



Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard

A VERRA STANDARD

SAMKOS REDD+ PROJECT



Project Title	Samkos REDD+ Project
Version	V1.2
Date of Issue	29-June-2023
Project Location	Battambang, Pursat and Koh Kong provinces, Cambodia
Project Proponent(s)	Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Environment Contact Name: H.E. Choup Paris, Under-Secretary of State and National REDD Focal Point Email : Paris.ncg@gmail.com Phone : +855 017 313 366
Assessor Contact	SCS Global Services Christie Pollet – Young CPollet-Young@scsglobalservices.com +510.993.0124
Project Lifetime	1 September 2019 – 31 August 2049; 30-year lifetime
History of SD VISTa Status	This is the first validation for the Project.
Other Certification Programs	The Samkos REDD+ Project is concurrently seeking validation and verification under the VCS and CCB standards.
Expected Future Assessment Schedule	The Samkos REDD+ Project is concurrently undergoing validation and initial verification under the SD VISTa standards. It is estimated that the Project will subsequently verify annually.

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1 SUMMARY OF SDG CONTRIBUTIONS

Table 1: Summary of Project SDG Contributions

Row number	Estimated Project Contribution by the End of Project Lifetime	SDG Target	SDG Indicator	Net Impact on SDG Indicator	Section Reference	Claim, Asset or Label
1)	The SRP will work with ID Poor families and will focus on providing employment and livelihood support to the neediest community members.	1.0	# and % of families in Project Zone with ID Poor status	Implement activities to decrease	3.2	Claim
2)	The project will decrease food insecurity for rural households throughout the project zone	2.1.2	Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	Implement activities to decrease	3.2	Claim
3)	The project will decrease the number of children who are malnourished	2.2.2	Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height $>+2$ or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type	Implement activities to decrease	3.2	Claim

4)	By building and maintaining water wells, the project will increase the proportion of the rural population who have access to drinking water, affecting 1212 families over the life of the project.	6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	Increase	3.2	Claim
5)	The Project will provide employment and livelihood support, including employing local Cambodian rangers/forest personnel to protect Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary	10.1.1	Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population	Increase	3.2	Claim
6)	Over the 30-year lifetime of the project, 47,610,840 tCO ₂ e of net emission reductions from avoided deforestation compared to the reference level are estimated.	13.0	Tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions avoided or removed	Increase	VCS/CCB project description	SD VISta-labeled VCU
7)	297,397 ha of the Project Area under conservation management/enforcement	15.1	Forest area as a proportion of total land area	Maintain	4.2	Claim
8)	Over the 30-year lifetime of the project, approximately 30 species listed under some category of threat in the IUCN Red List will be repeatedly observed across the Project Area.	15.5	Presence of HCV species listed under some category of threat globally in the latest IUCN Red List	Maintain	4.2	Claim

2 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1 Project Objectives, Context and Long-term Viability

2.1.1 Summary of Project Sustainable Development Objective(s)

With the aim of helping the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) achieve its environmental goals for sustained social and economic growth, promote climate change mitigation and adaptation, maintain biodiversity, and create alternative livelihoods under the United Nations scheme of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), Wildlife Alliance, created The Samkos REDD+ Project (SRP). The Project includes three protected landscapes: Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary (PSWS), a protected landscape in northwestern Cambodia, encompassing a total area of 202,451 ha; the Phnom Kravanh Biodiversity Conservation Corridor of Protected Area (CBC) with 82,735 ha, and the northern zone of Southern Phnom Kravanh National Park (SCNP) located in Pursat with 12,211 ha. The total Project Accounting Area is 282,718 ha.

The three protected areas—PSWS, CBC and SCNP—are an integral part of the Cardamom Mountains, in Cambodia's Indo-Burma hotspot. The Indo-Burma hotspot is one of the most biologically important regions on Earth. According to the IUCN, it ranks among the top 10 hotspots for irreplaceability and, unfortunately, in the top five for threats, because only 5% of its natural habitat remains.

The Project Zone includes 26 targeted villages across 14 communes and 2 provinces. These growing communities with approximately 3,041 families and 13,261 villagers, present the biggest threats to the Samkos REDD+ project. The threats manifest themselves in the form of illegal land clearing, land encroachment, illegal logging, and poorly planned rural infrastructure.

In response to the threats to PSWS and the CBC, Wildlife Alliance (WA) with the Ministry of Environment (MOE), decided to create the SRP. The protection of SRP will be achieved by designing and delivering an active park management system specifically for PSWS, which includes direct park ranger patrols along the Project Zone and inside the Project Accounting Area. Wildlife Alliance and MoE rangers have already been patrolling large areas within the Project Accounting Area since 2019, as the sanctuary borders the Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project (VCS Project ID 1748).

The Project will also generate sustainable livelihood opportunities, create alternative income generating activities (IGAs) and initiatives to stimulate investment in local businesses designed to reduce pressure on the environment while significantly increasing community well-being. The programs will address food security, malnutrition and raise environmental awareness.

Biodiversity co-benefits will be achieved through greater protection of the ecosystem predominantly by means of increased ranger patrols and improved monitoring. The Project will protect critical habitat for significant populations of IUCN listed species, including the Asian elephant, Asiatic black bear, sun bear, large spotted civet, clouded leopard, and the dhole, as well as the critically endangered Siamese crocodile.

The Project's climate benefits include the average annual avoided emission of 1,911,823 t CO₂e, for a total of 57,354,690 t CO₂e over the project's 30-year lifetime.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN General Assembly in 2015. Of the 18 Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDG), the

government has prioritized the following six goals: Education, Decent Work and Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Climate Action, Peace and Institutions, and SDG Partnerships. These six goals are also prioritized within the RGC's strategic planning priorities, as set out in the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV (RS-IV) and the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023. The Project activities will fall under the following CSDGs:

- SDG 1 End Poverty
- SDG 2 Zero Hunger
- SDG 6 Clean Water
- SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 13 Climate Action
- SDG 15 Life on Land

2.1.2 Description of the Project Activity

The Samkos REDD+ Project has 3 key objectives:

1. Climate: Avoid GHG emissions from deforestation and degradation.
2. Community: Create decent employment opportunities, provide clean water and deliver conservation agriculture activities to increase household incomes, food security and protect the landscape.
3. Biodiversity: Protect and maintain habitat to maximize biodiversity.

The Project will design and implement the following project activities to meet its objectives under the sustainable development goals as described below.

Goal 1 End Poverty

One of the goals of the RGC is to lower poverty levels in rural areas. The SRP will support poverty reduction by generating employment and supporting an increase in household incomes. The SRP will work with ID Poor families and will focus on providing employment and livelihood support to the neediest community members. Conservation agriculture will help reduce illegal logging by local farmers/villagers by improving agricultural productivity and restoring crop diversity and increasing market access.

The Project will employ local Cambodian rangers/forest personnel to protect Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary. Since 2019, the Project has already employed 61 local rangers. Another 21 Cambodian rangers will be employed in 2023/2024 as a direct result of the Samkos REDD+ project.

Goal 2 Zero Hunger

The Project identified many households in the Project Zone as 'food insecure' for at least 3 months a year, which means that rural household diets lack in the quantity and quality of food needed for the maintenance of adequate nutritional status and prevention of disease. In one village in SRP Pursat, 85% of children under 5 were diagnosed as 'malnourished' by a study conducted in September/October 2020. Villagers' understanding of the relationship between feeding practices, food intake and health was very limited. Conservation agriculture will help reduce hunger and malnourishment in households in the Project Zone by providing chickens and frogs to the poorest households, and training on animal

husbandry. These are low-environmental impact, high protein food sources that will also reduce dependence on wildlife for meat.

Goal 6 Clean Water

The Project identified 68 sites for the construction of solar-powered water wells in the 26 target villages – 26 wells in Battambang and 42 in Pursat province. The Project will create a water well sub-committee for each location to help maintain and solve potential problems. A water well committee for the whole village will also be created for overall monitoring and inspections of all wells in their villages.

Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities

The SRP drives financial flows to a least developed country, Cambodia, to reduce inequalities. The SRP aligns the voluntary carbon market (VCM) with Nationally Determined Contributions, and supports governments and local communities through carbon financing.

Goal 13 Climate Action and Goal 15 Life on Land

Under Goal 13 Climate Action and Goal 15 Life on Land, the following activities will be prioritized:

13.1 Physical Protection/Monitoring

Conservation law enforcement is the main tool used to protect and conserve the natural resources in all three protected areas of SRP. Ranger patrols are a difficult and life-threatening task that requires all conservation enforcement teams to have the capacity, tools, and commitment to protect the country's resources for future generations. The Ministry of Environment adopts the following methods to protect its parks: land patrols (foot, motorbike, and truck), riverine patrols, and partnerships with NGOs for technical field support and financial assistance.

Based on the Project's focus group discussions in SRP, participants viewed the quantity and limited capacity of forest rangers to arrest illegal loggers and process forest crimes as contributing factors to deforestation. Rangers, on average, can patrol 10 days a month or three times per week. Poachers, therefore, would go on other days of the week. In addition, the core conservation zones inside the SRP are large. Rangers have been unable to patrol the whole geographic region because they do not have the patrolling tools, like motorbikes to effectively patrol. Illegal loggers have been able to take the absence of rangers, tools, including the means to quickly process the crimes, as opportunities to clear the land and harvest the trees.

The Project will provide conservation law enforcement training, patrolling equipment and upgrade and/or construct additional ranger-field stations for the purpose of 1) protecting the sanctuary, 2) monitoring and collecting wildlife population demographic data, 3) promoting the values of protected areas to tourists and local communities and 4) working with NGOs to ensure that all projects follow conservation guidelines.

The Project will also partner with MoE to deliver a pro-ranger program to strengthen the technical skills of the rangers, whose duties include detection, investigation, and apprehension of persons responsible for criminal forest activities. Wildlife Alliance has been one of MoE's strategic conservation partners since 2000.

13.2 Conservation Agriculture

Many villagers in the Project Zone have faced environmental challenges in the last 5 years, including longer dry spells during the rainy season, uncertainty of harvesting yields due to natural disasters like flooding, and declining yields because of the loss of soil nutrients. Poor harvests and/or low sales on

agricultural goods have also pushed many farmers to take out loans from outside parties. With declining yields in corn and cassava, two commodities that resource-poor farmers cultivate, families have been unable to repay their high-interest loans. To compensate for the loss of income streams from agriculture, some farmers illegally cleared more land and sold more timber inside and outside of their respective communities, including crossing the border into Thailand to fell trees.

Conservation agriculture would not only address the practices needed to improve agricultural productivity on existing farmland and restore crop diversity, but it would also help to protect the ecology of SRP by preventing villagers from clearing more forests to simply meet the basic needs of their families. Additionally, conservation agriculture can help improve market access. Connecting the farmer's conservation-friendly products to a growing group of globally responsible food shoppers may enable them to sell more of their products above the break-even price point. Eco-tourists prefer buying and consuming products that are responsibly grown and delivered.

2.1.3 Implementation Schedule

Date	Milestone(s) in the Project's Development and Implementation
1 Sept 2019	SRP protection efforts started; GHG accounting period started
1 Sept 2019	O'Som and Roveang ranger stations become fully operational
23 July 2020	Ministry of Environment (MOE) gave final approval for SRP project
25 July 2022	MOE and WA signed Project Agreement to develop and implement SRP
25 Nov 2022	Started survey of SRP community water wells in Project Zone
23 Nov 2022 to 26 January 2023	Delivered 27 SRP FPIC Workshops across Project Zone
11-13 Oct 2022	Delivered SRP SIA workshops in Pursat town
24 February 2022	Started livelihood surveys in IP village (Phnom Rey)
14-15 Nov 2022	Delivered BIA workshops in Phnom Penh
22 June and 1 July 2022	Chrak Chang Let and Thmor Da ranger stations become operational

2.1.4 Project Proponent

Organization Name	Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Environment (MOE)
Role in the Project	Project Proponent
Contact Person	H.E. Choup Paris

Title	Under-Secretary of State and National REDD Focal Point
Address	Thoracic Heritage Building, lot 503, Sangkat Tonle Bassac, Khan Chamkarmon, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Telephone	(+855) 17 313 366
Email	Paris.ncgg@gmail.com

2.1.5 Other Entities Involved in the Project

Organization Name	Wildlife Alliance (WA)
Role in the Project	Partner to MOE in the implementation of SRP
Contact Person	Dr. Suwanna Gauntlett
Title	Chief Executive Officer
Address	Nº 86, Street 123, Toul Tompong I Precinct, Chamcamon District, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Telephone	(+855) 23 211 604
Email	gauntlett@wildlifealliance.org

2.1.6 Project Type

The SRP falls under the VCS sectoral scope 14: – Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Uses (AFOLU), under the category Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). Specifically, the project falls under the REDD+ category Avoided Unplanned Deforestation (AUD). The project is eligible under this category by the definitions provided in the VCS AFOLU Requirements version 3.5 published 19 October 2016 by virtue of the fact that it prevents emissions that would have otherwise taken place through unplanned deforestation.

The SRP is not a grouped project.

2.1.7 Project Location

The SRP includes three protected areas in the Kingdom of Cambodia: 1) Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary (PSWS) in Battambang, Pursat and Koh Kong provinces; 2) Southern Cardamom National

Park (northern sector) located in Pursat province; 3) Cardamom Biodiversity Conservation Corridor(s). There are six biodiversity corridors, of which two are in Battambang and four in Pursat province. See Map in Figure 1.

Extent Boundary	Location (Easting, Northing UTM Zone 48N)
Northern Extent GPS Point	305491.20 m E, 1393197.98 m N
Eastern Extent GPS Point	383776.54 m E, 1335440.24 m N
Southern Extent GPS Point	265315.68 m E, 1315715.71 m N
Western Extent GPS Point	250874.08 m E, 1384556.10 m N

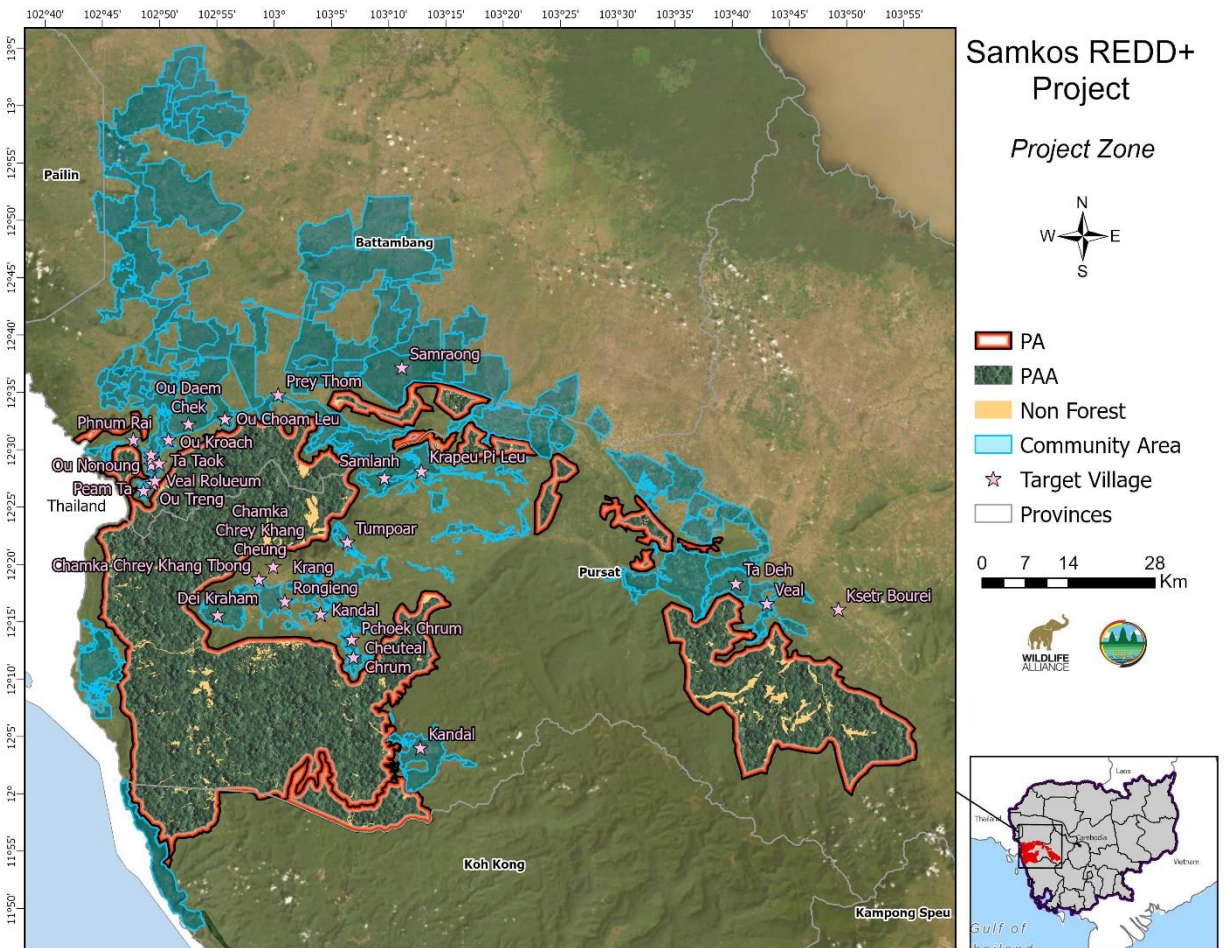


Figure 1. Project zone map for the Samkos REDD+ Project.

2.1.8 Baseline Scenario

The entirety of the Project Area is gazetted as a protected area (Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary (PSWS), the Cardamom Biodiversity Conservation Corridor(s) (CBC), and the northern zone of Southern Cardamom National Park (SCNP)), and therefore has formal protection against deforestation. WA has been operating in the Project Area for the last 3 years, and their efforts in forest protection and community engagement are the primary reasons that the Project Area is still forested. Although the Project Area has been designated as a protected area, the MOE is unable to fund forest protection activities, supply needed equipment, or the training needed to successfully conserve the forested areas under their jurisdiction. In the past, various international NGOs operated in this landscape providing funding for protection from donations and grants. However, these organizations left the area approximately 7 years ago and without their presence the area lacked adequate resources to continue protection. With the success of the neighboring Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project, WA began to expand their support into these areas, providing funding, training, and logistical and managerial support which has been instrumental in the protection of the Project Area. Wildlife Alliance's existing activities include enforcement of forest boundaries and reduction of illegal logging and forestland clearing activities. Therefore, the pre-project land use was primarily that of conservation, but with in-sufficient funding or resources resulting in significant amounts of incursion and forest loss. The protection activities to-date have been funded from the WA's general funds, including revenue from the SCRCP and donations. However, the SCRCP revenue is not able to support the scale of activities needed to protect the project area. It is certain, based on the amount of consistent threat observed since 2019, that without new sources of revenue there will be an increase in illegal logging and conversion of the forest area into agricultural land.

Despite some protection to date, threats to the forest are steady or increasing along the network of newly created and updated roadways. According to the information gathered at the biodiversity impact assessment workshop, all of the unplanned drivers of deforestation that lead to the creation of new land for farming are present in the SRP; this includes land encroachment, illegal logging, illegal camps, forest fires, and charcoal production. The drivers of deforestation are still present because of the opportunity cost of the most profitable alternative land-use, mixed vegetable farm, is 2,571% more profitable than if the forests of the SRP are left standing.

Deforestation in Cambodia has occurred as a result of economic development that the government has had little capacity to enforce (MoE, 2020). A dramatic increase in deforestation since 2010 is likely a consequence of an increase in forestland conversion, timber harvesting and agricultural expansion for cash crops. Forest disturbance resulting from the expansion of monoculture plantations for rubber has been statistically linked to international market price fluctuations, with recent years seeing higher market prices and consequentially exceptionally high disturbance rates (Grogan et al., 2015).

Forest degradation and deforestation are major threats to all land units in the Project Area, despite the presence of official legal protection. In addition to small-scale agriculture, tree harvesting for firewood and timber from state-owned lands are illegal under Cambodian Law. There is considerable evidence that the boundaries of many Cambodian forested areas and protected areas are not enforced, and furthermore that there is a substantial amount of uncontrolled access into protected areas that leads to their conversion (i.e. Seima Protection Forest REDD+ Monitoring and Implementation Report; http://database.v-c-s.org/sites/v-c-s.org/files/CCB_IMP_REP_C0047_29Apr16.pdf). This gap in enforcement is largely caused by a lack of funding, limiting MOE's ability to patrol the forested area with enough frequency and efficacy to deter forest conversion activities, as detailed in the above section Sub-Step 1a. An analysis of the land cover / land use in Battambang and Pursat provinces, in which the Project Area is located, showed that greater than 40% of the land area has been converted

to agriculture or for development. This study showed that conversion to agriculture is a prevalent scenario in this area, and further demonstrates that land use laws and regulations are systematically ignored.

2.1.9 Causal Chain(s)

During the SIA workshop, the following **focal issues** were identified:

- 1) Logging and land grabbing
- 2) Lack of community participation in forest protection
- 3) Poverty of local communities

Based on the Problem Flow Diagrams developed for each of the three focal issues identified, several strategic project entry points were discussed during the SIA workshops and agreed upon as the most likely strategies and activities to address root causes of the problems. These thus constitute the project activities for the SRP that if implemented would follow the theory of change logic developed in the Results Chains (**Error! Reference source not found.**) to lead to the desired outcomes. These proposed project activities were further enriched by the knowledge and experience of the project partner WA, who has been engaging with local communities in this landscape for the last decade to identify their needs. As such, the project communities have been variously engaged in designing these Project activities.

While the Project partner WA has been successful in implementing some of these activities, the effectiveness and scope of their implementation has been limited by a lack of sustained funding. Therefore, the Project Partner WA deems it most effective that the SRP maintains and expands these on-going project activities. Supporting these operations will be the most direct way to deliver benefits to the communities in a timely fashion. It is envisioned that several new activities, directly supporting the sustainability of the REDD+ Project while simultaneously providing alternative means to the local communities, will also be possible with carbon revenue. Specific existing activities and envisioned new activities are described below, followed by detailed Results Chains (**Error! Reference source not found.**) and a description of the key activity areas that will serve as a framework for activity implementation.

The Project will design and implement the following project activities to help address the focal issues.

Park Management: Conservation law enforcement will be the main tool used to protect and conserve the natural resources in SRP, which addresses focal issue 1, logging and land grabbing. The Project will provide field assistance through on-the ground ranger enforcement training and supervision; patrolling equipment such as, motorbikes and vehicles; and upgrade and/or construct additional ranger-field stations for the purpose of 1) protecting the 3 protected areas, 2) monitoring and collecting wildlife population data, 3) promoting the values of protected areas to local communities and 4) working with NGOs and community-based organizations to ensure that all activities in the SRP follow MOE laws, sub-decrees and conservation guidelines.

Conservation Agriculture: Conservation agriculture will address all three focal issues. It will help reduce illegal logging by local farmers/villagers by giving them an alternative to forest products. The conservation agriculture program will lead to better livelihoods and address poverty by providing ID Poor families with high-protein, low environmental impact food sources (chickens and frogs), which aims to reduce malnutrition and reliance on forest resources. Additional families will be trained in conservation agricultural methods.

Clean Water: The SRP will provide 64 solar-powered water wells in 26 villages for household consumption (drinking, cooking, etc.). This will address focal issues 2 and 3 by providing water for irrigation and improving health.

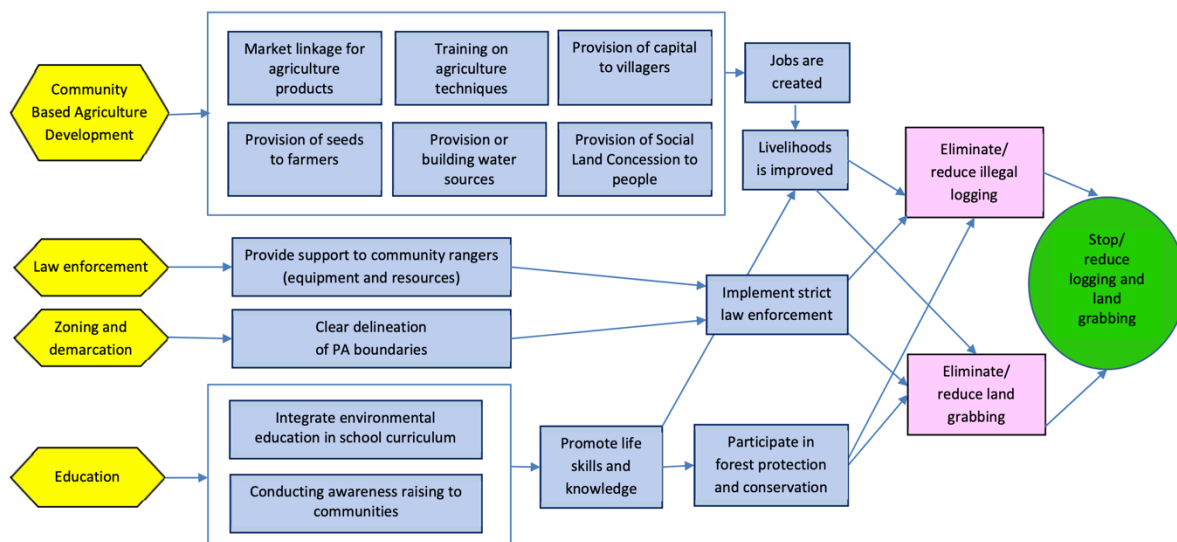
Focal issue 1) Logging and land grabbing

If environmental knowledge is included in the school curriculum and awareness raising about laws is conducted for local people, life-skill and knowledge are provided, local people will participate in the forest protection and conservation.

If agriculture sector is linked to market, seeds are provided to local people with capital and training of agriculture techniques, water source is built, social land concession is provided adequate land to local people, jobs are created, livelihoods of local people will be improved.

If effective law enforcement is supported by local people with clear delineation of boundaries and strict legal measures,

THEN illegal logging and forest clearing for land grabbing will be reduced, leading to complete stop.



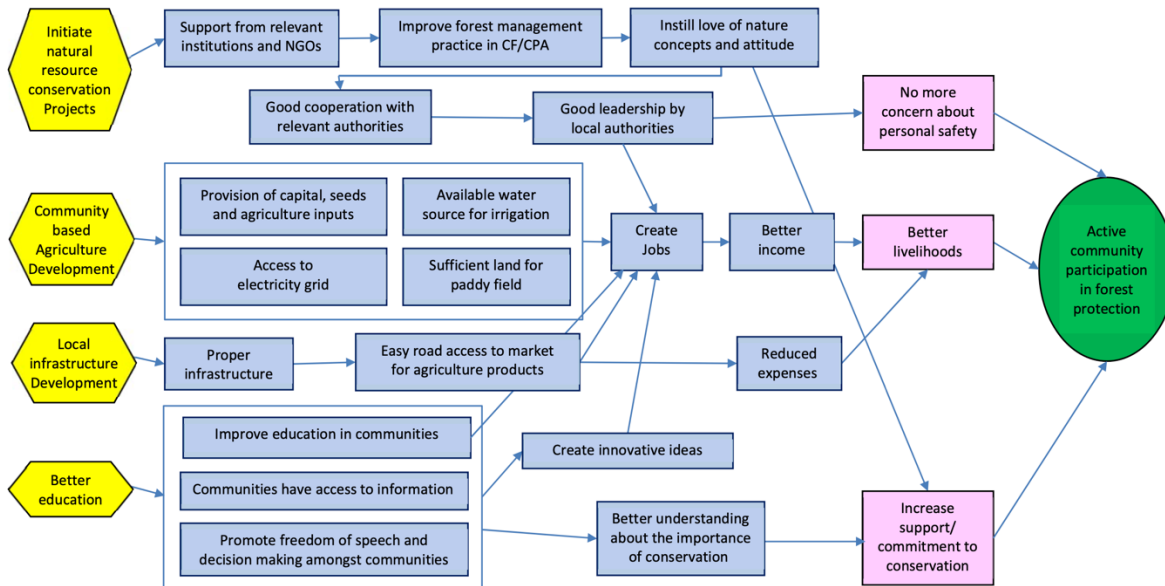
Focal issue 2) Lack of community participation in forest protection

If good infrastructure is in place and expenditure is decreased.

If good education is in place with innovation and information is circulated widely to communities and freedom of speech and decision-making power are given to the community members

If there is support from concerned institutions and NGOs to enhance forest management in the community protected areas, local communities will love nature and provide good collaboration with relevant institutions, good security and personal safety.

THEN, local communities will participate in forest protection and conservation.



Focal issue 3) Poverty of local communities

If villages and communes are safe, no gambling, no drug trafficking and drug usage, no domestic violence, family members are living together in harmony

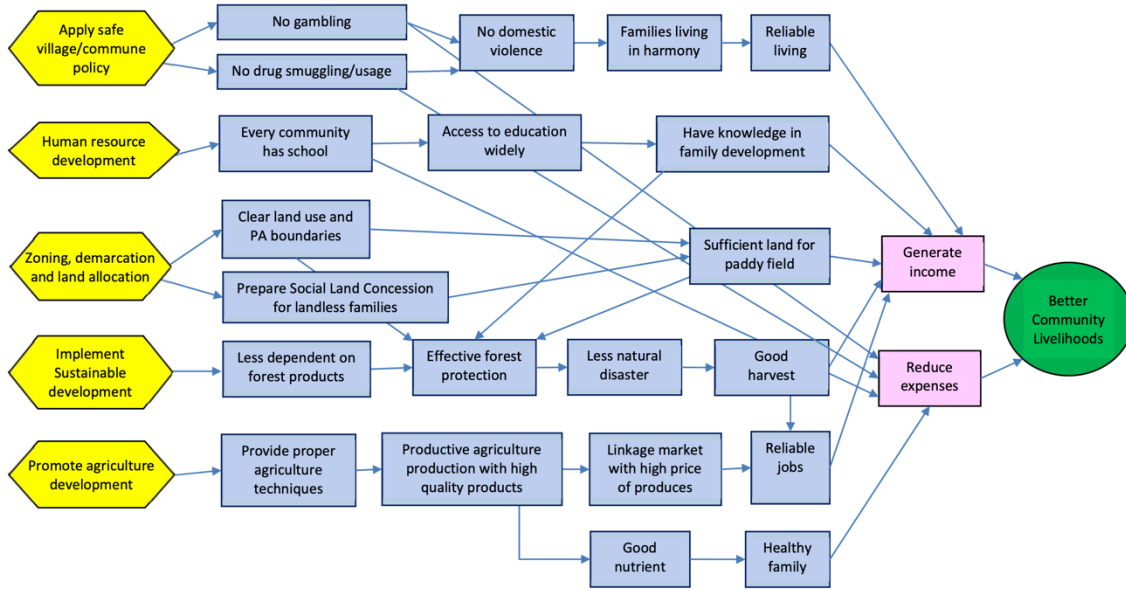
If good strategy to promote agriculture development is in place, training on agriculture technique is provided, communities will have better yield along with good market for agriculture products and the products will be sold at high price, with sufficient capital and knowledge, ...

If clear land use policy and zone are in place, community members have access to social land concession with adequate land for paddy field,

If development is sustainable, forest is well protected, natural disasters are happening less frequently, local communities yield good harvest,

If human resource development exists, each community has school, people have good education and knowledge of family development, ...

If social welfare, good hygiene, sufficient nutrient and food, healthy family, and IF, local people have proper jobs,
 THEN their livelihoods will be improved.



Legend		Intermediate	Threat Reduction	Target
Table	Strategy	Result	Result	Target

2.1.10 Threats to the Project

Human Activity Risks

Unsustainable Agriculture

The greatest human induced risk to the Project’s benefits is continued deforestation. The Project Zone is undergoing large pressures for new agricultural land from the expanding local population, in-bound provincial migration, and wealthy businessmen trying to find new and unsustainable opportunities in forested areas. Unsustainable agriculture is a primary risk to the SRP benefits and the Project’s sustainability.

Mitigation for this risk is through Project Activities, mainly in the form of increased and strategic protection of the Project Area, creation of new sustainable income generating activities, and through the promotion of improved agricultural methods.

Charcoal Production and Illegal Logging

Within the Project Area there are extractive activities, including the production of charcoal and illegal logging. These are additional threats of deforestation and degradation in the SRP Project Area and pose a significant risk to the Project’s climate benefits. Conservation law enforcement under MoE routinely patrol the Project Area in the attempt to halt the illegal activities. These law enforcement units are limited because of the size of the Project Area. The SRP will provide the financial, political and human capacity support necessary to maintain and strengthen conservation law enforcement. This is achieved by employing more government rangers, providing ranger training on park management, including SMART patrols, and more equipment to effectively complete their tasks.

Anthropogenic Fires

Another human induced threat is frequent fires; these can occur multiple times a year in the area. Many are set intentionally with the goal of clearing brush for agriculture, or some may be the unintentional result of illegal activity, such as charcoal production. SRP will monitor the Project Area for the occurrence of fire and will work to reduce the risk of fire. In addition, the Project aims to reduce illegal incursions of people into the Project Area, thus mitigating anthropogenic fire potential. The Project Proponent will monitor fire events and other potential contributions to reversals as part of their annual monitoring efforts and is required to report on and account for any major loss of carbon in the Project Area. It is the goal of the Project to work with communities to understand the value of the forest, thus decreasing their willingness to destroy their forest resources, as they begin to realize tangible carbon benefits.

Natural Risks

The region in which the Project is located is not generally susceptible to severe or destructive natural events. The primary types of natural events that could occur would be geologic events, pests or disease, flooding or fire. The area is not prone to any geologic activity and poses little to no risk to the Project. As the Project Area is a native and biodiverse ecosystem the risk from pests or disease that result in significant emissions reversal is low. The primary mitigation for this risk is to maintain the forest and ensure through monitoring that the trees and ecosystem remain healthy and intact. There can be minor seasonal flooding from the annual monsoons. However, the species of this area are all adapted to the hydrological cycles and are not liable to monsoonal flooding. The Project Area is mountainous and there is a medium risk of erosion or landslides. Due to the Project activities that protect forests the risk of erosion or landslides is minimized. The risk of fire has the most potential to cause damage to the forests of the Project Area. However, the risk of significant emissions reversal is low. The evergreen and semi-evergreen forest types are of a dense, evergreen, moist forest type that is not prone to forest fires. There have been no catastrophic fires in forests of this type in this region. Therefore, natural events have low risks to the Project's benefits.

Political Risks

In all countries, there exists a slight risk of shifting legislation or the potential of new policies that could potentially affect natural resource management and/or land tenure. There have been cases in Cambodia where the RGC has allowed protected forest lands to be cleared for agricultural or development purposes. That said, the likelihood of such changes occurring is low, especially given that the Project Area is currently under government ownership and under protective status (It includes national park land and a wildlife sanctuary). As a highly visible international REDD+ project, the likelihood that the RGC would allow the SRP Project Area to be converted is low. Additionally, as the intent is to nest this Project into a future jurisdictional/national program, the Project's visibility will only increase as well as its importance to the RGC.

There are upcoming national elections in July 2023, which brings with them the risk of civil unrest if the party in power loses the election. Additionally, there will be a change in the Ministry of the Environment. While we expect the future Minister to be supportive of the SRP and REDD+ projects generally, it does present a potential risk.

Policy risks

Risk of reversal

Risk of project reversal due to community opposition is considered minimal, as they have openly and widely been consulted through numerous outreach and information-sharing

meetings throughout project development. As a project governance policy, all stakeholders are always able to seek further information or air grievances if desired. The Project will continue to engage the surrounding communities, provide education and support for community social services, and improved livelihood opportunities.

All these factors build and enhance community support for the project and make them authentic stakeholders, thereby reducing the risk of opposition to the project and its goals.

Insufficient Revenues

The majority of REDD+ credits are currently sold on the voluntary market, posing a risk to recurring, sustainable income flow. If credits are not sold, there will be no revenue, and thus no monetary support for the Project over its 30-year lifetime, save initial investment. Nevertheless, the Project Proponent believes that the Project will be successful in attracting sufficient buyers of carbon credits. The Project has been developed as a cooperative effort between Wildlife Alliance and the Ministry of Environment, it is one of the largest projects in Southeast Asia, making it an attractive Project to the greater Southeast Asian region. In addition, it is a vital forest resource to Cambodia, and is a critical watershed for the Gulf of Thailand, an important part of Cambodia's economy because of its contributions via hydroelectricity, tourism, and fisheries. The intention of the Project Proponent is to nest the Project into the potential future Cambodian jurisdictional/national REDD+ scheme. In the future, this will allow for the sale of larger credit volumes, on a recurring, sustainable basis, to sovereign nations and large multi-national buyers in the international market created by the Paris Accord. Therefore, the Project Proponent believes that the risk of insufficient revenues to the Project's benefits is low.

2.1.11 Benefit Permanence

The Samkus REDD+ Project activities are all designed to enhance the SD VISta benefits beyond the Project's Lifetime. Community activities are designed to transform local economies over the life of the Project. In this regard, the focus of the SRP is developing local business and income-generating activities that are critical components of a long-term low carbon economy. Project activities that meet this overarching objective focus on sustainable agriculture and management of natural resources. These activities will reduce the necessity for community members to deforest and degrade the Project Area. During the Project Lifetime, this will be achieved, for example, by improving education by training farmers in sustainable agriculture.

2.2 Stakeholder Engagement

2.2.1 Stakeholder Identification

Wildlife Alliance has been working on the protection of the southern portion of the Cardamom Mountain range for twenty years and in the project area since 2019, when they built two new government ranger stations. At the initiation of their conservation efforts, they first conducted a spatial analysis of the region to understand the location of all the communities that were adjacent to the area they were committed to protecting. Next, they conducted a participatory rural appraisal with each community. During this process, Wildlife Alliance worked with a suite of government agencies including the ministry of environment, ministry of agriculture, forest and fisheries, as well as with local district and provincial government offices thus developing a more in-depth understanding of all other stakeholders in the region.

To enable a participatory stakeholder analysis, including identification of and further analysis into potential impacts of the project on different community groups, a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) workshop was held from 11-13 October 2022. A total of 60 participants attended, representing 27 villages from 9 communes, 4 districts and 2 provinces. It is important to note that at the end of the SIA process, Kandal village in O'Som commune was not selected as a project beneficiary because families do not suffer from food-nutritional insecurities and have accumulated significant amounts of wealth through land investments, tourism and agro-products.

The 27 villages included (1) Ou Nonoung, (2) Ou Kroach, (3) Ou Treng, (4) Peam Ta, (5) Peam, (6) Ou Tateak, (7) Ta Taok, (8) Veal Rolueum, (9) Phnum Rey, (10) Ou Daem Chek, (11) Ou Choam Leu, (12) Prey Thom, (13) Samrong, (14) Samlanh, (15) Krapeu Pi Leu, (16) Kandal, (17) Krang Rongieng, (18) Chamka Chrey Khang Cheung, (19) Chamka Chrey Khang Tbong, (20) Dei Kraham, (21) Cheuteal Chrum, (22) Pchoek Chrum, (23) Tumpoar, (24) Kandal (O'Som), (25) Ksetr Bourei, (26) Tadeh, and (27) Veal.

Workshop participants comprised representatives of the local administration (provincial administrations, district administrations, commune council members, village chiefs and deputy village chiefs), village elders, local community leaders, indigenous (Por), women and youth representatives from various locations within the Project Zone.

2.2.2 Stakeholder Description

The Project Zone includes 26 villages with a total population of 34,179 people. They were identified by the Project partner WA as most associated with natural resource use and forest loss within the Project Accounting Area (PAA), and thus are most likely to be positively impacted by the project activities.

PSWS Battambang includes one district, two communes and 12 villages, corresponding to approximately 10,718 villagers (2,332 families), of which 796 families have IDPoor status.

PSWS Battambang Corridor (B2) includes one district, 1 commune and 1 village, corresponding to approximately 889 villagers (207 families), of which 88 families have IDPoor status.

PSWS Pursat includes one district with 3 communes and 10 villages and 11 sub-villages, corresponding to 15,933 villagers (3,958 families), of which 497 families have ID Poor Status.

PSWS Pursat Conservation Corridor (P4) includes one district with 2 communes and 3 villages, corresponding to 6,732 villagers (1552 families), of which 366 families have ID Poor Status.

During the SIA workshop, groups of stakeholders were identified and analyzed in relation to the focal issues.

The stakeholders who benefit from the status quo are:

- Loggers
- Poachers
- Timber traders
- Wildlife traders
- Land speculators
- Non-timber forest product collectors

- Microfinanciers and money lenders/creditors

The stakeholders who are adversely affected by the status quo are:

- Communities in general, including present and future generations
- Government and local authorities
- Youth and women
- Workers/ job-seekers
- Borrowers and debtors

2.2.3 Stakeholder Consultation

Communities were consulted during the first round of our Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) process, which is continuous throughout the Project lifetime. A list of FPIC meetings to date is in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Additionally, the SIA training and workshop utilized the theory of change logic to hypothesize how the SRP intends to achieve its objectives. In other words, through the SIA training and workshop the Project partner WA, local government officials and key community leaders created a roadmap of how the SRP plans to get from Point A (project activities) to Point Z (project impacts). First the participants created a Project Vision Statement. Secondly, they identified and prioritized the Project's focal issues, from which they created a problem statement and vision statement for each focal issue. With these problem and vision statements they created a problem flow and results chain diagram for each focal issue. Next the participants conducted a risk analysis and negative impact assessment for each focal issue, and finally a theory of change statement. Once these items were created for each issue, a list of mitigating activities and indicators were created for the life of the Project. This process, described above, demonstrates how key community members and project stakeholders were involved in every step of the Project's design process.

Table 2. Location, date, and attendance of FPIC meetings for the Samkos REDD+ Project

ID	Location	Commune	District	Date	Place	Total	Female	Male
SRP-101	Ou Nonoung	Ta Taok	Samlout	08-Jan-2023	Villager's house	34	23	11
SRP-102	Ou Kroach	Ta Taok	Samlout	26-Jan-2023	Village chief's house	65	44	21
SRP-103	Ou Treng	Ta Taok	Samlout	04-Dec-2022	Peam Ta Primary School	57	43	14
SRP-104	Peam Ta	Ta Taok	Samlout	05-Dec-2022	Village chief's house	31	23	8
SRP-105	Peam	Ta Taok	Samlout	05-Jan-2023	Village member's house	33	28	5
SRP-106	Ou Tateak	Ta Taok	Samlout	05-Jan-2023	Village member's house	26	22	4
SRP-107	Ta Taok	Ta Taok	Samlout	08-Jan-2023	Village chief's house	52	41	11
SRP-108	Veal Rolueum	Ta Taok	Samlout	03-Dec-2022	Ou Nonoung Primary School	45	24	21

SRP-109	Phnum Rai	Ta Taok	Samlout	27-Jan-2023	Phnum Rai Pagoda	56	33	23
SRP-110	Ou Daem Chek	Kampong Lpov	Samlout	29-Jan-2023	Village chief's house	31	13	18
SRP-111	Ou Choam Leu	Kampong Lpov	Samlout	16-Dec-2022	Ou Choam Leu Pagoda	71	35	36
SRP-112	Prey Thom	Kampong Lpov	Samlout	17-Dec-2022	Village chief's house	55	28	27
SRP-113	Samrong	Chhnal Mean	Koas Kraia	20-Dec-2022	Samrong Leu primary school	55	41	14
SRP-114	Samlanh	Krapeu Pi	Veal Veng	23-Dec-2022	Samlanh primary school	50	30	20
SRP-115	Krapeu Pi Leu	Krapeu Pi	Veal Veng	26-Dec-2022	Village chief's house	44	32	12
SRP-116	Kandal	Anlong Reab	Veal Veng	25-Jan-2023	Villager's house	50	26	24
SRP-117	Krang Rongieng	Anlong Reab	Veal Veng	22-Jan-2023	Village chief's house	42	27	15
SRP-118	Chamka Chrey Khang Cheung	Anlong Reab	Veal Veng	11-Jan-2023	Villager's house	36	21	15
SRP-119	Chamka Chrey Khang Tbong	Anlong Reab	Veal Veng	07-Jan-2023	Village meeting Hall	36	15	21
SRP-120	Dei Kraham	Anlong Reab	Veal Veng	09-Jan-2023	Dei Krahom Pagoda	90	64	26
SRP-121	Cheuteal Chrum	Pramaoy	Veal Veng	07-Dec-2022	Village chief's house	46	16	30
SRP-122	Pchoek Chrum	Pramaoy	Veal Veng	09-Dec-2022	Village chief's house	63	35	28
SRP-123	Tumpoar	Pramaoy	Veal Veng	20-Dec-2022	Village chief's house	36	21	15
SRP-124	Kandal	Ou som	Veal Veng	05-Dec-2022	Village chief's house	24	10	14
SRP-125	Ksetr Bourei	Santreae	Phnom Kravanh	23-Nov-2022	Commune meeting hall	40	6	34
SRP-126	Ta Deh	Samroang	Phnom Kravanh	25-Nov-2022	Village meeting Hall	51	24	27
SRP-127	Veal	Samroang	Phnom Kravanh	28-Nov-2022	Villager's house	43	25	18

Total	1,262	750	512
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2.2.4 Continued Consultation and Adaptive Management

WA plans to install comment boxes in each of the 26 communities, in which stakeholders can leave anonymous comments about the Project and its activities. These comment boxes will complement the

new field office that will house the field team. The field office will be centrally located so that the target beneficiaries have access.

2.2.5 Anti-Discrimination

The SRP is committed to fair treatment and equal opportunity for all Project stakeholders, community members and employees. The Project, nor any agent of the Project, will discriminate against any person for any reason, including, but not limited to, gender, religion, nationality, tribe, or sexual identity. The Project has established an equal opportunity policy that ensures that the Project will not engage in or be complicit in any form of discrimination. The SRP is committed to providing a workplace and programs that are safe and free from all sexual harassment or unwelcome sexual advances. The Project has drafted a document outlining a sexual harassment policy, defining sexual harassment and describing the recourse that any employee who feels that they have suffered sexual harassment should take. Additionally, the Project has established a grievance system that will provide all Project employees, stakeholders, community members and participants to have a recourse method in the event that any discriminatory actions or sexual harassment does occur.

2.2.6 Worker Training

The SRP considers local employment a priority and local sourcing is strongly encouraged at all levels of the Project, from casual workers up to management positions. The SRP recognizes that local hiring, especially women, marginalized and vulnerable community members, is a major benefit to the implementation and operation of the Project due to the knowledge and familiarity local people possess of the landscape, its communities and its biodiversity. Their involvement will also ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Project throughout the Project's Lifetime and beyond.

Currently, 60 local forest protection personnel have been trained through ranger trainings. Rangers were trained in groups of 5-6 people for 2-3 months after being hired, and their training activities included map reading, GPS, court documentation, and how to conduct patrols.

The SRP also has 4 full-time local employees currently working in Battambang. All have received first aid training.

The Samkos livelihoods team will provide training in animal husbandry as part of the conservation agriculture project activities.

2.2.7 Equal Work Opportunities

The SRP has developed an Equal Opportunity Policy. Based on this policy future SRP job positions will be openly advertised through the Project Office within the Project Zone. The Project has the responsibility for the fair treatment of all, representation for all Project Zone groups, and encouraging diversity within project staff and management. SRP policy stresses equal opportunity for all groups, including members of ethnic minorities, various socio-economic groups, gender and sexual orientations, for all employment positions and for inclusion in REDD+ program activities. The selection of potential employees is held on a democratic and neutral basis, providing equal opportunity to all applicants. The SRP operates a strict non-discrimination policy such that women and vulnerable groups of people will receive equal chances regardless of the type of work.

Job applicants are selected for an interview based on their skills and experience required for the advertised positions. The Project Office will be closely involved during the selection process in

conjunction with a committee from the Project Office and the Head of the relevant department for which the vacancy is advertised. Employment vacancies are publicly advertised through the same channels that other project news is publicized, such as through posters at villages and sign boards. Successful candidates are selected in a democratic, non-discriminatory manner in accordance with the Project's equal opportunity policy. Preference is given to applicants who live in the local communities in the case where two applicants show the same capacity for a given position whereas one is local and the other one not. Unsuccessful candidates are provided with an explanation for why they were not selected in order to assist them to improve if there is another vacancy in the future.

All capacity building activities in the local communities in the Project Zone will be open to all villagers, including women and vulnerable populations. As such, it is important that their capacity and skills are strengthened equally as the men. An assessment of the needs for capacity building with the forestry community members and other stakeholders in the project zone will be conducted with their participation and consultation to identify their priorities and needs.

The SRP will enact a policy on staff turnover where employee contracts will ask them to inform the Project at least two months before their resignation from their position. Announcement of recruitment for new staff will then be made at least two months before their final work date. This will allow them to have sufficient time for training and on the work and activities of the position, and to learn any lessons learned related to the position and the SRP. A training session will be conducted with the participation of the new staff member, to introduce the Project, and the officers responsible for each project components will present the work and activities that they are responsible for.

A project management structure has been developed with clear lines of communication between project staff to ensure direct communication and solidarity. New staff will be informed of this structure so that they will have good communication for which to ask for information, knowledge and experience of the project staff to improve their performance.

2.2.8 Workers' Rights

The SRP abides by all relevant Cambodian workers' rights, laws and regulations. The Project ensures that any project employment is in conformance of the Core Labour Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The following conventions of the ILO have been ratified by the Government of Cambodia and are judged to be "In Force" in Cambodia by the ILO:

- C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)

The SRP works to exceed all local labor requirements, and ensure that the project employees have a safe, equitable and fair work environment. The law governing employment in Cambodia is the Labor

Law, first passed in 1997, and amended 2007. This law provides regulations on the relationship between employees and employers, and the socio-legal rights and obligations resulting from a labor relationship. All people engaged in work in Cambodia, including Cambodian citizens and foreign nationals, are subject to the regulations of the Labor Law (Peng et al., 2012).

In addition to the Labor Law Cambodia there are several international legal standards that cover labor rights in Cambodia, this includes 13 International Labor Organization conventions that Cambodia has ratified (Peng et al. 2012). Also, there are many government labor regulations, including royal decrees, sub-decrees, prakas, decisions, circulars, and notices that have been issued by the Royal Government of Cambodia, and particularly by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. The Project Proponent and Project partner WA will ensure that any relevant international convention or government regulation is fully followed.

All employees of the Project will be informed about their rights at the point of their employment during employee orientation. Additionally, a hard copy of the relevant laws will be kept at the Project Office and any worker is free to consult these any time during working hours. An employee manual is provided to all employees that details their rights, the Project's equal opportunity policy and the project grievance policy through which all employees have a recourse mechanism.

2.2.9 Occupational Safety Assessment

The SRP abides by all relevant Cambodian workers' rights, laws and regulations. Workers will be informed about their rights at the point of their employment during employee orientation. Additionally, as described in the Health and Safety plan, during the employee orientation workers will be informed about the potential safety risks of their job and of methods to mitigate the risks. A hard copy of the relevant laws will be kept at the Project Office and any worker is free to consult these any time during working hours.

The SRP ensures that workers' health and safety are protected to the best of the Project's ability always and across all sites. Risks are identified, mitigation strategies produced, and appropriate measures adopted to minimize any risks.

Given the nature of the Project and its geographical surroundings, it is recognized that certain occupations inherently present a risk to the health and safety of workers, in particular occupations that require spending long periods walking in difficult environments. These include, though not exclusively, plot samplers and forest protection rangers, who are faced with challenging terrain as well as the risk of encountering illegal logger, illegal forest land clearer, and wildlife hunter. In addition, forest fires may also pose a safety risk if they spread rapidly and unexpectedly. The Project has created a comprehensive Health and Safety Plan that ensures that all workers' health and safety is protected, and that all workers are fully informed about workplace risks and safe practices to mitigate those risks. These include training in safe working practices, first aid training for some staff members as well as the enforcement of requirements for safe handling of equipment and other materials. This Health and Safety Plan additionally provides a comprehensive list of the measures that will be taken to inform employees of their rights, to assign roles and responsibilities to supervisors and workers and provide a safe workplace culture. This document will be revisited regularly and revised as needed to ensure that it contains current information and includes all job categories and potential risks. A copy of the plan has been provided to the verifier and will be kept at the Project Office and be readily available for any consultation. In addition, SRP will set up a Health and Safety Fund, which will be sourced through a contribution from the sale of SRP credits. The fund will be used to compensate project workers for an accident during their working hours/work mission. The SRP will ensure a detailed orientation of newly

recruited employees so that they are fully aware of their rights as well as responsibilities. All law enforcement rangers and full-time WA project staff will be provided with full health and life insurance.

2.2.10 Feedback and Grievance Redress Procedure

The SRP strives to minimize the possibility of conflicts and grievances by maintaining close linkages with the local communities and stakeholders throughout the Project Zone. The Project additionally has an open-door policy, and will encourage community members, stakeholders and employees to visit the new Project Office, in Battambang town and Project Sub-office in Samlout District, and discuss any issues or feedback directly with project staff. The Wildlife Alliance Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/WildlifeAllianceREDD/>) allows comments and feedback which will be followed up upon by project staff. Facebook is an important social media platform across Cambodia and used by many rural and forest communities as the main source of information and news. A project phone number has will also be disseminated to communities.

If conflicts or grievances arise, the SRP has a feedback and grievance redress policy and process, the purpose of which is to provide an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism for resolving complaints and conflicts, and ensure that the process is transparent and comprehensive. The SRP feedback and grievance redress process has been publicized to communities and a copy provided to the project validator.

The full grievance policy has been submitted to the validator and is available to anyone upon request. In summary, community members and project stakeholders are encouraged to submit grievances, comments or feedback to the Project Office through several channels, with all communication methods receiving the same level of response. The primary method for communication will be through the Project Office or Sub-office, and government ranger stations located throughout the Project Area.

Two types of issues accounted for in the grievance process include:

- Issues or conflict between the community or other project stakeholder and MoE, and
- Concerns regarding project employee rights, work practices, and employee safety raised by MOE or WA employees or contractors.

This procedure applies to the MOE/WA and activities under the SRP. If a Project Stakeholder(s) has a complaint or grievance, the first step should be taken up with a commune chief. The complainant could communicate this verbally or in writing to their nearest government ranger station of Project sub-office. In addition, the MOE/WA has published an email address, phone number, and Facebook page that Project stakeholders can use to make comments or voice grievances.

This grievance policy is outlined in the document “Samkus REDD+ Project Grievance Redress Mechanism.” This grievance process was described in general at community meetings, and the document has been provided to the local government offices in the Project Zone. In addition, a summary of the grievance policy was translated to Khmer and posted on the Project information boards located at commune halls across the Project Zone.

In summary, once the commune chief has received a grievance, through any of the described channels, they are required to respond to the aggrieved person(s) within 7 working days. The commune will maintain full records of all grievances received, communications made between the commune chief and the aggrieved person(s), and the agreed resolutions. If the commune chief and the aggrieved person(s) cannot resolve the grievance to a mutually satisfactory manner, the aggrieved person(s) may raise complaints and grievances to the Provincial Project Committee (PPC) or its

members either verbally or in writing (using Complaints and Grievances Form provided). At his level, the MOE/WA Project Management Unit (PMU) is obliged to (1) record every complaint and keep track of the status, and (2) keep complaints and grievances confidential unless otherwise directed by the aggrieved person (s). If there is reason to believe that the PPC will not provide an objective review of the concern, the matter may be taken up directly to PBC further review and decision-making. The PPC has to respond complaint within 7 working days since the date of the complaint has been submitted.

The PMU will maintain a record book of all grievances received and their resolutions, which can be viewed upon request from project stakeholders or auditors. The PMU will update and present the record of recorded cases to the PBC during the annual PBC meeting.

2.2.11 Feedback and Grievance Redress Procedure Accessibility

Please see 2.2.10 directly above for an explanation of how accessibility of the feedback and grievance redress procedure is publicized and made publicly available.

2.2.12 Stakeholder Access to Project Documentation

- The Project Office and Project Sub-Office maintains a full printed version of the PD in English for public viewing.
- The executive summary has been translated into Khmer is posted in public places in communities throughout the Project Zone.
- The full PD version and the executive summary of the PD in English and Khmer version are made available on the project webpage ([http:// www.wildlifealliance.org/](http://www.wildlifealliance.org/)) and official Wildlife Alliance Facebook page.
- The executive summary has been translated into Khmer and is posted in public places in communities throughout the Project Zone.
- In addition to the executive summary, a poster/flyer in Khmer advertising the Project, and providing a contact email address was posted in communities.

2.2.13 Information to Stakeholders on Assessment Process

The project partner WA has actively communicated to community members and stakeholders about the start of the Public Comment Period and the methods with which they can submit comments on the Project as well as how to view full project documentation. This was accomplished by communicating the Project Public Comment Period and Validation and verification field visit dates to previously identified stakeholders, community leaders, leaders of the faith communities and public officials. They were then requested to pass that information onto their communities.

The Project partner WA will arrange for community meetings with all stakeholders during the validation and verification site visit. During these meetings the auditor will be able to independently ask questions of all stakeholders regarding FPIC and SIA consultations. For VCS/CCB and SD VISta validation, a poster/notice in Khmer advertising the public comment period, and the validation field visit was posted in communities throughout the Project Zone. It included details on how a comment to the CCB can be made.

2.3 Project Management

2.3.1 Avoidance of Corruption

WA maintains an anti-corruption and anti-bribery policy that is updated as required but at a minimum reviewed annually. Each year, senior staff are reminded of the policy during management training and asked to reaffirm their commitment to this policy. WA requires all project stakeholders to adhere these policies as well, both contractually where appropriate and where possible. Staff and stakeholders must also adhere to these policies operationally; for example, hiring practices reflect these policies by requiring job descriptions with minimum qualifications to be posted prior to hiring. In addition, all WA companies go through a third-party financial audit annually once projects begin to sell carbon credits. During Verification, auditors can review WAs ABC policies and operational practices.

2.3.2 Statutory and Customary Rights

Within the Project Zone there are several land use and tenure systems, which are recognized in both customary and statutory rights regimes. Below is an overview of statutory property rights in Cambodia.

The Land Law of 2002 classifies the various types of property and ownership rights in Cambodia: (i) State Public Property, (ii) State Private Property, and (ii) Private property:

1. **State Public Property:** According to the Articles 15 & 16 of this law, State Public Property is land held by the State which carries a public interest use. State Public Property includes properties of a natural origin, such as the Permanent Forest Reserve. State Public Property cannot be sold or transferred to other legal entities, although it may be subject to rights of occupancy or use that are temporary in nature (such as a logging concession in the Permanent Forest Reserve).
2. **State Private Property:** Under Article 17, State Private Property is land that is owned by the State or public entities that do not have a public interest use (i.e., owned by the state or public entity but does not fit the definition of State Public Property as mentioned above). In addition, State Private Property can be described as excess or idle land that is held by the State or public entities. State Private Property may be sold or transferred to other legal entities, such as use for social or economic land concessions.
3. **Private Property:** Private property is property owned by natural persons or legal entities other than the State or public entities. Private property can be owned by individuals, collectives or business organizations/associations.

The Project Zone is composed of the three property types listed above. The entirety of the Project Area is State Public Property comprised of protected areas managed by the Ministry of the Environment. Parts of the Project Zone outside the Project Area are both state private and private property. The state private property in the Project Zone includes social and economic land concessions. Private Property in the Project Zone comprises land legally allocated to community members (some of which has been sold to land speculators and outsiders).

2.3.3 Recognition of Property Rights

The RGC owns the land inside the Project Accounting Area. Outside the Project Accounting area, the district and provincial governments in Pursat are reviewing land titles of villagers. WA has requested that the Pursat provincial government create a task force to title the lands of families living in the Project Zone. The Battambang government has agreed to create such a task force to look at the families that still do not have land titles and live within the Project Zone. As such, the project works with communities to clarify property zones and demarcate boundaries between separate property types. This is an important Project activity that avoid land tenure conflicts.

2.3.4 Free, Prior and Informed Consent

A list of FPIC meetings to date is provided in **Table 2**, section 2.2.3.

2.3.5 Restitution and/or Compensation for Affected Resources

Three main community groups are predicted to suffer potential costs from implementation of project activities. The SRP will mitigate for these negative impacts as follows:

- **Poachers and illegal loggers:** although these are illegal activities for the large part, those genuinely undertaking them for basic livelihood support will be offered or considered for direct employment when job opportunities arise e.g., as eco-guards. Nonetheless, they will also enjoy the other general community benefits like access to community educational grants schemes, improved health access and agricultural training to help move them away from illegal activities.
- **Traders, middlemen and employers:** while this group might see diminished profits in the short term, we believe they will enjoy greater stability in the long-term from conducting legitimate business, reduced run-ins with the law, employees and community, and overall greater social capital and license to operate in the area.
- **In-migrants:** similar to the traders above, this group might suffer some costs in the short term through increased scrutiny and fewer chances for accessing 'free' land and jobs, but will also gain from greater stability by being recognized and accepted as legitimate members in the community once they come in through legal avenues.

2.3.6 Property Rights Removal/Relocation of Property Rights Holders

The Project does not require involuntary removal or relocation of communities or any legal activities important for their livelihood and culture.

2.3.7 Identification of Illegal Activities

We have identified illegal logging as a major threat to the project's forested area. We have built new ranger stations where the biggest threats are and have employed 60 rangers to reduce illegal logging. As part of this effort, rangers confiscate chainsaws and other logging equipment being used illegally within the Project Area.

2.3.8 Ongoing Conflicts or Disputes

There are some minor conflicts or disputes in the SRP Project Zone between the communities. Some communities have had minor conflicts or disputes over the land, territory or resources in the Project Zone during the last 20 years, all based on uncertain land tenure rights. Additionally, illegal land clearing and intrusion by outsiders has, and continues to, occur causing some levels of conflicts between specific local individuals and MOE.

The Project has committed to working with these communities to identify the boundaries of their lands, and to assist them in acquiring official tenure to them. WA has requested that the Pursat provincial government create a task force to title the lands of families living in the Project Zone. The Battambang government has agreed to create such a task force to look at the families that still do not have land titles and live within the Project Zone. These activities are designed to enable communities to gain the evidence needed to prove ownership of their lands and gain tenure, therefore there is no potential for the project to prejudice any decision or outcome of a dispute through its activities. As the determination

of land tenure and resolution of any disputes over tenure is made by the relevant RGC land registry ministry in accordance with national and local laws.

2.3.9 National and Local Laws and Regulations

The SRP complies with all relevant local, regional and national laws, statutes and regulatory frameworks including the following:

Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management (1996)

The Objective of this law is to protect and upgrade the environment quality and public health by means of prevention, reduction and control of pollution; to assess the environmental impacts of all proposed projects prior to the issuance of decision by the Royal Government; to ensure the rational and sustainable preservation, development, management and the use of the natural resources of the Kingdom of Cambodia; to encourage and provide possibility to public to participate in the protection of environment and the management of the natural resources.

The mechanism for implementing this law is through the National Environmental Plan.

The Land Law (2002)

The Land Law classifies the different types of property and ownership rights in Cambodia: (1) State Public Property, (2) State Private Property, and (3) Private property:

State Public Property: According to the Articles 15 & 16 of this law, State Public Property is land held by the State which carries a public interest use. State Public Property includes properties of a natural origin, such as the Permanent Forest Reserve. State Public Property cannot be sold or transferred to other legal entities, although it may be subject to rights of occupancy or use that are temporary in nature (such as a logging concession in the Permanent Forest Reserve).

State Private Property: Under Article 17, state private property is land that is owned by the state or public entities that do not have a public interest use (i.e., owned by the state or public entity, but does not fit the definition of State Public Property as mentioned above). In addition, State Private Property can be described as excess or idle land that is held by the State or public entities. State private property may be sold or transferred to other legal entities, such as use for social or economic land concessions.

Private Property: Private property is property owned by natural persons or legal entities other than the state or public entities. Private property can be owned by individuals, collectives, or business organizations/associations.

The Forestry Law (2002)

The Forestry Law is an important sector-specific law that defines the management framework for harvesting, use, development, conservation, and protection of forests in Cambodia. It aims to ensure sustainable forest management and customary user rights of forest resources for indigenous and local communities. Reaffirming the Constitution, the Forestry Law provides that all forests (referred to as the Permanent Forest Estate), belong to the State, noting that there is currently a lack of proper demarcation of Cambodia's forest estate. The Permanent Forest Estate is divided as follows:

Permanent Forest Reserves are State Public Property and fall under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Administration (FA) which is housed the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). According to the Forestry Law, the Permanent Forest Estate is defined as all forested land within the Kingdom of Cambodia. Generally, all categories of forests fall within the definition of the Permanent Forest Reserves - including forests that occur on private lands, flooded forests, wetland forests and mangrove forests. However, while all these forests are under the jurisdiction of the FA, wetland, and mangrove forests outside the Protected Areas (PA) are under the jurisdiction of the Fisheries Administration (FA) of MAFF. Permanent Forest Reserves consist of three sub-categories:

- Production Forests
- Protection Forests
- Conversion Forests

Production Forests are forests that are managed primarily for the sustainable production of timber and non-timber forest products. In these forests, protection is a secondary objective. The Production Forests include Forest Concessions and Community Forests. Areas under Production Forests include those forests where harvesting is permitted (e.g., annual bidding coupes for domestic wood supply), degraded forests, forests to be rehabilitated, and forests reserved for regeneration or plantation. The government may grant an area of production forest, not under use, to a forest concession through public bidding consistent with the National Forest Management Plan and after consultation with concerned ministries, local authorities, and communities. However, from January 2002, the RGC issued a Declaration on the Suspension of Forest Concession Logging in the country. Community forests are forests owned by the state that have been allocated to communities under a 15-year renewable agreement. The primary goal of community forests is to protect and rehabilitate forests and to enhance the sustainable use of forest resources by local communities.

Private Forests are those that are individually owned, and these forests are managed by the owners for a range of benefits. The owners have the free will to utilize these forests the way they deem fit and in addition, forest carbon in private forests belongs to the owners. Land within the Permanent Forest Estate can also be zoned as a Protected Area. Protected Areas fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment (MOE); applicable law includes the Protected Area Act 2008 and the Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management Law 1996.

Protected Area Law (2008)

Provides the Cambodian Ministry of Environment the authority to manage all protected areas in Cambodia. It lists the type of protected areas under MOE's purview as:

- National park
- Wildlife sanctuary
- Protected landscape
- Multiple use area
- Ramsar site
- Biosphere reserve

- Natural heritage site
- Marine park

It also states that protected areas shall be defined by a sub-decree, the process by which protected areas can be created or altered. This law also defines which activities are permitted in the various zones of the Protected Area:

- Core Zone
- Conservation Zone
- Sustainable Use Zone
- Community Zone

The entirety of the Project Area will be within Core and Conservation Zones under this law.

The Cambodian Community Forestry Sub-Decree (2003)

The National Forestry Program aims to register 1000 community forestry groups nationally and cover two million hectares by 2030. To achieve this target the government adopted various guidelines and policies to support the development of community forests such as the community forestry sub-decree, community forestry guideline, and national community forestry program.

Declaration on Classification and List of Wildlife Species NO: 020 PR. MAFF (2007)

This declaration lists and classifies all wild species in Cambodia. The decree groups species into three main categories, endangered, rare, and common. The decree also declares that all wild species are technically owned by the State and are protected under this provision.

Code of Criminal Procedure adopted by COM

The purpose of the criminal code is to define the rule of law in Cambodia. It distinguishes what is a criminal and civil action and set the rule of law in Cambodia. The Project Proponent uses it to enforce protection of forests in the SCRCP.

The Project developers declares that all the laws, rules, royal degree, and sub decrees stated in this document apply to the whole geographic region of SRP.

It is important to note that in 2002, the Cambodian Ministry of Environment (MOE) and Wildlife Alliance created The Cardamom Forest Protection Program. The program has been in operation in the southern cardamoms (Southern Cardamom National Park, Tatai Wildlife Sanctuary, Botum Sakor National Park) since 2002. In 2019, WA was granted permission to expand the program into the northern Cardamoms (Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary and Cardamom Biodiversity Corridor) and 50% of the Central Cardamom National Park.

2.3.10 Project Ownership

The SRP accounting area (PAA), which will generate credits at the project start date, is state owned land, under the mandate of the Ministry of Environment (MOE) in accordance with the Protected Area Law of 2008. It is comprised of three official protected areas: Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary,

Phnom Kravanh Biodiversity Conservation Corridor, and Southern Phnom Kravanh National Park
(Pursat jurisdiction).

2.3.11 Grouped Projects

The SRP is not a grouped project.

3 BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE AND PROSPERITY

3.1 Condition of Stakeholders at Project Start

There are 26 villages and 11 sub-villages included in the SRP. The Project Zone includes **total population** and **target population**. Whereas the total population includes all villagers living in the Project Zone, the target population includes only villagers (families) that have been identified by a nationwide program called Poor Households Program (ID Poor) implemented by the Cambodian Ministry of Planning. ID Poor serves as an official Government social registry of poor and vulnerable households. The Project aims to provide direct livelihood assistance to all villagers with an ID Poor card. The **total population** of the Project Zone is estimated to be 67,106 villagers (16,016 families). The target population is estimated to be 13,261 villagers (3,041 ID Poor families).

The words village and sub-village are given distinct meanings in this project document. A village is an official administrative community: a community of villagers administered by a single official village chief. A sub-village is a settlement that can be located several kilometers from the official village. Many sub-villages are created by a natural increase in population and/or the influx of new migrants, including relatives of villagers, and cannot offer services such as health and education to the settlers because of the distance to the main village. Additionally, sub-villages tend to be closer to core conservation zones, which can lead to increased deforestation and wildlife poaching.

Historic conditions: At the end of 1998, the year of reintegration and full peace across the Kingdom, the northwestern region of Cambodia became one of the last forest frontiers of the country. In a region that was known as the Khmer Rouge stronghold, the opening of tropical forest lands in Battambang and Pursat initiated an intense competition for land, forests and soil to improve the living standards for all, especially the poor. Agricultural colonization was supported by a massive flow of in-migration of landless farmers/villagers from lowland regions across Cambodia. Analyzing forest land use cover changes across the landscape from 1998 to 2016, it is clear that the negative impacts on forest areas were growth in the region's population, expansion of villages/sub-villages and farmland to cultivate the following primary crops, maize, cassava, and fruit trees over a period of almost 20 years.

Landuse/Economic Activities: Almost 100% of Project Zone villagers depend on agriculture activities to support their families, especially in the wet season. When asked, villagers inside the Project Zone said that the current size of their farmland was insufficient for supporting their growing family sizes and needed to clear more land to meet basic needs. Climate change was another driver of deforestation. Many farmers complained that drought or dry spells and/or salinity continued to affect their crops in the Project Zone. Decreasing agricultural yields will only create food insecurities for vulnerable populations. If forests are available, families will clear them for their survival, which will cause more environmental destruction.

Based on the RGC's General Population Census of 2019, the average family size in Battambang province is 4.5, and 4.0 in Pursat. It is important to note that in the dry season, while some farmers from PSWS, SNCP and PKWS cross the border into Thailand for work, most villagers stay and harvest timber and/or other forest products from inside the protected areas to sell to external parties to support

their families. Income streams for most upland farmers come from fruit trees, corn, soya and mung beans, sesame and cassava. Fruit trees offer a main source of income for many upland farmers.

Socio-cultural information: Most villagers living in the Project Zone are ethnic Khmers. It is important to note that the Project Zone has the original demobilized Khmer Rouge soldiers and their families living off the land. Apart from the demobilized Khmer Rouge soldiers and their families, PSWS Battambang, PSWS Pursat and SCNP Pursat have 8 indigenous peoples - the Por, the Chong, the Phunong, the Kreung, the Jarai, the Tumpoun, the Kouy, and the Kachak. While the Phunong, the Kachak, the Kreung, the Jarai, the Tumpoun and the Kouy moved into PSWS Battambang after the civil war in 1989, the Chong and the Por have been living in PSWS Pursat, PSWS Battambang and SCNP Pursat, or Phnom Kabal Kamouch (Skull Mountain) as the Chong call it, since before French colonial rule in the 1800s. The Por people of Battambang are the least integrated, meaning that most of the Por still practice their culture and traditions, and have a unique relationship with the forests and wildlife in the protected area. Please note that indigenous communities in Cambodia are called ethnic minorities, hill tribes, highlanders, highland people, indigenous people, and Khmer Leu. The Project will use the term indigenous peoples.

Landownership: PSWS Battambang- As of December 1, 2020, the Samlout district government received all official land requests by the villagers living inside PSWS Battambang. Based on the information provided by the PSWS Battambang park director, 3,487 plots of land were requested by 1,750 families in Ta Taok commune and 7,418 plots of land were requested by 3,677 families in Kampong Lpou commune. The Battambang departments of the environment, land management, and agriculture, assisted by the PSWS park director and Samlout district governor, will inspect the land requests to decide whether these lands are under the jurisdictions of the departments of the environment or forestry. Once categorized, the interdepartmental inspection team will decide if lands were recently cleared, and therefore not eligible for land titling. The provincial department of land management will submit the final requests for land allocations to the Battambang provincial government for approval in the coming months. It is important to note that Phnom Rey village, an ethnic minority village, has not registered any land title requests because of landmines in the village.

PSWS Pursat- As of December 1, 2020, villagers from all 5 communes in Veal Veng district submitted 82,000 hectares of land requests to the district government for review. It is important to note that in 2013, there were only 15,000 hectares of land requests for the entire province of Pursat. To manage these unusually high numbers, the district government created 3 working groups. One of the three working groups is specifically investigating all land requests and stopping any illegal land encroachment on site, if found.

As of January 1, 2021, the working groups had almost finished processing the land allocation requests in Pramaoy commune. Of the 22,000 requests, the district government removed 12,000 hectares. More requests will be denied once the working group investigates the two remaining villages in the commune. The working groups have also started to review land allocation requests from Anlong Reab commune, where 61,167 hectares land requests were submitted.

Migration: Most respondents in PSWS Battambang, PSWS Pursat and SCNP Pursat perceived in-migration flow (migrants), which include relatives, as a driver for deforestation (See **Error! Reference source not found.**). Some village chiefs said that the arrival of newcomers in their respective villages had increased by 30-50% over the last 5 to 10 years, especially in Steung Touch, Ou Treng, and Phnom Rey villages (PSWS Battambang). Migrants, especially those with no relatives in the villages and no available shelter to rent or buy, are pushed to enter core conservation zones to clear the land to build temporary or permanent shelters, sell the timber and gather fuelwood to cook their food. Because migrant workers also tend to be poor, they poach wildlife for food, including threatened and endangered species. Links between migration and clearing of forests have been reported in Samlout Protected Area

(Samlout Multiple Use Area), north of PSWS Battambang. PKWS respondents identify in-flow migration as a problem, but not to the same level as they witnessed in 1990s and mid 2000s.

Household Income: One of the major challenges for the sustainable development of the rural communities located inside the Project Zone, include rural poverty, which directly affects the lack of key quality social services in health and education, land tenure rights, and insufficient park protection resources.

Over the past decade, Cambodia has managed to successfully grow and sustain its economy with incredible strength and drastically reduce poverty. Cambodian and international records all show that incidence of poverty under the national poverty line fell from 47.8 per cent in 2007 to 13.5 per cent in 2014. In 2018, using data from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), only 12.9 per cent of Cambodians lived below the national poverty line. But most Cambodians who are not in extreme poverty are, by international standards, either moderately poor or economically vulnerable, with two-thirds of the population, mostly in rural communities, living under USD 5.50 a day (World Bank 2019). Based on figures from UNICEF, over 75% of Cambodians continue to live in rural areas, one of the highest amongst ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) member states.

Although malnutrition prevalence has declined over the past two decades, it must be noted that in 2018, about 33 per cent of Cambodian children under the age of five were stunted and 10% wasted (not weighing enough for their height), some of the highest rates in the region. In addition, Cambodia still has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the region (160 per 100,000 live births in 2018), which points to problems in quality and access to healthcare.

The Project identified many households in the Project Zone as ‘food insecure’ for at least 3 months a year, which means that rural household diets lack in the quantity and quality of food needed for the maintenance of adequate nutritional status and prevention of disease. In one village in SRP Pursat, 85% of children under 5 were diagnosed as ‘malnourished’ by a study conducted in September/October 2020. Women’s understanding of the relationship between feeding practices, food intake and health was very limited.

To assist the Government in addressing the needs of rural Cambodians, the NGO community has been very active in delivering poverty alleviation activities. NGOs, however, have never been given guidelines on how to operate inside Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary. From the focus group discussions with NGOs, employees working for at least seven international NGOs have spent decades executing health, agricultural and education interventions inside the Project Zone without understanding the meaning of a protected area. These NGOs could have helped raise awareness and created a conservation movement. Moreover, some NGOs funded small farmers to create or maintain agriculture practices that did not support biodiversity protection or conservation agriculture. To add to the situation, park officials in both sanctuaries had never been invited to review the design of these agriculture projects to reduce the ecological impacts. Constructive dialogue between the local park officials, the NGO and the farmers at a deep technical level could have been very useful in creating alternative and more nature-friendly practices and techniques.

Table 3. SRP Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder Categories	Condition at Project Start
Local communities, including youth and women	High rates of poverty and malnourishment; lack options for livelihoods; lose access to forest due to outsiders’ illegal activity, low education rates

Government and local authorities	Losing ownership and control of land to people illegally encroaching/land-grabbing and illegally extracting resources
Workers/job-seekers	Lack options for livelihoods
Borrowers and debtors	Lack income-earning opportunities and are subject to interest on loans
People who exploit the forest illegally: loggers, poachers, timber traders and wildlife traders	Depend on extractive forest resources for their livelihoods
Land speculators and encroachers	Clear land for themselves or others
Microfinanciers and money lenders/creditors	Profit from loans and interest rates

In our social impact assessment workshop, participants developed problem flow diagrams based on the focal issues.

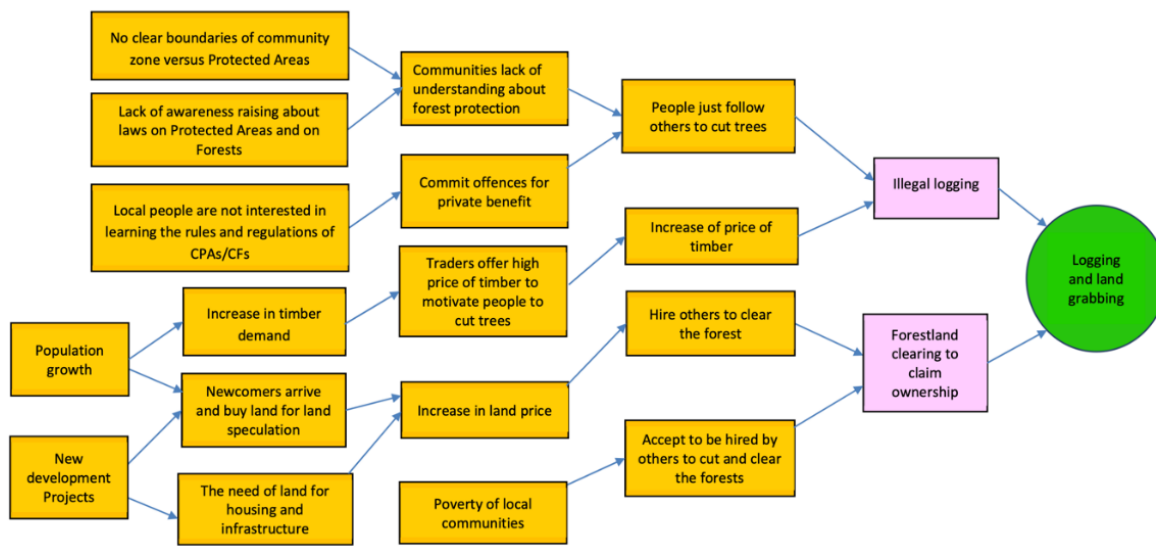


Figure 2. Problem flow diagram for the focal issue of logging and land grabbing

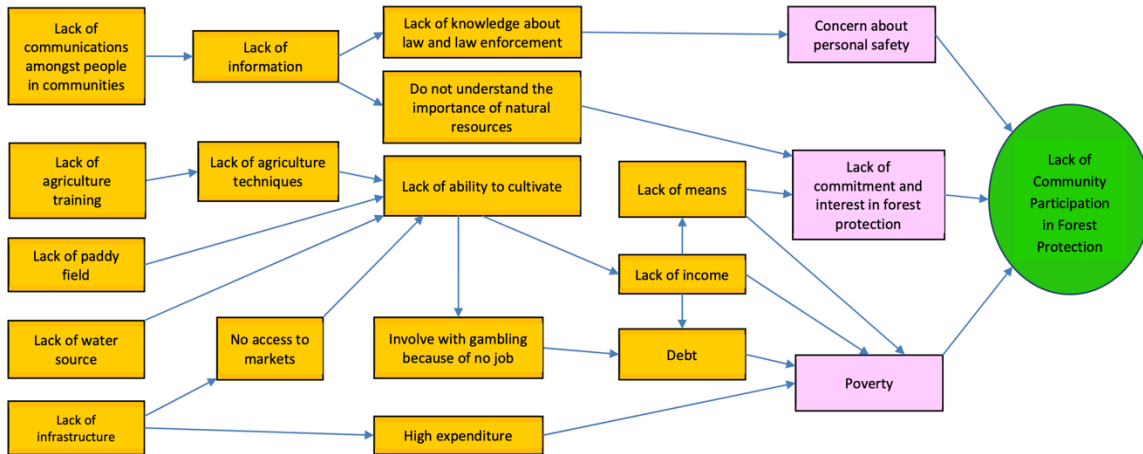


Figure 3. Problem flow diagram for lack of community participation in forest protection.

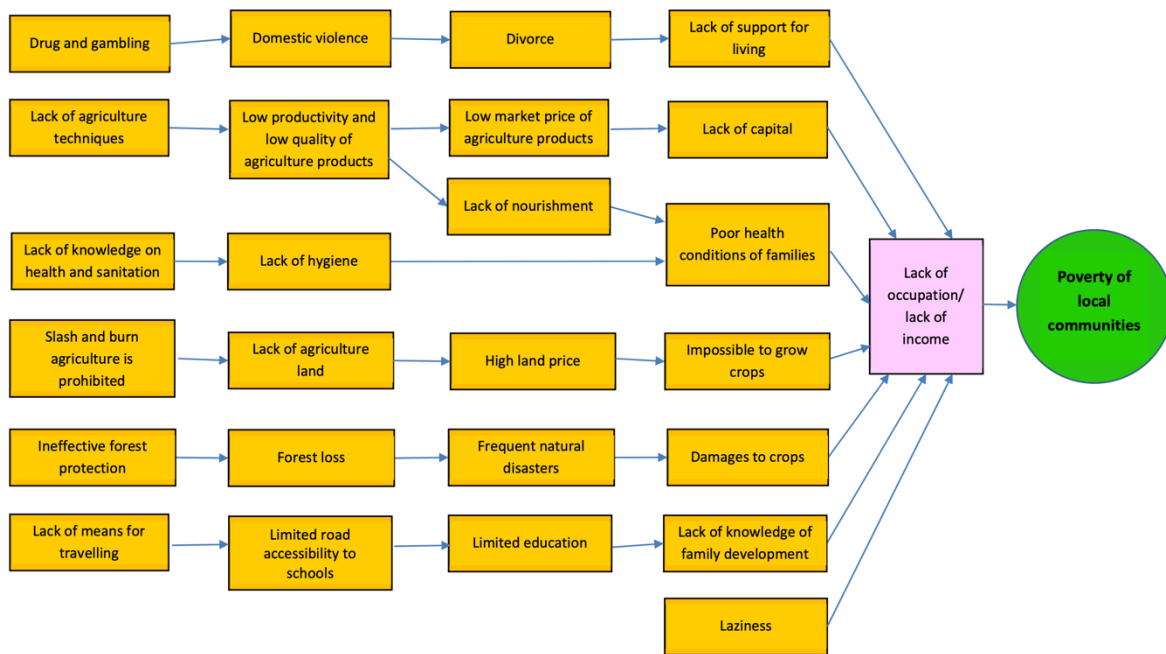


Figure 4. Problem flow diagram for poverty of local communities.

3.2 Expected Impacts on Stakeholders

Impact #1	The SRP provide support for employment and livelihoods to the neediest community members.
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Type of Impact	Positive, predicted direct impact
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Local communities; job-seekers
Resulting Change in Well-being	Increased employment, decreased poverty

Impact #2	The project will decrease food insecurity for rural households throughout the project zone.
Type of Impact	Positive, predicted direct impact
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Local communities; youth and women
Resulting Change in Well-being	Decreased food insecurity

Impact #3	The project will decrease the number of children who are malnourished
Type of Impact	Positive, predicted direct impact
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Local communities; youth and women
Resulting Change in Well-being	Decreased malnutrition

Impact #4	The project will increase the proportion of the rural population who have access to drinking water.
Type of Impact	Positive, predicted direct impact

Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Local communities; youth and women
Resulting Change in Well-being	Increased access to water, increased health and irrigation of crops
Impact #5	The Project will provide employment and livelihood support, including employing local Cambodian rangers/forest personnel to protect Phnom Samkus Wildlife Sanctuary
Type of Impact	Positive, predicted direct impact
Affected Stakeholder Group(s)	Local communities; job-seekers
Resulting Change in Well-being	Increased household income

3.3 Stakeholder Monitoring Plan

The stakeholder monitoring plan focuses on the three focal issues identified in the Social Impact Assessment workshop held in November 2022 in Phnom Penh.

Key results	SMART Objective	Code	Indicator	Indicator type	Data collection method	Who collects data	When	Where
Focal issue 1: Logging and land grabbing								
Decrease in illegal logging	By 2027, reduce the number of illegal logging incidents by half in the SRP	SIA001	# of land use planning meetings held with participation and support from local authorities	Output	Internal report	Samkos livelihood team	Bi-annually	PZ
		SIA002	# participants in land use planning meetings	Output	Internal report	Samkos livelihood team	Bi-annually	PZ
		SIA003	Volume of timber and logs confiscated by SRP patrol rangers	Outcome	Internal report	Samkos conservation law enforcement team	Quarterly	PAA
		SIA004	# of chainsaws confiscated from loggers	Outcome	Internal report	Samkos conservation law enforcement team	Quarterly	PAA
Decrease in encroachment and land-grabbing	By 2025, have signboards in the REDD+ Project Zone zoned and	SIA005	# of demarcation posts installed zoning forest and community areas	Outcome	Internal report	Samkos conservation and livelihood teams	Annually	PZ

	demarcated							
		SIA006	# of forest fires in the SRP extinguished by SRP rangers	Outcome	Internal report	Samkos conservation law enforcement team	Quarterly	PAA
		SIA007	# of illegal fences and signs removed by SRP rangers	Outcome	Internal report	Samkos conservation law enforcement team	Annually	PAA
		SIA008	# of land encroachment cases stopped	Outcome	Internal report	SCLET	Annually	PAA

Focal issue 2: Lack of community participation in forest protection

Greater appreciation and awareness of wildlife benefits	By 2022, 25% more community members demonstrate greater appreciation for wildlife and conservation	SIA009	# of awareness and sensitization meetings	Output	Internal report	Samkos livelihood team	Bi-annually	PZ
		SIA010	# of community members attending awareness and sensitization meetings	Output	Internal report	Samkos livelihood team	Bi-annually	PZ

Increase in wildlife populations including HCVs		SIA0 11	# households with greater awareness about importance or conservation	Outcome	Household survey	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ
	By 2027, reduce the number of wildlife poaching incidents by half in the SCRPP	SIA0 12	# and type of equipment provided, including ranger outposts	Output	Internal report	Samkos conservation management team	Annually	PAA
		SIA0 13	# of illegal flyhuts (tarp-based shelters for poaching) in the project area and removed by SRP rangers	Outcome	Internal report	Samkos conservation law enforcement team	Annually	PAA
Focal issue 3: Poverty of local communities								
Reduce food insecurity and malnutrition	By 2028, families in PZ should have food security for 12 months of the year	SIA0 14	% of families who are food insecure for ≥ 3 months of the year	Output	Health centers	SLT	Annually	PZ
		SIA0 15	# of families who have	Output	Household survey	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ

Reduction in poverty			received chickens					
		SIA016	# of families who have received frogs	Output	Household survey	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ
		SIA017	# of children under 5 who are malnourished	Outcome	Health center	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ
		SIA018	By 2033, reduce the percentage of ID Poor families in the project zone by half	Outcome	Local authorities	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ
Higher income levels		SIA019	By 2027, 10% of community members earning income directly from the SRP and associated activities	Output	Household survey/Internal report	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ
		SIA020	# water wells built	Output	Engineering company	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ
		SIA021	# of villages with water wells implemented	Output	Engineering company	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ

		SIA0 22	# water well managemen t committees	Outp ut	Househol d survey/ Internal report	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ
		SIA0 23	% increase in yields and sales in local and external markets	Impa ct	Househol d survey/ Internal report	Samkos livelihood team	Annually	PZ

3.4 Net Positive Stakeholder Well-being Impacts

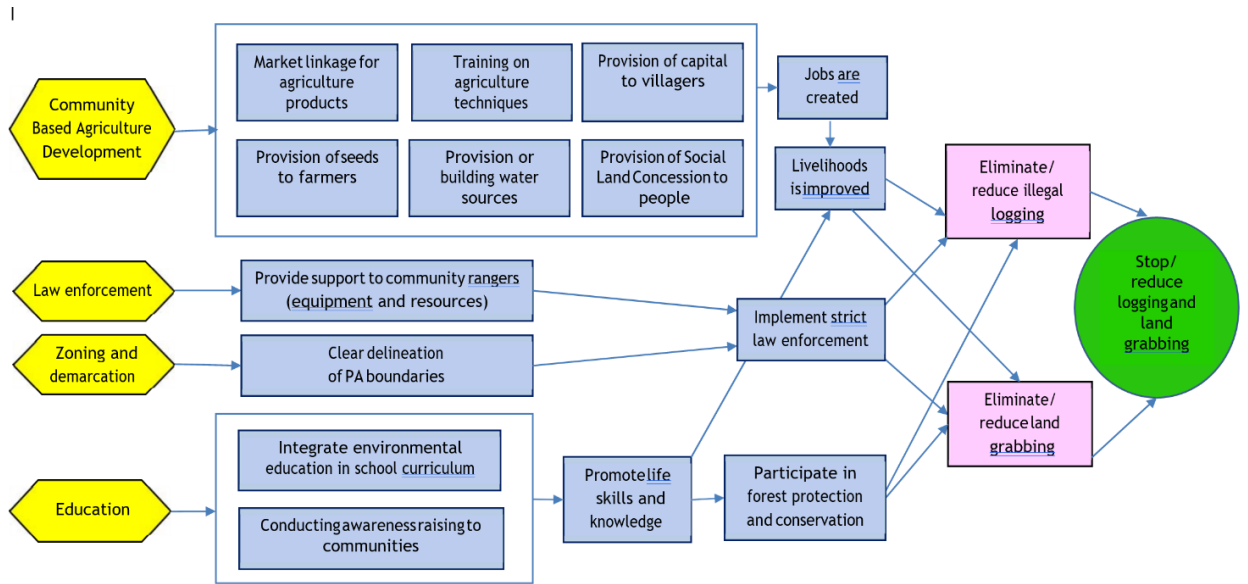
The anticipated net impacts of the project activities are positive, though the impacts will vary by stakeholder group.

Results chain diagrams from the SIA workshop show an improvement in conditions due to project activities and structures implemented by the communities. The stakeholder groups who stand to benefit most directly from project activities are those who are adversely affected by the status quo, which includes communities in general, including present and future generations; government and local authorities; youth and women; workers/ job-seekers; and borrowers and debtors. In the short-term, there are expected to be negative impacts such as profit loss for stakeholders currently benefiting from the status quo, including loggers, poachers, timber traders, wildlife traders, land speculators, non-timber forest product collectors, and microfinanciers and money lenders/creditors. However, the net impact is expected to be positive, as the continuing existence of the forest provides critical ecosystem services (watershed regulation), and having increased incomes and employment opportunities from project activities allows everyone to prosper.

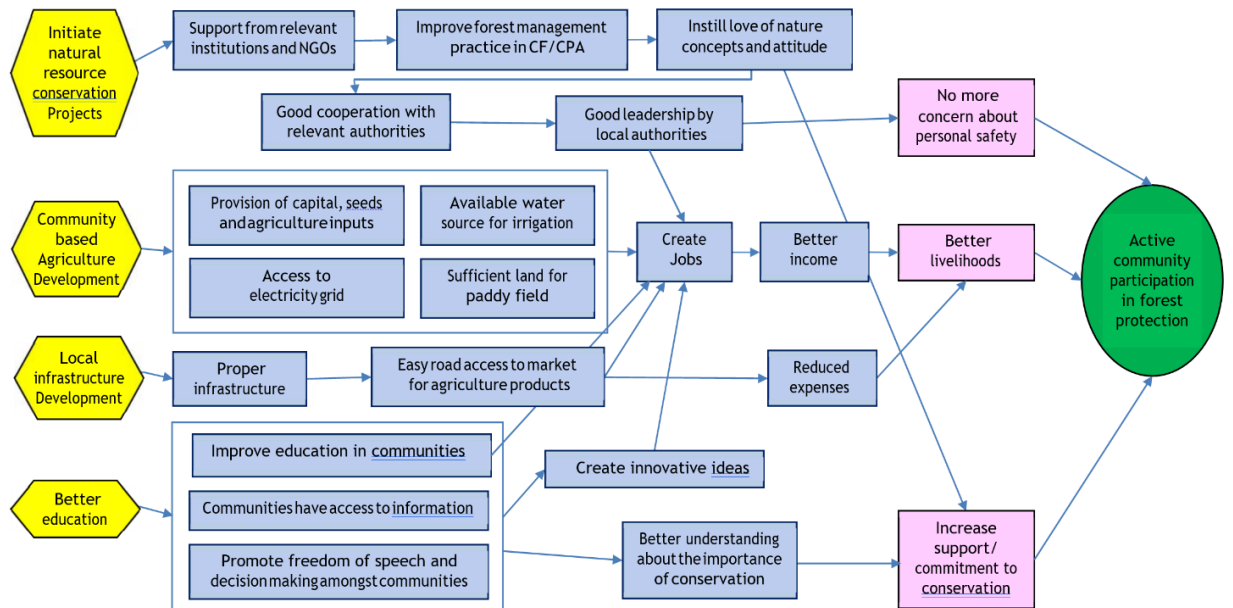
Additionally, the reduction in deforestation maintains cultural values for at least some project zone inhabitants such as the Por.

Results chain diagrams for each focal issue are shown below.

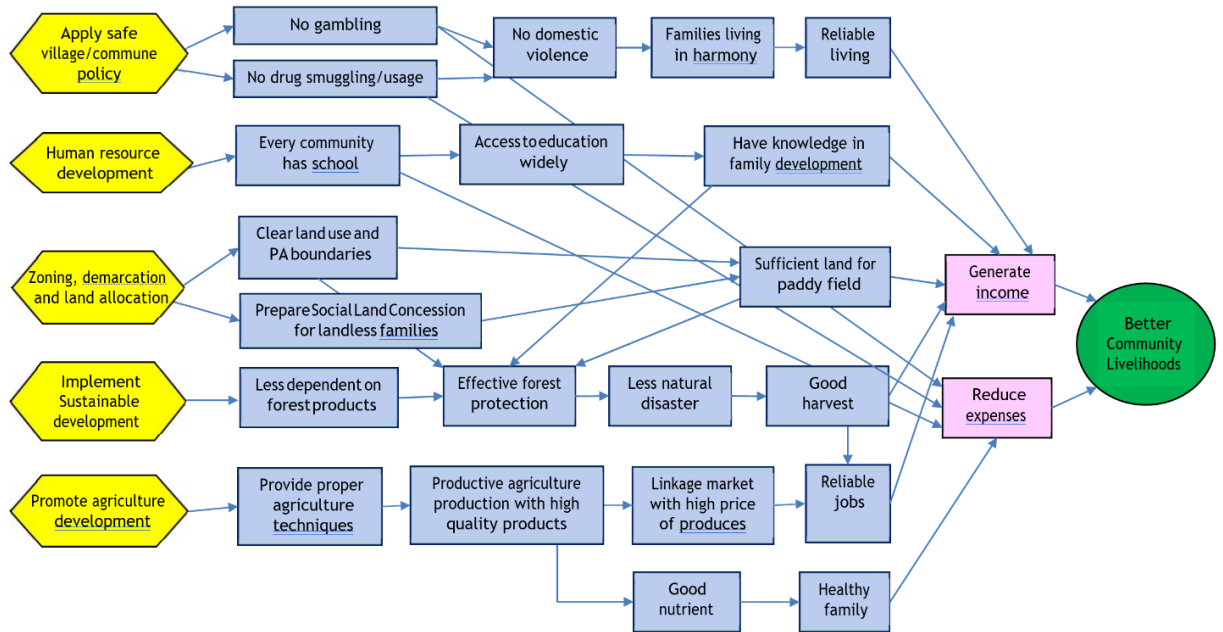
Focal issue 1: logging and land grabbing



Focal issue 2: Lack of Community Participation in Forest Protection



Focal issue 3: Poverty of Local Communities



4 BENEFITS FOR THE PLANET

4.1 Condition of Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services at Project Start

SRP sits inside the northwestern zone of the Cardamom Mountains (Kravanh Mountains), a vibrant mountain range that covers north and southwest Cambodia. Its dramatic landscape spans almost 300,000 hectares. The Project Area extends into Battambang, Pursat and Koh Kong. It is bounded by the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest and the Central Cardamoms to east.

The SRP is part of the larger Cardamom Mountains region, which forms part of the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot (Myers et al. 2000) and is a ridge-to-reef conservation landscape comprising 18,000 km² of largely contiguous forest cover. The landscape forms a Global 200 Ecoregion (Cardamom Mountains Rain Forests) and includes a secondary Endemic Bird Area (i.e. an area containing at least one restricted-range endemic bird species). The length of the Cardamom Range is approximately 300 kilometers. It is separated from the nearest other rainforest by the vast, dry Khorat Plateau in central Thailand to the north and east and by the Gulf of Thailand in the west.

Location and general description

The mountain range rises from sea level to more than 1500m to intercept and extract the moisture from the monsoon winds. The orientation of their topography along the Gulf of Thailand produces unusually wet conditions of 3000-4000mm annual rainfall on the southwestern slopes of these ranges; only a short dry season occurs. These ranges rise rapidly from the coast, leaving only a narrow coastal plain. They gently grade down into the interior lowlands to the north and northeast. Upper elevation areas above about 900 meters in the Cardamom and Elephant Mountains contain a distinct montane forest community. These forests are structured with dense evergreen tree canopies reaching up to 30 meters in height. The proposed project zone is located in the northwestern Cardamom Mountain that covers lowland-hills forest and portion of mangrove (wetland) forest in the west, by the gulf of Thailand.

Biodiversity features

The northwestern Cardamom Mountain rainforests, as part of Cardamom Mountains, are amongst the most significant landscapes for biodiversity conservation in mainland South East Asia. The landscape supports numerous endemic bird (e.g. Green peafowl [*Pavo muticus*]), amphibian (e.g. *Chiromantis samkosensis*), reptile (e.g. *Crocodylus siamensis*), and plant species (e.g. *Nepenthes holdenii* and *Dalbergia spp.*). While the largest megafauna has either been extirpated or live in extremely very low density (i.e. tiger *Panthera tigris*, rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus / Rhinoceros spp.*) or heavily impacted by historic hunting (i.e. Asian elephant *Elephas maximus*, gaur *Bos gaurus*) populations of smaller carnivores (e.g. dhole *Cuon alpinus*, mainland clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*, Malayan sun bear *Helarctos malayanus*, greater hog badger *Arctonyx collaris*, large-spotted civet *Viverra megaspila*) are significant (Gray et al. 2017) and the landscape supports the largest global population of the Endangered pileated gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*). A minimum of 35 IUCN Threatened species of bird (9), mammal (18), and reptile (8) occur within the Project Zone with globally significant populations of at least 11 and regionally (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) significant populations of 18.

The elephant population in the Cardamom and Elephant ranges, though heavily impacted by hunting during the late 20th and early 21st centuries, is one of only two in Cambodia with >40 individuals.

Significant reptiles include Siamese crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis* which is globally critically endangered and have confirmed breeding populations within the Project Zone. In 2009, FFI helped to

identify 35 pure-bred Siamese crocodiles in a local wildlife rescue center and has since developed the first conservation breeding program in the country – a vital source of genetic diversity for the reintroduction of the species into new areas. In 2012, the Cambodian Crocodile Conservation Project launched a program to release pure-bred individuals back into the wild in suitable sites in the Cardamom Mountains, under the National Siamese Crocodile Reintroduction and Reinforcement Action Plan.

SRP comprises of two regional: northern and southern zones, which consists of five dominant vegetation types (four in the northern and one in the southern zone): evergreen forest, dry dipterocarp forest, pine forest and grassland, and mangroves that only occur in the southern zone.

Northern Zone

1. PSWS Battambang covers 30,590 hectares of evergreen forest, dry dipterocarp forest, pine forest, and grasslands, with an elevational range of approximately 200 to 1146 meters.
2. PSWS Pursat covers 161,747 hectares of evergreen forest, dry dipterocarp forest, pine forest, and grasslands, with an elevational range of approximately 200 to 1717 meters.
3. PSWS Koh Kong covers 9,588 hectares of evergreen forest, dry dipterocarp forest, pine forest, and grasslands, with an elevational range of approximately 200 to 997 meters.
4. CBC Battambang covers 9,931 hectares of evergreen forest, dry dipterocarp forest, pine forest, and grasslands, with an elevational range of approximately 290 to 806 meters.
5. CBC Pursat covers 72,804 hectares of evergreen forest, dry dipterocarp forest, pine forest, and grasslands with an elevational range of approximately 57 to 804 meters
6. SCNP Pursat covers 12,211 hectares of evergreen forest, dry dipterocarp forest, pine forest, and grasslands with an elevational range of approximately 200 to 738 meters

Southern Zone

PKWS Koh Kong covers 12,426 hectares of mangrove forest and evergreen forest with an elevation range of 0 to 257 meters. Whereas mangroves account for approximately 73% of the total area, or 9,103 hectares, evergreen forest accounts for 23%, or 3,323 hectares. Additionally, a total of 4,976 hectares of the area was estimated to be peatlands, with an average depth of 115cm.

Types of threats

Inconsistent and poor law enforcement

Despite some level of formal protection, very few reserves in the region have effective management and workforces; they are essentially “paper parks”. Several are now under threat from illegal logging operations and from adjacent concessions that encroach on the unprotected protected areas. The wildlife trade has also resulted in widespread hunting throughout Cambodia, taking a heavy toll on endangered wildlife populations. The widespread presence of anti-personnel land mines continues to pose severe threat to both wildlife and humans.

Habitat reduction, degradation and fragmentation

Besides loss of forest which leads to habitat loss and fragmentation, for some of the water-dependent species like the crocodile, factors causing loss of habitat include: conversion of wetlands for aquaculture, use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in rice production, and an increase in the population of cattle in the landscape. Moreover, many river systems, including those in protected areas, have hydroelectric power dams approved or planned (three out of seven dams was built in the project

accounting area), which are likely to cause the loss of wetlands plus altered flooding cycles. Moreover, when populations fall to extremely small levels dependent on highly isolated habitats, as is the case for *C. siamensis*, they become too fragmented leading to both reduced reproduction (due to the difficulty of locating mates), and genetic problems from inbreeding.

Exploitation and fragmentation

Illegal poaching for meat and wildlife trade is still an important threat in these forests. For instance, capture of wild crocodiles for skins and to stock commercial crocodile farms remains an ongoing threat, as well as incidental capture/drowning in fishing nets and traps. Snares are perhaps the biggest threat to the Project Areas globally significant mammal diversity with WA supported forest rangers removing 21,589 in 2017. These indiscriminate killers have caused significant declines in many threatened species throughout Southeast Asia (Gray et al. 2017).

From the Biodiversity Impact Assessment workshop held for the proposed SRP, the leading threats identified across the greater SRP landscape were:

- Land encroachment
- Wildlife poaching and illegal wildlife
- Illegal logging

Participants in the BIA workshop analyzed how these issues are expected to change over the next 5-10 years in the absence of the proposed Samkos REDD+ Project.

Table 4. Without project projections for the key contributing factors to the focal issues identified during the BIA workshop in Phnom Penh, Nov 2022 (NB: the condition could Improve, Worsen, or Remain unchanged)

Focal Issue	Direct Factor	Condition in 5-10 years	What will drive the change?
Land Encroachment	Agriculture-house land conversion	Worsen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing population/ migration • Not enough funding support to rangers • Limited knowledge on environment issues • Increase demand for food increasing pressure for agricultural land • Lack of demarcation/ poor land use planning
	Forest clearance for land sale	Worsen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing land prices • Increasing population through growth or immigration • Not enough funding support to rangers • Continuing need for employment (thus hired to clear land) • National/ international investment and demand for land attracts land speculators
	Clearing for charcoal production	Remain unchanged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand will remain for domestic consumption • Not enough funding support to rangers

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some commercial facilities may change from using charcoal to other energy supplies including electric, solar and LPG
Wildlife Poaching	Inefficient law enforcement	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased budget from central government and MoE for enforcement New technical training for rangers to increase capacity Greater environmental awareness Better livelihood of local communities and rangers due to national economic growth
	Increasing price of wildlife meat and parts	Remain unchanged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High demand for wildlife parts will continue Cultural and societal preferences for wildlife meat consumption for health and social status continue
	Lack of understanding of the role of FA and MoE	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater outreach by public agencies to local community about the law Greater access to information from social media and other networks
	Increase in snaring	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong law enforcement Greater collaboration between local authorities and communities Raw material for producing snares is becoming more expensive
Illegal Logging	Law enforcement not punitive enough for repeat offenders	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New policy/ Government strategy along with the new regulation (Environmental Code) will be promulgated Workplan/Management of the Protected Areas (demarcation, zoning) will be improved due to the newly created Government Management Policy Law enforcement will be improved alongside economic development of the country
	People hired to log the forest	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General economic development in Cambodia means people will earn more income Social media will help in spreading/educating people on environmental awareness Natural based ecotourism and alternative livelihoods will be created and become more common among the local communities In general, people have a better living standard, which could lessen demand for woods or timber for construction purposes

4.2 Expected Impacts on Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Impact #1	Over the 30-year lifetime of the project, 47,610,840 tCO _{2e} of net emission reductions from avoided deforestation compared to the reference level are estimated.
Type of Impact	Predicted, direct positive impact
Affected Natural Capital and/or Ecosystem Service(s)	Forest ecosystems, biodiversity, endangered species, carbon sequestration
Resulting Change in Condition	The project is taking urgent action to combat climate change by avoiding significant emissions of CO _{2e} by stopping deforestation.
Impact #2	The Project will protect 282,718 ha of the Project Area under conservation management/enforcement
Type of Impact	Predicted, direct positive impact
Affected Natural Capital and/or Ecosystem Service(s)	Forest ecosystems, biodiversity, endangered species, carbon sequestration
Resulting Change in Condition	Through the protection of the project area, forests will continue to exist and their flora and fauna inhabitants will have a place to live. The area will have increased levels of resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.
Impact #3	All threatened and endangered species in the Project Area will be protected and safeguarded against extinction
Type of Impact	Predicted, direct positive impact
Affected Natural Capital and/or Ecosystem Service(s)	Forest ecosystems, biodiversity, endangered species

**Resulting Change
in Condition**

Increased protection of biodiversity; preservation and protection of species from extinction

4.3 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services Monitoring Plan

Climate

A plan has been developed to monitor the SRP's impact on its climate related objectives, namely the reduction in the emissions of tCO₂e by reducing deforestation in the Project Area. The primary objective of the monitoring plan is to ensure accurate estimates of carbon stocks and carbon emission reductions from the REDD+ Project over the crediting period of the Project. The climate monitoring plan includes three primary monitoring activities that will be performed throughout the lifetime of the SRP. These activities, and their frequency are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Primary monitoring activities

Activity	Frequency	Method
Forest Patrols and Perimeter Observation	Weekly	Patrol teams inspect perimeter of project area via ground-based assessments
Plot Measurements	Annually	Sampling teams visit a portion of forest plots in the project area.
Identification of significant disturbance	Annually or after major disturbance event	Periodic inspection of aerial imagery or videography, satellite imagery or other remote sensing product with ground inspection when necessary

In addition to these three primary project monitoring activities several additional monitoring activities will happen at informal frequencies during the Project Partners' general operations. This includes regular forest ranger patrols through the Project Area, and outreaches to the communities. These additional monitoring activities will serve to identify many instances of encroachment or tree harvesting that may occur in the Project Area. The monitoring plan is meant as a guide to maintain consistency during monitoring, and also includes training and internal audit procedures for quality control. It is meant as a working document to be revised as needed during the course of the project.

Biodiversity

Indicators are important in impact assessment because they respond to the basic question "what should be measured in order to show that the claimed net social benefits are real and additional" (Richards & Panfil 2011)? An ideal indicator from the perspective of showing attribution is one that measures an 'intermediate state' or assumption between an output and outcome or an outcome and an impact, clearly showing progress along a causal chain (Richards & Panfil, 2011). Thus, we used our theory of change logic in the Result Chain diagrams as the basis for selecting indicators that factor in attribution. We then decided on the best sampling methods to use to collect these data to acceptable levels accuracy, precision and cost effectiveness whilst retaining transparency and simplicity. From this, a Monitoring Plan was developed to guide data collection.

Further, the indicators will be analyzed based on the Pressure-State-Response framework, which also relies on a causal-chain logic, where threats negatively impact the status/condition of biodiversity, while responses or project interventions reduce pressure. Most Response indicators can be grouped under: Security enhancement; employment of locals; alternative sources of income. Pressure indicators fall under: human population size and dynamics; and Incidences (OI) including poaching, encroachment, charcoal and logging. Finally, State indicators are grouped into three categories: wildlife (including species presence, diversity, distribution); vegetation (including species composition and diversity, distribution, disturbance and regeneration); and land-uses (including changes in various vegetation/habitat types, encroachment and fire). Most of the response and pressure indicators correspond to the social indicators developed in the stakeholder monitoring plan, and so data collection follows the protocols outlined therein.

We envision two main aspects of state indicators to measure, each with a distinct set of monitoring protocols:

Wildlife: wildlife surveys and monitoring for all species – with a focus on HCVs – will be done using several methods: ranger patrols, camera traps, fecal DNA analysis, and information from any independent research projects in the area

Vegetation and Land-use: carbon plot monitoring plots and remote sensing (based on LANDSAT imagery) and GIS techniques.

The biodiversity impact monitoring plan is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Biodiversity impact monitoring plan for the Samkos REDD+ Project.

Focal Issue	Key Results	Code	Indicator	Indicator Type
Land encroachment and land use planning	Reduced forest conversion for sale or into settlements or agricultural land	BIA001	Forest extent/size for the Project Accounting Area (PAA) included under Samkos RP	Impact
		BIA002	# ha of primary forest cleared within the Samkos PAA	Outcome
		BIA003	Land use plan developed for the public and community lands associated with the Samkos RP	Output

		BIA004	% of project area land units with appropriate titling	Outcome
		BIA005	# km of PA boundary with appropriate physical demarcation posts and entry warning signs	Outcome
		BIA006	% households moving away from use of firewood or charcoal for cooking	Outcome
		BIA007	# arrests made of illegal loggers	Outcome
	Decreased charcoal production	BIA008	# charcoal kilns confiscated	Outcome
Wildlife poaching	Greater appreciation and awareness of wildlife benefits	BIA009	# awareness-raising events e.g., meetings, seminars, videos etc. held across the project area	Output
		BIA010	# environmentally-reliant income-generating activities or enterprises established	Outcome

		BIA011	% families still dependent on wildlife meat as food	Outcome
	Increase in wildlife populations, especially HCV species	BIA012	# rangers employed and equipped	Output
		BIA013	# ranger training sessions undertaken	Output
		BIA014	# patrols undertaken by rangers in the Project Area	Outcome
		BIA015	# of offenders sent to the courts of justice	Impact
		BIA016	# snares extracted	Outcome
		BIA017	Meters of wildlife nets	Outcome
		BIA018	# wildlife individuals rescued	Outcome
		BIA019	# wildlife individuals killed by poachers	Outcome
		BIA020	# court cases and transactional fines	Impact
		BIA021	Presence, Abundance and Distribution of	Impact

			key HCV species	
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4.4 Net Positive Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services Impacts

The SRP without-project scenario is unplanned deforestation due to expansion of subsistence agriculture. Charcoal production and poaching of animals are part of this without-project scenario, and conditions are expected to worsen for biodiversity and ecosystem services. The project activities that protect the forest and improve livelihoods for communities will have a net positive impact as they will ensure the continuation of the forest and its inhabitants.

5 OPTIONAL: CLIMATE MODULE

The SRP GHG emission reductions are claimed under the VCS standard. The SRP is currently seeking validation and verification under both the VCS and CCB standards.

Please see the joint VCS and CCB monitoring reports and project description document (available on the Verra project registry website) for more information on project methodology, monitoring, verified carbon units, and net emissions reduction.

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