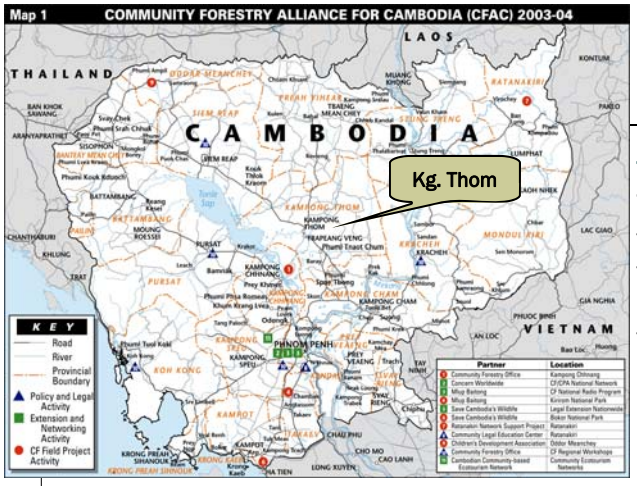
STORIES FROM THE FIELD...



Building Community Forestry Patrol Stations in Kampong Thom, Cambodia

The community in Dong Kombut, Sandan District, Kampong Thom, is highly dependent on forest resources. When Mr. In Nam, the head of the community, visited Community Forestry International in Phnom Penh to apply for a seed grant, he provided a long list of forest products which villagers collect, including resin, rattan, mushrooms, fruits, and medicines. Dong Kombut has two community forestry areas with a total area of approximately 12,000 ha. Though the area is not yet officially recognized by FA, it would be one of the largest CF areas if approved.

CFI approved a seed grant in April 2005 to build two patrol stations in their community forestry area. Mr. In Nam and other CF members marked the boundary of the CF area by putting up simple signs and clearing pathways. Some 10-15 villagers are now conducting regular patrols of the CF area. Mr. In Nam says that there is very little problem with illegal activity because the community is managing the area very carefully. He has also communicated with other villages in the surrounding area to make sure there is no conflict.

Mr. In Nam was very grateful for the CFI funds which allowed the villagers to build the two patrol stations. Funds were used to buy materials, and villagers contributed their own labor for construction. The patrol stations are located 6 and 8 km from the village, so it was a big effort to build them. Mr. In Nam plans to apply for another seed grant in the near future so that his community can formalize the boundaries of the CF area by putting up larger signs. Because he and the community were so grateful for the assistance received from CFI, he made a special trip to Phnom Penh to the CFI office in order to hand-deliver the final report on the grant along with the photos which were taken by him using s disposable digital camera supplied with the grant to document their activities.

CFI is pleased to be able to continue directly supporting local villagers who are making a difference in the lives of their communities. For more information on the CFI Seed Grant program to support local communities, call: (855-23) 220 714.