

CAPACITIES TO CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY AND TO RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE (EE) Outcome Evaluation

Executive Summary:

An outcome evaluation assesses **how and why a development outcome is or is not being achieved**, and the **role that UNDP has played**.

UNDP's country programme outcome under evaluation is defined as: "**National and local authorities and communities are better able to conserve biodiversity and respond to climate change**".

Between 2006 and 2009, UNDP has spent **6.8 million USD** on achieving this outcome. More than **three quarters** of the funds were spent on conserving **biodiversity** (5.2 million USD), the remaining quarter on climate change.

Are national and local authorities and communities now better able to conserve biodiversity than in 2005?

The **capacity** of national and local authorities and communities to conserve biodiversity was **enhanced** during the period of 2006 – 2010. Measurable progress was made from the baseline, most notably the **improved management** of several protected areas and the **expansion of community-based, pro-conservation development**.

- The **capacity of national authorities** has gained significantly over the past five years due to improved enabling structures for both biodiversity conservation and climate change management.
- The **capacity of local authorities** to engage in biodiversity conservation was advanced through policy improvements, training programs, and the provision of equipment.
- The **capacity of communities** to participate and benefit from conservation increased precipitously over the last five years due to support for community-based management of forest, wildlife, and fisheries resources.

In spite of good efforts and progress made during the evaluated period, the capacities of national and local authorities and communities to conserve biodiversity did not keep pace with the **overwhelming challenges** generated by Cambodia's rapid social and economic changes. Most gains achieved remain **geographically limited and fragile**.

Many **protected areas** managed by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries are arguably **better conserved now** than five years past. Some community projects seem to be gaining traction. However, across nearly all other

landscapes **biodiversity faces considerable risks**. Cambodia's fantastic national biological treasures continue to be depleted and gradually relegated to disconnected habitat islands. The security of the nation's fundamental ecosystem services is increasingly vulnerable and sustainable economic growth options are evaporating.

This situation is not necessarily a failure of **UNDP programming**. The effectiveness of many projects could have been improved as several project evaluations noted. There is also an on-going need to enhance the technical and implementation support capacity of UNDP's staff. However, the organization's overall contributions were **strategic and important**. This was particularly the case on the local and community levels. The simple fact is that over the last five years conservation did not benefit from adequate national level investment and was crushed by more powerful social forces.

Alleviating this destructive trend will require **continued donor support for fieldwork** so that the few remaining biodiversity strongholds are protected. Abandoning field sites before sufficient local management capacities exist will likely result in the loss of even more of the world's unrecoverable biological wealth.

Ultimately, the **national government** must **lead** if conservation is to succeed. Fieldwork should be complimented by programming that **accelerates the capacity of national authorities** to implement strategic, integrated and informed decision-making. This should reflect best international principles and practices, including landscape level approaches complimented by improved monitoring and reporting. National authorities must be equipped with better tools and motivation to balance development desires with conservation needs. Efforts on all levels should focus upon establishing pathways for sustained, transparent and sufficient conservation financing ultimately derived from national sources.

Are national and local authorities and communities now better able to respond to climate change than in 2005?

- Compared to 2005, **national authorities** are now much better able to respond to climate change with regard to their organizational capacity (NCCC, CCCA, CCD). They are somewhat better able to respond on the policy level (integrating climate change into sector policies and programmes) and individual level (training to government staff).
- There has not yet been significant development of the capacity of **local authorities** to address climate change, although the awareness and commitment to do so has been established.
- Capacity development of **communities** has been modest and dispersed, with a focus on promoting sustainable livelihoods that include some resilience to climate change.

For the future, it is suggested that UNDP establishes a **programmatic framework** to guide climate change development assistance, develops a **unified UNDP approach** that draws in

other UN agencies, enhances the **involvement of sector Technical Working Groups**, promotes a more **rigorous capacity development**, and jointly addresses the integration of climate change into **subnational development**.

Lessons Learnt:

1. Biodiversity

Building biodiversity conservation capacity requires a significant investment of time.

In almost every instance, the results of capacity building are much higher in locations that benefit from sustained international financing. This does not necessarily reflect a project design flaw nor should it be an excuse for eternal international support without commensurate national buy-in. However, this is an indication of the low capacity baseline and the need to design projects to allow enough time for self-sustaining strategies to gain traction.

Community-based conservation initiatives require national level support.

The most promising capacity building results are being seen on the local authority and community levels. This is in part a reflection of funding priorities over the past five years. Community-based conservation has not occurred without national support. These initiatives have gained from significant and growing national investment, particularly in terms of a complimentary enabling environment. As these local programs mature, however, it is becoming increasingly obvious that national planning, investment and development priorities are capable of undermining community level gains. In addition, national funding support for basic conservation services such as wildlife monitoring and enforcement are vital.

Biodiversity conservation requires the support of an international donor.

The Government of Cambodia is certainly making progress towards improving its ability to support biodiversity conservation. However, there will be a continuing need for external inputs for several years if not decades. Several donors invest in a variety of biodiversity impacting sectors such as community development, forestry, climate change, agriculture, water, tourism and fisheries. There are also numerous international NGO's that provide support. However, UNDP is slowly emerging as a primary donor in the field of biodiversity particularly in terms of its ability to successfully capture and program GEF funds. The continued technical and coordination support of UNDP for biodiversity conservation will be critical.

Biodiversity conservation requires integrated and coordinated approaches.

One of the outstanding challenges identified by all sources is the need to build the capacities required to move away from sectoral conservation and towards more integrated approaches. National level vision and coordinated leadership is lacking. This certainly applies to key ministries where increased cooperation would improve the cost-effectiveness of monitoring, enforcement, training, and planning. The need for integration also applies to development sectors where activities related to infrastructure, water resources management, social

development, and agriculture should more fully integrate biodiversity values. There is a need for landscape level approaches so that jurisdictional and transboundary management boundaries no longer ignore the needs of wide-ranging species and the maintenance of environmental services. There are valuable lessons to be learned from the coordinated approaches emerging from climate change activity.

2. Climate Change

Given that many climate – related activities started only recently, some preliminary lessons can be drawn:

Raising the awareness of climate change implications is a prerequisite

There is limited understanding of the effects of climate change on Cambodia.²⁸ Information on vulnerability and adaptation has been important to raising awareness about how climate change will aggravate floods, drought and storm events and impose adaptation measures. Effective dissemination of NAPA, SNC and the UNDP Human Development Report on Climate Change are also important aspects of this task which warrants an overall communication and knowledge programme.

UNDP needs to better define and communicate its strategy

The introduction of a programmatic approach to climate change is a major shift in management strategy that requires planning, consultation and a concerted effort to link the individual components of a climate change programme. The process to develop and convey this strategy, through NCCC, CCD, CPAP or other means, has yet to emerge. There are barriers to programme-based strategies that still need to be overcome, where the climate change programme is viewed as more than a collection of projects led by CCCA and PPCR.

Climate change requires a multi-agency/stakeholder approach

Major support exists across sectors, as shown in Annex 4. Climate change is a cross-cutting theme that requires a multi-agency/stakeholder perspective and involvement of many sectors. This is a challenge given the traditional boundaries between ministries and between government and civil society. The role of CCD as a facilitator of a cross-cutting collaborative process rather than as solely an advocate of MoE interests will need to be emphasized if the programme is to be effective.

UNDP/UN integrated programming requires innovation

There are few models or incentives for integrating climate change across the UN system at the country level. The institutional constraints to joint programming are significant, despite UNDAF. Innovative cross-practice approaches are necessary to demonstrate that UNDP can deliver integrated programming (see Annex 6, Section 2 of the report).