



The Socio-Economic Context of Illegal Logging and Trade of Rosewood Along the Cambodian-Lao Border



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Purpose

Siamese Rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*) has recently been listed on Appendix II of The Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). This listing means that source countries are legally required to export only controlled quantities of rosewood with close monitoring and documentation, which is intended to ensure that the international trade is not detrimental to the survival of this species.

This briefing note outlines the socio-economic context of illegal cross-border rosewood logging in the Cambodian–Lao border region, identifying the main factors that prompt local involvement in this activity, as well as broader implications for forest governance in both countries. The analysis draws upon two data sources: (i) four months of fieldwork in 2009 in a Cambodian village ('Sekong Village') in the border district of Siem Pang, Stung Treng Province, where rosewood logging has been common; and (ii) literature review and media monitoring through to early 2013 relating to rosewood logging in the region.

The Four Main Findings of This Brief Include:

1. As rosewood becomes increasingly rare, it is increasingly restricted to remote locales, including remote international borders, which often receive limited attention from national governments and forest management forums. Increased understanding of cross-border logging and trade in remote locales is crucial to the design of effective and socially appropriate management interventions.
2. The illegal trade in luxury timbers is often reported as providing few benefits to local communities and entailing many negative impacts. But, a case study of village livelihoods in northeast Cambodia shows why cross-border rosewood logging in Laos is widespread and, at times, socially acceptable.
3. The case study from the Cambodian–Lao border also demonstrates the importance of specific socio-economic factors that influence local patterns of illegal cross-border rosewood logging. Consequently, policy interventions to control cross-border logging must recognise the importance of formal and informal institutions based on the local socio-economic context.
4. The case study from the Cambodia–Lao border has further implications for forest management and governance, including:
 - Interventions to reduce illegal rosewood logging in remote border regions will require innovative engagements with development issues (e.g. poverty alleviation, transport infrastructure, sustainable development);
 - Formal national and sub-national regulations are expanding to incorporate remote border regions in governance frameworks, but effective implementation remains a challenge;
 - Tackling the illegal logging and trade of rosewood will be a challenge that requires sustained national, regional and global cooperation.

Rosewood Logging and Trade on the Cambodian–Lao Border

Background on Rosewood

The term ‘rosewood’ here refers to Siamese rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchensis*) found in mainland Southeast Asia. Rosewoods have long been commercially valued in Southeast Asia; however, the scale and scope of rosewood trade has recently changed. On the demand-side, increasing market linkages and demand in China has driven up prices for luxury timbers for traditional-styled furniture.¹ On the supply-side, as readily accessible areas are denuded of luxury timbers, logging activities have moved to remote forest frontiers. The rosewood trade is widely reported as being unsustainable, mostly illegal and increasingly violent.²

Protection Status

Siamese rosewood is now legally protected in all its range states. Also at the national regulatory level, the main areas now targeted for rosewood logging are protected areas. Siamese rosewood is listed on the IUCN Red List as ‘vulnerable’. Thailand and Vietnam had proposed the listing of rosewood on CITES since 2008, but initially this was not supported by other range states.³ In March 2013, member countries of CITES voted to list Siamese rosewood in Appendix II of CITES with trade restrictions coming into force in June 2013.⁴

Despite these multi-layered legal protections across the region, legal exceptions may be granted and rule-of-law is weak, particularly in relation to the enforcement of environmental laws. Furthermore, the increasing scarcity and legal protection of rosewood has been resulted in rapidly increasing prices, which increases incentives for those who log and trade in the species illegally.

Cross-Border Logging and Trade

Remote, forested border regions are increasingly being drawn into the illegal rosewood trade through cross-border logging. This issue has received considerable national and regional attention in relation to Cambodia’s western border with Thailand.⁵ However, little attention has been directed towards the shared border of Cambodia and Laos, which is also a hotspot for rosewood logging and trade. The Cambodian–Lao border region is associated with small populations, poverty, ethnic diversity, and weak regulation of trans-border activities. This region also has relatively high forest cover, including the largest National Park (NP) in Cambodia (Virachey NP, 3325 km²) and one of the largest National Protected Areas (NPA) in Laos (Xe Pian NPA, 2400 km²).

In the 1990s, timber was illegally logged in Cambodia and then transported through Laos to Thailand.⁶ However, in recent years Cambodians living near the border have been crossing into Laos to log rosewood, which they then take back to Cambodia to sell. In 2007–2008, high prices for rosewood saw over 400m³ logged in Xe Pian

¹ EIA (2012a). *Appetite for Destruction: China’s Trade in Illegal Timber*. London: Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA). TRAFFIC (2012). *Precious Woods: Exploitation of the Finest Timber*. Paper presented at the Chatham House Workshop: Tackling the Trade in Illegal Precious Woods, 23–24 April, 2012, UK.

² EIA (2012b). *Rosewood Robbery: The Case for Thailand to List Rosewood on CITES*. London: Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA); Boyle, D. (2012). China’s bloody timber trail. *Phnom Penh Post*, 30 November 2012; EIA (2013a). *EIA Briefing Report: 16th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP16) to the UN Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*, Bangkok March 2013. Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA); Hance, J. (2012). Blood rosewood: Thailand and Cambodia team up to tackle illegal logging crisis and save lives. *Mongabay*, 11 April 2012; Milne, S. (2012). Chut Wutty: Tragic casualty of Cambodia’s dirty war to save forests. *New Mandala*, 30 April 2012; Peal (2011); Vrieze, P. and Vannarin, N. (2012). In Cambodia, quality wood makes for murder. *Global Post*, 13 November 2012.

³ EIA (2013a).

⁴ EIA (2013b). International protection for Siam rosewood begins. *Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)*. 11 June 2013.

⁵ Weinland, D. and V. Sokheng (2011). Business boom depletes forests. *Phnom Penh Post*, 6 September 2011.

⁶ Global Witness (1998). \$50 million worth of Cambodian logs destined for Thailand via Laos in new illegal export deal. *Global Witness*, 19 June 1998.

NPA in Laos and smuggled to Stung Treng Province.⁷ In 2009, Cambodian villagers reported that the activities of timber traders became increasingly common and less hidden following the completion of a major conservation project in Virachey NP.⁸ By 2011, Cambodian officials estimated that 70-90% of villagers in Siem Pang District were involved in illegal cross-border logging of rosewood from Laos.⁹

A number of factors contribute to this pattern of cross-border logging and trade:

- much rosewood was logged out on the Cambodian side of the border during the 1990s¹⁰;
- because of historical, cultural and social reasons (see below), many Cambodian citizens in the border region can easily travel in Laos, whereas the converse is less common;
- the Cambodian–Lao border checkpoints on the Sekong River are relatively isolated and formal regulations are weakly implemented; and
- incomplete border demarcation, sparse settlements and very limited infrastructure have maintained relatively abundant forest resources in the border region.

Role of Rosewood in Village Livelihoods in Northeast Cambodia

The illegal trade in luxury timbers is commonly regarded as providing little or no benefits to local people.¹¹ Undoubtedly, the rosewood trade is heavily skewed in the distribution of benefits (Table 1) and the larger-scale trade often completely excludes local villagers. But small-scale, artisanal rosewood logging is also providing substantial economic returns to the many rural inhabitants of the border region. Both Cambodia and Laos are least-developed countries with per capita incomes under US\$1000 and US\$1300 respectively¹², and remote regions along their shared border are especially poor.¹³

Table 1: Price of Rosewood in Different Markets

| Market Location | Prices | Notes |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| End market (e.g. China) | Up to US\$50,000/m ³ | Prices vary greatly with timber quality and processing. ¹⁴ |
| Export market (e.g. Vietnam) | US\$5000-7000/m ³ | |
| Source markets (e.g. rural Cambodia, Laos) | US\$1000-2000/m ³ | Prices reported by Cambodian villagers, Siem Pang District, Stung Treng Province, 2009. |

⁷ Baird I.G. (2010). *Quotas, Powers, Patronage and Illegal Rent-Seeking: The Political Economy of Logging and the Timber Trade in Southern Laos*. Washington DC: Forest Trends.

⁸ On the 'Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Project (BPAMP)' see: Global Witness (2009). *Country for Sale: How Cambodia's Elite has Captured the Country's Extractive Industries*. London: Global Witness.

⁹ Phnom Penh Post (2011). *Laos logging leaves Cambodians in limbo*. Phnom Penh Post, 28 October 2011; Seangly, P. (2011). *Cambodian border crossers still languishing in Laos*. *Phnom Penh Post*, 20 December 2011. See also, P.122-124, Birdlife International (2012). *The Biodiversity of the Western Siem Pang Proposed Protected Forest, Stung Treng Province, Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: Birdlife International.

¹⁰ Global Witness (1998).

¹¹ TRAFFIC (2012).

¹² World Bank (2012). *GDP Per Capita* (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>).

¹³ CEPA (2009). *Report on the achievement and potential of Stung Treng Province*. Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA).

¹⁴ EIA (2012a, 2012b).

In Cambodia and Laos, rosewood trees are scattered in extensive forest areas, which often have limited road infrastructure. This means that traders must rely on artisanal loggers who know the forests (e.g. villagers), to whom logging represents a compelling economic opportunity. In Sekong Village, the issue of rosewood logging is sensitive, but despite its illegality, logging was regarded as socially acceptable because:

- it relies on natural resources in the local region and reflects villagers' common crossing the Cambodian–Lao border to harvest resources for trade and consumption;
- few alternative opportunities for poverty alleviation exist and government assistance programs are limited;
- illegal logging does not have the negative social consequences of other illegal cross-border activities (e.g. drug smuggling); and
- weak law enforcement and the value of rosewood made it highly likely that illegal logging and trade would persist even if individual villagers did not participate.

Yet, villagers also often recognize that luxury timbers are becoming increasingly scarce and will not be available as an income source in the future if current logging and forest governance practices continue unchanged.

Economic Importance of Rosewood in a Cambodian Village (2009 Study)

- **Logging trips:** From Sekong Village, small groups of men travelled to Laos by motorboat with 2-4 men per boat and 1-2 boats travelling together. Logging trips lasted about 10-30 days, with the duration often depending on their paddy farming requirements (**Table 2**). In general, middle-aged men (>30 years) who owned motorboats led logging groups, choosing men from their relatives and friends. Women had little direct involvement in rosewood logging or trade. Villagers could make between US\$100-1000/man/trip. Logging trips were usually self-financed to cover major expenses (e.g. petrol, rice). Villagers' profits depended on:
 - the capital they could invest;
 - the duration of the trip;
 - number of men in the logging team;
 - connections with border authorities;
 - knowledge of the forest;
 - as well as timber quality.
 - Motorboats and chainsaws are essential for high returns, and often the owner of such equipment would get a larger share of profits.

Villagers reported that the cross-border rosewood trade was instigated in 2006 when traders and soldiers from the border checkpoint came to offer high prices for rosewood.¹⁵ Timber traders mostly came to riverside villages to buy rosewood in the wet season when timber can be floated easily down the Sekong River. However, a new road between Siem Pang District and Stung Treng town (Provincial Road No.301) built in late 2009 led to increased cross-border logging.¹⁶

- **Village livelihoods:** Rosewood offers much greater returns to villagers than any other available livelihood activities (**Table 2**), and this clearly contributes to ongoing logging and trade. The Cambodian–Lao border region is classed as poor by both national governments and lacks basic services. Livelihoods in Siem Pang

¹⁵ Around this time, rosewood sharply escalated in price in the lead-up to the Olympic Games in China and was also seeing high prices in neighboring Laos (Baird 2010).

¹⁶ Birdlife International (2012).

District are based on farming and collecting natural resources. In Sekong Village, paddy farming generally ensured rice sufficiency, but income generating activities were limited. Most households had at least one family member involved in rosewood logging, with the exceptions unable to participate because of labour constraints (e.g. only elderly, young children or women).

Table 2: Economic Returns Commonly Reported for Different Livelihood Activities in Sekong Village, Northeast Cambodia¹⁷

| Livelihood Activity | Income | Notes |
|---|--|--|
| Rosewood logging | US\$1000-3000/month | Logging can be combined with other activities like farming, fishing and hunting. |
| Gold panning in Laos | — | This commonly financed villagers' major expenses over a decade ago. But gold panning offered much lower returns than logging and has now finished. |
| Labourer in Stung Treng town | US\$150-300/month | This estimated income assumes continuous work and excludes subsistence costs, which are expensive in urban centres compared to rural villages. |
| Fishing for trade — sell to traders in Laos or in Siem Pang district centre | US\$115/month (income reported by one middle-aged couple) | Fishing used to be a common source of income, but declined as logging became more common. It was still common for older men and couples who were not strong enough to go logging. Fishing can be combined with other activities like farming. |
| Hunting wildlife for trade — sell to traders in Laos or in Siem Pang district centre | US\$20/day (income reported by two young men for 2 monitor lizards and 1 turtle) | Hunting used to be a common source of income, but is now less important. It is hard work like logging, but offers lower, more sporadic returns. Also, the conservation project in Virachey NP increased the risks of hunting, with increased fines, imprisonment and confiscation of guns. |
| Oleoresin collection (Dipterocarp trees) — sell to traders in Stung Treng town | US\$1000-1500/year | Liquid resin sold for US\$5/20L in Sekong Village. Resin collection used to be common, but declined as logging became more common. |
| Livestock raising — sell to traders in Stung Treng town | US\$200-500/each | Large livestock continue to be important for farming and income. But logging offers much quicker returns. |
| Paddy rice farming | — | Most households were only occasionally able to sell rice. Half the residents stopped paddy farming in 2009 to concentrate on rosewood logging. Villagers' varied in their view of logging, with older villagers tending to see it as a temporary occupation while younger villagers saw it as more long-term occupation. |

Note: US\$1 = KHR4000

¹⁷ Theliade, I., H. Meilby and S. Laegaard (2012). REDD+ in Prey Long, Cambodia – more than just carbon. Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen (http://sl.life.ku.dk/English/outreach_publications/Conferences/papers_conferences/~media/SI/Resultater_Outreach_Publications/Kurser_konferencer/2012/redd/1_2_theilade_meilby_laegaard.ashx).

Rosewood logging was usually regarded positively as a means for hard-working villagers to support their families and productively improve their living conditions (**Table 3**).

Table 3: Common Uses of Income from Rosewood Sales in Sekong Village, Northeast Cambodia

| Expense | Amounts | Notes |
|---|--|---|
| Housing | US\$1000-4000 | Tin roof, wooden walls and floors. |
| Household goods and other major assets | US\$5000-7000/m ³ | Includes motorbikes, motorboats, hand-tractors, chainsaws, mobile phones, TV-karaoke system. |
| Daily living expenses (e.g. food, clothing) | US\$22/50kg rice | Most food products were collected from the local village area and less commonly purchased. |
| Sickness | US\$200 (costs reported for one sick child to go to Siem Pang District hospital) | — |
| Parties | US\$25/man (costs reported by men for alcohol, meat and karaoke) | Men would often have parties in the village and at the border checkpoint after successful logging trips. Parties helped maintain social connections that were important for logging. However, some villagers were critical of excessive alcohol consumption that was enabled by money from logging. |

Importance of Social Factors for Cross-Border Rosewood Logging and Trade

A range of social factors are important in influencing patterns of rosewood logging and trade in the Cambodian-Lao border region, and include:

- **Ethnicity and language skills:** The northeast region of Cambodia is part of a former Lao kingdom and the ethnically diverse population has long used Lao language as the lingua franca. Hence, Cambodian citizens familiar with Lao language are readily able to cross into Laos for logging. In contrast, Lao citizens cross into Cambodia less frequently since they usually lack familiarity with Khmer language. Villagers and officials in Siem Pang District were usually bilingual in Lao and Khmer languages. In contrast, timber traders were Khmer or Viet–Khmer.
- **History of cross-border mobility:** During the Khmer Rouge period in the 1970s, many residents from Stung Treng Province fled to southern Laos. Some refugees settled permanently in Laos; others later returned to Cambodia. After the war, villagers collected natural resources for trade in the uninhabited border region. These experiences contribute to local residents' familiarity with Laos, cross-border personal connections, and knowledge of forest resources in the border region.
- **Wealth differences within and between villages:** All residents of Sekong Village were 'poor' by national and international standards, but there were still wealth differences between households. Wealthier villagers could be more involved in rosewood logging as they had a secure subsistence base and more capital to invest. For example, motorboats were essential for villagers to participate in rosewood logging, but were only owned by 27% of households in Sekong Village. Some ethnic minorities in other villages were unable to participate in rosewood logging because they lacked access to sufficient capital.

- **Personal connections with villagers:** The majority of loggers in Sekong Village were local residents. The exceptions all had personal connections with villagers (e.g. through marriage), and most were ethnic Lao from Cambodia or Laos.
- **Leadership positions:** In Sekong Village, those in leadership positions (e.g. village headman, village police) and those receiving regular work with conservation projects were not personally active in rosewood logging, but members of their immediate family were usually involved. The three village teachers went logging and occasionally acted as intermediaries with traders. This latter role was facilitated by their greater familiarity with Stung Treng town where they had undertaken teacher training, and their owning mobile phones that allowed them to easily contact traders.
- **Informal regulations:** Key informal regulations in rosewood logging and trade include:
 - *Informal village regulations:* One of the wealthiest men in Sekong Village was the main contact point for traders and was said to have ‘responsibility’ for rosewood in village, though he held no formal leadership role. His family owned the village’s largest store, which included a separate locked room for storing rosewood prior to its collection by traders. When timber traders came to the village, they always visited him. He had built up good connections with border authorities and knowledge of the forested border region since regularly going to Laos for gold-panning a decade earlier.
 - *Informal government regulations:* Villagers reported that the Cambodian soldier border checkpoint was the key regulating authority for them in the cross-border rosewood logging and trade. Soldiers reportedly collected ‘taxes’ of US\$100-300 per motorboat. Rosewood trade was also facilitated by other local Cambodian officials (e.g. commune and village police). Following improvements in road access to Siem Pang Districts, officials collect US\$50-150 per truckload of rosewood from Laos¹⁸ and it has been alleged that senior provincial officials are intimately involved in the large-scale illegal rosewood trade.¹⁹

Though in conflict with formal regulations, such practices are common as informal regulations that are widely seen as necessary to supplement very low government salaries (US\$30-50/month). Villagers’ personal connections with border authorities were crucial for enabling crossing of the border, avoiding confiscation and determining the amount taxed. Villagers were restricted by local authorities to selling rosewood in remote locales (e.g. village, forest, border checkpoint), and reported that they would be arrested if they tried to sell elsewhere (e.g. Siem Pang district centre). This informal arrangement allowed villagers to be involved in artisanal logging in their local area, but limited their profits as the largest financial returns are made further up the market chain. Hence, local authorities restrict villagers’ involvement in order to maintain their control of the rosewood trade and maximize their own benefits.

In contrast to the Cambodian authorities, villagers reported that Lao authorities were stricter in their attempts to stop rosewood logging. Though villagers were sometimes able to pay ‘taxes’ to Lao officials, others reported being fined about US\$500 and/or having timber and chainsaws confiscated when caught logging rosewood in Laos.²⁰ Arrests of Cambodian citizens in Laos for illegal rosewood logging have been increasingly reported in

¹⁸ Cambodia Herald (2012). Stung Treng officials allowing logging in Laos. *Cambodia Herald*, July 2012.

¹⁹ Titthara, M. (2013). Letter links official to ‘illegal’ logs. *Phnom Penh Post*, 2 January 2013. Titthara, M. (2013b). Five men allegedly caught with 10 cubic meters of illegal rosewood worth more than \$1million, *Phnom Penh Post*, 22 February 2013. See also: Global Witness (2009); Peal, P. (2011). Dead wood: A resurgence in illegal logging takes its toll. *Economist*, 17 December 2011; Taing, S. (2011). Tycoon logging ‘illegally’. *Radio Free Asia*, 28 December 2011; Weinland and Sokheng (2011).

²⁰ See also: Nimal, T. (2012). Laos logging incident sees man shot, injured. *Phnom Penh Post*, 26 March 2012; Nimal, T. (2010). Laos repatriates Cambodian loggers. *Phnom Penh Post*, 9 May 2010.

the Cambodian press.²¹ Encounters with Lao border authorities have resulted in occasional injuries, including at least three Cambodian loggers killed by Lao soldiers in 2010-2011.²²

Even on the Cambodian side, tensions do emerge between villagers, border authorities and timber traders. For example, villagers were critical of authorities at the border checkpoint and attempted to evade taxes. Villagers also reported occasional violent disputes over rosewood, including two men being killed in Siem Pang District.²³

Implications for Forest Management and Governance

- Across Southeast Asia, trade networks are expanding to incorporate logging in forest frontiers in the quest to satisfy market demand for rare, luxury timbers like rosewood. Cross-border logging in remote locales will continue to present unique and increasing challenges for forest governance and law enforcement. This is especially so in areas where formal regulations for the forests and national borders are weakly implemented in contrast to informal regulatory practices, and where particular social patterns facilitate a range of cross-border activities. To date, these remote border regions have received little attention from national governments and forest management forums, and the legal significance of their cross border complexity is not fully appreciated. *Hence, increased understanding of cross-border logging and trade is crucial to the design of socially- and legally-appropriate instruments.*
- Illegal cross-border logging of rosewood along the Cambodian–Lao border clearly demonstrates that such activities are not uncontrolled — illegal practices do not mean a complete absence of regulation, just that common practices do not reflect existing formal regulations. *Policy interventions must therefore recognise the importance of informal regulations based on the local social context.* Informal regulations link artisanal loggers, government officials and timber traders in dynamic relations that can manipulate or evade formal regulations. Revising laws may be important, but will be insufficient to change current logging trends if informal regulations are not taken into account in reform and implementation strategies.
- Interventions to reduce illegal rosewood logging in remote border regions will require innovative engagements with development issues.
 - This includes *meaningful contributions to alternative livelihoods and poverty alleviation to expand the options of artisanal loggers.* Villagers are well aware that cross-border rosewood logging is prohibited and of the risks involved. However, they have limited livelihood options and observe the absence of effective governance. Provincial authorities in Cambodia have identified development of remote border regions as a priority, recognising such locations are marked by poverty and trans-border crime.²⁴
 - Expanding transport infrastructure is crucial for rural development, but its varied impacts on forest governance need greater recognition. In parts of Stung Treng Province, recent road infrastructure development shifted transportation away from river transport and improved regulation at the main Cambodian–Lao border checkpoint (National Route No.7). However, unofficial roads in the border districts like Siem Pang have been constructed specifically to target rosewood in Laos.²⁵ Such road access facilitates larger-scale trade and likely excludes most rural villagers.

²¹ Kunthea M. (2010) Laos repatriated Cambodian pair. *Phnom Penh Post*, 15 July 2010; *Phnom Penh Post* (2010) Border crossing: Laos police release Cambodians. *Phnom Penh Post*, 15 December 2010; Nimal (2012, 2010); *Phnom Penh Post* (2011); Seangly (2011).

²² Nimal, T. (2011). Cambodian shot and killed by Lao soldiers. *Phnom Penh Post*, 5 March 2011.

²³ Foreign observers of the timber trade were reportedly not welcome at the border checkpoint as foreign consultants with the former conservation project in Virachey NP had overseen the destruction of illegally harvested rosewood.

²⁴ CEPA (2009).

²⁵ Birdlife International (2012).

- Illegal rosewood logging and trade should not be seen as an activity in isolation, but instead seen in the broader governance context as one example of unsustainable development that is common across the region. In addition to illegal logging, other questionable developments in the Cambodian–Lao border area include extensive economic land concessions, mining concessions, and hydropower projects. National governments are vigorously pursuing economic development through such activities, but with less attention to environmental and social issues. Hence, tackling illegal logging must be part of a broader effort to promote more environmentally and socially responsible development by national governments.
- National and sub-national agencies are expanding to incorporate remote border regions in governance frameworks, but effective implementation of formal regulations remains a challenge. Initiatives aimed at improving governance and developing the Cambodian–Lao border region include: (i) the Cambodia–Laos–Vietnam development triangle;²⁶ and (ii) provincial-level agreements between Cambodian (Stung Treng) and Lao (Champassak and Attapeu) authorities on border regulation – particularly trans-border crime and illegal logging.²⁷ These regional arrangements complement national legislation relevant to rosewood, including protected areas and species-specific protection. However, the effectiveness of these formal regulations is undermined by informal regulations²⁸ that sideline and undermine law enforcement. Attention to enforcement practices also raises the issue of social justice given that this has mainly targeted small-scale artisanal loggers, rather than officials and traders. A further challenge to those seeking to improve law enforcement is the increasing violence associated with illegal rosewood logging, especially in Cambodia. Given this context, it is clear that high-level political will is necessary before more effective implementation of existing laws and regulations can be achieved.
- *Tackling the illegal logging and trade of rosewood will require sustained national, regional and global cooperation.* The listing of rosewood on CITES was a significant political breakthrough, but it has not to date been effective in limiting the illegal trade in the species. Indeed, observers suggest that both prices and volumes traded have increased sharply in response to the listing. Similarly, demand-side measures in the USA (Lacey Act) and EU (FLEGT), which aim to reduce global market access for illegally-logged wood products, are unlikely to have much impact since these are minor markets for rosewood. Most important is reducing demand for rosewood in China, though this demand continues to increase rapidly in line with ongoing economic growth in the country, especially of the Chinese luxury market.

²⁶ Saigon GP Daily (2012). Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia focus on development triangle. *Saigon GP Daily*, 6 December 2012.

²⁷ CEPA (2009).

²⁸ Many informal regulations would not be seen as ‘corruption’ even if technically illegal (eg. Cambodians allowed to crossing the border to fish or collect mushrooms for small-scale trade for a small payment to Lao border police/army).



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