



Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project

Fourth Monitoring Report Summary

The Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project (SCRP) is an initiative designed to 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+). The 493,582.6 ha SCR Project Area encompasses parts of former Southern Cardamom National Park and Tatai Wildlife Sanctuary and will protect a critical part of the Cardamom Mountains Rainforest Ecoregion – one of the 200 most important locations for biodiversity conservation on the planet. The SCR Project Accounting Area as defined by the VCS methodology is 442,871 ha. The Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project is part of the Indo-Burma Hotspot, one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots, and is a critical watershed for the Gulf of Thailand, with a mosaic of habitats from dense evergreen and pine forests on its ridge tops to lowland melaleuca wetlands, flooded grasslands, lakes and coastal mangroves in its lowlands. This mosaic of habitat supports at least 52 species of IUCN Threatened birds, mammals, and reptiles including Siamese crocodile and one of Cambodia's two viable populations of Asian elephant. The landscape has also been identified by the Royal Government of Cambodia as an opportunity for tiger reintroduction.

The SCR's watershed is important for the fisheries of the Gulf of Thailand as it provides fresh water to the largest contiguous mangrove forest left in the Gulf, Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary, which is a critical nursery for the region's fisheries. This area provides food for Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam and supports the regulation of climate for the Southeast Asian peninsula. More specifically, the SCR has 22 major waterways that feed approximately 3,800 villages in over 6 provinces. So far, the project has directly supported the livelihoods of 29 villages in 13 communes around the perimeter of the project area. These communities represent approximately 4,719 families and 16,495 individuals.

Wildlife Alliance has been assisting the government in the management of the Cardamom Rainforest Landscape since 2002. Core activities of Wildlife Alliance have been patrols protecting the forest and technical assistance to the government to help it implement forest protection. Wildlife Alliance has also undertaken community development and education programs, to help local people switch to livelihoods that are compatible with the sustainable use of the region's rich natural resources.

Despite its global importance, uncontrolled small-scale land conversion of forest to agricultural land by migrants and conversion to agro-industrial plantations by the private sector make the Southern Cardamom region one of most threatened forest landscapes in Southeast Asia. Rural communities depend on small-scale agricultural production to support their livelihood. A lack of sufficient employment opportunities for the growing rural population combined with a lack of knowledge regarding improved agricultural techniques drive the local population to clear forests for cultivating commercial crops.

The drivers of deforestation are predominantly a high demand for new agricultural and cash crop land in the SCR Project Area, and throughout Koh Kong (province) in general. The population in the province and the region around the Project Area has significantly increased over the last decade. This is from both in-migration and an increase in childbirth rates in the surrounding villages. Currently, there are low education rates in the area, due to the need for children to work on the families' farms during the day, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and therefore deforestation. Additional drivers of deforestation include illegal logging, fuel gathering and charcoal production. These activities are primarily undertaken by members of the local communities to provide additional sources of income.

The primary method for the identification of stakeholders in the SCR was through SBIA workshops that were held in Koh Kong on August 15 – 17 and August 23 – 25, 2017. These workshops had 73 participants, who were all identified by local experts as leaders or representatives of the Project stakeholder groups. Additionally, the expert knowledge of the Project Proponent was used to identify any project stakeholders

who were not previously identified during the SBIA workshop. During the second monitoring period there was a project description deviation with the frequency of monitoring being changed from “annual” to the “monitoring period” for most social and biodiversity indicators, which aligns with the frequency defined in the first monitoring report. This deviation does not have any effect on the applicability of the methodology, additionality or appropriateness of the baseline scenario. There is no change in the number of indicators being monitored or to the language of the indicator.

In response to the threats to the Southern Cardamom landscape, Wildlife Alliance with the Ministry of Environment (MOE), decided to create the SCRP. The protection of the SCRP will be achieved by continuing and intensifying patrolling of the Project Area, as well as by providing additional project activities to the communities that are designed to mitigate the drivers of deforestation. Two important project activities are agricultural intensification and community-based ecotourism. These will help create greater financial security in the communities, and therefore less need to perform unsustainable resource extraction from the Project Area. A fund will also be provided to support scholarships for children from project communities to directly address one of the critical drivers of deforestation identified during stakeholder workshops (i.e., low education rates and limited opportunities for post-primary school education). This fund will be available for community members in addition to those directly benefiting from the project. As of M4, 7 new students are supported by this scholarship, accruing a total of 17 students supported since the scholarship program began in 2021. During M4, the project has provided 304 families trainings on agricultural methods and intensification, and 8 training events to 501 families of tourism service providers in the Chi Phat (332 families) and Chhay Areng (169 families) Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET). During 2022 to 2023, the Project directly employed 28 villagers and conducted on-the-job training. Awareness raising on the Southern Cardamom REDD+ activities was conducted in 316 meetings in 29 villages (11 meetings/village) and were attended by a total of 5,961 community members, including students. The Project also operates more government (park) ranger stations mandated with legal protection of the forest and wildlife: 10 park ranger stations and 3 sub-stations inside the Project Area. Government rangers are full-time employees and live at the park ranger stations. They conduct daily and systematic patrols in the Project Area and Leakage Zones. As of 2023, 258 government (park) rangers were being supported by the Project. Furthermore, 6 land use planning meetings were held with participation and support from local authorities, followed with the installation of 146 demarcation posts along 26 kilometers of the community land boundaries in Russey Chrum communes.

The Project’s climate benefits include the avoided emission of approximately 6,894,239 t CO₂e during this fourth monitoring period and 34,521,475 t CO₂e to date over the lifetime of the Project. The Project will generate substantial community and biodiversity co-benefits. New and sustainable livelihood opportunities, such as direct employment, alternative income generating activities (IGAs) and initiatives to stimulate investment in businesses will be designed to reduce pressure on the environment while significantly increasing community well-being. Additional programs will address food security, improve health and education facilities, as well as raise environmental awareness. Biodiversity co-benefits will be achieved through greater protection of the ecosystem predominantly by means of increased security and improved monitoring. The Project will also be protecting critical habitat for significant populations of many IUCN listed species, including Asian elephant, Asiatic black bear, sun bear, large spotted civet, clouded leopard, and dhole, as well as the critically endangered reptiles Siamese crocodile and Southern river terrapin.

Please visit the Project website – <https://southerncardamomredd.com/> Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernCardamomREDD> or the Project Office to view full project documentation.

Project name	Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project
Project location	Koh Kong, Cambodia

Project Proponent	Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Environment Contact Name: Choup Paris Email: paris.ncg@gmail.com Phone: 017 313 366
Auditor	EPIC Sustainability Services Pvt. Ltd. R. B. Venkataramanaiah info@epicsustainability.com +91 95909 29936
Project Start Date, GHG Accounting Period and Lifetime	Project start date: 01 June 2015 GHG accounting period: 01 June 2015 – 31 December 2044 Project lifetime: 01 June 2015 – 31 December 2044
Project Implementation Period of Verification	01 January 2022 – 31 December 2023
History of CCB Status	The Project received its validation on 30 November 2018. The Project completed its first verification (M1) on 30 November 2018. The Project completed its second verification (M2) on 27 August 2021. The Project completed its third verification (M3) on 7 October 2022
The Edition of the CCB Standards Being Used for this Verification	This project is being validated under the 3 rd Edition of the CCB Standard.
Gold Level Criteria	Double Gold Level Criteria, Climate and Biodiversity
Date of completion and version number of this version of the Monitoring Report	Date: October 24, 2024 Version: 2.1
Project Identified Communities, Community groups and Stakeholders	Project Identified Communes (Villages): Kandoal (Sovana Baitong), Dang Peng (Pur Beung Kamlot, Pur Beung Chhayreab, Bakangrout), Chi Phat (Chi Phat, Tuek Laak, Cheam Sla, Kamlot), O Som (O Som, Chhay Louk, Kien Chongruk), Tasal (Romiang Sar), Chambak (Krang Chek), Pralay (Chamnar, Pralay, Samraong, Toap Klay), Chumnoab (Chumnoab, Chrak Russey), Thmor Donpov (Koh, Prek Svay), Angdoun Teuk (Chi Meal), Tatai Krom (Kaoh Andaet, Anlong Vak), Trapeng Rung (Dei Tumneab, Trapeang Rung, Trapeang Rung-Veal Taphou), Ruessey Chrum (Kokir Chrum, Trapeang Chheu Trav) Community Groups / Stakeholders: Agriculturalists, Charcoal producers, Firewood gatherers, Subsistence hunters, Women, Youth, Landless – Migrants, Community Forests, Local authorities, Police and military

