



PROGRAM DOCUMENT

François' Langur Community-based Conservation Program

- Location:** Khuon Ha and Thuong Lam communes, Lam Binh district and Sinh Long commune, Na Hang district, Tuyen Quang province, Vietnam
- Goal:** Ensure the long-term survival of the Francois Langur in Vietnam by maintaining a viable population in the Lam Binh/ Sinh Long landscape
- Objectives:** Engage local people in co-management of the Lam Binh and Sinh Long watershed forests leading to conservation of the last known viable population of the globally Endangered François' Langur in Vietnam, and promoting conservation of biodiversity and forest values through the establishment of a pilot community-based conservation area in the landscape.

Program basis and background

The Lam Binh/ Sinh Long karst forest landscape comprises high value forests holding critical habitat for the endangered François' Langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*), and other species including Chinese Pangolin, Himalayan Bear, Lesser Leaf-nosed Bat, Parti-coloured Flying Squirrel, and possibly Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey. The landscape is within the 'Na Hang / Ba Be Conservation Complex', with central coordinates E 105° 24.00' N 22° 30.00'. It includes more than 25,000 ha of forest terrain, of which three annexed sites are of particular importance: Thuong Lam of 4,659 ha; Khuong Ha of 3,230 ha, and Sinh Long of 13,776 ha, and proposed to pilot a community-based conservation area.

Threats to the biodiversity at the site include shifting agriculture, unsustainable gathering of non-timber forest products, illegal hunting and trapping wildlife, and logging of timber. There is no targeted biodiversity conservation action taking place at the site and its management as a watershed conservation area is weak and non-supportive of needed biodiversity conservation measures.

Since about 2011, PRCF has been working in the Lam Binh/ Sinh Long landscape to involve local communities in direct conservation of the endangered François' Langur and its sustaining habitat. The site holds the largest known and still viable population of the species in Vietnam. Initially a small project, the effort is now becoming a long-term technical assistance program, in which PRCF will mentor and support the Lam Binh/ Sinh Long community to define and establish a pilot community-based conservation area. This will include working with local government organizations to endorse project results, such as the feasibility study and investment plan to establish the pilot protected area, for management by the Lam Binh/ Sinh Long community.

The main output of this project/ program is to establish a pilot community-based conservation area in the Lam Binh/ Sinh Long landscape, supported by the facilitation of training to selected community-officers charged with conservation management, provision of facilities and equipment to enable conservation management, and planning establishment of tools to help advance community-led conservation management, all following national guidelines and regulations. Supported through PRCF core funds, together with private and institutional grants, gifts, and donations to the foundation, PRCF has pledged involvement at the site for between eight and twelve years to provide needed technical assistance to see the co-management pilot at Lam Binh/ Sinh Long succeed.

Previous relevant work at the site

Previous PRCF projects supporting the present conservation endeavor, by establishing foundations for co and collaborative management at the site, have included:

- (a) Community-based planning of the Lam Binh Forest Area François' Langur Conservation Landscape, Tuyen Quang Province, Vietnam - funded by Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF).
- (b) Sustainably funded community based conservation of the largest known remaining population of the globally Endangered François' Langur in Vietnam - funded by the IUCN Save Our Species fund.
- (c) Involvement local people to conservation François' Langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*) and to manage Lam Binh watershed protection forest – funded by McKnight Foundation

Program Rationale

The project/ program herein takes the opportunity to create a pilot model of community-managed forests for this key biodiversity area, harnessing the opportunity for sustainable funding from payments for forest environmental services. Experiences and lessons learned from this project will contribute to the ongoing development of national policy on community-managed forests, benefit-sharing, and co and collaborative management of natural resources and biodiversity. PRCF is participating in the Indigenous Peoples' and Local Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCA) Consortium. The project will take use of experiences gained from other countries in the ICCA network as an additional factor to secure project approach is in compliance with regional experiences.

This project/ program comprises a larger PRCF initiative targeting conservation of the endangered François' Langur and its habitat, through engaging local communities in direct conservation of the species and forest resources in the Lam Binh and Sinh Long watershed area. A number of baseline activities have already taken place to prepare and strengthen the capacity of local people to plan and carry out conservation management work. These have included conservation awareness, habitat mapping, and species conservation monitoring as working foundations to build from and to support conservation management. With working foundations already in place and supported by institutional arrangements and financial measures, PRCF aims now to legitimize the community-based management approach at Lam Binh, by helping to establish pilot community-based conservation area to protect the last known viable population of François' Langur in Vietnam, and to establish a working precedent for community managed protected areas in Vietnam. Using established links between conservation work, local communities, and payment for environmental services, the approach offers sustainability measures for conservation management that could be replicated elsewhere in Vietnam.

It is prime time to promote the proposed conservation model, as the Vietnamese government is looking into various forms of community-based forest and biodiversity management initiatives, and is in process or revising its Forest Protection and Development Law. The pilot will provide feedback and information to government agencies charged to examine the new Forestry Law, through direct policy dialogue facilitated by the Vietnam National Parks and Protected Areas Association, and People and Nature Reconciliation, which are partners to PRCF in project implementation