



## JOB DESCRIPTION

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| <b>Position:</b>               | Mining Research Assistant  |
| <b>Reports to:</b>             | Conservation Impact Technical Advisor, Director of Policy and Development Program  |
| <b>Location:</b>               | Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and remote   |
| <b>Country Program/Sector:</b> | Cambodia   |
| <b>Position Type:</b>          | Research Assistant   |
| <b>Internal liaison:</b>       | KSWS Landscape Technical Advisor<br>KSWS Project Manager<br>Community and REDD+ Technical Advisor<br>Community Conservation Advisor<br>Forest Carbon Technical Advisor |
| <b>External liaison:</b>       | University of British Columbia Vibrant Forest Landscapes Lab   |
| <b>Expected travel:</b>        | Travel to Mondulakiri province, Cambodia   |

### **Organization background:**

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a US non-profit organization established in 1895 and based in New York, that saves wildlife and wild places by understanding critical issues, crafting science-based solutions, and taking conservation actions that benefit nature and humanity. With a presence in more than 60 nations, and experience helping to establish over 150 protected areas across the globe, WCS has amassed the biological knowledge, cultural understanding and partnerships to ensure that vibrant, wild places and wildlife thrive alongside local communities.

In Cambodia, WCS assists the Royal Government to conserve species and habitats in four landscapes across Cambodia, namely, the Eastern Plains (consisting of the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) in Mondulakiri and Kratie provinces), the Northern Plains, the Tonle Sap, and the Freshwater Rivers. Taken together these landscapes support all of the major habitat types in Cambodia, as well as vital population of most of Cambodia globally threatened species. These protected areas are also extensively used by human populations that reside in and adjacent to the protected areas.

### **Position background:**

The Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) covers 317,456 hectares in Eastern Cambodia. Home to the ancestral territories of the Bunong Indigenous People as well as the highest number of species recorded in any protected area in Cambodia, the KSWS sustains important values for livelihoods, biodiversity, climate, and ecosystem services. In 2017 the Ministry of Environment and WCS established a REDD+ program within KSWS, covering 166,983 hectares and encompassing 20 villages (12,000 people). The program is part of several initiatives in KSWS to support long-term sustainability of the landscape.

Recognising the need to balance conservation and development in KSWS, there is a need to better understand how future investments in land, specifically mining, could impact the landscape. Investment in extractive industries is growing rapidly in Cambodia, including exploration and exploitation within protected areas. Several global initiatives exist to guide the sustainability of these investments, but these

initiatives often face significant implementation challenges. Understanding how future mining investments could impact KSWs, and strategies for best practice, is important for ensuring long-term sustainability and benefits for local people.

In this regard, WCS is seeking a research assistant to understand potential social and environmental impacts of mining in KSWs, and decision-making processes that could guide responsible investment. This research is being conducted in collaboration with the [University of British Columbia Vibrant Forest Landscapes Lab](#) (VFL). The purpose of the research is to develop understanding on how organizations and community representatives can strategically engage with mining investments, mitigate negative impacts and maximise benefits. Developing this understanding requires a holistic approach to analysing the regulatory setting, local KSWs context, identifying knowledge gaps, and learning from past experiences with mining investments in protected areas. With this information, communities and project staff can increase their capacities to engage with mining and other land investments for facilitating engagement processes in the future.

**Position summary:**

The Research Assistant will review available documentation and conduct interviews with government, non-government organizations, companies, community representatives, and WCS staff to analyse the potential social and environmental impacts of mining in KSWs and co-develop strategies to guide just and sustainable outcomes. The analysis will include a (1) rapid assessment of the KSWs context (key areas of concern and potential benefit), (2) analysis of specific international and national frameworks to guide responsible investment, (3) interviews with key actors involved in mining-related decision-making processes. This will involve working with WCS staff to obtain and review key documents and datasets and collaborating with the UBC VFL lab through regular online meetings. The Research Assistant will then lead the preparation of material that can be used for communication with future investments. Interested candidates will have the opportunity to contribute to peer-reviewed publications with the UBC VFL lab after the completion of this work. The outcome of this analysis will help to inform organizational strategies for navigating the impacts of mining in protected areas in Cambodia, with specific guidance for KSWs.

**Proposed Timeline:**

- 1-month preparatory activities and project planning, including document review, introductory meetings, consultations with project partners, (21 days).
- 1.5 months of consultation and analysis (32 days).
- 1.5 months report writing and preparing communication material (32 days).

**Deliverables:**

1. A research proposal for review before proceeding with analysis and consultation activities.
2. Full report with detailed research findings. Report contents will include priority actions to close knowledge gaps, and recommendations directed towards key stakeholders to ensure responsible and sustainable mining investments.
3. Complete and organised dataset gathered during research for future use, including, interview recordings and transcripts, documents and datafiles, analysis.
4. Communication material for engagement with various stakeholders prepared in collaboration with WCS, including technical guidance for responsible mining in KSWs.

**Position requirements:**

- Proven high-quality technical and general writing ability in English.
- Experience with data collection and analysis, including policy analysis, conducting interviews, and working with data.
- Proven understanding of issues related to conservation, land-investments, Indigenous People's rights, and equity.
- Ability to travel to and stay in remote areas during community consultations.

**Desirable skills:**

- Spoken and written Khmer language.
- Previous work or familiarity with Mondulkiri and/or the Bunong indigenous group.
- Previous work in mining and/or land-based investment sectors.