

Forest monitoring in Prey Lang, Preah Rokar and Sorng Rokha Vorn wildlife sanctuaries

3rd Monitoring Report
- Executive summary



The third monitoring report of the CEEJA project aims to present the findings of community and satellite monitoring in three wildlife sanctuaries: Prey Lang, Preah Rokar and Sorng Rokha Vorn, and to evaluate the performance of REDD+ projects in Cambodia.

Cambodia lost 104,000 ha of tree cover in 2022, equivalent to 1.2% of its total area. 37% of the tree cover loss occurred inside protected areas.

CEEJA is a 5-year action funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium of civil society organizations and educational institutions.

Communities participating in the project use a smartphone application to collect data on the ground, and state-of-the-art satellite monitoring approaches to detect forest loss and degradation.

KEY FINDINGS

• **Prey Lang Wildlife Sanctuary lost more than 8,600 ha of tree cover in 2022**, a 22.4% decrease since 2021, but still a high amount. The Prey Lang Community Network (PLCN) documented 3,698 entries, mostly related to illegal logging and forest resources. Multiple illegal timber transport cases were recorded at the banks of the Mekong River, in Preah Prasob district and Vattanak commune. PLCN also identified areas marked by loggers before the actual logging operation took place, showing the potential of community monitoring for forest protection.

• **Preah Rokar Wildlife Sanctuary experienced a tree cover loss of 426 ha in 2022**, a 51% decrease compared to 2021. The Prey Preah Rokar Forest Community Network (PFCN) recorded 330 entries, mostly related to resin trees and illegal logging, specifically single stumps of luxury timber. PFCN also intercepted and confiscated illegal logging activity on a regular basis.

• **Sorng Rokha Vorn Wildlife Sanctuary lost 28 ha of its tree cover in 2022**, a 33% decrease since 2021. The Monk Community Forest (MCF) recorded 23 entries, mostly related to valuable resources and illegal activities. MCF also fostered positive relationships with the authorities due to the respected status of monks in the country.

• **REDD+ projects in Cambodia have failed to deliver their promises of reducing deforestation and carbon emissions.** Both Tumring and Stung Treng REDD+ projects have experienced **substantial forest loss and degradation**, leading to an **increase in carbon emissions**. Market-based approaches are commodifying nature, enabling exploitation, and neglecting the rights and livelihoods of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

The authors recommend to:

• **Support community monitoring as an effective and participatory way of forest protection.**

Community networks should be recognized and empowered by the authorities, and provided with adequate resources and training to conduct their monitoring activities.

• **Reform REDD+ projects to ensure their environmental and social integrity.**

REDD+ projects should be transparent and accountable, and adhere to strict social and environmental safeguards. REDD+ projects should also address the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and ensure the participation and benefit-sharing of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

Prey Lang Community Network urges the Cambodian government to take action against the rampant deforestation and forest crime in the area. They recommended four actions: revoking mining concessions from companies that violated agreements, supervising and evaluating officials who were involved in corruption and negligence, inspecting and developing strategic plans to combat various illegal activities that threatened wildlife and biodiversity, and implementing new regulations and laws for forest protection.



**"WE
TOGETHER
PROTECT
PREY LANG
FOREST,
IT IS OUR
FOREST TOO"**



Phnom Penh,
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