

Impact Spotlight

Keo Seima REDD+ Project
Q3 2021

EVER
LAND



Wildlife
Conservation
Society



Conservation rice enterprise expands to the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary



IBIS Rice is a Wildlife Conservation Society initiative unique to the Northern Plains, successfully connecting conservation outcomes with economic incentives. Launched in 2010, it provides communities motivation to engage in conservation, offering 1,500 wildlife-friendly farmers a premium for organic jasmine rice.

Farmers commit to no logging, hunting, or pesticides, protecting the landscape and its species. The rice is sold globally at a higher premium and provides a win-win scenario for communities and conservation, helping to diminish poverty and reducing deforestation by 75% where IBIS Rice farmers work. This program has proven successes in the Cambodian Northern Plains Landscape and is now being expanded into the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION





Key activities

The model of the IBIS Rice program is simple: farmers grow rice according to international organic standards and agree to conservation commitments. In return, they are offered premium prices for their harvest.

Core to ensuring IBIS Rice's conservation impacts are successful are the Internal Control System (ICS) and compliance monitoring programs. Farmers are supported to achieve organic certification by external inspection, in harvesting and selling compliant products, and with preparations for the next growing season.

The ICS and compliance monitoring ensure conservation rules are followed, whilst organic certification increases the value of the product, allowing IBIS Rice to buy at a greater premium, increasing farmer incomes.





Milestones



In KSWs, the IBIS Rice program is currently active in 3 REDD+ villages: Pu Kong, Pu Char and Ou Chra, with a total of 79 farmer households having joined the program and 13 successfully selling to IBIS Rice already.

The target area forms a deforestation frontier spreading into KSWs. Although early in project implementation, the program has likely already reduced some deforestation and has provided increased income to farmers.



Current news

This initiative is important to local farmers, who receive capacity building, agricultural support, and a higher income as a result of participating. It also plays a significant role in the project's long-term strategy for achieving durable forest conservation, as incentivizing farmers to follow compliance rules has a demonstrable impact of reducing deforestation in areas where IBIS Rice is implemented.

Farmers have begun the organic certification process in this quarter, which will ultimately lead to even higher prices for their produce. Sansom Mlup Prey (SMP) - a Cambodian NGO focused on developing sustainable, organic, and wildlife friendly agricultural systems that helped launch the IBIS Rice program - has submitted a proposal to the KSWs REDD+ program to expand the pilot program into an additional 4 villages.





The future



The IBIS Rice program has demonstrated clear conservation and development impact in the Northern Plains, backed up by independent research showing increased well-being. In KSW, the program can be expanded further to positively impact more farmers, villages, and forests with this proven model. IBIS Rice plans to expand into 4 new villages (total 7) in the next 12 months. This initiative will help landscape-scale reductions in logging, hunting, pesticide use, poverty, and deforestation, leading to happy, healthy communities and forests.