

Finding protected area funding solutions

IUCN discusses protected areas funding with the Lao PDR Government and non-governmental organisations

Vientiane, Lao PDR, October 10, 2008 (IUCN) – IUCN Lao PDR together with the Lao PDR Government's partner, the Department of Forestry, and other stakeholders from key line agencies, academic institutions and WWF held the inception meeting last month to discuss the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in Lao PDR.

The central theme of this project is developing a sustainable financing framework for securing funding of National Protected Areas (NPAs) in Lao PDR.

Limited funding is considered one of the bottlenecks for Lao PDR's protected area management system as it contributes to ineffective management and capacity building on the ground.

Management of NPAs has been intermittently funded through mixed sources including the Lao PDR Government's source and donors' funds.

The Programme of Works on the Protected Areas (PoWPA) is a two-year project which aims to developing a sustainable financing mechanism, addressing capacity building and creating better governance for the NPA management system. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), together with other parallel funding to complement this work.

The PoWPA also focuses on training in developing NPA management and business plans for NPA managers, and forming a core team of NPA professionals who consist of various disciplinary subjects.

The Lao PDR Government has targeted on three of 92 themes of the programme for the first country project phase.

Eighteen NPAs of Lao PDR were established under the Prime Minister's Decree 164 in 1993. Two more areas were added in 1995 and 1996 respectively. Recently Nam Kan provincial protected area in Bokeo province was declared as NPA by the Prime Minister Decree 163/PM dated September 19, 2008 making the current system of 21 NPAs. Together with two established corridors the NPA system accounts for 14.9% of the country land area.

This system is governed through a series of legislations including the Law on Aquatic and Wild Animals and the revised Forestry Law, adopted in 2007.

During the meeting, participants discussed the PoWPA technical support implementation partnership structure to ensure the smooth and effective implementation.

