

Summary of Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) Project, Mid-Term Review

The Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) is a multi-donor initiative (funded by Sida, Danida, EC and UNDP; a total of US\$ 8.9 million) with a comprehensive and innovative approach to address climate change in Cambodia. The CCCA aims at creating the enabling conditions required for Cambodia to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by climate change. The approach is to focus on capacity building and institutional strengthening targeting key national institutions, sub-national authorities, and civil society. The CCCA includes a horizontal multi-donor Climate Change Trust Fund, administered by UNDP, which provides resources for the programme and for mainstreaming initiatives and to create a harmonized engagement point for donors, thereby minimizing transaction costs for Government. The overall objective of the CCCA is to strengthen the capacity of the NCCC to fulfill its mandate to address climate change and to enable line ministries and CSOs to implement priority climate change actions.

The CCCA was subject to a Mid-Term Review (MTR) during March 2012, during which time representatives of stakeholders and participants were consulted and all key documents and deliverables to date were reviewed. The objective of the MTR was to objectively determine the progress of CCCA to date, and to develop recommendations to help optimize the implementation and sustainability of CCCA in the remaining timeframe for the project. Full details of the MTR are provided in subsequent sections of this report. The main observations and conclusions are summarized below, going through each of the five proposed results, followed by observations on project design and management, with associated recommendations.

The CCCA Result 1 outcome clearly and correctly centres on the capacity and tools of the CCD, CCTT, and the NCCC, as the institutional “hub” of climate change management in Cambodia. CCD is at the core of Result 1 activities, expected to drive the process of creating the CCCSP and related policies, serving as the Secretariat for the NCCC, and generally providing guidance to the CCTT, which in turn is expected to maintain the link back to the Ministries. However, this multi-dimensionality of CCD’s role makes the achievement of outcome level results extremely challenged. Nevertheless, there has been some progress towards achievement of the Result 1 outcome, based on the 2012 targets. The CCD has an increased profile in its dealings with the NCCC (performing as a Secretariat), and has been more actively involved in supporting the preparations for the COP process and dissemination of that process in Cambodia. The CCD is, however, not fully staffed, and its ability to maintain a grip on daily activities and to plan ahead for CCCA activities is quite constrained.

The CCTT is in place, which is a significant achievement, but it lacks leadership and tends to be responsive to cues from the CCD, not taking direction from the NCCC. The CCTT is not yet defining its own pre-emptive course of actions. With regard to the Ministries having CC Focal Points, this has not advanced much, with just MAFF (and the Fisheries Administration within it) and MoWA having CC Focal Points or Technical Working Groups. The targets and performance indicators for Result 1 reflect general support to the various groups involved in climate change management, but they do not explicitly address the required operational tools, such as the necessary climate change policies, strategies, and plans. As such, these are not yet in place, and as a result, the guidance required for all the other CCCA initiatives is not yet clear or coherent. The process for developing the CCCSP has been delayed; there is now a rush to complete it. The MTR Team believes that the CCCSP perhaps needs more time than just a few months to be developed with consistency and coherence; more CCD guidance (with technical assistance) is required here.

The main proposed outcome from Result 2 is the whole spectrum of stakeholders and practitioners (national to sub-national to communities) being better informed with regard to climate change issues and knowing what practical approaches for climate change management might apply to them, so that they can actually implement something effectively. CCCA has done quite a good job of identifying the stakeholders and examining various media and communication approaches that pertain to each of the target groups; this is commendable. However, it is the *content* of the messages that is important. This needs to clearly articulate the risks and problems faced by individual vulnerable groups, the roles and responsibilities of various groups (Government and civil society), and the specific details of possible actions on the ground. Other initiatives within CCCA should be producing this “content”. There are many opportunities for this, especially within Results 4 and 5, and these should be “harvested” by the Team for Result 2. Clearly, there has been some achievement of outputs and outcomes within Result 2, with CCCA sponsoring several events, the most notable and visible being the 2nd National Climate Change Forum. There is probably increased public awareness of climate change issues (through efforts in Results 2 and 5; eventually Result 4 as well), although this is difficult to measure accurately. The climate change information centre needs to be located in a high traffic area in Phnom Penh, so that it is visible and actually used. This should help increase public access to climate change information. This information should include a list of all climate change initiatives in Cambodia, constantly updated.

The main measure of the Result 3 outcome is the fact that the TFS is functioning and the grant system has started; both very positive developments. The MTR Team believes that the basics are in place and that with another year/year and a half of successful operation, the TFS will be able to solicit additional funds (with or without the active involvement of the NCCC). There is good progress with this outcome and time left to consolidate results and fully examine options for a nationally-owned trust fund. It is unlikely, however, that the Government will have assumed full ownership of the Trust Fund and will have committed national funds to the TF by mid-2014. It is assumed by the MTR Team that the current modality of the TF can continue, or some hybrid version of it with a contracted TFA, until such time as national ownership can be obtained. The main point is that the TF serves an important purpose and is useful in its own right, regardless of who “owns” it.

With regard to Result 4 (the coastal component of CCCA), this initiative is only just getting underway, after a long and difficult formative stage. The proposed activities are appropriate for the intended objectives, but they are very ambitious for the remaining timeframe. A close analysis of the outputs listed in the UNDP-DHI contract and in the DHI Technical Proposal reveals a preponderance of “guides”, “guidance”, “considerations”, “assessments”, “analysis”, “development of plans”, “development of training materials”, “meetings/workshops”, and “establishment of monitoring and evaluation format”. Actual implementation of climate resilient actions remains obscure, and is a concern for the MTR Team, as it appears that only about 14% of the Result 4 budget is allocated to community implementation of climate resilient initiatives. There is a risk that financial commitments will be made to initiate coastal zone initiatives, and that these will not be completed within the CCCA timeframe, in a manner which would allow lessons to be learned and then to inform policy development/ reform. The MTR Team believes that progress and activities should be re-assessed (full evaluation and audit) at the end of 2012; there may then be a possibility of re-directing unused funds to other CCCA components.

With regard to Result 5, it is a significant achievement that eight grants are now underway, despite initial delays in defining and implementing the grant process. It is very encouraging that both the TFS and the grant system and new partnerships between Government and CSOs are now fully engaged, since these represent the “action” part of CCCA – facilitating mobilization of Government and communities as they address climate risks on-the-ground. However, more networking of grantees is required (sharing their lessons through several roundtables each year). Within the eight grants, there

is a good cross-section of partnerships, with various Government/CSO collaborations, and all grants have strong sub-national elements. Although there is no apparent strategy to distribute grants geographically (for example, Siem Reap and Prey Veng have multiple grants), there is quite wide geographical distribution (at least 11 provinces), which is positive. In addition, most vulnerability types (agriculture, fisheries, coastal zone, forestry, urban/coastal planning, infrastructure climate proofing) are addressed, which is very positive for lessons learned. The missing elements include health issues, issues specific to gender, education opportunities (curriculum development), and water management (these could be prioritized in a second call, which should be initiated immediately). All grants (including the current ones) should have at least 18 months for implementation.

Some of the grants reflect too much academic research and not enough community experimentation, and some communities evidently were not too involved in designing the grant projects. Commune and village institutions will need to be bolstered within the individual grant projects, and this needs to be an explicit activity in all future grant proposals. Performance monitoring and reporting will be critically important for the grants (CCD should be involved in this, to learn more about on-the-ground climate change management). It will be important to report on the quality of the partnerships, the progress with specific climate vulnerability issues, and the sector and geographic spread of the grants, as well as the effectiveness of the capacity-building, institutional strengthening activities, and policy building implications within individual grant projects. There will a huge amount of information coming from the grant experiences that needs to feed back into Result 2 (for CCCA information dissemination) and also informing policy change and perhaps the CCCSP itself (Result 1).

In looking at the CCCA accomplishments to date, and the original design, one can say that the concept (with the exception of the coastal component, which stands by itself), is sound and coherent. All the required elements for climate change management in Cambodia are evident and appropriate, working with the correct set of partners and participants. There is sufficient scope to address national and sub-national needs and clear potential for practical linkages between participants and project activities (but this is only possible with effective project leadership). These potential positive elements of CCCA are not yet realized, but all the ingredients are in place; now patience and persistence are required to keep everything moving. CCCA represents a complex engagement of climate change stakeholders. It is, and will continue to be, a challenge to have them all share the same vision and commit high levels of energy to completing all their tasks. Very effective day-to-day leadership is required to achieve this; perhaps the PSB should meet more frequently as well, to monitor and re-direct as necessary.

There are several planning and management challenges evident in CCCA. CCCA budgeting in general does not relate to outputs, so it is very difficult to determine value-for-money with what has been achieved to date, and how best to invest the remaining funds to meet the overall objectives (this is most evident within Results 1 and 2; Results 3 and 5 are quite well-prescribed with their budgets and outputs). Measurement of results is constrained by inadequate performance indicators (all performance indicators in all five result areas need to be reviewed and made more functional). Capacity-building *per se* is not captured in the indicators, and without proper baselines, is difficult to determine the extent to which it has occurred, in any case. Examination of the expenditure reports suggests that little has been spent on specific capacity-building activities, whereas travel expenditures are quite a bit higher, which reflects different interpretations of capacity-building in the absence of clear performance indicators.

There is not full government ownership of CCCA, but there is certainly increased understanding and acceptance of the CCCA concept. A key constraint is the actual engagement of CCD (not fully staffed and lack of incentives). The next year is critical for creating traction between CCCA and CCD. No matter how this goes, the concept of a semi-autonomous climate change management agency, that encompasses the planning and implementation functions (including the TFS) should be explored and

discussed (and not treated as a threat to CCD in the process). Linkages to other climate change initiatives, such as PPCR, will likely continue to be discussed, but the MTR Team is not hopeful that there will be full collaboration between CCCA and various other initiatives, until such time as CCCA has proved its worth, as a Government-owned concept that can then house other initiatives.

CCCA has had a difficult and slow start, but now has all the elements of Results 1 to 5 in place so that implementation and production of outputs can accelerate. Results 3 and 5 (the Trust Fund and the grants) are the best placed for action. Result 4 (coastal component) is underway, but faces time constraints. Results 1 and 2 (CCD capacity and policy development, and information management and dissemination) have been the most challenged, but seem to be catalyzing for action in 2012. CCD ownership of activities and outputs from Results 1 and 2 is still a concern. The MTR Team understands that additional consultant technical assistance is proposed for Results 1 and 2; they endorse this approach, despite previous skepticism about the value of technical assistance. Much will depend on the personal relationships between the consultants and CCD staff. Further effort is needed with the CCD organizational analysis and individual skill assessments and then development of responsive capacity-building for both the CCD and the CCTT. The latter should be opened up for limited representation from CSOs and universities.

A lot of time, effort, and funds have been invested in the gestation and initiation of CCCA activities, and now patience and persistence (and an extra year, to mid-2015) are needed to protect the investment. It will be important for other ministries to respect the mandate of CCD and the concept of CCCA (not undermine it) and for donors to be patient and stick with the CCCA momentum that has been achieved so far.

Key recommendations from the MTR include the following:

- Bolster the Government and donor support for the CCD function as the main facilitator of climate change management in Cambodia; complete the organizational analysis of CCD and address skill gaps of both CCD and the CCTT; consider including CSO and university representation in the CCTT, and engage a leader for the CCTT.
- In the next year, explore other modalities for a combined CCD coordination function and the TFS grant role (one body to set policy, provide grants, and coordinate on-the-ground climate change action).
- Slow down the CCCSP process to ensure proper guidance and harmonization of approaches between the various ministries, as well as time to create an over-arching policy for the various sector strategic plans.
- Clarify the climate change information needs of Government and solicit input from the public regarding what they believe can be done at the community level to improve climate resilience; consider awareness-raising for politicians and business leaders.
- Consider establishing a climate change information centre in a high-traffic area in Phnom Penh and examine cost recovery options.
- With the grant projects, ensure that there are consistent climate change management messages being conveyed at the community level, and organize information from the grant experiences for wider dissemination and to inform climate change policy development at the national level.
- Set up time-series monitoring of public perceptions of climate change (similar to the KAP study); track all climate change projects in Cambodia and host a conference in 2013 to share experiences to date.
- Maintain the current TFS modality for the next two years, but in the next year examine options for alternatives which would include the policy/planning aspect as well as the grant function, possibly in one semi-autonomous agency.
- Consider extending CCCA to mid-2015, to accommodate all the grant projects, work on the CCCSP, and the coastal component.

- Maintain strict monitoring of the coastal component, and conduct a full evaluation/audit at the end of 2012, to determine the probability of full completion of Result 4 activities within the CCCA timeframe (whether mid-2014 or mid-2015); ensure that full reporting of the GEF-funded components is provided to CCCA.
- Complete the second call for grant proposals as soon as possible (with a focus on sectors not already addressed by current grants), and try to allow 18 months for completion of all grants (in the first and second calls); exclude current grantees from the second proposal call, but ensure networking between all grantees, so that lessons learned can be properly shared; provide training in proposal writing and performance indicators/M&E functions, as necessary; the TFS M&E function needs to be shadowed by CCD.
- Enhance the gender aspects of the grants, including reporting of gender-disaggregated data; clarify the process for capturing lessons learned from the grants and the way that experiences will be used to inform new climate change policies.
- Encourage community experimentation with climate resilient technologies and approaches and ensure that community institutions and processes are explicitly addressed by the grants.
- Accelerate the consultant recruitment process and involve CCD in final selection of consultant.
- Where appropriate within each of the Results areas, establish new/relevant performance indicators for capacity-building that track changes in skills, use of climate change planning and operational tools, development of institutions and processes, etc.
- Include Result 4 and Result 5 performance indicators in the overall CCCA progress reporting (these are absent at the moment).
- The PSB should meet four times per year to stay abreast of changes and requirements for CCCA decisions; all APRs should include clear plans for all Results areas to the end of CCCA, so that future plans can be properly reconciled to the accumulated activities to date.
- Maintain a close watch on travel expenditures and ensure that the opportunity costs of travel are acceptable (that funding requirements elsewhere within CCCA are not foreclosed).