



Southern Cardamom Forest Protection Cambodia

Defending one of the last unfragmented
rainforests in Southeast Asia



The Southern Cardamom project protects a mosaic of habitats from dense evergreen and pine forests to wetlands, flooded grasslands, lakes and coastal mangroves. As well as covering parts of the Southern Cardamom National Park and Tatai Wildlife Sanctuary the project also protects a critical part of the Cardamom Mountains Rainforest Ecoregion – one of the most important locations for biodiversity conservation on the planet. This unique project is home to at least 52 IUCN threatened species of mammals, birds and reptiles: Siamese crocodiles, sunbears, clouded leopards and one of Cambodia’s two populations of Asian elephants.

The Context

The diverse ecosystems protected by the project are some of the most important biodiversity hotspots on the planet; however, they are also one of the most endangered. Deforestation and forest degradation is driven by illegal logging and clearing forest to make way for agricultural land and plantations, as well as fuel collection and charcoal production. Largely due to a lack of alternative opportunities, many local residents rely on small-scale farming for their livelihood.

The Project

Covering over 445,000 ha in western Cambodia, the Southern Cardamom project aims to address these local drivers of deforestation. The project offers training on improved farming techniques so farmers can increase yields on smaller plots of land; and also develops community-based ecotourism, increasing the economic value of keeping the forest standing. Initiatives to stimulate investment in local businesses have also been set up, helping create greater financial security for the local residents and alternative options to unsustainably clearing land. The project also supports improved environmental governance and programmes to increase awareness about environmental protection.

The Benefits

The project directly supports the livelihoods of residents living in the 21 villages surrounding the project area and has also improved healthcare facilities. By protecting the rainforest, the project ensures the vital ecosystem services continue to function: the catchment area provides fresh water to the largest mangrove forest in the region, and supports the regulation of climate for the South Asian peninsula. With this unique habitat protected, the renowned wildlife in the area, including 52 threatened and endangered species — the Asian elephant, the clouded leopard and critically endangered Siamese crocodile — have a fighting chance at recuperating their numbers.

Thanks to the creation of a scholarship fund, children from the local rural communities are able to continue their education after primary school



2,400+ families

benefiting from additional income generated



10,000+ people

trained in climate-smart farming techniques



10,000+ people

provided with better health care



29 communities

have access to a scholarship funds and improved education



1,200 women

improving their skills through trainings



3,867,000 tCO₂e

mitigated on average annually



20 major waterways

protected that provide fresh water to to the largest continuous mangrove forest in the region



445,000+ ha

of forest conserved and protected



52 IUCN Threatened species

protected in their natural habitats, including Siamese crocodile and one of Cambodia's populations of Asian elephants

For more information on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, please visit: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Official name: Southern Cardamom REDD+ project | Registry link: <https://registry.verra.org/app/projectDetail/VCS/1748> | Registry ID: 1748