

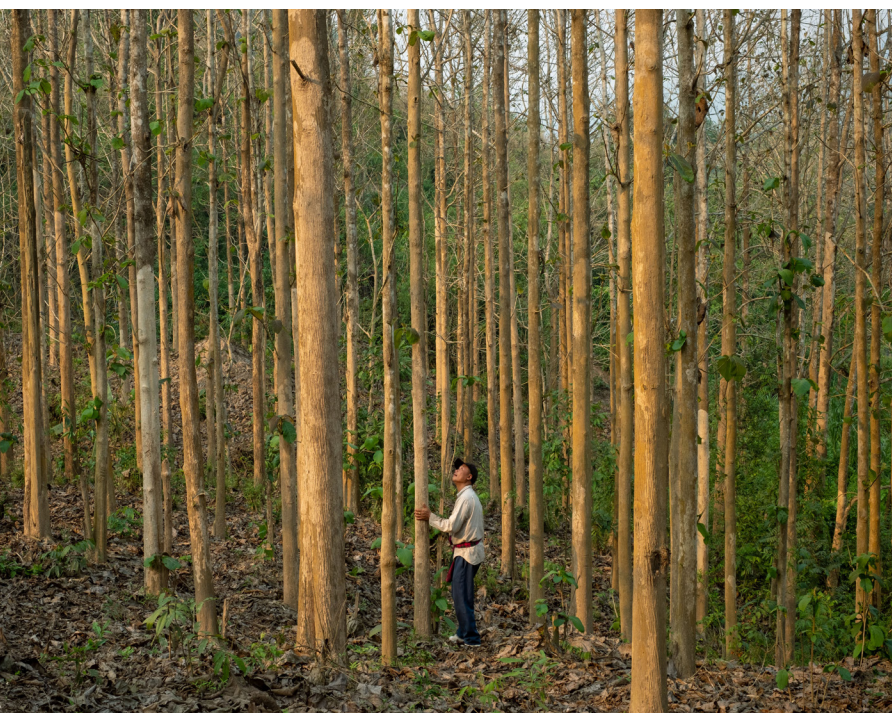
CAMBODIA



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE AND FORESTS (RECOFTC) – PHASE II RESILIENT FOREST LANDSCAPES: EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES, STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONS, AND SHARED PROSPERITY



Lao PDR - a smallholder inspects his teak plantation in Bokeo
Photo@RECOFTC

BACKGROUND

The Mekong region is growing richer and more integrated through a nexus of economic, energy, agricultural, and transport initiatives. This brings great opportunities for communities, countries, and beyond but comes with unsettling risks. Forests are cut down, burned, or degraded. Environments are destroyed as human and natural thresholds are surpassed. Carbon emissions continue to rise as climate impacts and disasters hit more frequently. Local people are often cut off from the benefits of development but bear the greatest risks. Many – especially women, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable populations – have had their lives upended by forces beyond their control, and millions more are at risk of poverty, displacement, strife, conflict, and tragedy. Nevertheless, moments of great turbulence also offer hope for positive transformations. Community forestry (CF) has

proven to be a sustainable way to improve forest management, strengthen local livelihoods, and mitigate impacts of climate change.

This project forms an integral part of the Swiss Cooperation Programme in the Mekong Region 2022-25.

OBJECTIVES

RECOFTC envisions a world where empowered local people are effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forest landscapes. To achieve these targeted results, RECOFTC has defined four interlinking goals in its Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (SP):

Goal 1: Landscape collaboration in a changing climate: Rights of local people in forest landscapes are protected, exercised, and compensated through collaborative landscape management.

Goal 2: Governance, institutions and conflict transformation: Enhanced forestry sector good governance will result in the effective transformation and prevention of conflict through strong institutions, inclusive relationships, targeted strategies, services, and skills.

Goal 3: Private sector engagement and enterprising communities: Economic value of forest landscapes for local people is increased through sustainable investment and community-based enterprises (CBEs).

Goal 4: Social inclusion, gender equity and public action: Empowered women, youth, indigenous people and other vulnerable groups' participation changes public awareness and norms to support people-centred landscape policies and practices.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE:

Duration

Previous phases: 2013 - 2018
Phase II: Dec 2018 - Dec 2023

Budget

Total budget:
USD 38,000,000
Swiss contribution:
CHF 4,300,000

Implementing Agency

The Center for People and Forests
(RECOFTC)

Other partners

- Swedish International
Development Cooperation Agency
(SIDA)
- Royal Thai Government

Imprint

Swiss Cooperation Office and
Consular Agency SDC
50, Street 334, Boeung Keng
Kang, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Email: phnompenh@eda.admin.ch
Web: www.eda.admin.ch/cambodia

March 2022

EXPECTED RESULTS

RECOFTC's five-year mission is to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improved governance, and fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forest landscapes in the Mekong region. RECOFTC's continued efforts not only help to secure rights and more equitable benefits for local communities but also contribute to significant progress towards climate change mitigation/adaptation efforts and the Sustainable Development Goals.

RECOFTC partners with over 250,000 local groups to improve the lives of 600,000 people; contribute to the legal recognition of a total of 5.5 million hectares of forest land; strengthen over 10,000 communities, 1,000 businesses and 70 government institutions to help transform forest-based conflicts into landscape processes and decisions that will ensure rights of local people and improve forest governance; work with over 300 CBEs and seven larger private companies to help improve market access of CBEs.

APPROACH

SDC seeks to ensure that smallholder farmers (men and women) living in or near forests in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam, especially those belonging to ethnic minorities or indigenous people (IP), have secure and equitable access to and control over agricultural land and forest resources.

RECOFTC is an international not-for-profit organization that specializes in capacity building for CF. They play a key role in empowering rural people to equitably engage in the sustainable management of thriving, climate-resilient forest landscapes, forest governance, and livelihood improvement of people with secured access to land and sustainably managed forests. With this aim, RECOFTC works with public and private stakeholders to improve practices, policies, and institutions for CF and forest management in the region.

SDC supports RECOFTC with a core contribution for the implementation of its Strategic Plan. In doing so, SDC focuses on improving RECOFTC's capacity to promote and monitor better forest governance and stronger tenure rights for local communities with gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of IPs to ensure an increased share of benefits for local people from diversified CF practices and private sector engagement, and to establish a stronger presence in the Mekong region.

KEY RESULTS AND INSIGHTS FROM PREVIOUS PHASES

SDC is supporting RECOFTC since its foundation in 1987; after a brief interruption in 2006, SDC re-initiated its support in 2012 and successfully supported the implementation of RECOFTC's Strategic Plan 2013-2018. By supporting governmental, non-governmental, and community partners, RECOFTC has shown that CF and related approaches can deliver results that improve livelihoods and safeguard the environment. Key results during the 2013-2018 programme phase were:

- In Lao PDR and Myanmar, national CF working groups were established, while the existing one in Cambodia was strengthened. Regionally, ASEAN incorporated the Working Group on Social Forestry, a formal policy-setting body for the region, within its overall structure. RECOFTC plays a key facilitation role for these bodies.
- The enactment of over 17 forest governance policies and legal instruments: In Cambodia, the guidelines for community protected areas were enacted in 2017, allowing communities to secure tenure over forests in designated protected areas. In Lao PDR, village forestry has been recognized as an essential component for the sustainable management of forests. In Myanmar, approved revisions of the CF instruction in 2016 broadened the legal scope for forest governance by strengthening CF, and encouraging women's leadership in management committees. CF networks were established or strengthened in Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam.
- RECOFTC trained over 24,500 participants and worked with partners to support 390 forestry groups comprising 75,000 households and 270,000 ha of forest land.

TARGET GROUPS AND PROJECT LOCATION

RECOFTC's main office is in Bangkok, with national offices in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam. Beneficiaries of the contribution will be policy and decision makers, as well as practitioners in governmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations, which included local communities who live in and around community forestry land, small-scale forest-based enterprises and marginalized groups such as IP and women in the Asia-Pacific and Mekong region.