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# **Executive Summary of Terminal Evaluation of Cambodia Community- Based Adaptation Programme (CCBAP)**

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Cambodia**

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Final Report

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## Background:

1. The Cambodia Community Based Adaptation Programme (CCBAP) is one of the initiatives of UNDP which funds local non-government organisations (LNGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) to support adaptive capacity of rural communities in areas vulnerable to climate change. The LNGOs/CBOs work closely with local stakeholders and authorities such as the Commune Councils and provincial authorities. The project (2010-2015)<sup>1</sup> which started in 2011 envisaged in the project document a terminal evaluation. This report presents findings and conclusions of the independent evaluation undertaken in December 2014.
2. The terminal evaluation assessed the overall performance (outputs, outcome and impact) of the project as well as lessons that will need to inform future programme. The evaluation used a mixed-method approach to gather and analyse data and used the following specific criteria to draw conclusions and make recommendations: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability and Coherence/ complementarity.

## CCBAP Project Context and Objectives:

3. In 2012, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) developed Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) which addresses climate change impacts on the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). In line with the priority interventions outlined in the Cambodian National Adaptation Programme for Actions (NAPA) to climate change, the UNDP supported the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) since 2009 in piloting climate change-resilient agricultural water management in two provinces through the NAPA follow up (NAPA FU) project. Subsequently CCBAP was launched in 2011.
4. Besides these, since 2010, there have been several major initiatives in climate change adaptation (CCA) targeting rural areas and rural livelihoods, including: (i) UNDP's support (2011-2015) to National Committee for sub-national Democratic Development (NCDD); (ii) Strategic Programme for Climate Resilience (SPCR) financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB); and (iii) USAID-funded 'addressing rural vulnerability' project (2010-2015), amongst others.
5. Directly contributing to country programme outcome 2 of UNDP Cambodia, CCBAP has enabled farmers in the target communities to increase their production and income through irrigation and, in some cases, diversification of livelihoods. The CCBAP project objective was *"To improve community-based adaptation and climate resilience in vulnerable communities in flood/drought*

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<sup>1</sup> Initiated in December 2010, but actual implementation started in 2011. Originally the project was to end in 2012, but subsequently received additional no-cost extension and funding which now comes to an end in March 2015.

*prone provinces of Cambodia.*”<sup>2</sup> The intended project outputs were the following:<sup>3</sup>

- i. improved necessary capacity within NGOs, CBOs and local communities to implement community adaptation measures;
  - ii. mainstreaming of adaptation to climate change at commune level; and
  - iii. lessons learned and good practices documented and shared to influence changes in policy and programme development.
6. The project<sup>4</sup> received a total funding of US\$ 4.51 million.<sup>5</sup> Since the launch of the project, 50 LNGOs / CBOs (71 grants) have been funded by CCBAP to plan and implement adaptation measures in 428 villages, 113 communes, 59 districts and 21 provinces of Cambodia. As per the Annual Progress Report (APR) for 2013,<sup>6</sup> cumulatively since 2011, CCBAP benefited a total of 15,320 vulnerable households (70,336 people including 37,667 women).<sup>7</sup>

## Key Findings:

### Improved capacity for Climate change adaptation at community level

7. With the facilitation of LNGOs/CBOS, the project has created awareness in communities about climate risks and how peoples’ lives and livelihoods are affected by climate change. It has also brought about a collegial relationship between community members and commune councils who now engage in dialogue and discussions on local needs.
8. A major activity that has been supported is rehabilitation of small-scale infrastructures like tertiary canals, small dams, community ponds, water pipelines and repair of roads undertaken at village level through commune councils. Canals were helping farmers to take two crops of rice, and in a few cases, even three.
9. CCBAP has facilitated revival of farmers’ water users committees (FWUCs)<sup>8</sup> which are required to undertake collection of user fees for regular maintenance of water structures; however, except a few, most of these seen have not yet acquired the capacity to mobilise enough funds to be able to ensure maintenance of the structures.
10. Evidences showed that although providing access to irrigation and drainage to communities was critical, farmers needed to be encouraged to move from exclusive reliance on rice farming to diversified cropping including high value crops and drought-tolerant species. Secondly, the levees of canals and reservoirs needed to be made stronger through compacting and grassing at the time of construction to ensure that the structures remain functional for at least 5-7 years.

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP Cambodia (2011a). *Project Document – Cambodia Community-Based Adaptation Programme (CCBAP)*

<sup>3</sup> UNDP Cambodia (2011a). *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise qualified, ‘project’ refers to CCBAP in this document.

<sup>5</sup> UNDP Cambodia (2014). *CCBAP Quarterly Project Report, Quarter 2, 2014 – 1 April-31 June 2014*.

<sup>6</sup> The latest for which data was available at the time of this evaluation.

<sup>7</sup> UNDP Cambodia (2013). *CCBAP Annual Report, 2013, Final*

<sup>8</sup> In Cambodia, the Water Law of 2007 establishes the legal basis for the FWUCs which are required to be registered with the Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology (PDOWRAM), and operation and maintenance of downstream parts of irrigation systems are left to these committees.

11. Promoting savings groups has been a key intervention. With a few exceptions, site visits showed that groups formed in 2011-12 were no longer functioning; those formed in 2013-14 were functioning. There is need for a systematic study of the savings groups created through CCBAP to assess if these were targeting the most vulnerable, and to understand the factors that contributed to success or failure of these groups.
12. Capacity building of implementing partners has focused on, besides technical knowledge on climate change, Vulnerability Reduction Assessment (VRA) and proposal writing, aspects of contract management and compliance procedures related to reporting, finance and accounting. The ability of LNGOs/CBOs to engage with communities in dialogue on need for changing and adapting cultural practices in farming is limited.

### **3.2 Integrating Community Based Adaptation into commune plans and budgets**

13. At the national level, CCBAP has worked with the NCDD to develop guidelines for climate change mainstreaming at commune level. A core group on climate change mainstreaming has developed draft operational guidelines on mainstreaming climate change in sub-national planning process. This is now awaiting approval by government.
14. Pending finalisation of guidelines by the NCDD, UNDP has started encouraging its implementing partners to work directly with commune councils who were trained in VRA and in developing commune development/investment plans (CDP/CIPs) incorporating CCA considerations at the commune level. So far 87 of the 128 target communes<sup>9</sup> have integrated project activities into CDP/CIPs.

### **3.3 Evidence-based advocacy and policy influence**

15. CCBAP has undertaken several activities and technical interventions in order to engage with external stakeholders: training and technical support on VRA to NGOs and other stakeholders, production and dissemination of video documentaries, case studies uploaded on website. The contribution of these activities toward influencing policy at national or regional level has been mainly in developing climate change mainstreaming guidelines.
16. At present the predominant focus of CCBAP has been on implementing ‘projects’. There is need for CCBAP to engage in learning-focused research and experimentation which it has not done so far. The evaluation noted that although there were several projects within UNDP which address community-based adaptation (CBA), there does not appear to be any significant attempt at drawing and synthesising lessons from all these initiatives.

### **3.4 Partnership and complementarity with other CCA initiatives**

17. There are several other initiatives in the country which support community-based adaptation, some nationwide, and others in selected provinces. At the level of communities, these projects are indistinguishable and deliver very similar activities and outputs, though with different implementation modalities. Amidst

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<sup>9</sup> UNDP Cambodia (2014a). *Quarterly Project Progress Report - Cambodia Community Based Adaptation Programme, (01-07-2014– 30-09-2014)*

these plethora of CBA interventions, it is unclear if CCBAP makes any singular contribution.

## Conclusions:

### Relevance:

18. CCBAP contributes to Cambodia's national development strategic plan and UNDP's country programme by enabling capacities of local government, local NGOs / CBOs to integrate CCA into local development and economic planning. The main emphasis of the project so far has been on creating communal irrigation structures which ought to be part of any on-going development work. In this regard, an issue that needs addressing is the distinctive contribution of CCBAP, given that there are various other similar initiatives in the country.
19. The project ensured that women were included as beneficiaries of various activities. Better analysis and planning of activities can enhance the resilience and adaptation aspect of the project which is now weak.

### Effectiveness:

20. CCBAP has enabled farmers to increase production and income through irrigation and, in some cases, diversification of livelihoods. The short duration of the project assistance (12-18 months), however, has worked against realising full potential of the interventions. In relation to the intended outcome of improved adaptation capacity and resilience at community level, the project has created awareness about CCA and enabled communities and commune councils to engage with provincial authorities.
21. Besides irrigation, interventions supporting other adaptation practices like diversified cropping, adoption of crops with low water requirement (vegetables, pulses/beans), use of mulching method for water conservation have been supported, albeit on a limited scale due to weak technical capacity for programming and quality assurance.
22. The project's ability to influence national debates and policies remain weak due to its preoccupation with implementing a large number of activities, not all of which generate relevant evidence-base for developing convincing policy messages. CCBAP is yet to find its niche and criticality in terms of adaptation solutions.

### Efficiency:

23. The project uses an efficient delivery mechanism. Monitoring and reporting of project results are predominantly activity and output-focused which stymies the project's ability to track outcomes in relation to adaptation solutions. In order to be able to engage in policy advocacy, CCBAP will need to be able to generate outputs- and outcome-data and analysis in a more scientific and robust manner than is currently being done.

### Impact:

24. The evaluation highlighted the need for CCBAP to reassess how it positions itself amidst a number of other initiatives on CCA in the country and where it would

like to make an impact. CCBAP is currently not designed to make an impact to scale or sector-wide remit, nor has it currently demonstrated a significant capacity for innovation and advocacy.

**Sustainability:**

25. The short duration of the grants (12-18 months) limits the sustainability of CCBAP interventions which are focused on addressing long-term structural and cultural issues. This is further affected by the fact that progress on institutionally linking the commune council plans to provincial plans and resources through sub-national decentralisation remains weak in Cambodia.

**Coherence and complementarity:**

26. Within UNDP, there are several other initiatives on CBA which deliver nearly similar activities and outputs through different implementation modalities. CCBAP has not built strong linkages with various initiatives which could have created synergy and complementarity to make a strong contribution to the project outcome.

**Lessons:**

27. The project needs to develop a more nuanced understanding of adaptation measures and ability to engage with communities in dialogue on need for changing and adapting cultural practices in farming.
28. There is scope for CCBAP to engage in learning-focused research and experimentation in areas where further research and evidence can help in better policy making, for example in: (i) making FWUCs effective; (ii) best practices and framework for village savings groups which can be sustainable; (iii) effect of declining rice prices on small farmers and its implications for adaptation. These will require systematic data to be gathered and analysed to develop clear policy messages.

**Recommendations:**

**Remaining duration of the current project**

- R1: Through discussions with communities and commune councils, work out and implement a plan to reinforce (through compaction and grassing) the levees/side walls of all reservoirs, ponds and canals that have been renovated in the past two years. Once this is done, explore signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the implementing partners and commune councils, handing over all responsibility for maintenance and after-care to communities.
- R2: Undertake an impact study of savings groups that have been created and carry out an audit of working capital that each group holds (should hold) and, working with commune councils, develop a realistic action plan to support these. The lessons from this study should provide valuable inputs for future programming as well as advocacy for developing an institutional framework for these groups which may have potential to mobilise significant savings for community action.

- R3: Undertake a review of all FWUCs and affiliated associations to assess their functioning and effectiveness in terms of collecting user fees for the structures that have been rehabilitated through CCBAP, and draw lessons for future. This could form basis for advocacy with government and donors involved in supporting irrigation infrastructure in the country.
- R4: Working with villagers and commune council members, conduct a survey of actual area of land (and number of farmers) irrigated by the completed structures during wet and dry seasons, production and productivity enhancement due to irrigation, and cost-benefit analysis of the interventions. This would help establish benchmarks based on evidenced data for future interventions, and get the commune councils, implementing partners and provincial authorities away from the current practice of estimating benefits of irrigation based on total land in a catchment area.
- R5: Conduct an internal review within UNDP to examine if there was anything UNDP could have done or do further to move forward on outputs 2 and 3, including establishing stronger linkage with other similar projects on CCA under its execution.
- R6: As the project is currently due to end in March 2015, to allow a reasonable time-frame to carry out the above activities, UNDP needs to request the donor(s) for an extension up to December 2015, with a clear interim plan and budget from April-December, 2015. This would allow for, besides completing the above activities, time to ensure that lessons from the current project are critically analysed and taken on board for future programming.

#### **Future Programme**

- R7: The theory of change needs to be clearly predicated on the theme of innovation and evidence-based advocacy on CBA, and this needs to drive selection of implementing partners and CCBAP staff capacity put in place for managing the initiative.
- R8: Ensure that activities and sub-projects implemented at community level have minimum duration of 3 years to allow for follow-up and capacity development for sustainability.
- R9: Synthesise lessons and evidence that emerge from the recommendations R2-R5 above and develop advocacy messages and training/ exchange programme promoting best practices aimed at implementing partners and commune councils.
- R10: To strengthen current capacity of implementing partners and CCBAP team to bring emerging knowledge on adaptation and best practices to bear on project analysis, planning and implementation, UNDP should recruit a senior technical adviser with strong adaptation background capable of bringing emerging knowledge from different contexts on good practices and with advocacy experience to support the CCBAP project.

