

Country Name	Project for Facilitating the Implementation of REDD+ Strategy and Policy
Kingdom of Cambodia	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>In Cambodia, the deforested area was estimated to expand to approximately 120,000 ha which accounted for 1% of the total forest area during the period between 2005 and 2010. Some of the proximate causes of the deforestation implied the structural impediments: rampant illegal logging, conversion to agricultural land, forest fires. Also, weak administrative capacity, rural poverty, and population growth were attributed to deforestation. In 2010, the government of Cambodia held a ministerial council to examine the “National Forest Plan (NFP)” comprised of: 1) forest demarcation/classification/registration, 2) conservation and utilization of forest resources and biodiversity, 3) forest law enforcement and governance, 4) village forestry, 5) capacity building and research & development, and 6) securing sustainable forest resources development to approve the plan to indicate the general direction of forest management. As being deemed highly effective and beneficial in REDD+¹, Cambodia became a member of the international cooperation framework: the REDD+ Partnership. At the end of 2010, preparatory work was launched for the implementation of REDD+ by the inter-ministerial REDD+ task force. However, it was deemed that administrative capacities had to be duly enhanced to comprehensively respond to the issue.</p>										
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through effective National Management of the REDD+ Readiness process and stakeholder engagement, development of the National REDD+ Strategy, improvement of capacity to manage REDD+ at the subnational/national levels, and a monitoring system and RLS/RELS framework and capacity for implementation, the project aimed at strengthening the capacity of related stakeholders for smooth implementation of REDD+ strategy and policy, thereby contributing to promoting sustainable forest management as a mitigation measure against climate change based on the experiences of REDD+ implementation in Cambodia.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: Sustainable Forest Management as a mitigation measure against climate change is promoted based on the experiences of REDD+ implementation. Project Purpose: The capacity of related stakeholders is strengthened for the smooth implementation of the REDD+ strategy and policy. 										
Activities of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project site: Whole country of Cambodia Main activities: (1) Realization of effective National Management of the REDD+ Readiness process and stakeholder engagement, (2) Development of the National REDD+ Strategy, (3) Improvement of capacity to manage REDD+ at the subnational/national levels, (4) Design of a Monitoring System and Reference Emission Levels and/or Reference Levels (RELS/RLs) framework and capacity for implementation. Inputs (to carry out the above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Cambodian Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) Experts: 10 persons</td> <td>1) Staff allocated: 29 persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Trainees received: 12 persons</td> <td>2) Facilities: office space meeting rooms for the experts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) Equipment: PCs, Printers, Cameras, Projectors, GPS, Water pumping machines, PV system, Boats, etc.</td> <td>3) Local Cost: utilities, etc.</td> </tr> </table> 			Japanese Side	Cambodian Side	1) Experts: 10 persons	1) Staff allocated: 29 persons	2) Trainees received: 12 persons	2) Facilities: office space meeting rooms for the experts	3) Equipment: PCs, Printers, Cameras, Projectors, GPS, Water pumping machines, PV system, Boats, etc.	3) Local Cost: utilities, etc.
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Project Period	(ex-ante) June 2011 – May 2016 (actual) June 2011 – May 2016	Project Cost	(ex-ante) 535 million yen, (actual) 539 million yen								
Implementing Agency	Forestry Administration (FA), Fisheries Administration (FiA), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) Ministry of Environment (MoE)										
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Forestry Agency										

II. Result of the Evaluation

<Constraints on Evaluation>

- Due to travel restrictions and lockdown measures raised during the COVID-19 Pandemic, data gathered during the ex-post evaluation was lower both in quantity and quality as on-site data collection and direct observation were not as feasible as planned. Nonetheless, mitigation measures were taken as follows; 1) rely more on existing monitoring data collected prior to COVID-19, 2) increase scope of desk-based review of administrative data, 3) use of remote data collection and analysis methods where available.

<Special perspective to be considered in the ex-post evaluation>

- The successive technical cooperation project of this project named “The Project for National and Sub-national Capacity Development for Sustainable Natural Resource Management” has been implemented. Therefore, the project effects of this project have been maintained.

I Relevance

<Consistency with the Development Policy of Cambodia at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation >

The project was consistent with the development policies of Cambodia at the time of ex-ante evaluation. The “National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)” (2006-2010) was to realize good governance through its “Rectangular Strategy.” Following the plan, the

¹ It signifies Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. The Paris Agreement was adopted to reaffirm that 1) GHG emission reduction through the participation of all countries and, 2) conservation of forest as a sink (promotion of REDD+) in December 2015. Cambodia has been recognized as one of the countries with great potential to contribute to emission reduction by REDD+ in the international society.

“National Forest Programme (NFP)” (2010-2029) was formulated in September 2010 to substantiate the development in the forestry sector. To achieve one of these objectives “Addressing Climate Change,” REDD+ was positioned as a major component in NFP. Aligning with the programme, “Cambodia National REDD+ Roadmap” was formulated in 2010.

<Consistency with the Development Needs of Cambodia at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation >

The project was consistent with the needs of Cambodia at the time of ex-ante evaluation. The deforested area was estimated to be expanded to 1% of the total forest land during the period from 2005 to 2010. Some of the proximate causes of deforestation were rampant illegal logging, conversion to agricultural land, forest fires. Also, weak administrative capacity, rural poverty, and population growth were the structural impediments to coping with the issue.

<Consistency with Japan’s ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

The project was consistent with Japan’s ODA policy towards Cambodia. According to the “Country Assistance Program for Cambodia” (2002), the project was considered to support the efforts toward sustainable economic growth and strengthening capacities to respond to global issues.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

<Status of Achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of Project Completion>

The Project Purpose was achieved by project completion. According to the Terminal Evaluation Report, the draft NRS was presented to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) in 2015. With the substantive due process prior to the presentation, necessary policies and measures were thus included in the draft NRS (Indicator 1). Furthermore, after a preparatory period in the secretariat, the Cambodia National REDD+ Taskforce was inaugurated in 2013. The Consultation Groups participated in inter-ministerial consultation meetings to collectively shape the framework of the project (commonly called CAM-REDD). The participants therein expressed opinions on the contents of draft NRS that were properly incorporated into the draft toward the finalization. Thus, Policy level inter-ministerial coordination and stakeholder consultation for promoting a national REDD+ strategy was enhanced (Indicator 2).

<Continuation Status of Project Effects at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The project effects have been continued since project completion. Concerning the national Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), in the Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility phase II (FCPF-II) program, technical methodologies of Measurement, Reporting and Verifiability (MRV) and the Satellite Land Monitoring System (SLMS) have been further enhanced as SERVIR-Mekong program² has supported to upgrade the methods of satellite image analysis in this regard. Also, the Forest Reference Level (FRL) has been upgraded through the activities of the FCPF-II. The comprehensive training programs by bilateral and multilateral donors have continued to support the above areas. The technical cooperation programs so far provided the specific areas of; 1) accurate assessment of land use/cover change, 2) forest inventory survey, GHG inventories for the land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF) sector at the national/sub-national levels. Concerning the improvement of capacity at the subnational level, technical training has been provided periodically by FA central focusing on Forest Monitoring. In parallel, the JICA’s ongoing technical cooperation project for National and Sub-national Capacity Development for Sustainable Natural Resource Management (SNRM) has focused on the capacity development of provincial staff and selected pilot communities based on their actual local needs in respective target provinces.

<Status of Achievement for Overall Goal at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The Overall Goal had been achieved at the time of the ex-post evaluation. The rate of deforestation and/or forest degradation has been measured and officially recognized as an annual rate of change of forest cover is minus 3.5% during the period between 2010 and 2018. Also, policies and measures were taken to stem deforestation since project completion (Indicator 1). The official publication of the forest cover has been set to be made every four years and accordingly stated as shown in the Table below. Also, in terms of a specific measure, FA reported that Economic Land Concessions (ELCs)³ in 2012 have positively contributed to stemming deforestation during the period between 2010 and 2014.

<Other Impacts at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The project and international projects provided the counterpart member staff to have ample opportunities to learn and perform at the regional and/or international forums. The experience to represent the country significantly motivated them to take ownership of providing solutions to the difficult issues that will be noted to globally contribute to the context of climate change. No other negative impact was confirmed at the time of ex-post evaluation.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is high.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results	Source
(Project Purpose) The capacity of related stakeholders is strengthened for the smooth implementation of the REDD+ strategy and policy.	Indicator 1 Necessary policies and measures in a national REDD+ strategy are drafted.	Status of the Achievement: achieved (continued) (Project Completion) - A national REDD+ strategy (NRS) has been drafted since 2014 and revised several times being duly reviewed and agreed upon by FA, FiA, and MoE in November 2015. - The outline of the NRS was presented to UNFCCC during COP21 in December 2015. (Ex-post Evaluation) The NRS was officially endorsed by the Government in 2017. MoE submitted the Action and Investment Plan (AIP) to substantiate the implementation of the NRS. The AIP was endorsed by the Government in 2021.	Terminal Evaluation Report Interviews of former C/Ps and JICA Experts of SNRM

² SERVIR-Mekong program is to help the five countries in the Lower Mekong Region use information provided by Earth observing satellites and geospatial technologies to manage climate risks. The region includes Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Vietnam. <https://servir.adpc.net/about/about-servir-mekong>

³ A land concession is a contract between the Government and another actor that gives specific rights to control an area of land for a fixed period of time and for the conduct of specific activities in that area.

	<p>Indicator 2 Policy level inter-ministerial coordination and stakeholder consultation for promoting a national REDD+ strategy is enhanced.</p>	<p>Status of the Achievement: achieved (continued) (Project Completion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The REDD+ Taskforce Secretariat started operation in 2012. The Taskforce was inaugurated in 2013 by the promulgation of the “Decision on Establishment of Cambodian REDD+ Taskforce” by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. - The project (CAM-REDD) advised the secretariat on drafts of their terms of references (TOR) to establish 4 Technical Teams: “Benefit Sharing”, “Safeguard” “REDD+ Projects” and “MRV/REL.” Each TOR was approved in the 1st Taskforce meeting in 2013. The 4 teams have officially commenced in 2014. - Consultation Group (CG) members were appointed, and the first CG meeting was held in 2013. <p>(Ex-post Evaluation) The Government issued the 2nd FRL to enhance NFMS and Safeguard Information System (SIS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forest management frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Protected Area Strategic Management Plan (NPASMP) (2017-2031) was prepared by MoE and submitted to UNFCCC. Currently, the Production Forest Strategic Plan (PFSP) is in preparation by FA. - Forest law enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FA has suppressed a total of 5,184 cases of forestry offenses from 2017 to 2020. • In 2019, the National Campaign was extended and rolled out on a countrywide basis. - Community-based natural resource management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of 2020, there has been a total of 639 Community Forestry (CF) being established in 21 provinces. The CF is consisting of 169,483 households in the area of about 519,016 ha. • Through the preparation of CF management, the area of CF has been expanded. The livelihood and capacity of CF members have been enhanced, thus increasing their income level by 20% per year. - FRL and NFMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1st FRL was submitted to UNFCCC in 2017 and the upgraded FRL (2nd FRL) was submitted in 2021. NFMS has been continuously upgraded through the activities of FCPF II. - SIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first Summary of Information on Safeguard was submitted to UNFCCC in 2019. - REDD+ nesting⁴ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prakas (Ministerial Decree) and technical guidelines for REDD+ nesting have been accepted by MoE. 	<p>Terminal Evaluation Report</p> <p>Interviews of former C/Ps and JICA Experts</p>																																																					
<p>(Overall Goal) Sustainable forest management as a mitigation measure against climate change is promoted based on the experiences of REDD+ implementation.</p>	<p>Indicator 1 The rate of deforestation and/or forest degradation is officially recognized, and policies and measures are largely taken to reduce it.</p>	<p>(Ex-post Evaluation) achieved According to MoE and FA, the official publication of the forest cover has been set to be made every four years. According to FA, it was deemed that distribution of land to the affected people through ELCs in 2012 has positively contributed to stemming deforestation between 2010 and 2014. However, the moratorium on the granting of new ELC in 2012 was made and revoked around 1 million ha from a total of 2.5 million ha in 2016. And no ELCs was engaged since. Thus, it suggested that the current total area for ELCs might be equivalent to around 1.5 million ha.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table: Forest Cover in Cambodia</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="488 1397 1378 1899"> <thead> <tr> <th>Natural forest (ha)</th> <th>2010 Baseline*1</th> <th>2014</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2018</th> <th>Change from the base year</th> <th>Annual change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Evergreen forest</td> <td>3,573,437</td> <td>2,973,903</td> <td>2,861,233</td> <td>2,799,032</td> <td>-22%</td> <td>-3.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Semi-evergreen forest</td> <td>1,391,117</td> <td>1,108,320</td> <td>1,071,947</td> <td>1,038,969</td> <td>-25%</td> <td>-3.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deciduous forest</td> <td>4,498,397</td> <td>3,480,532</td> <td>3,336,349</td> <td>3,205,830</td> <td>-29%</td> <td>-4.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pine forest</td> <td rowspan="5">988,472</td> <td rowspan="5">907,420</td> <td rowspan="5">865,380</td> <td rowspan="5">835,323</td> <td rowspan="5">-15%</td> <td rowspan="5">-2.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bamboo</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mangrove</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rea mangrove</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flooded forest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Forest regrowth</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overall</td> <td>10,451,423</td> <td>8,470,175</td> <td>8,134,909</td> <td>7,879,154</td> <td>-23%</td> <td>-3.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Note 1: Cambodia Forest Cover 2010 (Initial Forest Reference Level for Cambodia under the UNFCCC Framework, Annex 4, p. 60, Table 2)</p>	Natural forest (ha)	2010 Baseline*1	2014	2016	2018	Change from the base year	Annual change	Evergreen forest	3,573,437	2,973,903	2,861,233	2,799,032	-22%	-3.0%	Semi-evergreen forest	1,391,117	1,108,320	1,071,947	1,038,969	-25%	-3.6%	Deciduous forest	4,498,397	3,480,532	3,336,349	3,205,830	-29%	-4.1%	Pine forest	988,472	907,420	865,380	835,323	-15%	-2.1%	Bamboo	Mangrove	Rea mangrove	Flooded forest	Forest regrowth							Overall	10,451,423	8,470,175	8,134,909	7,879,154	-23%	-3.5%	<p>Questionnaire response from FA</p> <p>Cambodia Forest Cover 2018</p>
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3 Efficiency

⁴ A country may need to decide whether it wants to “nest” an existing local project within the larger scale reference level. Jurisdictional approaches have the ability to access and integrate a range of financial streams, from which local projects can benefit. As such, local projects and national REDD+ efforts could be mutually beneficial, but since both tend to be developed following different guidelines or requirements, they need to be reconciled.
<http://www.fao.org/redd/news/detail/en/c/1175327/>

Although the project period was as planned (ratio against the plan: 100%), the project cost slightly exceeded the plan (ratio against the plan: 101 %). The outputs were produced as planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is fair.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

At the time of the ex-post evaluation, being aligned with the international agreement on climate change, the overall policy on REDD+ has remained to be coherently enhanced as described above. MoE and FA have been implementing the NRS and duly engaged in forest monitoring further through the technical support of the ongoing bilateral and multilateral cooperation project and program. The policy framework on the forestry sector has also remained guided by NPASMP.

< Institutional/Organizational Aspect>

In order to further efficient NFMS implementation, the main responsibility on management of the protected forest and forest conservation areas was assigned to MoE from MAFF. ELCs were passed to MAFF from MoE on April 28, 2016. As a result, the key project counterpart personnel of FA were transferred to MoE accordingly. Moreover, With the transfer of jurisdiction to the concerned local authorities (Cantonments, Divisions, and Triage), the FA staff previously engaged in cantonments were transferred to each provincial authority. From the perspective of staffing, MoE and FA perceived sufficient to promote the planned NRS implementation. Also, approximately 50 staff members of FA were assigned to GIS Remote Sensing and National Forest Inventory team. However according to the survey result, to oversee the implementation at the subnational level, they needed to forge stronger linkages and communications between national and sub-national levels.

<Technical Aspect>

According to the survey results, MoE officials have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge so that they are then capable of training officials at the sub-national level. MoE senior officials sustained technical skills and knowledge of MRV, specifically, through national LU/LC mapping and forest inventory survey in the activities of FCPF II. They were aware of the importance of duly passing down to junior officials to ensure the institutional memory of the skillset. FA has continued to apply the knowledge gained from the project to assess Cambodia's forest cover in 2018. It was imperative for them to methodically apply the principles and methods in the interpretation of forest cover, which includes verification of the accuracy of the results. In addition, the senior officials in FA were mandated to transfer the knowledge to younger officials through on-the-job training by utilizing National Forest Inventory Manual, etc. It was deemed that FA officials have been keen to obtain more knowledge about any new technology both within and outside their organizations such as Differential Global Positioning System. However, the capacity development of the sub-national level on forest monitoring, tracking, and reporting remained to be a challenge and duly required institutional efforts to realize its full potential. It is also observed that the understanding of eliciting the incentives for the local communities has been still limited and superficial at the central level, although their substantive contributions are the fundament of ensuring effective enforcement of the REDD+ related strategies and activities.

<Financial Aspect>

The survey results confirmed that the government budget for the implementation of NRS has been sufficiently allocated to MoE and FA. They reported that they have generated carbon credit revenue⁵. Also, they have had financial support from bilateral/multilateral donors especially for the capacity development and forest monitoring activities (e.g. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for FCPF II). The Government was in the process to submit SAP proposals⁶ under Global Carbon Fund to secure a budget for future REDD+ activities. However, according to the survey result, it was observed that the budget allocation has been quite limited for the relevant operation at the sub-national level over multiple conflicting priorities at the national level. That resulted in an imminent challenge to maintain essential activities including field verification work (forest cover mapping) and daily patrol at the sub-national level.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, Slight problems have been observed in terms of the institutional/organizational, technical, and financial aspects of the implementing agency. Therefore, the sustainability of the effectiveness through the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project has achieved the Project Purpose and the Overall Goal as the capacity and readiness of implementing REDD+ were strengthened. Furthermore, it was confirmed a track record of forest cover, and necessary measures were examined to stem deforestation. As for sustainability, whereas it was confirmed that it addressed the in terms of policy aspect, some institutional/organizational, technical issues were remaining to be solved at the sub-national level. Also, there were concerns about the budget allocation for country-wide dissemination and extension to be duly implemented at the sub-national level. As for efficiency, the project cost slightly exceeded the plan.

Considering all of the above points, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing Agency:

- In order to further enhance the sustainability of the project as well as the impact in terms of NRS implementation at the subnational level, the capacity development of officials stationed in the target rural areas is required for further attention of relevant policymakers at the central level. It is imperative to enable them to regularly monitor and update the status of deforestation and forest cover in the National Forest Monitoring System. To do so, there is a specific need in the official stationed at the sub-national level to methodically track the field status on the map and report information and/data back to the central level in a timely manner.
- In order to further enhance the sustainability of the project as well as the impact in terms of investment to promote NRS implementation in the framework of AIP, how best to mobilize and coordinate resources should be further examined. Primarily, it is essential to establish the workable mechanism and institutional arrangement at the central level for information sharing, monitoring, and controlling the risks entailed in the investment such as illegal logging.
- In order to reduce deforestation at the sub-national level, it is critical to focus on mitigating the root of the deforestation problem:

⁵ A net reduction of 645,410 tons of carbon dioxide has been monitored and recorded in the FA's pilot project during the period between January 2015 and December 2019.

⁶ MRV methods developed in CAM-REDD was further enhanced in FCPF II program which will be ended in December 2021. If this proposal for Simplified Approval Process is accepted, the activities of FCPF II is expected to be succeeded by the fund of GCF.

pervasive poverty and people not being fully informed of the gravity in the rural area. Thus, it is recommended to formulate a program to improve the livelihood of local communities in the vicinity of target forests in close collaboration with NGOs and donors. Furthermore, it is also important to amply familiarize local communities and officials with related law/regulations and civil duties, so that the government would be able to deter irresponsible behaviors to aggravate the situation at the sub-national level.

Lessons Learned for JICA:

Although the project has achieved the objectives as planned, the financial aspect of sustainability has remained questionable in terms of continuation of capacity development as it is especially imperative to enhance at the sub-national level. Yet, JICA’s program-based approach and initiated donor coordination in implementing the cooperation were pivotal to the capacity building to implement REDD+. Such strategic modality should be continued for the technical cooperation, to support the long-standing transboundary issue notably as climate change. Where an issue requires full ownership and long-term capacity building of the recipient country, a comprehensive, overarching program-based approach should be pursued and emulated.



Opening Ceremony for Stakeholders Consultation Workshop on Kampong Thom Forest Management Plan 2013-2017



Group Breaking Activities on Improving the Forest Management Plan