

# **Summary & Lessons Learned of Cambodia Community Based Adaptation Programme (CCBAP)**

## **Mid Term Review**

### **I- Executive Summary**

The Cambodia Community Based Adaptation Programme (CCBAP), funded by AusAID and Sweden, has an overall objective of improving community based adaptation and climate resilience in vulnerable communities in flood and drought prone provinces of Cambodia. CCBAP started in December 2010 and was expected to end on 31 December 2012 (most grant projects are now wrapping up, with final documentation). As seven grant projects have had no-cost extensions of several months, the project is now slated for completion in March 2013. A proposal for a one-year extension for CCBAP has been submitted to Sweden for consideration. CCBAP has three main outputs:

- (1) improved necessary capacity within NGOs, CBOs and local communities to implement community adaptation measures;
- (2) mainstreaming of adaptation to climate change at commune level; and,
- (3) lessons learned and good practices documented and shared to influence changes of policy and programme development.

The overall objectives of the CCBAP Review were as follows:

- to review and assess the overall development progress to date, and identify opportunities and challenges related to programme design, implementation, and management of CCBAP;
- to provide an overview of the process for promoting accountability and ownership of programme resources, particularly the efficiency and effectiveness of programme implementation to date;
- to synthesize lessons that may help improve the project selection, design, the M&E system, and the implementation of remaining CCBAP interventions; and,
- to provide feedback and recommendations on capacity building of the LNGOs/CBOs, and climate change mainstreaming into local development plans, by using the approaches associated with decentralization reform.

The programme review was undertaken during the first two weeks of December 2012 and involved review of all documentation, consultations with all CCBAP staff, as well as the LNGOs and CBOs implementing the grant projects, and field visits to examine five projects in detail (see Annex 1 for the details of the review methodology, including the lines of discussion for specific CCBAP participants and beneficiaries).

The main review observations are summarized below.

CCBAP output targets for the grant projects have been exceeded, as 46 LNGOs/CBOs (41 funded by Sweden) have designed and (mostly) delivered relevant climate resilience-building initiatives in 380 villages in 107 communes (in 56 districts in 21 provinces). CCBAP thus covers about 6% of the total number of communes in Cambodia. CCBAP has certainly supported relevant activities that will increase climate resilience in many communities in the target provinces. Adaptive capacity (with the best mix of technical interventions, financial mechanisms, and management institutions) is “rooted” in many communities, and already providing economic benefits in some. The real test will be the endurance of these project communities through the next severe drought or flood. CCBAP is very

relevant and sharply focused on local action, with most project resources going directly to the participants/ beneficiaries. Sustainability has a good chance in many communities, but will certainly need ongoing attention, such as eventually developing cost recovery mechanisms for commune-level interventions, and setting climate resilience priorities within the commune development plans that provide immediate benefits (stable economic activities) to the maximum number of beneficiaries, rather than just focusing on a search for additional donor funds.

Capacity building provided by CCBAP has focused mostly on procedural needs (use of the VRA tool and reporting/financial accountability), which reflects the main function of grant management by CCBAP staff. This has been well-received by participants, as it has helped them with implementation of their grant projects and enhanced their compliance with CCBAP's reporting and accountability protocols. Technical training related specifically to climate change adaptation has been the responsibility of the project grantees (the NGOs and CBOs), working with the provincial technical departments (with funds provided by CCBAP). With these latter training sessions (mostly general introductions to climate change issues), it appears from programme documentation that they have not been based on specific training needs of participants, nor has their change in capacity been specifically observed and documented. Regardless of who delivers the training, future CCBAP training should at least have a statement of baseline participant capacity (before training), alignment of training content to meet capacity needs, and some measure of how the training has improved the capacity of participants in a sustainable manner,

The target of 60% of communes incorporating climate change issues in their development plans seems to have been exceeded, according to the number of endorsement/commitment letters received from participating communes. CCBAP grant projects have been taken up as commune initiatives, since they have originated in participatory planning exercises (using VRA) in the communes, they generally fit the needs that were defined in CDPs and CIPs, and in some cases both the planning methodology and the emphasis on water infrastructure for increasing climate resilience are expected to be incorporated into future CIPs. The CCBAP activities at the commune level have created good opportunities for engagement of women, and grant project design has, in many cases, provided real benefits that address the specific needs of women, as well as providing more security of economic activity during climate extremes, some of this already evident in a few projects that sustained agricultural production despite the drought in July and August 2012.

With CCBAP Output 3, CCBAP has set an ambitious target of trying to influence six programmes, policies, or practices in Cambodia, using the CCBAP project methodology. This is unlikely in the current timeframe of CCBAP. CCBAP is only just building bridges to CCCA and other partners (NAPA FU and UNCDF) with regard to use of the VRA tool and embedding climate change considerations into commune development planning, as the lessons from project design and implementation experience are only just being consolidated. CCBAP is certainly going in the right direction with this, however; more time is needed to work with partners and influence other programmes and policies, in order to meet the target for Output 3. Given the focus of CCBAP on commune development planning, and some solid gains in this theme with the grant projects to date, it makes sense for CCBAP to focus its policy influencing efforts on consolidating and clarifying the process for incorporation of climate adaptation needs in mainstream commune development planning throughout Cambodia. In fact, CCBAP is already going in this direction with the initiative planned with NAPA FU and UNCDF, which is positive. This single policy-building effort would be more than adequate (instead of six), if there were some concurrence between all partners and the Government on an improved commune development planning process that gives prominence to climate change considerations.

Given the relatively low project management overhead, and the high level of spending (74% of the project budget) at the participant/beneficiary level, and the fact there are many visible and verifiable results at this level, the reviewers believe that CCBAP has provided very good value-for-money to date,

with more than 55,000 beneficiaries (noted in the latest M&E data; December 2012) identified for the infrastructure elements of the grant projects alone (equivalent to an investment of about \$50 per person; probably less than this, as there are additional beneficiaries associated with Savings Groups and FWUGs). The CCBAP management team has done a very commendable job in mobilizing and implementing CCBAP, with most of the grant project portfolio very relevant to community needs for climate resilience, most of that delivered according to plan, and Outputs 2 and 3 now underway.

In terms of consistency with existing policies and directions in Cambodia, CCBAP has been fully responsive to the priorities defined in the NAPA and NSDP, and is consistent with the NCDD direction on increasing the degree of autonomy, decisions, and actions at the commune level. Application of the VRA tool and an increasing evidence base of climate resilience at the local level will certainly empower communes and local communities, and reduce dependence on national Government interventions. CCBAP shares project management systems with the SGP, reflecting collaboration from the initial phases in 2011. There has been increasing involvement with NAPA Follow-Up (FU) Project in developing the VRA tool and engagement with CCCA in sharing experiences with the grant management process and related tools. In the last six months, CCBAP has established a relationship with UNCDF and the NAPA FU Project, to examine increasing engagement with the commune development planning process. CCBAP projects are totally consistent with the GEF-SGP themes (giving due emphasis to the more vulnerable elements in society, as well as women, and focusing on food security and water access issues), and currently comprise about 2/3 of the SGP project portfolio in Cambodia, providing a good balance to the biodiversity and climate change projects. Having been executed as planned, CCBAP has made a significant contribution to the UNDP Country Programme.

The overall conclusion is that CCBAP has been able to accomplish most of its original workplan in two years, with 83% completion of the grant projects, at least in terms of activities and structures, but with outcomes not yet firmly evident (they would not be expected after only two years, in any case). The efforts to promote climate change considerations in commune development plans and dissemination of lessons are now well underway and coming at an appropriate time. As detailed above, there are no serious issues with regard to project planning, delivery processes, or the rate of implementation of activities. CCBAP can be considered as a cost-effective project, with much evidence of activities at the community level, mostly relevant to local climate resilience needs, with relatively good geographic distribution, and with an impressive number of beneficiaries, who seem able to articulate the link between climate variability, the constraints of limited rural production activities, and the need for security of resources (mostly water) and diversified incomes. CCBAP has been responding to the priority needs as defined by the local communities, through the VRA process. Communes are starting to assume ownership of both the planning process, and the infrastructure and institutions being supported by CCBAP.

The reviewers recommend that CCBAP be extended at least until mid-2014 (to allow proper completion of at least one cycle of new grant projects; 18 months, if possible, for CCBAP overall, allowing at least 16 months for grant project implementation), with additional funding that matches the absorptive capacity of CCBAP (estimated at about \$1.3 million over this period), as well as providing for extra staffing and management overheads (see details in the main body of the report). The reviewers believe that any possible extension beyond this proposed period should be based on an assessment of CCBAP performance in the extended period, and determination of how effectively new activities, related to increasing programme sustainability at the commune level, are taken up. The reviewers believe that it is important that a significant part of this new funding be used to add new activities, consolidate results, and strive for innovation and increased sustainability. There is a risk, otherwise, of just doing more of the same, which is not the most effective way to use additional funds. Specific recommendations for further embedding climate issues in commune development planning are made, including: support for detailed long-term planning in four selected communes; setting up exchanges between communes; encouraging local innovation in climate resilience;

undertaking specific studies related to rice varieties and water consumption/conservation; provision of support from a national technical advisor; establishing a roster of climate change experts to support commune level initiatives; increasing project activity in Mondolkiri and Ratanakiri (which have the highest climate vulnerability indices in Cambodia, compared to other provinces, but still do not receive a lot of attention); establishing a more effective system of climate resilience performance indicators (these are identified by the reviewers); and increasing accountability for planning and action at the commune level (details are provided in the main body of the report).

## II- Lessons Learnt

Effective Climate Resilience Benchmarks	CCBAP Lessons Related to the Benchmarks
A good understanding of climate resilience needs, specific to the location (based on a relatively scientific understanding of what has happened in the past, and cause-effect relationships).	The VRA tool has been broadly used to document local perceptions of climate change and related needs (this is <b>good</b> ). However, this system is perception-based; there are few empirical data at the local level to inform the real linkages between livelihoods and climate change, knowledge of which is required to develop appropriate solutions (this is <b>a gap</b> ).
Knowing the baseline situation (in measureable terms, if possible). This means vulnerability, social conditions, environmental conditions, and economic flexibility.	The grant projects in CCBAP <b>do not present a measured baseline situation</b> that clearly justifies the selection of interventions. The baseline is based on the VRA perceptions and is not clearly attributed to specific locations or pockets of populations in the project area. As a result, it is <b>not possible to generate a simple time-series of measured change in climate resilience</b> , which can be attributed to a project intervention.
Clear identification of technical and social solutions to climate change problems (realistic and practical approaches, based on experience elsewhere).	CCBAP has been <b>quite strong with this benchmark</b> , replicating, from experience in other locations and projects, mostly water access solutions that will help increase and diversify agricultural production, which <b>will help create a buffer against climate extremes</b> . Project solutions have generally included community institutional/ organization needs (this is <b>good</b> ).
Not creating negative environmental effects in adjacent areas.	The grant projects appear to be quite benign with regard to environmental effects in adjacent areas ( <b>good</b> ). However, there is a <b>lingering concern about water supply and sharing</b> , with changes in local water distribution created by project interventions (increased water supply in some areas may take away water access in other areas; this risk is not well-documented, but it has been mentioned by some beneficiaries, and requires good coordination with PDoWRAM).
Not too conditional on external factors (institutional approvals, planning sequences, funding, etc.).	All CCBAP grant projects, to some extent, <b>are dependent on external factors</b> , especially approvals for new or rehabilitated water infrastructure (from PDoWRAM, for example, as noted above, to reduce water access conflicts). They are, of course, continuing to be <b>dependent on external funding</b> , until such time as sub-national bodies have revenue-generation capacity and more autonomy of decision-making.
An ability to set priorities that will provide the maximum resilience to the maximum number of beneficiaries in an equitable manner (very challenging, perhaps requires benefit/cost analysis).	It seems that about 80% of the grant projects are aimed correctly at water access issues at the local level, which will, when properly addressed, have a relatively large follow-on impact in improving climate resilience for many beneficiaries (this is <b>very good</b> ). <b>Benefit/cost analysis has not been used</b> to compare various options, and the <b>equity of access</b> to climate solutions is stated by grantees, but <b>difficult to verify</b> .
A clear set of realistic performance	CCBAP is <b>strong on output monitoring</b> , but <b>weak on outcome</b>

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indicators for climate resilience initiatives, properly measured at the right intervals, and used to inform future project design.	<b>performance measurement.</b> There is a <b>lack of sampling of specific empirical data</b> that might reflect increasing climate resilience. <b>Outcome statements are based on assumptions</b> about the effectiveness of project interventions (which may be correct, but are unverified).
Integration with long-term development plans.	There is some evidence that climate resilient interventions are <b>increasingly being taken up in commune development plans</b> . It is not clear, however, that the full spectrum for climate resilience is being factored into a 5-10 year vision for local communities (i.e., that all options are being considered, and scheduled over the long-term).
Community commitment to design and participation (reinforced through repetitive awareness-raising and training, associated with specific applications; not just theory). Frequent opportunities provided for community inputs and discussion.	CCBAP seems to have been <b>quite strong generating and cultivating community commitment</b> to climate resilient actions, through the VRA process and by creating opportunities for community involvement in local institutions. These, in turn, are <b>well-anchored in specific infrastructure improvements and services</b> funded by the grant projects.
Simple but effective cost-recovery mechanisms (proper valuation of the resilient solution and increasing the chance of sustainability).	This is not prominent, although <b>there are measures for fee collection for water use</b> (through the FWUGs); they may not be based on the full valuation of the new infrastructure, but instead are intended to fund ongoing operation and maintenance costs ( <b>good concepts; will need sustainability checks</b> ).
Support to diversity of actions/livelihoods (not putting “all the eggs in one basket”).	At least 50% of the CCBAP grant projects have built in activities for diversity of actions and livelihoods, for increased income generation throughout the year ( <b>this is very good</b> ).
Linking new economic activity and community financing institutions to specific infrastructure and services that are climate resilient in themselves and increase the overall climate resilience of the community.	<b>Most CCBAP grant project design reflects this link, which is positive</b> , greatly increasing community engagement and future sustainability of the initiatives.
Levering replication of good approaches through revolving credit, that is driven by household economic gains despite climate variability, which in turn comes from climate resilience.	CCBAP is <b>strong on this point</b> , although more time (1-2 years) is required to see if loan repayments are adequate enough to start the revolving of funds and uptake of new climate resilient activities in local communities.
Clear, accountable, transparent, and cohesive community institutions and structures that manage the activities, measure their progress, report back to the community, incorporate into future plans, and disseminate into higher levels of sub-national and national policy.	CCBAP has laid the groundwork for this benchmark ( <b>good</b> ). Community institutions have been established to operate and maintain new or rehabilitated infrastructure, but they do not yet have the capability/capacity to measure changes in climate resilience or to undertake comprehensive climate change planning ( <b>still very dependent on LNGOs</b> for this, who are themselves still developing appropriate capacity).
Clear roles for civil society, government, private sector = effective partnerships, driven with good leadership; gender aspects clearly recognized and addressed.	CCBAP has <b>facilitated some very effective partnerships</b> that are based on existing authorities, responsibilities, and processes (this is <b>very good</b> ). Perhaps the weakest partners are sub-national authorities, which are chronically under-funded and find it difficult to provide necessary technical services and approvals ( <b>an ongoing challenge</b> ). Commune councils and local community representatives, procuring services from the private sector, appear to be establishing a solid “triangle” for implementation of climate

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	resilient initiatives, with LNGOs acting as facilitators and brokers ( <b>good</b> ). CCBAP has been <b>exemplary in maintaining a profile for gender considerations and providing opportunities</b> for engagement of women directly in climate resilient activities.