

Restoring ecosystems for sustainable development in the Tonle Sap Basin and Siem Reap/Phnom Kulen landscape (ERIP)

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Position Information

Job Title:	Gender and Safeguard Officer (National)
Reports to:	Project Manager
Contract Type:	Individual Contractor (IC)
Classified Level:	Officer
Duration:	01 January 2026 – 30 December 2026
Duty Station:	Phnom Penh, with frequent travels to project sites

2. Background

The Tonle Sap Basin (TSB), encompassing 85,790 km² across seven provinces in Cambodia, is home to approximately 4 million people, many of whom rely on the basin's rich biodiversity and ecosystem services for their livelihoods. However, the region faces severe environmental degradation, with over 1.7 million hectares of forest lost between 2006 and 2022 due to illegal logging, agricultural expansion, infrastructure development, and climate change. This degradation threatens biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the cultural heritage of the area, including the Angkor Archaeological Area¹.

Despite government efforts—such as logging bans, protected area expansion, and reforestation targets—underlying socio-economic drivers of deforestation persist. These include poverty, unsustainable agricultural practices, weak governance, and limited financial and institutional capacity. The degradation has disproportionately impacted vulnerable groups, including women and Indigenous Peoples, who depend heavily on natural resources.

The Steung Siem Reap (SSR) watershed, which includes Phnom Kulen National Park and flows into Tonle Sap Lake, has been identified as a flagship site for restoration due to its ecological, cultural, and economic significance. The area is also central to Cambodia's tourism industry and holds spiritual importance for the Khmer people.

Project Objectives

The overarching objective of the ERIP is to generate climate, environmental, and socio-economic benefits at scale by enabling integrated, collaborative management of degraded watershed systems in the Tonle Sap Basin. This includes:

- Restoring ecosystem functionality and biodiversity conservation.

¹ Cambodia National BD Status Report 2016

- Enhancing community livelihoods and resilience to climate change.
- Promoting sustainable land and water uses mechanisms.
- Contributing to Cambodia's national and international environmental commitments.

The project aligns with Cambodia's Circular Economy Strategy (2023–2028) and the Pentagonal Strategy Phase I, targeting the "Green" and "Sustainable" pillars, which emphasize reforestation, conservation, and inclusive economic development.

Approach and Strategies

The ERIP adopts a three-component strategy to address the drivers of land degradation and promote sustainable watershed management:

1. Policy and Capacity Development

- Integrated Planning: Develop an Integrated Tonle Sap Basin Management Plan (ITSBMP) and policy briefs to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services into national and sub-national land-use planning.
- Decision Support Tools: Enhance the Cambodia Environmental Management Information System (CEMIS) with gender-responsive indicators and data-driven tools for adaptive management.
- Coordination Platforms: Revitalize the Tonle Sap Authority and establish multi-stakeholder watershed forums to ensure inter-sectoral and vertical coordination.
- Capacity Building: Train government officials and community leaders on integrated watershed management (IWM), participatory planning, and environmental safeguards.

2. Financing and Livelihoods

- Innovative Financing: Operationalize a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme in the SSR watershed, supported by transparent financial mechanisms and public-private-community partnerships (PPCPs) and support result-based payment.
- Restoration Investments: Implement nature-based solutions (NbS) such as reforestation, agroforestry, and wetland restoration across the SSR watershed.
- Livelihood Diversification: Promote sustainable livelihoods through agroforestry, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and community-based ecotourism (CBET), including the development of "green destinations" linked to the tourism sector.
- Gender and Inclusion: Ensure equitable participation and benefits for women, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable groups through targeted training and enterprise support.

3. Knowledge and Communication

- Knowledge Management: Establish systems to capture and disseminate lessons learned, integrating traditional knowledge and scientific research.
- Global Engagement: Participate in the ERIP Global Coordination Project's Community of Practice to share and adopt best practices.
- Awareness Campaigns: Conduct outreach to raise awareness of ecosystem services and promote behavioral change among communities and stakeholders.

This integrated approach aims to restore ecosystem health, enhance resilience, and demonstrate scalable models for sustainable watershed management that can be replicated across Cambodia and the Mekong region.

3. Scope of Work

With guidance from and directly reporting to the Project Manager, and working closely with the Project Coordinator and the International Safeguard Consultant, the Gender and Safeguard Officer will carry out the following tasks:

- Support the International Safeguards consultant in preparing the ESIA and SESA, and developing the ESMP.
- Assist the Project M&E Specialist in the monitoring of the project progress and participate in the production of progress reports ensuring that they meet the necessary gender and safeguard reporting requirements and standards.
- Oversee the design of surveys/assessments/assignments to ensure that they are in compliance with the UNDP Gender and Environment and Social safeguards and adequately addresses gender and minority groups (including indigenous peoples) concerns.
- Assist the Project Coordinator in ensuring that the implementation of the project plans including the gender action plan, the stakeholder engagement plan, the indigenous peoples plan framework, and the environmental and social management framework are in compliance with the UNDP Gender and Environment and Social safeguards and follow the UNDP SES policy.
- Ensure social and environmental grievances are managed effectively and transparently in accordance with the project's grievance redress mechanism (GRM).
- Review the SESP annually, and update and revise corresponding risk log mitigation/management plans as necessary.
- Ensure full disclosure with concerned stakeholders.
- Oversee/ develop / coordinate implementation of all gender and safeguard-related work.
- Work with the Project Coordinator and M&E Specialist to ensure reporting, monitoring and evaluation and fully address the gender and Environment and Social safeguards issues.
- Integrate gender sensitization modules are included in all training activities supported by the project and support the development of these modules.
- Verify that project training materials and activities are aligned with local family realities, promote positive actions towards the role and involvement of women in family income generating activities and family finances, respect communities' ethnicity women's time availability, cultural practices, etc.
- Provide guidelines, standards and incentives revised and/or developed by the project include gender dimensions.
- Ensure that women participate in all project-related activities and comprehensively supports their engagement and participation.
- Support the collection of sex disaggregated and gender specific data, including data for the indigenous population and beneficiaries.
- Act as a resource person for the project's mid-term/ annual review and terminal evaluations, provide gender and safeguard-related information, and produce analytical reports, including learning and other knowledge management products
- Act as a resource person and contribute to the annual reviews of the project and produce analytical reports, including learning and other knowledge management products.
- Support project site and learning missions.
- Visit project sites as and when required to appraise project progress on the ground and validate written progress reports.
- Perform other relevant tasks as may be requested by Project Coordinator.

4. Institutional Arrangement

The Gender and Safeguard Officer will be based in the Ministry of Environment. The Consultant will work under the guidance of the Project Director/MoE and in supervision of the Project Manager. The consultant will also work closely with the Project Coordinator and Project Management Unit (PMU) team members. The Project Director will approve the timesheet for the Officer upon satisfactory performance.

5. Duration of the Work

The assignment is for 12 months, spreading from 01 January 2026 to 30 December 2026. The contract may be recruited upon satisfactory performance.

6. Duty Station

The consultant 'Gender and Safeguard Officer' will be based at the Ministry of Environment, and the person is expected to travel to the project sites as advised by the Project Director/Manager.

7. Minimum Qualifications of the Individual Contractor

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Master's degree in relevant fields like gender and safeguard studies, social and environmental science, or development studies.
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ At least five years of experience in gender, equality, disability and inclusion.▪ Demonstrated experiences in developing gender and safeguard strategies for environmental projects and programs.▪ Experience in implementation of safeguard guidelines, policies, procedures and tools, and capacity building on environmental and social safeguards standards and management in the context of forestry and biodiversity, natural resources management, and climate change.▪ Ability to communicate effectively and engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, the private sector, and civil society organizations as well as local communities.▪ Evidence of developing training curricula and training stakeholders on environmental and social safeguards.▪ Experience working in development partner funded nature conservation or natural resource management projects.▪ Progressing work experience in Cambodia with the knowledge of national environmental and social regulations.▪ Experience with GEF and/or other UN assisted projects, preferred.
Soft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Communication: Excellent written and verbal communication skills in Khmer and English.▪ Analytical and Reporting: Strong report writing, data analysis, and risk assessment skills▪ Teamwork: Ability to work effectively in a team and interact with diverse stakeholders
Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sound understanding of gender, equality, safeguarding, and inclusion.▪ Traditional and cultural awareness▪ Results focused▪ Teamwork

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication ▪ Building effective relationships ▪ Self-management ▪ Presentation, knowledge sharing and continuous improvement
Language:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in written and spoken English and Khmer required.
Gender:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Woman is encouraged to apply