

CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report

Organization's Legal Name:	International Rivers Network
Project Title:	Minimizing ecosystem and community vulnerability in Cambodia to Lower Mekong hydropower
Grant Number:	CEPF-110304
Hotspot:	Indo-Burma III
Strategic Direction:	6 Demonstrate scalable approaches for integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into development planning in the priority corridors
Grant Amount:	\$149,996.20
Project Dates:	June 01, 2020 - March 31, 2023
Date of Report:	June 05, 2023

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

We collaborated with multiple organisations and coalitions to implement the project. These include for example:

Cambodia Volunteers for Society (CVS), who supported some of the trainings, field visits, including monitoring of CEPF safeguards and design and implementation of the community action research (CAR).

Forest and livelihoods Organisation (FLO), as host of community volunteers who played a key role in supporting project activities, especially the design and implementation of the community action research.

Both FLO and CVS co-published the CAR report and women leaders' quotes, which are attached to this report.

3S River Protection Network (3SPN), co-organised and co-hosted the community action research exchange, which included communities they work with sharing their experiences of undertaking and using community action research.

Members of Rivers Coalition Cambodia and Save the Mekong Coalition with whom we worked with to engage Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) and MRC Development Partners on issues related to Mekong River including e.g. dialogues online and in-person; inputs into MRC Development Partners' Joint statements etc.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Planned Long-Term Impacts: 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<p>Plans for dams on the lower Mekong mainstream in Cambodia are cancelled, ensuring that the hydrological connectivity between the Mekong mainstream in Cambodia and the Tone Sap is maintained.</p>	<p>While no official cancellation, the government did announce a 10-year moratorium on the Mekong mainstream dams in Cambodia in 2020. Furthermore, the proposed mainstream dams in Cambodia - Stung Treng and Sambor - are not included in Cambodia's Power Development Master Plan, 2022-2040 (dated September 2022). Given the plan identifies projects to be developed, the exclusion of Sambor and Stung Treng dams is an indication that they will unlikely be developed any time soon.</p>
	<p>NA</p>

Planned Short-Term Impacts: 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<p>By end of the project, increased recognition by Cambodian Government and other stakeholders of alternatives to large-scale hydropower to meet the country's power needs, as evidenced by public statements and changes to the country's energy mix in energy plans and policies.</p>	<p>Increased recognition of alternatives to large-scale hydro by Cambodian government is evident in the Power Development Masterplan 2022-2040 (dated September 2022). For example, the plan excludes the two mainstream dams in Cambodia - Stung Treng and Sambor; significant increase in solar by 2040 (both installed capacity and as a percentage of national energy mix); and reduced reliance on large-scale hydro (while additional hydro projects are included in the Power Development Master Plan, by 2040 hydro as a percentage of energy mix will decline). Recognition of alternatives are also evident in Mekong River Commission Development Partner statements, which incorporated civil society inputs on the need to increase consideration of non-hydro renewables in Mekong country energy plans.</p>
<p>By 2022, at least 15 national and regional media articles cite International Rivers and our partners, including local communities, on the true impacts of hydropower on biodiversity and local people, and the availability of more sustainable alternatives to meet the energy and development needs of Cambodia and the region.</p>	<p>As indicated in attached media tracking sheet, over 100 articles during project period have cited IR staff and materials. Fifteen articles highlighted in green specifically mention Cambodia and/or published by media outlets in Cambodia</p>
<p>By end of the project, communities have cited and used findings of the community research at least four times in their engagements with external actors such as governments, corporate actors and the media.</p>	<p>Engagement with government, corporate actors and media by communities did not take place. However, community members and organisers have shared or drawn upon the community action research findings in a number of events including e.g. event hosted by NGO Forum on Cambodia (March 2023); sharing findings with local authorities (April 2023); sharing findings with Lower Mekong Network (LMN) monthly meeting (May 2023).</p>

Impact Description	Impact Summary
By end of the project, networks of local communities and civil society organisations working on hydropower and energy in Cambodia are more connected, as evidenced by at least four joint actions and statements.	Achieved. Joint actions include organising three community exchanges; coordinating civil society inputs into MRC Development Partner statements; collaboratively designing and implementing community action research, which was jointly published with CVS and FLO. Joint statements include e.g. Cambodian NGO statement welcoming Cambodian Government's statement during COP 26, which affirmed that they will not develop dams on the Mekong mainstream; Cambodian NGOs signing onto civil society statements related to the Asian Development Bank's energy policy update; Save the Mekong statement on Sanakham dam.
By end of the project, increased visibility of women's roles and knowledge related to rivers and natural resources management, as evidenced by their active participation in – and the key findings of – the community action research.	Achieved. 16 of the 29 researchers in the community action research were women, who played an active role in the design and implementation of the research. We also convened a community women exchange; and produced a booklet highlighting community women's voices and perspectives.
Increased capacity of Cambodian civil society to analyse and advocate on energy-related issues is demonstrated by integration of messaging and recommendations on energy issues into at least four civil society statements and/or advocacy plans.	Partially achieved. Training helped increase participants' awareness and understanding of issues related to hydropower impacts and availability of more sustainable and equitable energy options and pathways for Cambodia and the region more broadly. Messages related to energy issues were incorporated into e.g. Joint Cambodian NGO statement welcoming Cambodian government's statement during COP 26, which noted that Cambodia will not develop dams on the Mekong mainstream; Save the Mekong statement on Sanakham dam, which highlighted the need to prioritise sustainable and equitable energy options and pathways that respect the rights of communities; and coordinated inputs into MRC Development Partner statements, which incorporated some of the NGO messaging on the need for greater considerations of alternatives to hydro to meet the region's energy and water needs.
By end of the project, there will be increased opportunities for affected communities to raise their concerns and recommendations directly with governments and project developers and financiers, as evidenced by the number of engagements, meetings and/or dialogues.	Not achieved, largely due to delays in finalising the community action research.
By end of the project, increased recognition by Chinese stakeholders of affected communities' concerns related to hydropower in Cambodia, as evidenced by Chinese stakeholder's statements and/or responses to community and civil society recommendations.	As per approved grant amendment in May 2022, activities and deliverables related to engaging Chinese actors were dropped. Hence, no other progress to report on this impact.

Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

One unanticipated contribution of the project is linked to the grievance mechanism. As noted in the safeguarding report (covering July to December 2022), while no complaints were received about the CEPF project, a number of comments were placed in the feedback box. The comments in the feedback box broadly related to: 1) issues and concerns impacting natural resources e.g. illegal fishing, logging in community forest, some of which included allegations of involvement of local officials; 2) requests for improving development and infrastructure in the village e.g. repairing and/or improving community hall, roads etc. These issues were discussed with community members, who decided to convey their concerns to and request commune chief to intervene and address the complaints, which contributed to commune chief conducting an election for a new village chief in December 2022.

PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES

Overall results of the project:

The project contributed to:

Increasing community knowledge and understanding of changes in the Mekong River and their confidence and skills to document, analyse and articulate what the changes mean for their communities. This was achieved through the community action research process, which included 29 community researchers from two villages in Sambor district.

Increasing recognition of value of community-led research by other actors. This is evident in for example, the community action research workshop organized by NGO forum on Cambodia, which brought together different communities to share their experiences of community action research with other community members and NGOs working on water governance; and the Mekong River Commission (MRC) Development Partner statement (November 2022), which encouraged MRC to explore how community-based research data can be used by MRC as a means to be more inclusive of civil society and community perspectives.

Strengthening inter-community understanding, relationships and solidarity through organizing three community exchanges. Participants' reflections highlighted their appreciation to share with and learn directly from – and build connections with – other community members in the Mekong, 3S and Tonle Sap.

Increasing youth understanding of the impacts of hydropower and availability of more sustainable and equitable alternatives. The project supported trainings for civil society, focusing on youth participants to increase their awareness, understanding and analysis of hydropower impacts on rivers and communities, as well as more sustainable and equitable energy options and pathways for Cambodia.

Elevating community and civil society voices on issues related to the threats of hydropower to biodiversity, ecosystems, and food and livelihoods sources in the 3S basin and availability of alternatives, Mekong mainstream and Tonle Sap. This is evident in International Rivers Southeast Asia Program staff and materials being cited in at least 100 media articles during the project period, including 15 articles that specifically mentioned Cambodia and/or were published by media outlets in Cambodia; as well as various joint statements and actions.

Promoting women's voices and participation, including through the design and implementation of the community action research (16 of the 29 community action research

team members were women) and the community action research (CAR) report also included a section highlight differential impacts of changes in the Mekong on women and children; organising a community women leaders' exchange; and documenting and producing a series of quotes and booklet, highlighting the voices and perspectives of community women in Kratie, Stung Treng and Tonle Sap in Cambodia. The CAR report and booklet highlighting women's voices and perspectives are included in "Other Information" section. Summary report of women leaders' exchange was submitted with progress report, covering July to December 2022.

Results for each deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1.0	Strengthening community voice and networks	1.1	Community research report	Community action research report finalised and available in English and Khmer languages. Report available in "Other Information" section
1.0	Strengthening community voice and networks	1.2	Summary record of meetings between communities and other actors	Dialogues between communities and other actors e.g. government and private sector did not take place. However, community members and organisers have participated in and/or presented at other events e.g. ASEAN Grassroots People's Assembly in November 2022; sharing on community action research in March 2023 at an event hosted by NGO Forum on Cambodia
1.0	Strengthening community voice and networks	1.3	Exchange reports and communication materials (e.g. blog, photos shared on social media)	Community exchange reports (internal) submitted as part of progress reports.
1.0	Strengthening community voice and networks	1.4	Summary of community participants' reflections	Summary of community participant's reflections submitted as part of progress reports (e.g. ASEAN Grassroots People's Assembly). The final community action research report (see Other Information section) also includes some quotes/reflections from community action research team members.
1.0	Strengthening community voice and networks	1.5	Community exchange report and at least four communication pieces published profiling women's role and leadership	Community action research report produced in English and Khmer. Women leader quotes produced in English and Khmer (stand alone photos and as a booklet). Links/products are included in the "Other Information" section

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
2.0	Promoting energy alternatives	2.1	At least one brief published (English and Khmer); at least two infographics/posters disseminated to community and civil society in Cambodia	Not completed. While information and materials shared during trainings, and communication pieces related to hydropower and ADB energy policy was translated into Khmer, we did not end up producing a briefing paper.
2.0	Promoting energy alternatives	2.2	Training program and materials; summary of training report.	Summary reports of trainings have been submitted with progress reports
2.0	Promoting energy alternatives	2.3	At least 15 media articles cite International Rivers' and partner messaging related to hydropower and energy issues in Cambodia	See attached media tracking sheet, which shows that during project period IR staff and materials cited in over 100 media articles. 15 articles highlighted in green, specifically mention Cambodia and/or are published by media outlets in Cambodia
3.0	Dialogues with Chinese Actors	3.1	Community/CSO statements/letters sent to Chinese actors; and summary records of dialogues and engagement with Chinese actors.	As per approved grant amendment in May 2022, this deliverable has been dropped.
4.0	Compliance with CEPF Safeguards	4.1	Compliance with CEPF Social and Environmental Safeguards monitored and reported to CEPF	Submitted safeguard reports which outline compliance and monitoring measures undertaken during reporting periods.

Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:

Below we outline some key approaches used in the project to build community and civil society capacity and networks to protect the Mekong and minimize ecosystem and community vulnerability in Cambodia to Lower Mekong hydropower.

Collaboratively design and implement community action research (CAR), which collected and analysed data building on local knowledge and lived experiences. We produced a CAR report, which outlines the key processes and findings of the CAR undertaken in Koh Chbar and Char Thnoal villages in Sambor district. The English and Khmer versions of the report are available in "Other Information" tab.

Strengthen inter-community understanding and links through community exchanges. We co-organised three community exchanges during the project period: 1) Mini- exchange, where four community volunteers from Stung Treng, Sambor and Tonle Sap areas, shared some of their experiences and challenges in community work. The exchange included a visit to Lower Sesan 2 to also better understand on issues related hydropower development; 2) A community exchange, which facilitated community volunteers and members from Stung Treng (near the site of proposed Stung Treng dam), Sambor (community action research sites) and Tonle Sap to visit and speak with communities impacted by the Lower Sesan 2 dam. The community exchange contributed to increasing participants' understanding of impacts of hydropower dams and the importance of community solidarity and actions to advocate for changes. Participants expressed their commitment to share information and learning with their own communities to increase awareness and also appreciated the opportunity to build connections with other participants as well as communities impacted by Lower Sesan 2; 3) Community women leaders' exchange, which included 13 women from the Mekong 3S and Tonle Sap to share experiences with and learn from men and women impacted by the Lower Sesan 2 dam. The exchange contributed to building relationships among women participants, who also expressed commitments to share learnings with their own communities. Summary reports (for internal use only) of the community exchanges, which include some photos and reflections have been submitted with previous progress reports.

Promoting women's voices and participation, including through the design and implementation of the community action research (16 of the 29 community action research team members were women) and the community action research (CAR) report also included a section highlight differential impacts of changes in the Mekong on women and children; organising a community women leaders' exchange; and documenting and producing a series of quotes and booklet, highlighting the voices and perspectives of community women in Kratie, Stung Treng and Tonle Sap in Cambodia. The CAR report and booklet highlighting women's voices and perspectives are included in "Other Information" section. Summary report of women leaders' exchange was submitted with progress report, covering July to December 2022.

Media engagement to elevate community and civil society voices. See media tracking sheet in "other information" section

PORTFOLIO INDICATORS

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
1	Number of civil society	1	One civil society organization	1	This project's strategies and actions, implemented by

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	organizations, including domestic organizations, that actively participate in conservation actions guided by the ecosystem profile.		(International Rivers) actively participates in conservation actions guided by the ecosystem profile		International Rivers in collaboration with partners, were guided by the ecosystem profile. A key focus was promoting and strengthening community and civil society participation in the conservation and sustainable management of the Mekong corridor.
5.1	Number of civil society networks that enable collective responses to priority and emerging threats.	1	At least 1 civil society network (Save the Mekong Coalition) enables collective responses to priority and emerging threats	1	During project period we helped coordinate Save the Mekong Coalition and members to respond to threats posed by the Mekong mainstream dams. Interventions included for example, Save the Mekong statement on Sanakham dam; facilitating some Save the Mekong members to engage with Mekong River Commission and MRC Development partners on issues related to Mekong hydropower; providing opportunities for Save the Mekong members to join relevant regional forums and gatherings, such as the 2022 Mekong ASEAN Environment Week (MAEW).

GLOBAL INDICATORS

Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID*	Latitude	Longitude	Country	Original Total Size (Hectares) **	New Protected Hectares ***	Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion
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*World Database of Protected Areas

**If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

*** This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.

Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

KBA Name	KBA Code	Size of KBA	Number of Hectares with Improved Management

Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

Name of Production Landscape	Latitude	Longitude	Hectares Strengthened	Intervention

Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

Number of Men Trained	Number of Women Trained	Topics of Training

- **Cash Benefits:**

Number of Men – Cash Benefits	Number of Women – Cash Benefits	Description of Benefits

Benefits to Communities

View the characteristics column below with the following corresponding codes:	View the benefits column below with the following corresponding codes:
1- Small Landowners	a. Increased Access to Clean Water
2- Subsistence Economy	b. Increased Food Security
3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples	c. Increased Access to Energy
4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples	d. Increased Access to Public Services
5- Recent Migrants	e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change
6- Urban Communities	f. Improved Land Tenure
7- Other	g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge
	h. Improved Decision-Making
	i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Type of Benefit									Country	Number of Males Benefitting	Number of Females Benefitting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i			

Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

Policies, Laws and Regulations

View the topics column below with the following corresponding codes:			
A- Agriculture	E- Energy	I- Planning/Zoning	M- Tourism
B- Climate	F- Fisheries	J- Pollution	N- Transportation
C- Ecosystem Management	G- Forestry	K- Protected Areas	O- Wildlife Trade
D- Education	H- Mining and Quarrying	L- Species Protection	P- Other

No.	Name of Law	Scope	Topics															
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

“Other” Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:

No.	Country/ Countries	Date Enacted/ Amended	Expected impact	Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment
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Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices

A company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Name of Company	Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice	Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted
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Networks and Partnerships

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/ Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose
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Sustainable Financing

Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

Name of Mechanism	Purpose	Date Established	Description	Country/Countries	Project Intervention	Delivery of Funds?
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Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site
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LESSONS LEARNED

Community exchanges are an effective approach to building community relationships and solidarity. The community exchanges provided opportunities for participants to share with and directly learn from other community members, who are also working to protect their rivers and natural resources, important for their lives and livelihoods. There is real value in hearing directly from other community members rather than only from external actors, be they NGOs, academics etc

Engaging local authorities in design and implementation is important in Cambodian context to build trust and understanding. The community action research engaged local government officials through various stages, which helped increase their understanding and support for the research activities.

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

Community exchanges (also see lesson learnt above) were successful in building inter-community relationships and solidarity. It also helped increase understanding of how the Mekong, 3S and Tonle Sap are connected and some of the common challenges that riparian communities are facing and share different strategies and actions that communities in Cambodia have undertaken to address the challenges.

Community action research (CAR) as a process to not only build the knowledge and understanding of changes in the river and its impacts, but also build the confidence and skills of community researchers to document, analyse and articulate what the changes mean for their communities. We have received positive feedback from community action research team members (see CAR report for some quotes of CAR team members). We have also supported the researchers to present the findings to different audiences e.g. NGO forum workshop in March 2023 and Lower Mekong Network meeting in May 2023. Community presenters appreciated the opportunities to present, noting that they feel more confident and have improved their presentation skills.

COVID-19 really limited travel to field sites, which contributed to significant delays in project implementation, particularly the community action research.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

N/A as safeguards listed as a separate component. Safeguard reports outlining updates and actions against the mitigation strategies, monitoring and evaluation activities and the grievance mechanism identified in the project's social assessment, dated 20 March 2020, have been submitted with progress reports during the project period.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD)	\$803,400.00
Breakdown of Additional Funding	The figure above represents grant expenses (rounded to nearest \$100) for International Rivers SEA Program, covering period 1 June 2020 to 31 December 2022. This included: Mekong Inclusion Project (SDC contribution): \$207,600 Mekong Inclusion Project (DFAT contribution): \$379,700 TROSA project (Note, this is shared with IR South Asia Program): \$66,100 Open Society Foundation: \$150,000

INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

International Rivers; contact@internationalrivers.org