tonle Sap Great Lake. Many of these results are reported and discussed above.

In addition we have submitted copies of two papers that evaluate the impact of the three mechanisms that underpin this project – ecotourism, Ibis Rice and the Bird Nest Protection Scheme – on species populations and incomes of participating communities. Abstracts of those papers are reproduced below:

Clements *et al.* (2013). An evaluation of the effectiveness of a direct payment for biodiversity conservation: The Bird Nest Protection Program in the Northern Plains of Cambodia
Direct payments for the protection of biodiversity (a type of payment for environmental services) have been proposed as an effective tool for delivering conservation outcomes, in a way that also delivers development benefits to local people. Using an impact evaluation framework, this paper analyses the effective- ness of a direct payment program that was established for nine globally threatened bird species in the Northern Plains of Cambodia. The program provided conditional payments to local people to protect nests, since most of the species were highly threatened by the collection of eggs and chicks. Since the pro- gram's inception in 2003 it has protected >2700 nests over >2000 km2 of habitat at a cost of $30,000 annually, with 71–78% of the costs paid directly to local people. Payments significantly improved the success rates of protected nests in comparison with control sites, leading to population increases for at least three species. However, payments did not influence other threats to species, such as land clearance, and have failed to arrest declines in at least one species' population. The average payment per protector was a significant contribution to incomes in remote rural villages. However, the program only benefited a small proportion of people, causing some local jealousies and deliberate disturbance of nesting birds. The pro- gram demonstrates that direct payments can be a highly effective conservation tool in those cases where payments correctly target the cause of biodiversity loss. The results also suggest that it is important to consider how decisions over beneficiaries are made, especially in situations where property rights over biodiversity are unclear, if payments are to be socially acceptable. This has important implications for the design of payment schemes in conservation more generally.

Clements *et al.* (2010). Payments for biodiversity conservation in the context of weak institutions: Comparison of three programs from Cambodia
Implementing any conservation intervention, including Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), in the context of weak institutions is challenging. The majority of PES programs have been implemented in situations where the institutional framework and property rights are strong and target the behaviors of private landowners. By contrast, this paper compares three PES programs from a forest landscape in Cambodia, where land and resource rights are poorly denied, governance is poor, species populations are low and threats are high. The programs vary in the extent to which payments are made directly to individuals or to villages and the degree of involvement of local management institutions. The programs were evaluated against three criteria: the institutional arrangements, distribution of costs and benefits, and the conservation results observed. The most direct individual contracts had the simplest institutional arrangements, the lowest administrative costs, disbursed significant payments to individual villagers making a substantial contribution to local livelihoods, and rapidly protected globally significant species. However, this program also failed to build local management organisations or understanding of conservation goals. By contrast the programs that were managed by local organisations were slower to become established but crucially were widely understood and supported by local people, and were more institutionally effective. PES programs may therefore be more sustainable when they act to empower local institutions and reinforce intrinsic motivations.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The project was designed as part of a long-term conservation program in the Northern Plains and Tonle Sap Lake and Inundation Zone. It was designed under existing memoranda of understanding between WCS and the relevant government ministries and was preceded by many years of work which provided a foundation upon which to build. There are no stand-alone aspects of the project; all aspects of the project, from the Bird Nest Protection Program to the development of SMP to achieve wildlife-friendly farming and the support to SVC to realize ecotourism in remote communities are part of an ongoing program. There are structures in place both within WCS and now within SVC and SMP to support the achievements of the project now that it has ended. These achievements will act as the foundation upon which we will continue to build over the coming years.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The project expanded three separate incentive schemes that directly linked financial rewards for the individuals involved to conservation outcomes. The staff who introduced the schemes to the communities spend a lot of time in the field, this almost constant contact with the communities has built high levels of trust, capacity and motivation in the villages. The three schemes have been tested against controls and financial rewards, equitability and conservation impacts evaluated and refined. Communities involved have direct control over the services provided (tourism, rice production, nest protection), are rewarded directly for the provision of those services, and continuing provision of financial incentives is linked directly to a healthy conservation status. Because a high level of community self-regulation is built into the three schemes the project have very successful.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Setting a project within a framework of a long-term conservation program leads to high quality results, and builds a foundation for sustainability. Rather than focusing on short-term outputs, the project focused on enhancing old and developing new relationships with communities that created a suitable environment for the project to operate. In order to build sustainability the project built the capacity of SVC and SMP to operate the financial incentive schemes and deliver the rewards to communities.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Disney Foundation	A	USD 5,400	
Global Environment Facility	A	USD 101,433	
Multi-donor Livelihoods Facility	A	USD 416,027	
UNDP	A	USD 31,967	
Jeniam Foundation	A	USD 25,117	
Wildlife Conservation Society	In-Kind Contribution	USD 98,480	

Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:

A *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*

B *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*

C *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The project brought the three incentive schemes, and the two civil society organisations that implement them closer to financial and organizational sustainability. We will continue to promote and develop these schemes and organisations until they reach sustainability. For SMP and SVC we anticipate that this point will be reached within five years.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

None.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

None.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Dr. Tom Clements
Organization name: Wildlife Conservation Society
Mailing address: PO Box 1620, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel: +855 (0) 23217205
Fax: None.
E-mail: tclements@wcs.org

*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****