



COUNTRY	REGION	NATIONAL EMISSIONS IN 2016	SHARE OF THE FOREST AND LAND-USE SECTOR IN EMISSIONS
CAMBODIA	THE CARDAMOMS	125.2 MTCO <sub>2</sub> E	61%

# Involving local communities to protect the Cardamom range

In the framework of its REDD+ programme, Cambodia has fixed an objective of a [50%](#) reduction in its deforestation rate between 2017 and 2026, relative to the reference levels measured between 2006 and 2014. Situated in the Gulf of Thailand, and spread over [20,000 km<sup>2</sup>](#) in the southwest of Cambodia, the Cardamom range is the site of Southeast Asia’s largest rainforest, and [29%](#) of the country’s forest cover. Under significant pressure due to the illegal logging as well as poaching, the Cardamoms are an important habitat of several plant and animal species, and include several protected zones, among which are four national parks<sup>a</sup>.

## NGOs take up the fight against illegal deforestation

Due to the difficulty of enforcing land ownership laws over such a large area, multiple illegal [clearings](#) take place in the forest. At the same time, the [increase](#) in the number of legal land concessions granted by the Cambodian authorities allows timber and plantation companies to exploit protected forests. Between 2001 and 2019, according to Global Forest Watch, the Cardamom Forest lost [148,000](#) hectares of vegetation cover, which is 8.6% of its surface. Thus, since the early 2000s, several NGOs have been working to protect the Cardamoms. The Central Cardamoms Protected Forest (CCPF) initiative, launched in 2002 by [Conservation International](#), and renamed the Central Cardamom Mountains National Park (CCMNP) in 2016, works to protect the 400,000 ha of the forest by helping the government develop a legal framework, and by providing financial and technical support to forest guards who patrol the park to discourage illegal logging activities.

## Local action to protect the lungs of Southern Cambodia

The CCMNP programme supported by Conservation International, directly engages 2,700 people in conservation agreements, which provide economic benefits to local communities in exchange for wildlife protection and monitoring. In 2016, Wildlife Works, a leading global REDD+ programme development and management company, and [Wildlife Alliance](#), in partnership with Cambodia’s Ministry of Environment established the Southern Cardamom REDD+ [project](#): the project relies on local communities and indigenous peoples, among others, to preserve the forest by replanting trees, developing sustainable agriculture and demarcating protected forests. Wildlife Alliance and Wildlife Works protect 8,347 km<sup>2</sup> of forest across the Cardamoms, with 131 rangers active 24/7. In 2018, these rangers patrolled 129,415 km, seized 2,039 logs and 325 m<sup>3</sup> of

luxury wood and confiscated 553 chain-saws. As a result, the project avoids the emission of more than 12.8 MtCO<sub>2</sub>/year. The project also works with [15 villages](#) across the Cardamom range to develop community-based ecotourism. For example, Wildlife Alliance manages the Chi Phat Community Based Ecotourism ([CBET](#)) project launched in 2007: villagers who once roamed the forest cutting down trees are now employed as guides for hiking, mountain biking tours, or to run campsites. These projects are financially supported by the World Bank, who in 2019 launched the Sustainable Landscape and Ecotourism Project and committed \$50 million to promote ecotourism and develop non-timber value chains in the Cardamom Mountains.

<sup>a</sup> The Central Cardamom Mountains National Park (CCMNP), the Southern Cardamom, the Botum Sakor and the Preah Monivong Bokor

**SATELLITE VIEW OF THE DEFORESTATION OF THE CARDAMOM RANGE, IN PINK WITHIN THE OVAL, BETWEEN 2001 AND 2019** - Source : [Global Forest Watch, 2021](#)

