

## A. Contents

A. Contents.....	1
<b>List of Images .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>GENERAL ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Mekong Flooded Forest.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Eastern Plains Landscape .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Mekong Flooded Forest.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Eastern Plains Landscape .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Mekong Flooded Forest.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Eastern Plains Landscape .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>COOL &amp; Solar Cambodia.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Sustainable Energy for the Garment Industry &amp; Beyond.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH &amp; MONITORING .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Mekong Flooded Forest.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Eastern Plains Landscape .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>NEXT YEAR PLAN .....</b>	<b>36</b>

## List of Images

Image 1: Outreach and awareness raising to young children within to enhance their understanding the importance of wildlife conservation .....	9
Image 2: Community-Led Mitigation Plan Discussed Following ESMF Session on Siamese Crocodile Reinforcement in Nang Khi Loek .....	13
Image 3: Discussion with Yatong Commune Authorities on Recent Elephant Incident in Oyadav National Park.....	14
Image 4: Project and Technical Staff of Provincial Department of Agriculture visiting CamGAP Farmers to provide the technical support to farmer.....	14
Image 5: Multi-Stakeholder Platform Meeting: Progress Review & Future Directions.....	15
Image 6: Community Master Trainers Conduct GAP Training for Rubber Smallholders.....	15
Image 7: Smallholders Attend Agroforestry Training by CRRRI in Tbong Khmum Province .....	15
Image 8: Distributing Soursop Trees to Smallholders for Income Generation in Rubber Farm.....	15
Image 9: 126 Smallholders Engage in Collective Sales in Pou Chrey Commune, Mondulkiri.....	16
Image 10: Smallholders Engage in Collective Sales in Pou Chrey Commune, Mondulkiri .....	16
Image 11: Bounong Indigenous Leader (Blue Blouse) Guides Women’s Cooperative in 2025 Planning	16
Image 12: Bounong Indigenous Leader (Black Blouse) Demonstrates Proper Tapping Techniques to Villagers.....	16
Image 13: Handover of patrolling equipment for PA management to PPWS and SBWS .....	17
Image 14: Providing the two Solar Systems to PPWS and SBWS with capacity of 6.8kwp.....	18
Image 15: Protected Area Management meeting with Provincial Department of Environment of Mondulkiri.....	20
Image 16: Monthly ranger meeting with Srepok and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuaries to review the progress, challenges and set up the new work plan .....	21
Image 17: SMART Refresher training to the MoE Ranger, community ranger, Mobile Law Enforcement Unit team and SMART focal point.....	22
Image 18: Ranger and community rangers conducted field observation and Monitoring in Srepok and Phnom Prich .....	23
Image 19: Mutual Visit of WWF and SwissContact to discuss specific solar course for TVET.....	25
Image 20: Koh Han CBET leader presenting positive changes of using solar system in the community, Clean Energy Week 2024.....	26
Image 21: Garment factories representatives try the woodAI app in practice.....	28
Image 22: App developer gives hands on training on the app to factory representatives. ....	28
Image 23: Hog deer captured by camera trap .....	29
Image 24: White-shouldered ibis monitoring within SBWS in 2024 .....	30
Image 25: Red-headed vultures.....	32
Image 26: The first white-shouldered ibis nesting .....	32
Image 27: New Siamese crocodile hatchling recorded in Srepok river during the night survey .....	33
Image 28: string hook removed by research team during the river patrol.....	33

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Patrolling efforts from 2021- 2024 based on seasonalities .....	18
---	----

Figure 2: Active fishing activities from January to December 2024.....	19
Figure 3: Key threats to dolphin based on seasons from 2021-2024.....	19
Figure 4: Key threats to dolphin specifically to gillnets from January-December 2024 -Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE).....	20
Figure 5: Summary of simple payback time and savings of each hotel, under updated tariff structure (Dec 2024).....	24
Figure 6: Total dolphin mortality classified by age classes annually from 2022-2024.....	30
Figure 7: Investigation of dolphin mortality from 2022-2024.....	31

## List of Tables

Table 1: Number of beneficiary households participating in livelihood activities by Dec 2024.....	10
---	----

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBOs	: Community Based Organizations
CF	: Community Forestry
CFi	: Community Fisheries
COPS	: Conservation Oriented Patrol System
CPA	: Community Protected Area
CPMs	: Community Patrolling Members
CPUE	: Catch Per Unit Effort
CRRRI	: Cambodian Rubber Research Institute
CSOs	: Civil Society Organizations
FiA	: Fisheries Administration
FiAC	: Fisheries Administration Cantonment
FLO	: Forestry Livelihood Organization
GDR	: General Directorate of Rubber
GPS	: Global Positioning System
ICLTs	: Indigenous Community Land Titles (ICLTs)
MAFF	: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
METT	: Management Effective Tracking Tool
MFF	: Mekong Flooded Forest
MoE	: Ministry of Environment
PA	: Protected Area
PDAFF	: Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
PDoE	: Provincial Department of Environment
PPWS	: Prek Prasob Wildlife Sanctuary
SBWS	: Sambo Wildlife Sanctuary
SMART	: Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WWF Cambodia is pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report, highlighting our significant progress and continued commitment to environmental conservation across Cambodia's key landscapes. This year, our focus remained on advancing the protection of biodiversity, mitigating human-wildlife conflict, enhancing community engagement, and addressing environmental challenges through targeted initiatives and strategic partnerships.

WWF Cambodia's 2024 Annual Report highlights key initiatives and progress made across its core programs, with a strong focus on Environmental Protection and Livelihoods (EPL), the Mangrove Forests for the Future (MFF) initiative, and the Energy Program. These programs collectively aim to conserve Cambodia's vital ecosystems, improve community resilience, and support sustainable development, while addressing climate change challenges through integrated solutions.

In 2024, WWF Cambodia's efforts in the Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL) and Mekong Flooded Forest (MFF) saw notable successes in wildlife conservation, habitat protection, and community-driven conservation actions. The year was marked by continued collaboration with the key ministries and local authorities, as well as effective engagement with communities to ensure that conservation goals were aligned with the needs and aspirations of local populations.

WWF Cambodia's program continues to make significant strides in promoting sustainable livelihoods while ensuring the protection of the environment. The program focuses on enhancing the capacity of local communities to manage their natural resources sustainably, improving biodiversity conservation, and fostering climate resilience. A key achievement in 2024 was the continued success of conservation agreements with local communities, ensuring the protection of critical ecosystems, including forest and freshwater resources. These agreements have provided communities with a sustainable income through eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries, and non-timber forest products. As a result, local communities have benefited from improved livelihoods while contributing to the conservation of Cambodia's rich biodiversity.

WWF also focused on capacity building for local conservation practitioners, providing training on sustainable agricultural practices, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable resource management. This approach has enhanced local stakeholders' ability to manage natural resources effectively, ensuring the long-term success of conservation initiatives.

Additionally, WWF's work has integrated climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, helping communities build resilience to climate change while maintaining sustainable livelihoods. These strategies include improving coastal resource management and developing eco-friendly livelihood alternatives, such as sustainable aquaculture and mangrove-based ecotourism.

WWF Cambodia's Energy Program is central to the country's efforts to transition to renewable energy and reduce its carbon footprint. In 2024, WWF made significant progress in promoting renewable energy solutions, with a particular focus on solar energy and energy efficiency. WWF's efforts to advocate for better energy policies resulted in positive changes in Cambodia's rooftop solar energy regulations, which will help increase access to clean, affordable energy.

The program also focused on energy access for rural communities, where WWF has worked to install solar systems in remote areas, providing clean energy for households, schools, and community centers. These solar installations have improved living conditions and access to education and healthcare, empowering rural communities and reducing their dependence on fossil fuels.

WWF also collaborated with local businesses and government bodies to promote energy efficiency in the tourism and industrial sectors, reducing energy consumption and contributing to Cambodia's long-term sustainability goals. By focusing on clean energy solutions, WWF Cambodia aims to drive the country's transition to a low-carbon economy, mitigating the impacts of climate change while fostering economic growth.

In 2024, WWF Cambodia has continued to make significant progress in the conservation of Cambodia's vital ecosystems through the EPL, MFF, and Energy programs. These initiatives have strengthened local communities' resilience to climate change, enhanced biodiversity conservation, and promoted sustainable livelihoods. WWF's integrated approach to conservation, climate adaptation, and sustainable development remains essential in ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of Cambodia's natural resources. Moving forward, WWF will continue to collaborate with government, communities, and the private sector to promote sustainability, foster environmental stewardship, and contribute to Cambodia's green development agenda.

## GENERAL ACTIVITIES

### Mekong Flooded Forest

- The Mekong Flooded Forest (MFF) Landscape is located in the central northeast of Cambodia between Kratie and Stung Treng provinces, covering 27,000km<sup>2</sup>. The landscape is one of the Mekong River stretch and its tributaries with structure of the riverine and riparian habitat also known as wetland, dry dipterocarp, rocky, sandbar, flooded forest and water deep pools. This unique feature in the ecosystem is home to a global significant biodiversity hotspot in the region including mammals, reptiles and amphibians, birds, and fisheries. WWF-Cambodia worked with governmental partners including Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Provincial Administration of Kratie and Stung Treng, relevant departments including Department of Environment (PDoE), Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF), Department of Tourism (DoT), local authorities, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) of Community Forestry (CF), Community Fisheries (CFi), Indigenous Community Land Titles (ICLTs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to support the protected area management of Mekong Dolphin Protection and Management Zone, Prek Prasob and Sambo Wildlife Sanctuaries (PPWS and SBWS), biodiversity research and monitoring and community livelihood development and outreach awareness raising.
- WWF-Cambodia worked with its partners; included, Fisheries Administration (FiA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MaFF), Kratie and Stung Treng Fisheries Administration Cantonment (FiACs), local authorities, Community Fisheries (CFis), and local communities to implement a series conservation activities included research and monitoring of the Mekong Irrawaddy dolphin -*Orcaella brevirostris*, mitigating threats to fisheries and dolphin, and community fisheries engagement and awareness campaign.
- Although management plans for PPWS and SBWS have not been in place, a series of conservation activities including patrolling, biodiversity research and monitoring, community outreach and awareness raising and livelihood development were implemented ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of PA management for long-term protection.

### Eastern Plains Landscape

- The Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL) in Cambodia comprises over 14,000 km<sup>2</sup> of unique mosaic habitat, identified by Conservation International as one of the most biologically important regions in the world in terms of species diversity and endemism. The focus of WWF Cambodia's work in the north-eastern region of the country is to protect and conserve a globally significant landscape in a manner which improves the wellbeing of local communities, maintains the overall health of the ecosystem and supports sustainable economic growth.
- WWF Cambodia has worked to conserve an important tract of the dry tropical forest located in the northeast Cambodia, primarily in Mondolkiri Province, known as the Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL). Mondolkiri Province is located along the Northeastern border of Cambodia. It borders Kratie Province to the West, Stung Treng and Ratana Kiri Province to the north and Dak Lak, Dak Nong and Binh Phuoc Provinces of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the south and east. The EPL covers a total of 28,000 km<sup>2</sup> which contains six protected areas. WWF's objective is to ensure that the habitat in the Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS) and the Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS), as well as its connectivity to other protected areas in the landscape remains intact. Accomplishing this objective would provide safe habitats for wildlife and also provide environmental services and sustainable livelihoods for local communities. To meet this objective, it is imperative that WWF-Cambodia engage and directly support civil society actors to enhance their voices, build their capacity to manage their local resources and empower them as partners in conservation. To ensure equitable access and benefit-sharing between women and men, WWF-Cambodia has also been supporting the capacity building of community protected area (CPA) members, including legal aid, agricultural techniques, and advocacy skills, so they can raise concerns with their duty bearers to protect community natural resources—for example, from land encroachment and illegal hunting. Addressing the inclusive conservation and

commitment above, three key programs have been introduced based on key stakeholder consultations and their needs. These programs are: 1) Protected Area and Law Enforcement, 2) Biodiversity Research and Monitoring, and 3) Community Engagement Program. Please find the key interventions below.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Mekong Flooded Forest

- **Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Participation:** Among the 14 target CBOs, a total of 9,031 people, including 4,643 women (51.4%), have actively engaged in the sustainable management of Community Forests (CFs) and Indigenous Community Land Titles (ICLTs) across Kratie and Stung Treng provinces. Activities included monthly management committee meetings, community forest patrols, awareness-raising sessions, capacity-building on leadership and advocacy, do-no-harm principles, CF credit schemes, and mini-trust funds. Through these initiatives, CBOs have strengthened their technical and organizational capacities.
- Each CBO has an established management structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, allowing them to independently organize and lead monthly meetings. They also conduct annual reflection sessions to assess achievements, challenges, and solutions while developing their 2025 work plans. Additionally, CBOs actively participate in commune and district meetings, voicing their concerns and seeking support from local authorities. They have adopted GPS technology to report wildlife sightings and illegal activities such as logging, land clearance, and poaching. Furthermore, field monitoring has enhanced their understanding of the Code of Conduct, safety protocols, and security measures to better protect themselves from potential threats.
- **Capacity Building:** Following Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) training, communities successfully conducted forest inventories, identifying specific blocks and plots within their territories. However, the SMART application remains relatively new to them, requiring ongoing coaching and support from project staff for effective implementation.
- **Indigenous Community Land Titles (ICLTs):** ICLTs have established strong management structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for committee members. These structures are recognized by local authorities and have official registration with the Ministry of Interior, granting them a legal identity. These communities maintain their cultural traditions, fostering solidarity and unity, which strengthens their ability to advocate for their rights. Indigenous representatives confidently express their opinions in meetings and workshops, and ICLT members actively collaborate with other ethnic groups both within and outside their provinces. They also engage in regional and national networks that promote shared cultural values, amplifying their collective voice. Two existing IP communities, Ou Kak and Pun Chea, have obtained valid Indigenous Communal Land Titles (ICLTs). Meanwhile, two other IP communities, Tunsauing and Beong Char, are in the ICLT process. The Tunsauing IP community and Beong Char IP community are in the process.
- **Women's Representation in Decision-Making Roles:** Women hold 27% of leadership positions in CF management (20 women out of 74 CF and CPA management committee members) and 48% in ICLT management (29 women out of 61 ICLT committee members). Overall, 36% of decision-making roles across CF, CPA, and ICLT management committees are held by women, highlighting progress in gender inclusion within community governance structures.
- **Community Forests (CFs):** Five existing CFs—Ou Kak, Boeng Char, Pakle, Brasat Teok Khmao, and Veal Kanseng—hold valid CF agreements. Additionally, one new CF, Samki Phnom Yol, is in the process of being transformed into a Community Protected Area (CPA); however, the process has been delayed due to boundary overlaps between the Kratie and Mondulkiri provinces. To address this issue,

we are conducting consultations with CF members regarding the overlapping boundaries with Mondulkiri province and have planned a meeting with the Kratie Provincial Department of Land Management to seek a resolution. Two new CFs, Sakak and Trapaeng Thmar, are currently under the establishment process.

- **Awareness Outreach and Conservation Impact:** Conservation awareness was promoted through village meetings, monk engagement, student outreach, and educational materials on natural conservation and PA law. The December 2024 Social Impact Survey in PPWS and SBWS showed improved community knowledge and attitudes:
  - 100% of households recognized wire snaring as illegal and poisoning as harmful to health.
  - 70% would release endangered aquatic species if caught.
  - 67% had a positive attitude toward Hog Deer, despite crop damage.
  - These findings highlight the impact of awareness efforts on conservation behavior.



*Image 1: Outreach and awareness raising to young children within to enhance their understanding the importance of wildlife conservation*

- During the implementation of the Scale Up Phase 2 project from 2022-2024, a total number of households in participation through sustainable livelihood activities was increased to 576HHs including 192 (33%) of women led households. The alternative livelihood activities include chicken raising, fish raising, cattle raising (Cow Banks & Cattle Raising Groups), savings, community-based ecotourism, honey harvesting, rattan processing, CF credit, CF mini-trust fund,

and agroforestry. During this reporting period, the project team continues to follow up through monthly meetings and provide technical support for the aforementioned livelihood options. Additionally, the income resulting from the implementing livelihood option between 2023 and 2024) was a total of \$123,367.

No.	Livelihood Approach	# of beneficiary households	# of women-led households	Directly supported by
1	Chroy Banteay Chicken Raising Group	27	16	WWF-Cambodia
2	Tunsornng Chicken Raising Group	27	19	FLO
3	Wathanak Fish Raising Group	15	2	WWF-Cambodia
4	Cow Bank Groups	122	72	WWF-Cambodia
5	Buffalo Bank Groups	64	13	WWF-Cambodia
6	Cattle Raising Groups	94	44	FLO
7	Koh Promacharey Community-Based Ecotourism	25	13	WWF-Cambodia
8	Honey Group	56	9	FLO
9	Rattan Group	25	4	FLO
10	Agroforestry Group	121		WWF-Cambodia
	<b>Total # of Beneficiary Households</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>192</b>	

Table 1: Number of beneficiary households participating in livelihood activities by Dec 2024

- Communities' income generation has contributed 5% to 20% to conservation efforts based on livelihood activities and the communities' internal rules. In contrast, the income from mini-trust funds is contributed 100% to the 5 CFs and 60% from CF credit schemes. This contribution supports forest patrols accordingly. Furthermore, based on the Social Impact Survey in December 2024 shows that 27% of households contributed profits or in-kinds equivalent toward conservation activities in CBOs in targeted areas.
- As data from Social Impact Survey shows that 85% of women actively participation in livelihood actions within Scale Up II, self-report increased legitimacy and voice in livelihood decision including women well-presented and active in community-based discussion and meetings as well as women voice are well heard from community members
- WWF's Community Engagement Team supported five CFis adjacent to the hotspot areas of the dolphin conservation zones, to co-manage their territories and implemented sustainable fishing practices and participated in dolphin conservation. The five CFis implemented their management plan including regular monitoring and reporting to the River guards and FiAs on the incidents of illegal activities within dolphin conservation zones, raising relevant issues to local authorities as well as through the Communities Fisheries Network platform. The CFi members also received training on the use of SMART-Mobile for their effective reporting using SMART conservation tools. Among supported five CFis, at least 50% are able to use the SMART application effectively.
- In October 2024, Freshwater Dolphin Day was celebrated, bringing together FiA, FiACs, Buddhist monks, local communities, community members and students – all dedicated to protecting the Mekong's iconic dolphins and the rich biodiversity of our rivers. This half-day event featured a stunning dolphin photo gallery, community art performances, fun quizzes, an informative display of illegal fishing tools, and a community parade to raise awareness of dolphin conservation. Through these activities, we inspired local commitment to conserving the Mekong River and upholding fishery laws – both key to ensuring a thriving ecosystem that supports tourism and community livelihoods.

- **Scale Up Phase 2 (2022–2024) Impact:** The project expanded sustainable livelihood participation to 576 households, including 192 women-led households (33%). Livelihood activities included chicken and fish raising, cattle rearing (Cow Banks & Cattle Raising Groups), savings, ecotourism, honey harvesting, rattan processing, CF credit, CF mini-trust funds, and agroforestry. The project team provided monthly follow-ups and technical support, generating \$123,367 in total income between 2023 and 2024.
- **Community Contributions to Conservation:** Community-generated income contributed 5%–20% to conservation efforts, depending on internal rules and livelihood activities. Notably, 100% of mini-trust fund income and 60% of CF credit scheme income supported forest patrols. The December 2024 Social Impact Survey found that 27% of households contributed profits or in-kind resources to conservation activities in CBOs.
- **Women’s Participation and Leadership:** The survey also revealed that 85% of women actively participated in livelihood activities, reporting greater legitimacy and voice in decision-making. Women were well-represented in community discussions and meetings, and their voices were increasingly recognized by community members.
- **Community Fisheries (CFi) and Dolphin Conservation:** WWF’s Community Engagement Team supported five CFis near dolphin conservation hotspots in co-managing their territories and implementing sustainable fishing practices. These CFis followed management plans, conducted monitoring and reporting, and raised concerns through local authorities and the Community Fisheries Network platform. They also received training in SMART-Mobile tools, with at least 50% of CFis effectively using the application for conservation reporting.
- **Freshwater Dolphin Day 2024:** In October 2024, Freshwater Dolphin Day brought together FiA, FiACs, Buddhist monks, local communities, and students to promote Mekong dolphin conservation. The event featured a dolphin photo gallery, community art performances, quizzes, displays of illegal fishing tools, and a community parade, fostering local commitment to conservation, fisheries laws, and sustainable livelihoods.

## Eastern Plains Landscape

- **Sustainable Production & Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** Strengthened collaboration with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) through joint actions on sustainable production and consumption. The SCP multi-stakeholder platform was established integrating public and private sectors, academia, CSOs, and communities. to promote sustainable consumption and production, operating through five technical working groups.
- **CamGAP Certification & Capacity Building:** The CamGAP (Cambodia Good Agricultural Practice) standard was developed in 2023 to enhance sustainable local production. This has been further supported in 2024 through capacity-building support in 2024, training farmers engaged in vegetable cultivation, cacao and coffee farming, and wild honey collection. 10 trained farmers voluntarily applied for CamGAP certification, establishing demonstration farms with SCP project support to promote good agricultural practices in rural Cambodia.
- **Responsible Consumer Awareness & Stakeholder Engagement:** Conducted multiple awareness-raising sessions on responsible consumer behavior, engaging local authorities, community leaders, students, teachers, police, and private sector representatives.
- **Collaboration & Sustainable Coffee Production:** Strengthened collaboration between PDAFF and WWF, leading to joint initiatives on sustainable coffee production and capacity-building

programs for coffee farmers. SCP Cambodia Roadmaps were introduced and disseminated among responsible consumers in urban areas to encourage sustainable consumption practices.

- **Outreach & Engagement:** Conducted 103 events (meetings, training, workshops, dialogues) with 4,772 participants (2,600 female), including community members, local authorities, teachers, police, government officials, and CSOs. Activities were held in Phnom Penh (33 events, 2,893 participants) and Mondulakiri/other provinces (70 events, 1,879 participants). Provided technical assistance to 213 producers (94 cacao/vegetable growers, 74 coffee farmers, 45 wild honey collectors) out of 447 members.
- **Market Access & Policy Advocacy:** MAP Stakeholders (GDR, CRRI, PDAPP, WWF, Oxfam, NGO Forum, CamboDHRRA, FNN) are now more integrated and resourceful, leading to collective efforts such as market linkage forums, exchange visits, and the Sustainable Natural Rubber (SNR) dialogue. General Directorate of Rubber (GDR) committed to hosting the MAP Secretariat post-June 2025, ensuring the sustainability of MAP and promoting policy development for sustainable rubber practices.
- **Sustainable Natural Rubber (SNR) & Smallholder Empowerment:** 28 smallholder farmers joined the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR), with three actively engaged in training and meetings. One agricultural cooperative (PSAC), along with nine others, integrated SNR guidelines into their bylaws, focusing on economic, environmental, social, and governance principles. 15 master trainers delivered cost-effective training on tapping, farm management, sanitation, and collective business practices.
- **Women's Leadership & Inclusive Governance:** Women's representation in cooperatives increased from 12.5% to 50% (6/12), fostering cultural diversity among Indigenous, Muslim, and Khmer leaders. Women's participation introduced better management, hospitality, and business expertise, strengthening community-led governance.
- **Economic & Environmental Benefits:** Between May–December 2024, 126 smallholders collectively sold 552 tons of cup lumps, earning an additional \$27,600 compared to individual sales. Cooperatives generated \$6,900 in commissions, while transitioning from sulfuric acid to formic acid, enhancing environmental and health safety.
- **Environmental & Social Safeguards:** WWF held three consultation workshops under the Environmental and Social Mitigation Framework (ESMF) to ensure stakeholder participation and impact mitigation.
- **Capacity Building & Knowledge Transfer on Rubber:** 150 smallholder farmers in Mondulakiri received training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Through reflection and coaching sessions, these farmers independently trained 207 additional smallholders, expanding the adoption of sustainable farming practices.
- **Agroforestry Integration:** 50% of lead farmers have adopted two new agroforestry techniques on their farms. 19 smallholders (including 12 women) participated in rubber agroforestry training, with 14 piloting agroforestry practices to improve soil fertility, erosion control, and income diversification.
- **Improved Latex Processing & Quality Enhancement:** 125 smallholder farmers (50% of lead farmers) transitioned to formic acid for latex coagulation, improving rubber quality. Five producer groups in Mondulakiri enhanced processing techniques, ensuring higher hygiene standards. Seven collective points with cement flooring were established, improving sanitation and storage

conditions. 80% of smallholders engaged in collective sales now use formic acid, leading to higher-quality rubber.

- **Diversity & Leadership in Producer Groups & Cooperatives:** By the end of the project, women and minorities in producer groups and agricultural cooperatives in Mondulkiri and Tbong Khmum are expected to reach 30% representation. Currently, women make up 39% of producers and hold 50% of leadership roles within agricultural cooperative committees. Agricultural cooperative leadership now includes Bunong Indigenous (50%), Muslims (20%), and Khmer members.
- **Human-Elephant Coexistence (HEC):** Two field trips were conducted to visit affected communities in Oyadav National Park (OYDNP) and Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS). Engaged communities in discussions on HEC challenges and responsive programs, while developing a Community-to-Community (C2C) strategy.



Image 2: Community-Led Mitigation Plan Discussed Following ESMF Session on Siamese Crocodile Reinforcement in Nang Khi Loek



© Kim Marin / MoE / WWF-Cambodia

*Image 3: Discussion with Yatong Commune Authorities on Recent Elephant Incident in Oydav National Park*



*Image 4: Project and Technical Staff of Provincial Department of Agriculture visiting CamGAP Farmers to provide the technical support to farmer*



Image 5: Multi-Stakeholder Platform Meeting: Progress Review & Future Directions



Image 6: Community Master Trainers Conduct GAP Training for Rubber Smallholders



Image 7: Smallholders Attend Agroforestry Training by CRRI in Tbong Khmum Province



Image 8: Distributing Soursop Trees to Smallholders for Income Generation in Rubber Farm



*Image 9: 126 Smallholders Engage in Collective Sales in Pou Chrey Commune, Monduliri*



*Image 10: Smallholders Engage in Collective Sales in Pou Chrey Commune, Monduliri*



*Image 11: Bounong Indigenous Leader (Blue Blouse) Guides Women's Cooperative in 2025 Planning*



*Image 12: Bounong Indigenous Leader (Black Blouse) Demonstrates Proper Tapping Techniques to Villagers*

## PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

### Mekong Flooded Forest

- **Protected Area Management of Prek Prasob and Sambo Wildlife Sanctuaries (PPWS and SBWS):** In 2024, the METT (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) assessment showed slight improvements in management effectiveness, with scores of 61% for both PPWS and SBWS, up from 59% and 56%, respectively. The increase in PPWS indicates progress in PA management and protection, though further action is needed. Priority actions include developing joint work plans between PDoE and WWF, boosting local community participation, identifying additional ecosystem services, and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The COPS (Conservation Oriented Patrol Standard) assessment showed a decline, with scores of 68% for both PPWS and SBWS, down from 76% and 75%. This decline underscores the need for enhanced law enforcement and conservation efforts. However, key threats to the sanctuaries decreased by 52.4% in PPWS and 58.1% in SBWS compared to the 2022 baseline. Logging incidents decreased by 86% in PPWS and 66.4% in SBWS, while land clearance dropped by 13% in PPWS and 61.1% in SBWS. Poaching decreased by 58% in PPWS but increased by 31.2% in SBWS. Twelve land clearance cases, covering 169 hectares, were submitted to the provincial court, highlighting the need for continued enforcement and community involvement.



Image 13: Handover of patrolling equipment for PA management to PPWS and SBWS



Image 14: Providing the two Solar Systems to PPWS and SBWS with capacity of 6.8kwp

- Mekong Dolphin Protection and Management Zone:** From July to December 2024, patrolling efforts by the Fisheries Administration (FiA), Cantonments (FiACs), and Riverguards remained consistent, with 10 regular patrol days per month and 15 days for the Kampi & Chroy Banteay Zone. Night patrols increased from 80% coverage during the dry season to 100% during the rainy season, targeting illegal fisheries activities. Findings indicate peak illegal fishing occurs after midnight, involving unsustainable practices like gillnet and electric fishing. Intensifying night patrols in hotspots is recommended to address these activities.
- Despite increased patrolling, threats to dolphins remain high. While electric fishing, gillnets, and hook-longline fishing decreased during the rainy season, they peak during the dry season (December to June). Gillnets continue to spread into dolphin habitats, highlighting the need for refined law enforcement strategies to mitigate these risks effectively.

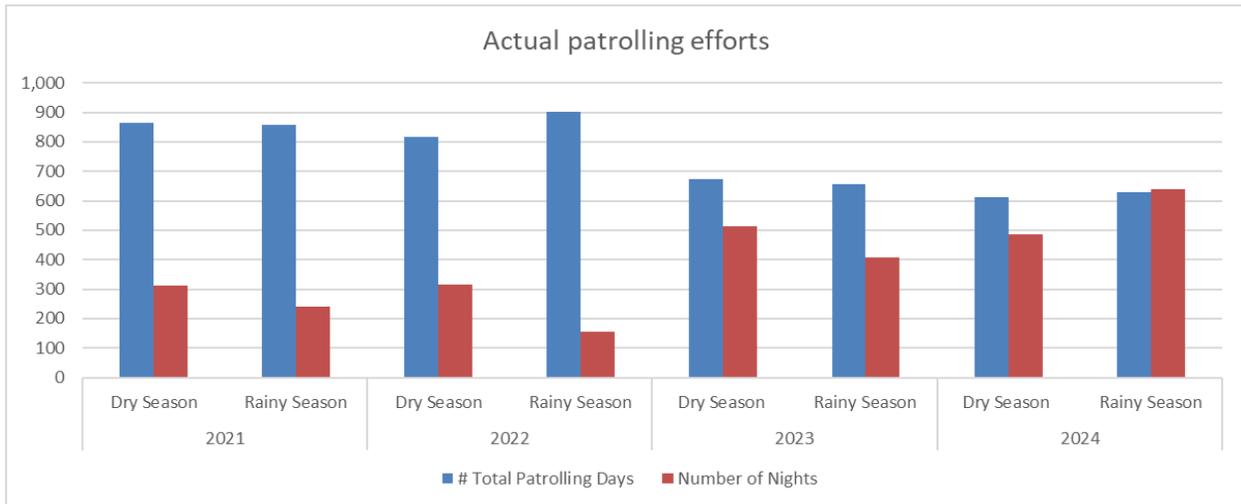


Figure 1: Patrolling efforts from 2021- 2024 based on seasonalities

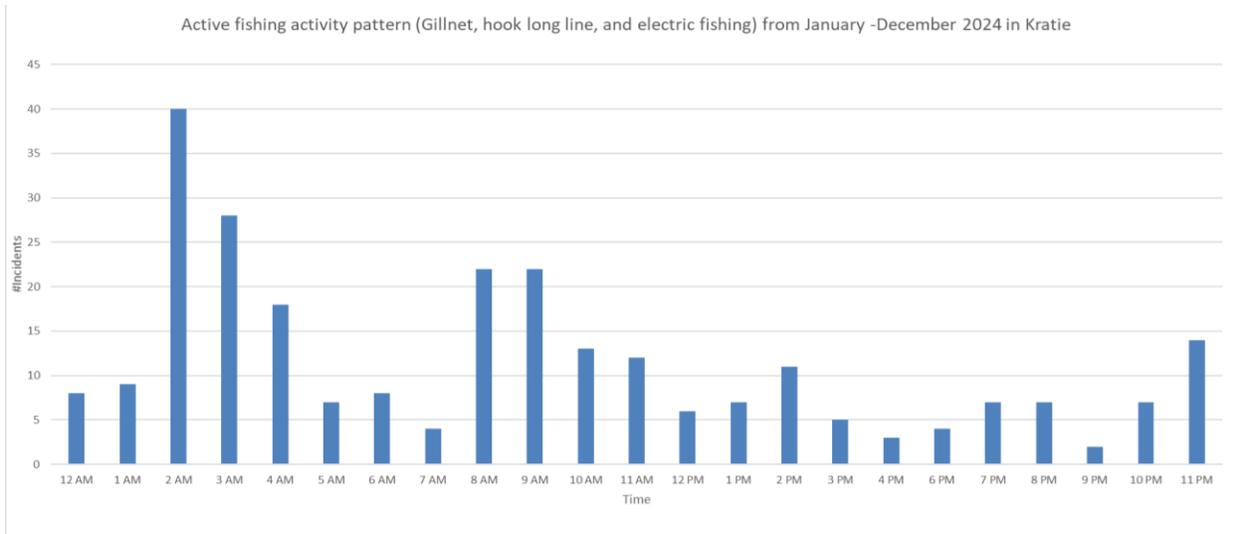


Figure 2: Active fishing activities from January to December 2024

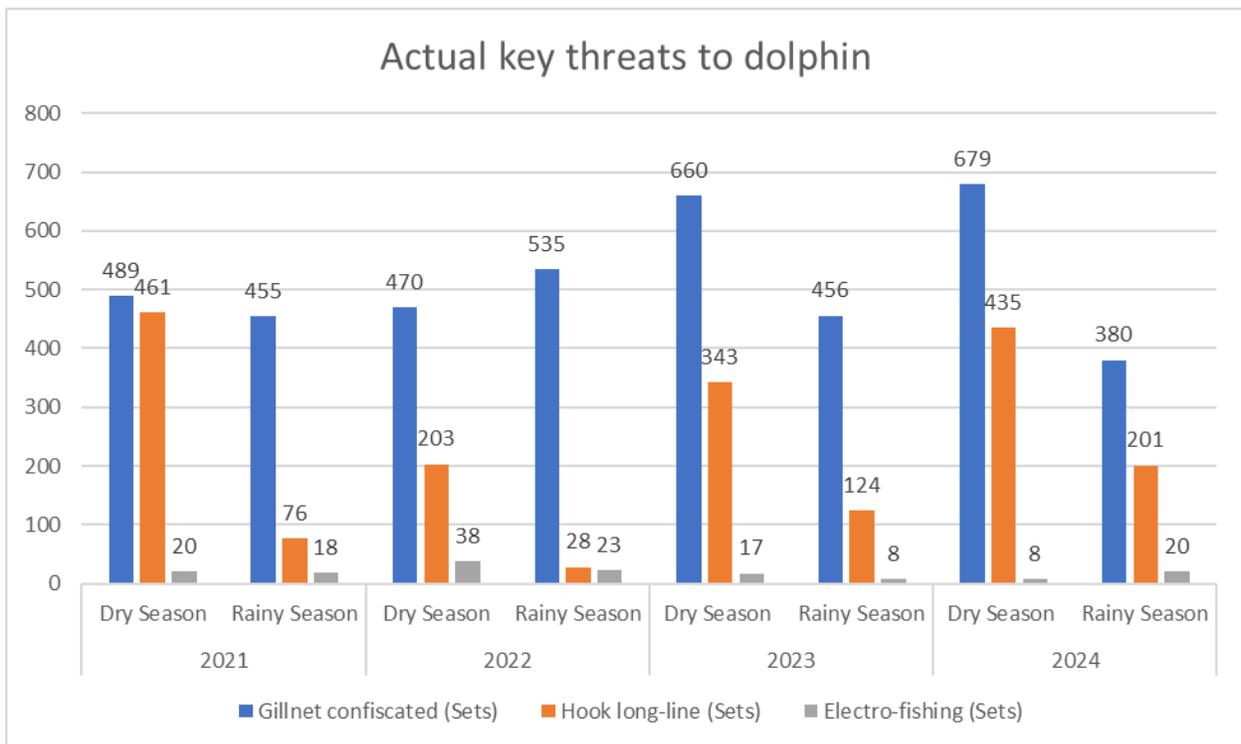


Figure 3: Key threats to dolphin based on seasons from 2021-2024

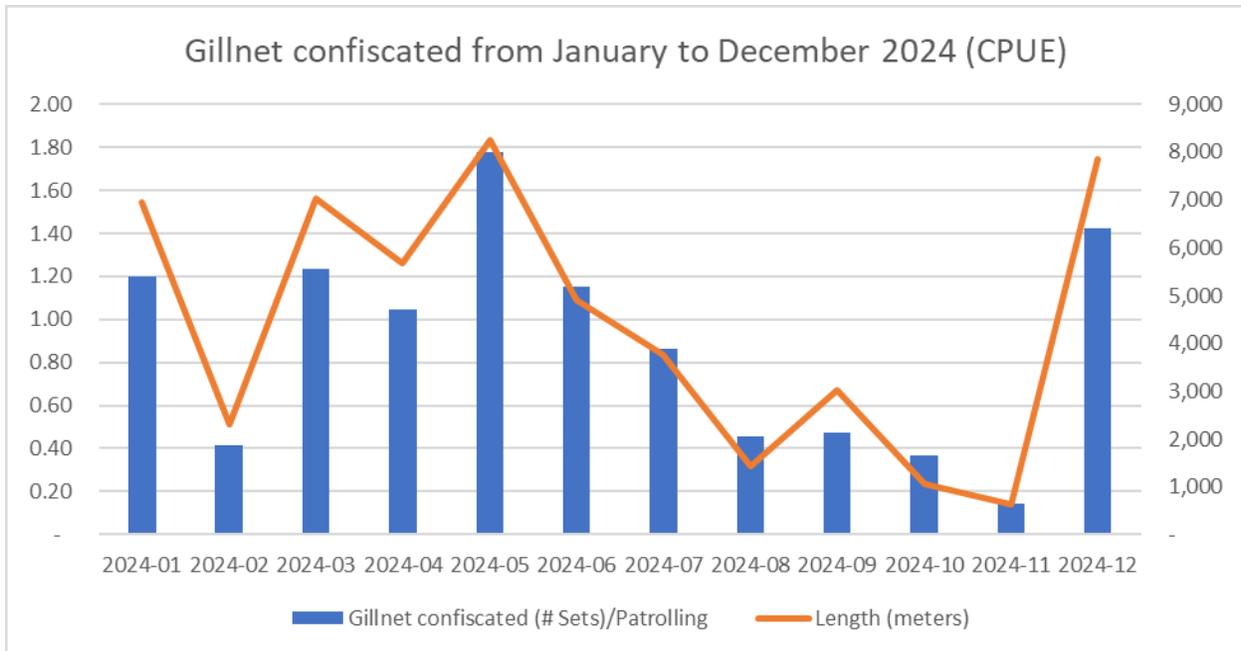


Figure 4: Key threats to dolphin specifically to gillnets from January-December 2024 -Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE)

## Eastern Plains Landscape



Image 15: Protected Area Management meeting with Provincial Department of Environment of Mondulkiri

- Protected Area Management and Law Enforcement in Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS) and Phnom Prich Wildlife sanctuary (PPWS):** Throughout the reporting period, significant progress was made in strengthening collaboration between key stakeholders. A PA management meeting at the Provincial Department of Environment (PDoE) successfully brought together PDoE leadership,

sanctuary management, project partners, and wildlife law enforcement teams. The meeting facilitated problem-solving and aligned efforts for better communication and joint action. WWF used this opportunity to monitor progress, provide updates, and ensure consistency across teams.

- **Monthly Ranger Meetings:** Ten regular monthly ranger meetings were held, including five at Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS), involving PDoE, Ministry of Environment (MoE) rangers, community rangers, and WWF staff. These meetings reviewed patrol activities and identified emerging challenges within the protected areas (PAs), ensuring that management efforts remained responsive to on-the-ground needs.
- **SMART Training for Law Enforcement Officers:** A SMART refresher training was conducted for law enforcement (LE) officers at the WWF Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL) office, with four participants. The training focused on standardized data collection, analysis, and reporting of wildlife sightings and illegal activities. This enhanced the LE team's ability to coach rangers in using SMART for evidence-based patrol strategies, which were integrated into subsequent ranger meetings.
- **Additional SMART Trainings:** Two additional SMART refresher trainings were organized for rangers, community rangers, and the mobile enforcement unit (MEU) team in PPWS and SWS, with 40 participants. These sessions provided further expertise in data collection and the use of the SMART system to improve patrol planning and decision-making.
- **SMART Focal Points Selection:** To enhance data management and decision-making, 17 participants representing 16 ranger outposts and the MEU were trained as SMART focal points. These focal points are now equipped to support the LE team and rangers with data entry, patrol planning, and report generation, which will help create more effective, evidence-based patrol strategies.
- **Law Enforcement Patrols:** Over the reporting period, 476 patrols were conducted, totaling 1,846 patrol days and 1,370 nights, covering approximately 41,280.12 kilometers across PPWS and SWS. While this is in line with the agreed patrol plan, there was a slight decrease compared to the previous semester, when 505 patrols were conducted with more extensive support.



*Image 16: Monthly ranger meeting with Srepok and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuaries to review the progress, challenges and set up the new work plan*



*Image 17: SMART Refresher training to the MoE Ranger, community ranger, Mobile Law Enforcement Unit team and SMART focal point*



*Image 18: Ranger and community rangers conducted field observation and Monitoring in Srepok and Phnom Prich*

# PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

## COOL & Solar Cambodia

### Solar PV and efficient cooling solutions for tourism industry

- WWF has made considerable advancements in solar energy and energy efficiency solutions for Cambodia’s tourism sector. The focus has shifted to off-grid solar installations and energy efficiency due to uncertainties in rooftop solar (RTS) regulations. The team has continued to engage on the RTS regulations process (capacities of 10 kWp or less), specifically the reduction in compensation tariff. Since this updated RTS tariff framework has not yet been adopted as the official standard, the team actively engages in consultation workshops of the Electricity Authority of Cambodia (EAC) to advocate for even more favourable tariffs.
- The teams have re-assessed 14 hotel facilities connected to the national grid using the new draft compensation tariff, revealing potential annual savings of \$1,000 to \$37,000 and payback periods of 3.5 to 8.5 years.



Figure 5: Summary of simple payback time and savings of each hotel, under updated tariff structure (Dec 2024)

### Community-Based Eco-Tourism (CBETs)

- Three solar systems have been successfully installed and are operational in the targeted CBETs. The systems have significantly benefited the communities by powering visitor centers, improving product quality, such as preserving food using energy-efficient refrigerators and through training activities to enhance capacity.

### Cooling audits

- The cooling energy audits for five prominent hotels in Cambodia have been completed. These hotels include Raffles Le Royal, Himawari Apartment Hotel, Sunway Hotel, and Sofitel Puketra, all located in Phnom Penh, as well as the Empress Hotel in Siem Reap. These audits were conducted by a specialist in cooling efficiency and these audits assessed system performance of the current cooling system, identified energy-saving opportunities and recommended practical improvements for sustainable and cost-effective operations.
- Three audit reports are finalized, and two are under review. Additionally, a draft of a public report titled "Air Conditioning Technologies Market Assessment for the Hospitality Sector" has also been completed and is being reviewed to provide industry insights and best practices.
- The finalized public report will be distributed to stakeholders including financial institutions and energy service companies in early 2025 to encourage the adoption of efficient cooling technologies.

### Capacity Building

- A total of 25 participants completed advanced solar engineering training, 71 members from three CBET sites trained in solar operations and maintenance, and 161 hotel staff received energy efficiency training through the CEE COMP program.
- In total, technical and management capacity was provided to 257 individuals, surpassing the project target of 100 trainees (i.e., 20 solution providers, 50 hotel staff, 30 CBET members). This included 73 women who gained energy efficiency and renewable energy skills, exceeding the target of training 50 women out of 100 trainees and promoting sustainable practices in the tourism sector.
- WWF has also begun collaborating with Swisscontact to integrate solar training into Cambodia's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools. In December, Swisscontact conducted a visit to WWF's solar installation in Kratie, together with four teachers from three TVET schools. The purpose of this visit was to observe high-quality installation and operations of the solar system, as well as their impact on the community. During the trip, the project team also visited a TVET school supported by Swiss contact in Kratie.
- This visit facilitated valuable discussions on best practices and collaboration opportunities to promote renewable energy adoption and sustainability initiatives. Both parties recognized the need for solar-specific training and are continuing discussions to establish a formal collaboration.
- WWF is working with Don Bosco Cambodia to revise its solar course to suit the Cambodian context, aiming to train Master Trainers in solar energy and build local expertise in renewable solutions.
- Negotiations are also ongoing with the Cambodia Ecotourism Network on developing joint projects in the future.



*Image 19: Mutual Visit of WWF and SwissContact to discuss specific solar course for TVET*

### **Training on solar operations and maintenance (O&M) best practices on sustainability**

- The solar training program has engaged 71 community members from the three CBETs — Koh Han, Phnom Chomroksat, and Koh Prumcharey. Participants learned to operate and maintain their solar systems, enabling them to manage their energy use independently and sustainably.
- There have been no complaints or incidents in the last 6 months, reflecting the effectiveness of regular follow-ups and community commitment.
- A notable achievement includes a women leader from Koh Han CBET being invited as a guest speaker at Cambodia Clean Energy Week, where she shared the benefits of solar energy and her role in promoting sustainable practices.
- ref:<https://kiripost.com/stories/promoting-sustainable-growth-and-community-needs-in-energy-transition>



Image 20: Koh Han CBET leader presenting positive changes of using solar system in the community, Clean Energy Week 2024

## Capacity building for women employed in tourism on energy management and entrepreneurship

- The Cambodia Energy Efficiency Competition (CEE Comp.) successfully promoted energy-efficient practices in buildings, especially in the tourism sector, through targeted capacity-building sessions.
- Six prominent hotels participated, with 161 individuals, including 41 women (25%), taking part in tailored training sessions. These sessions aimed to deepen knowledge and foster leadership in energy efficiency practices.
- A gender reflection revealed that 86% of women participants felt equally involved in energy efficiency initiatives, highlighting substantial progress in fostering inclusivity. This underscores the growing recognition of women's roles in driving sustainable energy practices in the tourism sector.
- The final winner was the hospitality school, École d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme Paul Dubrule, brought to the competition by the WWF. This outcome highlights the importance and benefits of energy efficiency in the tourism sector, aligning well with the project's goals.
- In September 2024, the Innovative Cooling Challenge was launched, marking a significant milestone in energy efficiency. Out of nine proposals submitted, five were shortlisted. These top five candidates were invited to present and debate their proposals openly and transparently. A diverse panel of judges, representing various areas of expertise including tourism, architecture, energy efficiency, and energy policy, ensured a fair and comprehensive evaluation process.
- The top three winners are the Templantation Hotel Siem Reap, Phum Khmer Lodge Siem Reap, and Six Senses Koh Krabey Island Resort. The official awarding event is set to take place in the first quarter of 2025.

## Policy framework for broad adoption of solar and energy efficiency

- WWF has continued to build on our groundwork for improved rooftop solar and energy efficiency regulations. These actions have yielded notable results. In December 2024, the Electricity Authority of Cambodia (EAC) updated its rooftop solar framework, incorporating key recommendations from WWF-KH and partners.
- These updates included lower compensation tariffs, enhanced the business case for small and medium installations, eliminated restrictions on system capacity, and exempted compensation fees for solar systems under 10 kWp, allowing businesses to scale their solar investments freely.
- A new provision on battery utilization offers exemptions for users meeting specific capacity thresholds, encouraging energy storage.
- Additionally, the EAC introduced a tariff structure that defines maximum investment costs for small, medium, and large systems, ensuring fair pricing and market stability while protecting solar consumers from overpricing.
- This change will drive the adoption of renewable energy in the tourism sector, in alignment with the Cool & Solar program. Overall, this development highlights the critical role of sound solar energy policy in enhancing sustainability in Cambodia's tourism industry.
- WWF-KH will continue to monitor implementation and support operators in their transition to solar, while advocating for further improvements in the renewable energy landscape.

## **Multi stakeholder action for solar and efficient cooling actions**

- Awareness raising of tourism sector stakeholders on the potential of energy solutions and best practices for sustainable tourism have continued. The solarized Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) initiatives were highlighted in a video that showcased the transformative impact of solar energy on communities. The video was successfully produced and widely shared during Clean Energy Week 2024, ultimately receiving 18,000 views in the first three months after its release on social media platforms. By emphasizing improved access to clean electricity and enhanced tourist services, the video inspired stakeholders to adopt renewable energy solutions more broadly.
- The team also collaborated with Energylab on a video to raise awareness on Just Energy Transition and Empower Women and local communities on clean energy topics.
  - a) *Solarized CBET Video:* <https://youtu.be/8E46uFZ3jK0?feature=shared>
  - b) *Just Energy Transition Video:* <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/18inEaGPec/>
  - c) *Empowering Women and local communities on clean energy topics:* <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19pTuVCvc5/?mibextid=wwXIff>
- From December 9th to 11th, 2024, a CBET familiarization and promotional trip was held in Stung Treng and Kratie provinces in partnership with CTF. Seven (7) local social media influencers produced videos highlighting the importance of renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and dolphin conservation. Their content reached over 66,000 views in just a month and attracted coverage from local TV channels like AMS, Rumdoul TV and SBM News, showcasing the appeal of Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) and the significance of the critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphin.
- These efforts highlight the project's success in combining clean energy advocacy, sustainable tourism promotion, and conservation awareness, furthering Cambodia's just energy transition and environmental protection goals.

## **Adoption of sustainable tourism practices through the engagement of financial institutions**

- To address financing barriers, the project reached out to financial institutions to explore green financing solutions, such as energy efficiency grants and pay-as-you-save models for investments in solar installations and cooling system upgrades.
- These approaches aim to lower upfront costs and enhance access to renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies in the tourism sector. Discussions focused on equipping financial institutions to assess clean energy projects by addressing risk mitigation, return on investment, and market growth opportunities.
- The project team worked with the Association of Banks in Cambodia (ABC) and CAPRED to support Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), aiming to improve access to tailored financing and strengthen connections between the financial and tourism sectors.

## **Awareness raising of clean energy, conservation and natural resources**

- A dissemination event is being planned in February 2025 in Siem Reap to promote the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for fostering better behaviour changes toward energy efficiency practices in tourism facilities. This event follows the participation of the hospitality school, École d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme Paul Dubrule, in CEE Comp and its success in a competition among 22 other buildings. Key stakeholders such as the Siem Reap Tourism Club, the Provincial Department of Tourism, and the École d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme Paul Dubrule Hospitality School will be engaged to enhance awareness and adoption of sustainable energy practices in the tourism sector.
- The event will emphasize practical strategies for improving energy efficiency in tourism operations, showcasing the benefits of reduced energy consumption, cost savings, and environmental protection. By providing local communities and tourism operators with actionable knowledge and tools, the event aims to inspire long-term behaviour change and reinforce sustainable energy practices.

## Sustainable Energy for the Garment Industry & Beyond

- Scale-up plan for the WoodAI app has started. The newly revised app will help us to scale to further brands. The actions aims at mitigation of risk of deforestation through garment sector can be achieved from factory level (not only through the buyer)
- Awareness of the forest wood used by garment sector is widely recognised and there is a strong commitment by corporates (fashion brands) to combat this deforestation driver. 4% of garment factories registered at TAFTAC already phase out forest wood (about 24 factories actively use the app and work with suppliers of plantation wood only) and there will be more with Ralph Lauren factories.
- SimpleE – an app for on cost and low-cost solution of energy efficiency for Tier 1 garment factories in Cambodia has been developed and piloted at 2 factories with support of WWF and H&M. It is an easy tool for factories to create road map for energy efficiency and work towards it. Tool is planned to be piloted in more factories and based on the feedback further developed
- TAFTAC recognizes the problem of forest wood fuel and is willing to promote more sustainable wood biomass among their members through the WoodAI app. A workshop will be organized at TAFTAC premises in early 2025.



*Image 21: Garment factories representatives try the woodAI app in practice*



*Image 22: App developer gives hands on training on the app to factory representatives.*

## BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH & MONITORING

### Mekong Flooded Forest

- **Wildlife Species Monitoring:** Key wildlife species showed positive trends in 2024, including the Indochinese hog deer (*Axis porcinus*, Endangered), white-shouldered ibis (*Pseudibis davisoni*, Critically Endangered), three species of vultures (*Sarcogyps calvus*, *Gyps bengalensis*, *Gyps tenuirostris*, all Critically Endangered), and river terns (Vulnerable). The hog deer population estimate is still undergoing peer review. The white-shouldered ibis population saw a 23% increase, reaching 311 birds in 2024 compared to 252 in 2021, contributing significantly to the national census of 752 birds. Both river terns and vultures showed stable populations, with 71 river terns and a total of 18 vultures recorded.
- **Mekong Dolphin Conservation:** a new population estimate for Mekong dolphins is not yet available, consultations with IUCN's Cetacean Specialist Group suggest continued threat to the population attributed to mortality rates, particularly among calves. WWF, along with FiA researchers, is working with external experts to finalize the population estimate. These findings will inform discussions at the March 2025 workshop with IUCN and the Cambodian Government.
- **Dolphin Monitoring and Mortality:** WWF, in collaboration with FiACs, River Guards, and community members, has continued monitoring dolphin calves and reporting incidents of stranded dolphins or by-catch. From July to December 2024, one new calf was recorded, bringing the total for the year to nine. During the same period, four adult dolphin mortalities were reported. Three of these were likely due to by-catch, while the cause of death for one dolphin remains uncertain due to decomposition of the carcass. These incidents underline the ongoing threats to dolphin populations in the region.



*Image 23: Hog deer captured by camera trap*



Image 24: White-shouldered ibis monitoring within SBWS in 2024

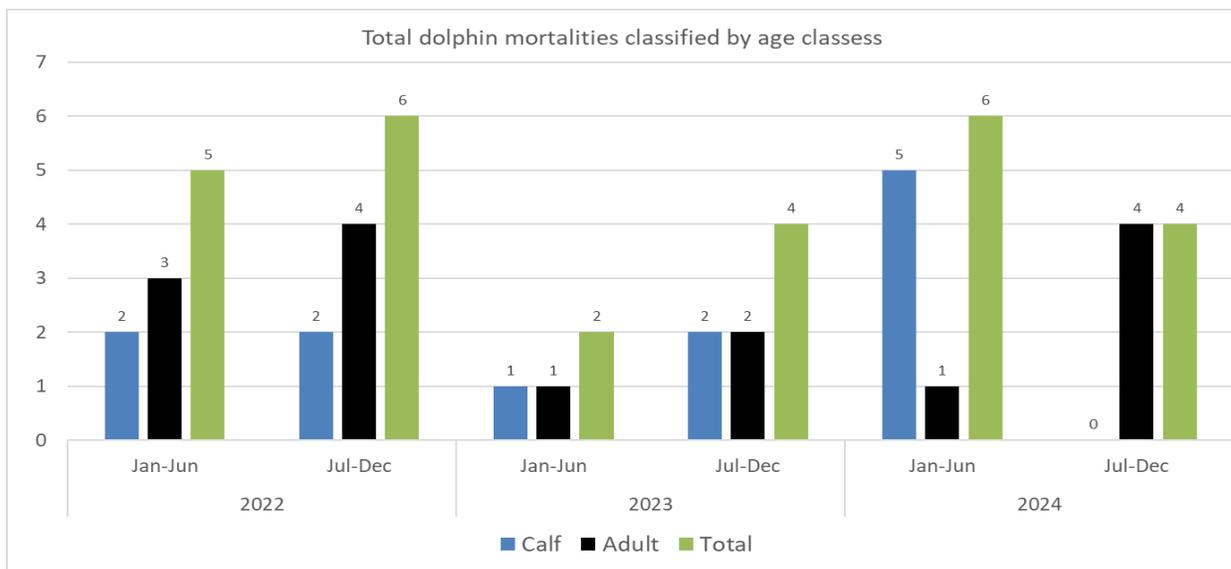


Figure 6: Total dolphin mortality classified by age classes annually from 2022-2024

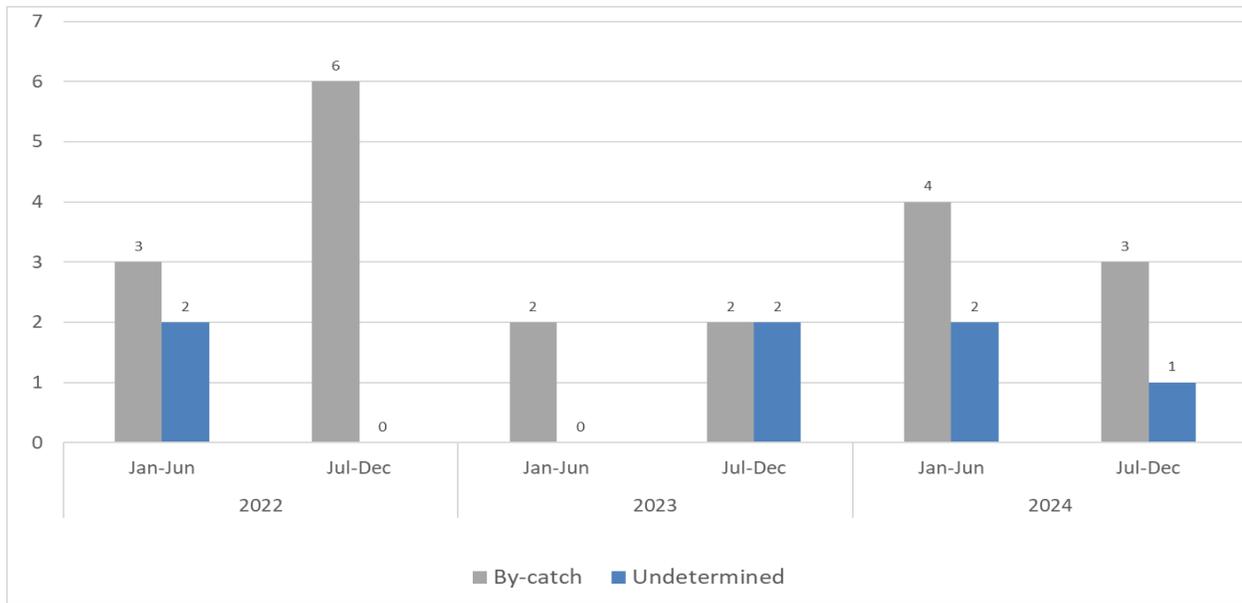


Figure 7: Investigation of dolphin mortality from 2022-2024

## Eastern Plains Landscape

- Elephant DNA Analysis:** The complex Elephant DNA analysis project continues to require expertise not available locally, necessitating frequent coordination with external organizations. A multi-institutional collaboration has been established between WWF, the Ministry of Environment (MoE), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) Conservation Genetics Laboratory, and the WildGenes Laboratory at the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS). The process is expected to begin in early February 2025 once finalized. This analysis will be crucial for understanding elephant populations in the region.
- Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) Management:** The implementation of the Conflict to Coexistence (C2C) concept continues, with ongoing efforts to engage impacted communities, local authorities, and key stakeholders. The HEC monitoring tool has been introduced to community focal points, but feedback indicates the tool needs to be updated for brevity and effectiveness. Refresher training will be conducted to ensure the tool's proper use for tracking and reporting unreported incidents. Coordination between Cambodia and Vietnam continues through monthly calls, focusing on transboundary collaboration and the co-designing process for Yok Don National Park. Although delays in the C2C implementation occurred due to revisions in the assessment questionnaire and budget approvals, immediate response plans are being prioritized to address short-term solutions in affected communities. Local communities will play a role in developing action plans, with training provided to ensure effective responses to elephant interactions.
- Rewilding of Siamese Crocodile:** The East Mekong Department has approved the implementation plan for the Srepok River, and a meeting with the MoE is planned for early February 2025. This will pave the way for the endorsement of the Siamese crocodile reinforcement plan for Srepok River in 2025 by Ministry of Environment (MoE). Meanwhile, habitat reinforcement activities, monthly patrols, and monitoring continue to protect the resident crocodile population. Illegal fishing gear and human disturbances are being cleared to ensure safe nesting conditions. Habitat protection and monitoring of the resident crocodile population have continued through monthly patrols, resulting in the recording of two new hatchlings and an adult crocodile in November 2024.

- **Vulture Restaurant Program:** The vulture restaurant program, aimed at supplementing vulture diets, continued through the provision of dead cows or goats on platforms. Four vulture restaurants were set up between August and December 2024. The program enabled monitoring of vulture populations, with the first two restaurants recording four red-headed vultures in August and three in October. In November and December, six and one red-headed vultures were observed, respectively.
- **White-shouldered Ibis Monitoring:** The national census of the white-shouldered ibis (WSI) was conducted across its habitat range from July to October 2024. In the Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL), the research team recorded eight WSI individuals in July and three in August, followed by three in September and seven in October. Notably, the research team discovered a WSI nest in Prek Prasob Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS), where two chicks were hatched and successfully fledged in December 2024.
- **River Patrols and Floating Outpost:** Monthly River patrols were conducted from July to December, with five field trips carried out by the research team. A floating ranger outpost, agreed upon by the Provincial Department of Environment (PDoE), will be established to control river access and reduce poaching. Coordination with border police and soldiers is required, though progress has been delayed due to staffing challenges and scheduling conflicts.



*Image 25: Red-headed vultures*



*Image 26: The first white-shouldered ibis nesting*



*Image 27: New Siamese crocodile hatchling recorded in Srepok river during the night survey*



*Image 28: string hook removed by research team during the river patrol*

## KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **Community Engagement:** Engaging local communities in the C2C process remains critical. However, building local ownership of mitigation solutions and ensuring the right strategies and tools are in place to address human-elephant interactions have been ongoing challenges. Illegal activities such as fishing and snaring continue to threaten crocodile habitats, requiring ongoing patrols and mitigation measures to protect these areas.
- **Wildlife Monitoring and Population Management:** While there have been positive trends in the recovery of endangered species such as the Indochinese hog deer, white-shouldered ibis, and vultures,

there are challenges in ensuring consistent monitoring. Updated population estimates are still needed for species like the Mekong Dolphin and white-shouldered ibis. For species like the Mekong dolphin, calf mortality remains a concern, affecting population growth and recruitment rates. The population's decline continues to affect ongoing conservation efforts, making it more challenging to achieve long-term sustainability. Elephant population analysis and DNA analysis have faced delays due to the complexity of the project and the need for external expertise. Coordination with external organizations while ensuring adherence to WWF's policies is an ongoing challenge.

- **Data Collection and Reporting:** Effective data collection and reporting of elephant interactions and calf mortality require up-to-date monitoring tools and proper training for community focal persons to ensure accurate reporting of incidents.
- **Dolphin Mortality and By-Catch:** Dolphin mortality remains a concern, particularly due to by-catch, despite enforcement measures being in place. The active fishing patterns vary based on seasons, times of day, and geography, affecting dolphin hotspots. Adaptive enforcement strategies have been revised and implemented, which include detecting fishing gear underwater in core zones, increased night patrolling, and the use of innovative technologies like drone-based thermal cameras for detecting fisheries. Real-time monitoring cameras are also being considered for areas of high dolphin concentration, especially in Kampi & Chroy Banteay Pool during the dry season.
- **Fundraising for Dolphin Conservation:** WWF, along with the IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group, plans to organize a Dolphin Swim event in March 2025 to raise awareness and funds for the River Guard Program. This event will also serve as an opportunity to mobilize sustainable financing for Mekong Irrawaddy dolphins and strengthen long-term fundraising mechanisms for dolphin conservation.
- **Zoning and Management Plans for PPWS and SBWS:** The development of Zoning and Management Plans for Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS) and Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary (SBWS) has not progressed as expected due to internal and external challenges. External factors involve the consultation process with Indigenous People (IPs) living adjacent to or within the sanctuary areas, which requires thorough and time-consuming community engagement to align with government zoning guidelines.
- **Community Forest (CF) Process:** The Community Forest (CF) process has been delayed due to overlapping boundaries between Mondulkiri and Kratie provinces. To resolve this, the FLO plans to discuss with the CF to relocate overlapping areas to Kratie province and arrange a meeting with the Provincial Department of Land Management to move the process forward.
- **Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) program** has faced significant delays due to issues with budget approval and the revision of assessment tools, which have impacted the timely implementation of the C2C concept and other key HEC management strategies.
- **Rewilding of Siamese Crocodile:** While progress has been made in the rewilding of Siamese crocodiles, there have been delays due to difficulties in securing official endorsement and challenges coordinating with other stakeholders.
- **Coordination with Transboundary Areas:** Ongoing cross-border coordination with Vietnam, especially in Yok Don National Park, requires careful management to ensure alignment between the two countries on engagement strategies. The co-designing concept introduced in Vietnam has proven challenging in maintaining smooth coordination.
- **Flooding and Environmental Challenges:** Flooding has hindered some field activities, including the setup of the vulture restaurant and river patrols, which in turn has impacted wildlife monitoring efforts,

delaying crucial data collection. The floating ranger outpost initiative aimed at controlling poaching has faced delays due to the logistical challenges of coordinating with multiple stakeholders, including border police and soldiers.

- **Community-Based Conservation:** Community involvement in wildlife conservation, especially for crocodile and elephant conservation, continues to be a challenge. Despite efforts to engage the local community through training and action planning, adequate support and resources are required to ensure that these efforts are effective and sustainable. Communication with remote communities is a major issue, resulting in delays in reporting incidents and a loss of trust in support services when community members do not receive timely assistance.

The challenges across MFF and EPL include coordination hurdles with external stakeholders, human-wildlife conflict management, delays in implementing key conservation actions, resource limitations, and the ongoing threat of illegal activities impacting wildlife and habitats. Addressing these challenges requires continued collaboration, adaptive management, and community engagement to ensure the long-term success of conservation efforts.

## NEXT YEAR PLAN

WWF Cambodia's work across Energy, Mekong Flooded Forest, and Eastern Plains Landscapes is envisaged to cover the following actions in the next year:

- **Restore Wetland Ecosystems:** Continue and expand the restoration of wetlands and flooded forests in the Mekong region. Focus on community-based wetland restoration projects and engage local communities in the management and conservation of flooded forests, which are critical for maintaining biodiversity and supporting local livelihoods.
- **Climate Resilience and Adaptation:** Strengthen climate adaptation measures by supporting communities living in the flooded forest areas. This includes developing sustainable livelihoods, such as eco-tourism and sustainable fisheries, to reduce dependency on unsustainable practices that damage the ecosystem.
- **Enhanced Monitoring and Research:** Increase efforts in scientific monitoring of key biodiversity species and ecosystems in the Mekong Flooded Forest landscape. This includes furthering collaborations with local universities and research institutions to gather data on species populations and ecosystem health.
- **Advocacy for Policy Integration:** Advocate for the integration of flooded forest conservation into Cambodia's national and regional climate action plans and biodiversity policies. WWF will also continue to push for the recognition of these forests' importance for carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, and biodiversity conservation in government development plans.
- **Conservation of Key Habitats:** Focus on the conservation of critical habitats in the Eastern Plains, including savannas, grasslands, and forests. This involves the continued implementation of landscape restoration initiatives, ensuring that degraded areas are restored through native replanting and soil conservation practices.
- **Wildlife Protection:** Strengthen wildlife protection programs by enhancing patrolling and anti-poaching efforts, particularly for endangered species such as the Indochinese tiger and Asian elephant. Work with local communities to enhance wildlife monitoring and community-led conservation efforts.
- **Community-based Sustainable Land Use:** Promote sustainable agricultural practices and eco-friendly land management in the Eastern Plains, focusing on agroforestry and sustainable cattle grazing. Engage local farmers in developing sustainable farming models that reduce deforestation pressures.
- **Policy Engagement for Land Use Management:** Continue advocating for better land use policies and forest management regulations in the Eastern Plains. This will include working with local and national government bodies to ensure that land tenure and conservation goals are aligned, allowing for community-led land use decisions.
- **Develop and Support Ecotourism:** Work with communities to develop ecotourism opportunities that promote sustainable visitation to the Eastern Plains landscape. This would help generate alternative livelihoods and fund conservation efforts while providing environmental education to tourists.
- **Advocate for Energy Policy Reform:** Continue working with the Cambodian government and relevant stakeholders to advocate for better energy policies, focusing on further improving solar energy regulations, energy efficiency standards, and clean energy incentives. This includes lobbying for more favorable tariffs for solar energy, especially for small- and medium-scale installations.

- **Expand Renewable Energy Access:** Scale up the installation of off-grid solar energy solutions in rural and remote communities, especially in regions where access to electricity is limited. The focus will be on providing solar solutions for conservation needs, and community facilities.
- **Promote Energy Efficiency:** Enhance energy efficiency initiatives, particularly in the tourism and industrial sectors, by rolling out tailored training and capacity-building programs for businesses. This includes promotion of energy-efficient practices and providing incentives for businesses to adopt energy-saving technologies.
- **Integration of Renewable Energy in Education:** Collaborate with TVET schools (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) to integrate solar training programs and energy efficiency education to build local technical capacity. Develop training modules for Master Trainers in solar energy.
- **Develop Financing Models for Energy Transition:** Continue to work with financial institutions to develop and promote green financing solutions for clean energy projects, such as pay-as-you-save models for solar installations and cooling system upgrades.

In the upcoming year, WWF Cambodia will focus on scaling up its energy program to promote sustainable energy solutions, increasing efforts in wetland and habitat restoration in the Mekong Flooded Forest, and conserving biodiversity in the Eastern Plains Landscapes. These actions align with WWF's broader goal of fostering sustainable development, enhancing climate resilience, and promoting the conservation of Cambodia's natural resources. By integrating these efforts into local communities' development plans, WWF aims to ensure long-term environmental and social benefits across the country.

End of Document