



**Sustainable Development
Verified Impact Standard**

SAMKOS REDD+ PROJECT

PROJECT ID: 3341



Document Prepared by Wildlife Alliance

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 villages across 8 communes, 4 districts 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.

The baseline scenario as identified as the conversion of native ecosystems from a natural forested state to a non-forest (agricultural) state. 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.

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

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 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. 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.

Conservation law enforcement is the main tool used to protect and conserve the natural resources in all three protected areas of SRP. 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.

The SRP will support poverty reduction by generating employment and supporting an increase in household incomes. 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 identified many households in the Project Zone as 'food insecure' for at least 3 months a year. 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.

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. Communities will create water well sub-committees 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.

For many villagers, poor harvests and/or low sales on agricultural goods caused by longer dry spells during the rainy season and declining yields because of the loss of soil nutrients have 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. Eco-tourists prefer buying and consuming products that are responsibly grown and delivered.

Please visit VERRA's registry website – <https://registry.verra.org/>, or the Project Office to view full project documentation.

Project Location

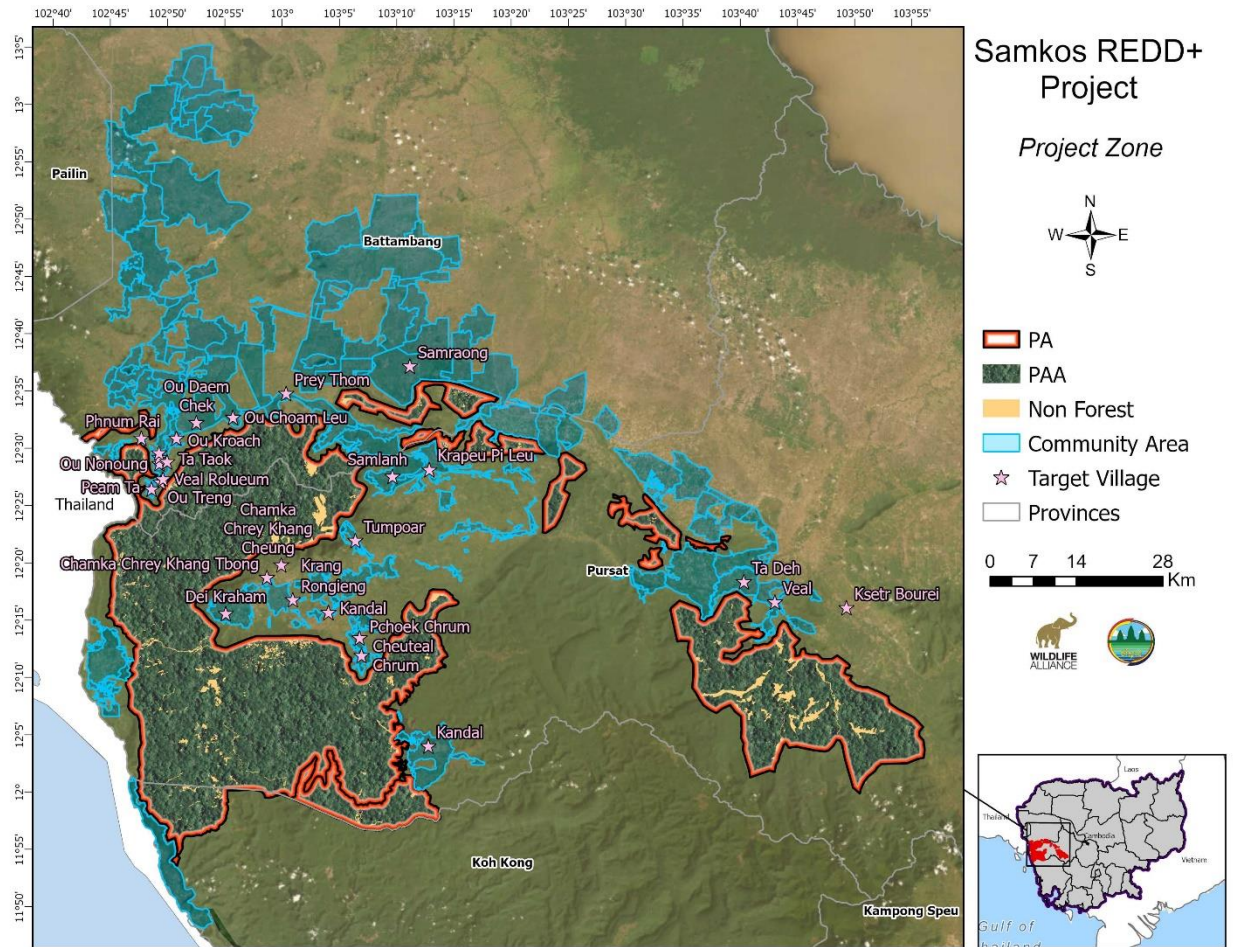


Figure 1. Samkos REDD+ Project location

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

Important Project Dates and Milestones

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 Ieth and Thmor Da ranger stations become operational

Causal Chain(s)

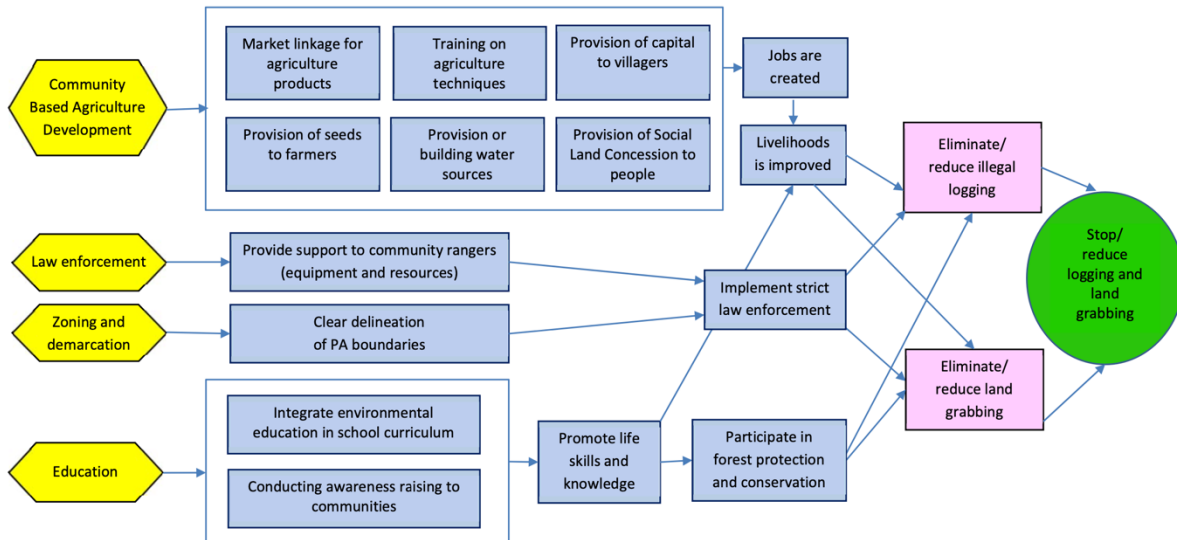
a) Focal Issue 1): Logging and land grabbing

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.



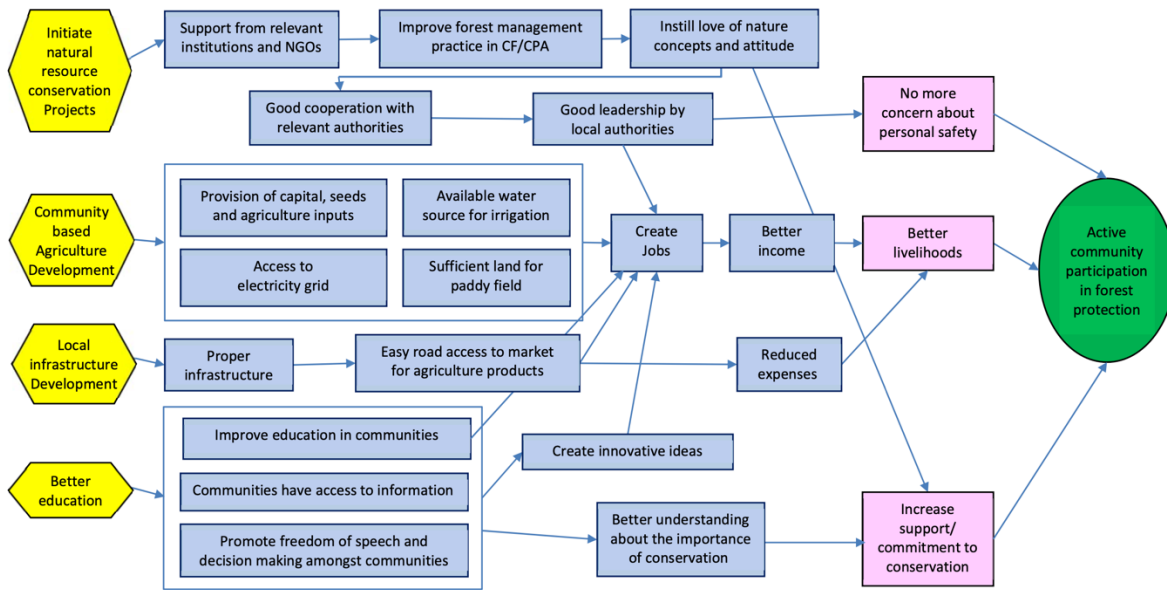
b) Focal Issue 2): Lack of community participation in forest protection

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.



c) 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, ...

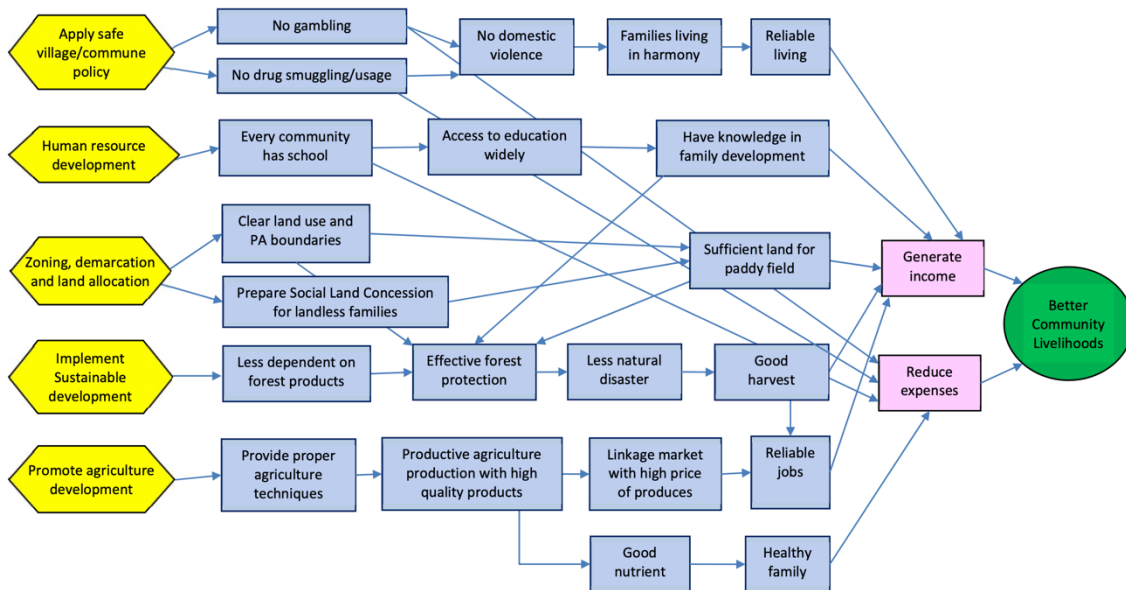
If clear land use policy and zone are in place, community members have access to social land concession with adequate land for paddy field,

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 Table	Strategy	Intermediate Result	Threat Reduction Result	Target

Figure 2: Results Chains underlining the theory of change logic for the three Focal Issues identified during community SIA workshops for the SAMKOS REDD+ Project.