

Impact Spotlight

Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project Q1 2023





SPOTLIGHT SUMMARY

“Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is a principle based on the collective right of communities to participate in decision-making and to give or withhold their consent to activities affecting their lands, territories and resources or rights in general. Consent must be freely given, obtained prior to implementation of activities and be founded upon an understanding of the full range of issues implicated by the activity or decision in question; hence the formulation: free, prior and informed consent.” - UN-REDD

The Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project successfully conducted its FPIC process for its 4th Monitoring Report (M4), starting February 15, 2023 and was completed by May 5, 2023. The FPIC process has been implemented on a continuous basis since the project began, emphasizing the importance of engaging local community members and indigenous people, and prioritizing their inclusion in the ongoing decision making and governance of the project. This is vital to the project’s ability to successfully deliver the promise of REDD+ in collaboration with the forest dependent communities. For M4, FPIC meetings were held in all 29 communities, reaching almost 1200 community members, an 18% increase compared to the last round of meetings conducted in the third monitoring period.

“We believe that the community deserves to receive up to date information from the project implementers and we want them to have the agency to give us suggestions and comments, so we can work together and properly meet their needs.”
- Sokun Hort, Wildlife Alliance Community Engagement Manager



TARGET 16.8





KEY ACTIVITIES

FPIC meetings are public gatherings inside the villages. These locations are accessible by all villagers and create a space for community members to give or withhold consent to project activities that may affect them and allows them to openly negotiate the conditions under which the project is designed and implemented. For the Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project, invitations and announcements to participate in the FPIC consultation meetings are done through official letters of invitation to commune chiefs, district governors and provincial governors, with follow-up phone calls to community leaders.

FPIC meetings are made available and accessible to all community members in all 29 communities within the project area, without any restriction. For this round of FPIC, invitations were sent to 3 provincial governors, 7 district governors and 13 commune chiefs informing them about the FPIC meetings that would be organized in their communities and requesting their participation and support in inviting concerned communities to join.

FPIC MEETING AGENDA

1. Register names of participants - document who is in attendance + their contact information, ask them to sign the list of participants;
2. Introductions of the community engagement team, who they are, how they can communicate with the project;
3. Remarks by community representatives and village chiefs or elders;
4. Conduct pre-test questionnaires about community understanding of REDD+, FPIC and grievance mechanisms;
5. Intro to climate change, adaptation and mitigation;
6. Overview of the Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project;
7. Overview of Wildlife Alliance;
8. Questions from the Community.





WHY FPIC MEETINGS ARE IMPORTANT

FPIC meetings are important because they provide a transparent space for community members to continuously give or withhold their consent and the opportunity to play an active role in negotiating the conditions under which the project is implemented and adapted. FPIC meetings are also important because they help community members understand the importance of conserving the forest and biodiversity and the critical role that these efforts play in mitigation against natural disasters such as extreme heat, drought and storm. The meetings also outline concrete actions community members can take in line with the project's theory of change, such as using renewable energy instead of fossil fuel, applying proper waste management and using organic pesticides and fertilizers for agriculture.

Climate adaptation activities facilitated by the project are also discussed, including the building of water storing facilities, adoption of climate smart agriculture techniques, low water intake irrigation systems for agriculture and uptake of sustainable food consumption behaviors.

The meetings also serve as a place for communities to better understand the root causes of deforestation such as illegal logging, illegal forest land grabbing for ownership, illegal poaching and poor community livelihood.

The meetings are also utilized to inform communities about the benefits the project is providing through its core community-based activities, such as:

- ✓ Community based ecotourism projects,
- ✓ Community based agriculture projects,
- ✓ Improved local physical infrastructure such construction of water wells, roads, bridge, school, toilets, street lights, health posts
- ✓ Awareness raising and sensitization events: community night shows, Wildlife Tour and science shows, zero-snaring campaign
- ✓ REDD+ Education scholarships for youth living in the project area.





MILESTONES

FPIC meetings invite communities to play an active role in local forest and biodiversity conservation activities by ensuring that their collective rights to participate in the decision-making process are realized. These meetings help communities understand exactly how the project is addressing the drivers of deforestation through investments in sustainable livelihoods programs, environmental awareness raising, improved access to education, food security initiatives, and access to health and well-being services.

Since starting FPIC meetings, the project has seen an increase in the number of participants from communities, as well as more open communications between communities and Wildlife Alliance. Through more frequent engagements with the project's community engagement team, the communities have gained a deeper understanding of the project and the vital role they play in its long term success.





CURRENT NEWS

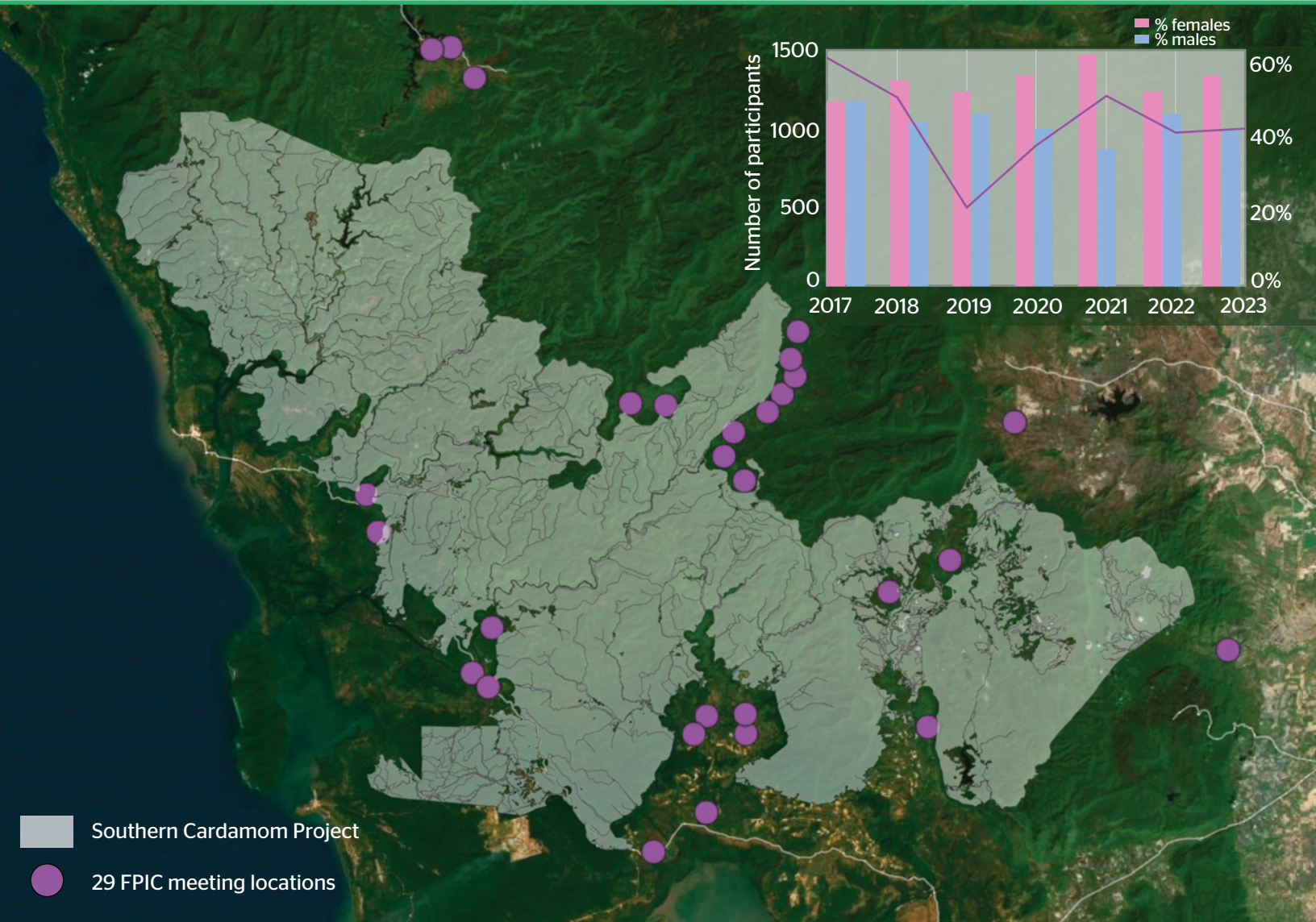
During the 29 FPIC meetings for the project's 4th Monitoring Report, the Southern Cardamom Community Engagement Team informed communities about the coming fourth verification field audit visit (M4). Most importantly, the team confirmed with communities that they maintained their consent for the project implementation to continue.

Communities were also reminded that the project has a grievance mechanism in place so if the members have any suggestions, comments, or complaints about the project, they can easily communicate this to Wildlife Alliance at any point in time during the project's lifetime. This feedback can be delivered via a phone call or in the form of a letter to be dropped in one of the grievance boxes that have been installed in all 29 communities throughout the project area. The Project's community engagement team can also be reached via messenger and email. Contact information can be found in the print-out project description summary distributed to villagers who came to FPIC meetings.





FPIC MEETING LOCATIONS



■ Southern Cardamom Project
● 29 FPIC meeting locations



THE FUTURE

Now the communication between communities and project implementer has reached a stable stage a community outreach network is being set up, scheduled to be completed by June 2023. One volunteer per village is being identified to join this network. This will serve as an important communication channel through which communities can easily engage with the project on an on-going basis. The network will also become an important tool for collecting information useful for the Community Engagement Team and their role in organizing effective FPIC meetings in the future