



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MANAGE A FOREST?

BROWN BAG SESSION ON THE SAFE ECOSYSTEMS PROJECT
PRESENTED BY:

UNDP NRM/CC/DRR UNIT & THE SAFE ECOSYSTEMS TEAM

SAFE Ecosystems Project





BACKGROUND



The Dry Dipterocarp Forest (DDF) ecosystems located in Savannakhet Province are recognized for being globally important as habitat for a number of globally significant and threatened species, and nationally important for their provision of numerous ecosystem services that benefit the people of Lao PDR.

The target area of the SAFE Ecosystems Project consists of five contiguous districts whose combined area of 916,323 hectares constitutes most of the central area of Savannakhet Province.

The total population of the five districts is 303,628 persons inhabiting 353 villages; of this total, 44,485 persons inhabiting 96 villages that are located within the four Protected Areas

CONVERSION AND DEGRADATION OF NATURAL HABITAT AND ECOSYSTEMS

Forest cover in Savannakhet province has declined from about 60% of land area in 2005 to its current level of approximately 52% .

The DDF landscape of the central area of the province has been particularly impacted by concessions for plantation forestry and agriculture as well as small-scale but widespread conversion of forest lands to agricultural production.

Other causes of deforestation and forest fragmentation include commercial and small-scale timber harvesting, burning of understory for cattle grazing, infrastructure projects, mining operations, and expansion of urban areas.

Poaching and the illegal wildlife trade have increased significantly as a result of the economic growth in the region, especially to satisfy demand of both national and international markets.





BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Inadequate legal, regulatory and institutional framework for Integrated Natural Resource Management.

Minimal experience among key government and civil society stakeholders in developing and implementing SFM practices on the ground.

No mechanisms to compensate for land uses for conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

CALL TO ACTION

Recognizing their global and national importance, the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) has prioritized the conservation and sustainable management of the Dry Dipterocarp Forests landscape of Savannakhet Province.



Phase I

In 2002, Eld's Deer were discovered during WCS biodiversity surveys.

In April 2004, the Governor of Savannakhet declared 93,000 hectares as a Provincial Sanctuary.



Phase II

From 2008 to 2016, the World Wildlife Fund cooperated with the Department of Forestry, Provincial and District Authorities to continue activities.

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GEF & UNDP SUPPORT

The UNDP-GEF Sustainable Forest and Land Management in the Dry Dipterocarp Forest Ecosystems of Southern Lao PDR Project (SAFE Ecosystems Project) aims to support the government of Lao PDR to facilitate a transformative shift towards sustainable land and forest management in the forested landscape of Savannakhet Province.

The project is being implemented over a period of six-years from May 2016 to May 2022 by the Department of Forestry (DOF) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

This Project seeks to strengthen land and resource use planning capacities and procedures, and the policies and regulations that govern them, while simultaneously expanding and strengthening the management of resources on the ground by government agencies, local communities and private sector actors.





PROJECT OBJECTIVE

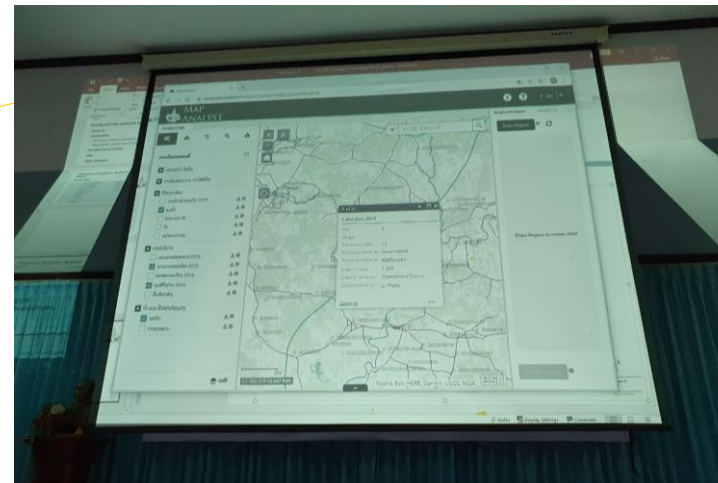


The objective of the project is to facilitate a transformative shift towards sustainable land and forest management in the forested landscape of Savannakhet Province in order to secure the critical wildlife habitats, conserve biodiversity and maintain a continuous flow of multiple services including quality water provision and flood prevention.

COMPONENT 1

Enabling policy environment and increased compliance and enforcement capacities for sustainable land and forest management across landscapes including protected areas.

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) completed.
- Integrated Spatial Plans (ISPs) developed.
- Decision support system developed and supporting Integrated Natural Resources Management.
- Multi-sectoral Coordination Mechanisms in place to support sustainable resource planning.
- Policies & regulations revised.
- Stakeholder capacities strengthened for sustainable management of natural resources.
- Guidelines in place for sustainable plantation forestry and agriculture.

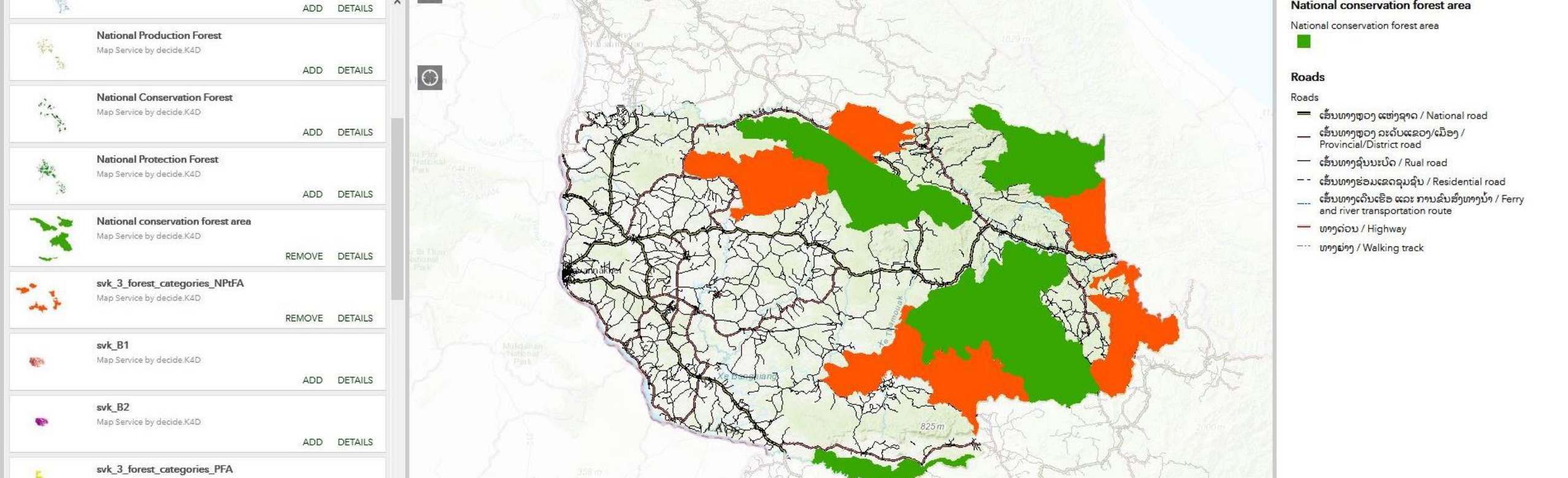




POLICY & PLANNING SUPPORT

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has supported the development of Integrated Spatial Plans and Strategic Environmental Assessments for the five target Districts where it is implemented.

Additionally, it has supported the Department of Forestry in the process of Protected Areas Development, as well as the CITES and Protected Areas Decree.



DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM (DSS)

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has supported the development of an online GIS based DSS which is able to utilize data and analyze geospatial issues.



CAPACITY BUILDING OF GOVERNMENT STAFF

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has supported the capacity building of government staff in a variety of subjects, particularly the use of GIS tools.

COMPONENT 2

Sustainable Forest Management and Protected Area Expansion in five priority Districts of Savannakhet Province.

- Upgrading and expansion of protected areas to conserve priority habitats.
- Protected Area Management Capacity strengthened.
- Existing intact forests designated as High Conservation Value Forests.
- Ecological integrity of degraded forest areas restored through reforestation.
- Capacities and Mechanisms Strengthened for Village Forest Management.
- Local stakeholders aware of benefits and strategies related to the conservation and sustainable development.
- Monitoring Systems in place to measure changes in key ecological determinants of ecosystem health.





LAUNCHING OF THE NATIONAL ELD'S DEER SANCTUARY

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has supported the creation of Lao's newest National Protected Area.

The National Eld's Sanctuary is an IUCN Category 4 Wildlife Habitat (the first in Lao) covering just over 130,000 hectares of Dry Dipterocarp Forest in Savannakhet Province



COMMUNITY REFORESTATION / AFFORESTATION

The SAFE Ecosystems Project is aiming towards restoring 1,100 hectares of degraded forest land in cooperation with over 45 Communities.

Additionally, the Project is about to pilot agroforestry techniques in rice paddy areas, as well as peri-urban forestry within the villages.



COMMUNITY RANGER PATROLS

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has been supporting 16 villages to conduct monthly patrols within the National Eld's Deer Sanctuary



VILLAGE LAND AND FOREST PLANNING

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has facilitated Village Forest Management Plans and Participatory Land Use Plans for 16 villages within the National Eld's Deer Sanctuary



ONG MANG CENTER

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has constructed the Ong Mang Center as an office to support management and operations within the National Eld's Deer Sanctuary, as well as the construction of 16 Community Halls and tourism infrastructure.



AWARENESS RAISING

The SAFE Ecosystems Project regularly meets with Villagers to disseminate land and natural resource management information.

Additionally, the project worked towards educating the larger population of Savannakhet Province to understand the importance of the Dry Dipterocarp forest.



SPECIES PROTECTION

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has been implementing actions to conserve 5 species in Savannakhet.

Siamese crocodiles - Asian Elephants – Silver-leafed Monkeys – Red-shanked Douc Langurs

Eld's Deer

COMPONENT 3

Developing and Promoting Incentives and Sustainable Financing for Biodiversity Conservation and Forest Protection

- Increased and More Strategic Funding for Sustainable Forest Management.
- Wildlife-related ecotourism operations generating community benefits.
- Increased and Diversified Financing for Protected Areas.
- Community Conservation Agreements are generating sustainable livelihoods opportunities linked to conservation outcomes.





CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has worked with 16 villages to develop and negotiate Conservation Agreements with 16 villages. These agreements provide benefits to the communities in exchange for tangible conservation actions.



LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has been supporting livelihoods in the villages where it works through creating Village Development Committees, supporting Handicrafts, Livestock, Home Garden and Agricultural activities. In 2021, the project will be constructing a local market at central location to improve access for villagers to sell their products.



ECOTOURISM

The SAFE Ecosystems Project has developed two Ecotourism sites in Savannkhet where tourists can explore Bru culture, take a forest walk searching for Endangered Red-shanked Douc langurs and Silver-leafed Monkeys, or go on a safari to see Endangered Eld's Deer.



THE WAY FORWARD

The SAFE Ecosystems Project is working with Villages to promote incentives for conservation, which includes land use planning and livelihoods support.

The real issue for not only the National Eld's Deer Sanctuary, but Protected Areas is funding. As such the Project plans to complete Sustainable Financing analysis and Business Plans for four Protected Areas in Savannakhet by the end of 2020.



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