



WWF

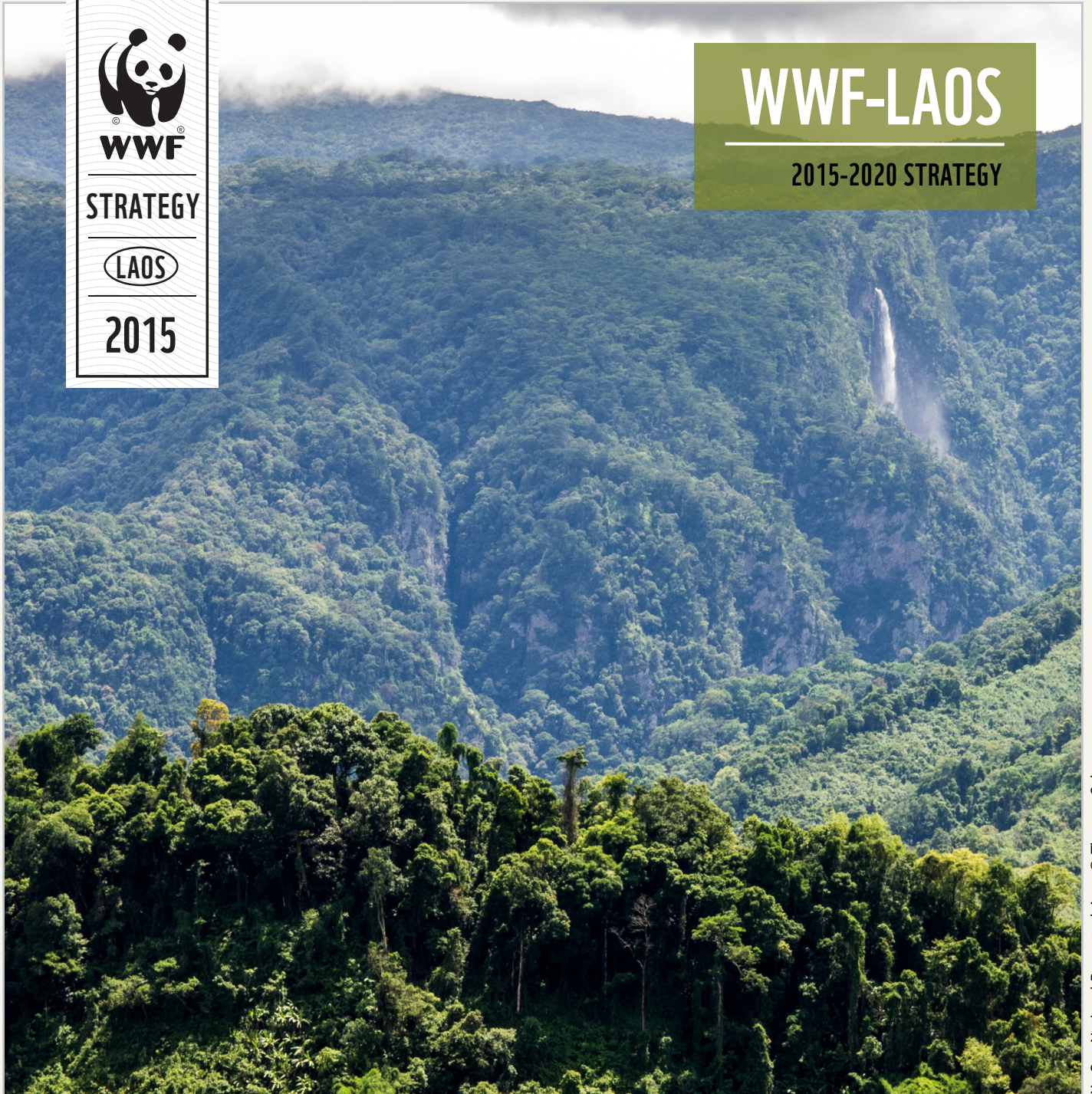
STRATEGY

LAOS

2015

WWF-LAOS

2015-2020 STRATEGY



INTRODUCTION

Laos is situated in the heart of Southeast Asia and is bordered by five countries: Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Mekong River flows through 1,900 km of Lao territory, much of which is mountainous terrain. The country is incredibly rich in natural resources and in terms of per capita forest and water resources is the highest of the countries in the Lower Mekong Basin. 80% of the country's 6.5 million people live in rural areas and primarily practice agriculture to meet their livelihood needs, also relying heavily on a range of non-timber forest products for subsistence and sale.

Laos falls within 5 of WWF's Global 200 Ecoregions, the world's most biologically important areas to conserve. The Annamite Mountains separating Laos and Vietnam cover almost 23 million hectares and have one of the greatest concentrations of endemic species in a continental setting. In southern Laos, the Mekong River provides the highest amount of fish consumed in the country, and is an area of unique aquatic diversity. Within Laos' borders, WWF Priority Species such as the Asian elephant, Eld's deer, Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphin, Mekong giant catfish and elusive saola can be found.

Despite this great variety of life, Laos' biodiversity faces numerous threats. Growing wildlife crime, infrastructure projects, and rapid habitat loss pose real and present risks to the integrity of special ecosystems and the species that inhabit them.

WWF's conservation vision recognises the strong links between environmental degradation and poverty alleviation and focuses on the central role of equitable access and benefit sharing of natural resource management to enhance livelihood resilience of all Lao people.

OUR HISTORY

WWF has been present in Laos since the late 1980's with the official establishment of the WWF-Laos Country Office taking place in 2001. Today, the headquarters is in Vientiane, with field offices in Salavan, Xekong and Champassak provinces. The conservation programme is continually growing, earning achievements year-on-year, with the overall goal of building a future in which the people of Laos live in harmony with nature.

THE MOTHER RIVER

The Mekong River flows for 1,900 km through Laos and is the country's biggest fishery. It's also home to WWF priority species such as the Irrawaddy dolphin, Mekong giant catfish and giant freshwater stingray.

OUR GOALS FOR 2020

WWF-Laos has developed a Places Goal and Species Goal for 2020. Our Places Goal focuses on the protection of High Conservation Value Forest and freshwater habitats in our priority landscapes. Our Species Goal places emphasis on the conservation of Asian elephants, Eld's deer, saola, Mekong freshwater megafauna, and key ungulate species.

The dry forest of Savannakhet's Eld's deer sanctuary © Ian Lacey / WWF-Laos



Green Schools Programme © Adam Oswell / WWF



Fishing at Khone Phapeng Falls © Fletcher & Baylis / WWF-Greater Mekong



Acanthosaura nataliae in Xe Sap NPA © Thomas Calame

WWF-LAOS 5-YEAR STRATEGY 2015-2020

In this new strategic plan, WWF-Laos will focus on protecting forest, freshwater and wildlife, which will not only be a critical contribution to WWF's global conservation goals, but also helps reduce poverty by sustainable natural resource management.

Core to this is the 'landscape approach' to conservation. This approach seeks to reconcile conservation and development through interventions in different components of the landscape, some of which are managed towards livelihoods and development goals and others for conservation.

WWF has identified two priority landscapes to focus on. These are the **Central Annamites Landscape** (shared with WWF-Vietnam), and the **Mekong Flooded Forests Landscape** (shared with WWF-Cambodia).

We will also build upon previous activities in three priority sites. In the northwest of the country, **Nam Pouy Priority Site** encompasses one of the most significant National Biodiversity Conservation Areas in the country, a place of critical importance for conservation of the Asian elephant. The **Central Laos Priority Site** is where rattan Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification and Community Fisheries were successfully piloted.

The **Savannakhet Priority Site** is home to the endangered Eld's deer and is located within the lower Mekong dry forests where spatial land use planning and participatory conservation approaches have been introduced.

To deliver impactful and sustainable conservation outcomes, we will foster positive relationships with government, business, civil society organisations, communities and individuals, while strengthening and empowering these actors in their decision-making processes.

WWF-Laos will also focus on ensuring livelihood security for communities that live in and around our priority sites and landscapes, which will help reduce pressure on natural resources.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Strategy 1: Landscape Planning & Management

- Integrating natural capital valuation into national climate-smart development plans
- Protecting High Conservation Value Forest in our landscapes
- Addressing habitat encroachment in priority places

Strategy 2: Wildlife & Protected Areas

- Reducing illegal timber flows
- Combatting poaching of our priority species
- Stopping demand for terrestrial and freshwater endangered species in trade centres
- Maintaining freshwater species populations and biodiversity targets

COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

By empowering communities to sustainably manage their natural resources, both benefits for nature and people are achieved. WWF works to promote sustainable management of rattan forest and aquatic resources in central and southern Laos.



Rattan weavers making baskets © Bounheuang Khampa / WWF-Laos

Strategy 3: Responsible Investments, Production & Consumption

- Ensuring sustainable production of key commodities that impact biodiversity
- Increasing FSC certified forest area in our landscapes
- Influencing the adoption of river stewardship principles by the corporate sector
- Encouraging the avoidance of illegal forest products in priority places

Sustainability

To achieve these strategies, we will make sure to demonstrate good conservation practices and results, help strengthen government policies, mainstream our conservation approaches, establish strong partnerships with key stakeholders, engage with corporations where possible and raise public awareness to make sure we implement lasting and sustainable conservation actions.

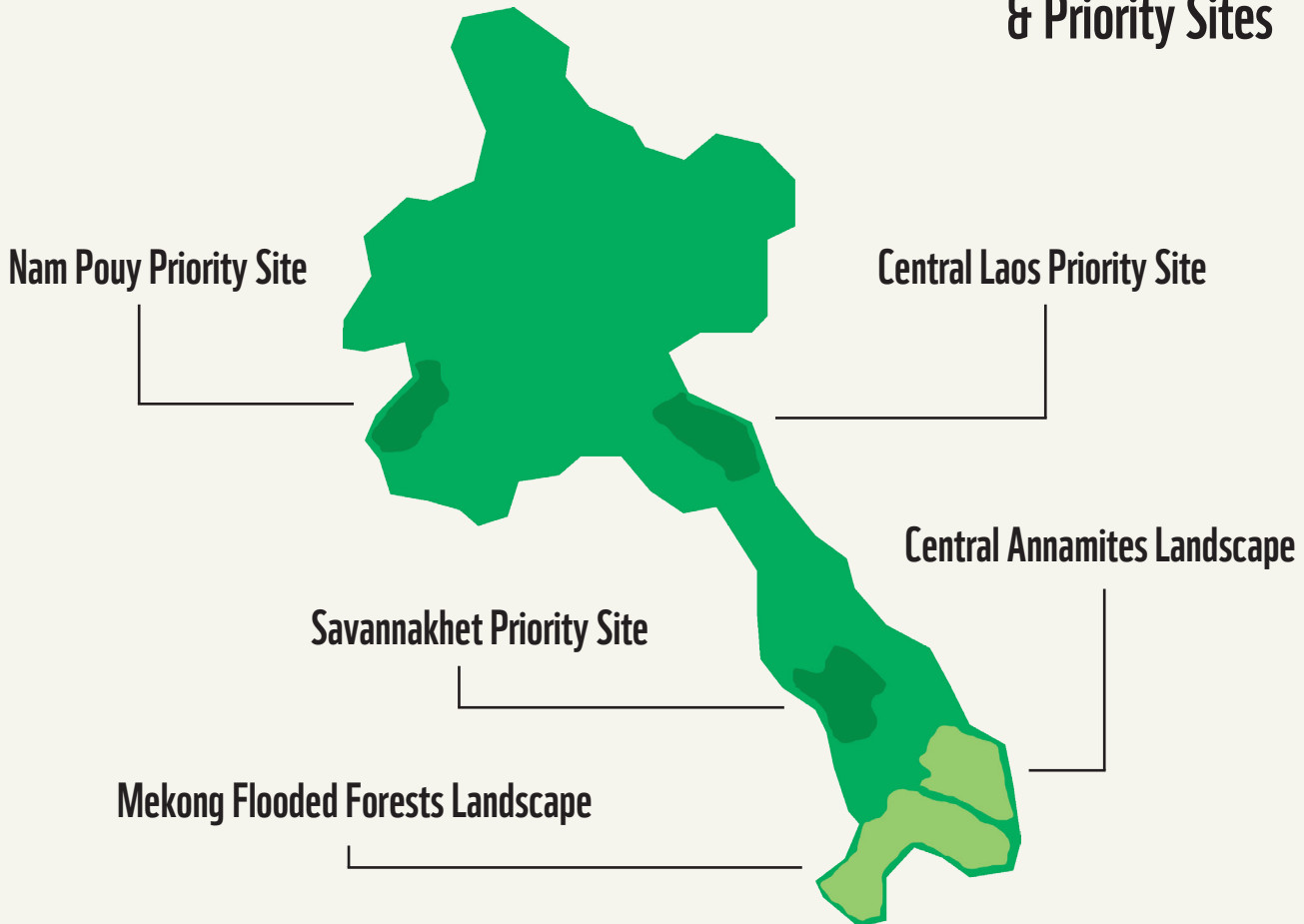


WWF-Laos has identified 3 terrestrial species and a group of freshwater megafauna as species conservation priorities in its 2015-2020 plan.

WWF-LAOS 2030 VISION

Our vision is that the human footprint stays within the country's capacity to maintain the full spectrum of biological diversity and ecosystems, and the key services they provide, to enhance Lao people's livelihood resilience and contribute to the sustainable conservation of the overall ecological integrity of the Greater Mekong region.

WWF-Laos Landscapes & Priority Sites



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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