

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Cambodian Rural Development Team
Project Title:	Sustainable Livelihoods for Mekong Biodiversity and Critical Wetland Resource Conservation in Cambodia
Date of Report:	Sep 1, 2010 to Jun 30, 2013
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CEPF Region: Indo-Burma

Strategic Direction: Strategic Direction 2: Develop innovative, locally led approaches to site-based conservation at 28 key biodiversity areas. Sub-direction 2.1 is particularly relevant: “Establish innovative stakeholder-based conservation management and caretaking initiatives at 28 key biodiversity areas.”

Grant Amount: US\$204,400

Project Dates: 1 September, 2010 to 30 June, 2013

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

During the implementation of the “Sustainable Livelihoods for Mekong Biodiversity and Critical Wetland Resource Conservation in Cambodia” project through the support of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, CRDT has been working closely with partners WWF and Community Economic Development (CED). Expertise and experiences have been shared during trainings, workshops, AGM, semester, quarterly, and monthly meetings, field visits in the project area and other important events.

Partner CED: they have worked in a large number of villages throughout the Mekong Flooded Forest in Kratie province. CED’s work focused on natural resource rights and management, and complemented the work of CRDT. CED has worked as a technical support for community fishery and forestry to make sure the community could lead and manage natural resource by itself and have a sustainable use of it.

Partner WWF: they have worked along the Mekong River and have high experiences on biodiversity conservation and natural resources management. WWF shared expertise, financial support and experiences to develop an innovative and effective approach to conservation and natural resource management. The partner WWF communicated throughout the implementation of the project to maximize the complementary nature of our work and minimize redundancy. WWF assisted in building relationships with provincial and national government authorities, and had a supervisory

role to ensure that all work undertaken by CRDT fits with their long-term conservation goals.

Other NGOs, networks and coalitions: CRDT had contacts with all organizations working in this area. In particular, CRDT liaised with the River Coalition in Cambodia (RCC), Mlub Baitong, CEPA, NGO Forum, CCC and the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT). Communication between NGOs working in this area is vital in order to share experiences and coordinate activities to achieve the project's goal. CRDT are also local partners of the Wetlands Alliance Programme and liaise with WAP partners to exchange knowledge and understanding of critical issues along the Mekong to ensure our staff understanding and ability to implement effective community based projects in support of wetlands conservation efforts.

The ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) declared the provinces, from the upper part of the Mekong in Cambodia, as protected areas for fish spawning grounds and prohibited fishing lost and large scale commercial fishing in 1987. The project intervened in the Mekong River mainstream in Sambour district, Kratie province. Thus the project followed the national conservation priority. Furthermore, the project addressed element of CEPF Strategic Direction 2: Develop innovative, locally led approaches to site-based conservation at 28 key biodiversity areas (CRDT, 2010).

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The projects' activities were designed to contribute to CEPF Ecosystem profile. When thinking about how to deal at best with ecosystem conservation issues in CEPF priority site from Kratie to Lao PDR, we decided that it was of best interest for the region to join forces with WWF and CED. First, WWF Cambodia mainly focused on gaining protected status for the site, conservation management and law enforcement, as well as community-managed conservation. Then, natural resource rights and management were implemented by CED and lastly, CRDT played an important role in improving community livelihoods to reduce their dependency on natural resources. Those organizations all had the same objective in reaching CEPF ecosystem profile, which made the partnership even more meaningful and is a concept CRDT will maintain in its future projects.

During the project implementation, local communities had been formed and their capacity on conservation and livelihood activities strengthened. Community fishery and forestry, livelihood groups (CBO) have registered with the government from national to commune level. In the Mekong Flooded Forest area, CRDT has been working with 30 CBOs to enhance food security and income generation by reducing natural resources usage. Environmental education, waste management, conservation awareness to CBO members through night shows have been conducted for beneficiaries in this biodiversity protected areas. Tree nursery activities and ecotourism community were operated sustainably in order to both make income for local people and preserve the environment. It also contributed to community fishery through sharing benefit to support activities of CFi in Koh Phdao around the dolphin pools.

Regarding the community livelihood activities link to conservation, there were remarkable outcomes from those groups. All CBO members were selected from community fisheries and forestry and indigenous communities which are recognized by the government. Benefits sharing conditions were clearly stated in the by-law citing the percentage of income to support conservation activities. In addition, communities better communicated with commune authorities through meetings, commune investment plan/

commune development plan. The natural resource management issue has been raised and integrated into the government plan. Moreover, they have dared to protest against some land concession companies who work on their land or in the community forest, or mining exploitations. Furthermore, social and environmental safeguards in the project area have been ensured during the project implementation from both project partners and beneficiaries.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

The project has effectively met the short-term impacts in most cases in terms of consumption of alternative livelihood products, improvement on food availability and health, decreasing time spent exploiting forest resources and engagement in wildlife trade, number of CBOs functioning, function of the Environmental Action Group, increasing awareness of potential solution for environmental issues and the importance of natural resource conservation, and waste management among target communities.

Based on the monitoring and evaluation report, most people rely on fishing for food and income among target communities. At the end of the project, 45% of fishermen have reduced their fishing time because of a decreasing fish population in stock (river) and as they were busy with implementing alternative livelihood activities such as chicken and pig productions. Contrastingly, the dependency on fishing has been increased for target communities (23%) who wished to earn further income for their households. Still overall, fishing habits have been positively changed among most target communities. At the same time illegal fishing activities conducted by outsiders have increased in which sometimes they were supported by some local authorities (chief of villages and communes), policemen and soldiers. These activities could contribute to the over exploitation of fish which is the cause of the decreasing fish population. The reliance on forest resources for livelihood among target communities in terms of timber, wildlife, and NTFPs has positively changed. Alternative livelihood activities have contributed to the change, but what mostly contributed has been the decrease of luxury timbers and wildlife and an increasing law enforcement against illegal loggings and wildlife trade, while the adverse impact on the forest was still caused by land concession and illegal logging and hunting from outsiders. Overall, the reliance on natural resources has positively changed among target communities in the Mekong Flooded Forest.

The project has not had any negative impact of livelihood and culture of indigenous people in the target areas. Differently, the project has contributed to build team work among CBOs' members and engaged them to apply improved agricultural techniques in terms of pig, chicken, and rice productions in order to increase food security and income generation.

The project has also not had negative impact on the environmental safeguard to Mekong Flooded Forest. Inversely, the project has improved the capacity of communities on waste management and organic agricultural products (rice). In addition the project has contributed to protect natural resources such as fish, forest, and wildlife through engaging target communities in decreasing illegal activities in terms of shocking fish, trapping and poisoning wildlife, and logging timber in the project.

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

Conservation of the critical biodiversity and endangered habitats of the 'central section' of the Mekong River (CEPF Priority Site: Kratie to Lao PDR) through decreased reliance on natural resources and increased empowerment of communities to lead site-based conservation.

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

Most people reliance on fishing for food and income among target communities (45%) has reduced because of a decreasing fish population in the river and the implementation of alternative livelihood activities such as chicken and pig productions. Contrastingly, the dependency on fishing has increased for target communities (23%) who wished to earn further income for their households. At the same time, illegal fishing activities conducted by outsiders have increased in which sometimes they were supported by some local authorities (chief of villages and communes) and police's relatives. These activities could contribute to the over exploitation of fish. The reliance on forest resources for livelihood among target communities in terms of timber, wildlife, and NTFPs has positively changed. And alternative livelihoods have contributed to the change. Some important reasons which contributed to the latter, were decreasing timber and wildlife, and increasing law enforcement against illegal timber and wildlife trade. The decrease in forest resources was due to land concessions, illegal logging and hunting from outsiders. Overall, the reliance on natural resources has positively changed in the Mekong Flooded Forest.

All committees and most members of CBOs have shown their high commitment in continuing the existing alternative livelihood activities in terms of rice, chicken, and pig productions; and saving component. But the capacity of CBOs' committees for group operation, participation of members in group and commune meetings, and understanding of process and objectives of CIP/CDP were still limited and thus need further improvement to strengthen the sustainability of the project when it ended.

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

19 communities in 4 communes in Kratie province that lie within the central section of the Mekong will have:

- Increased food and livelihood security from non-natural resource dependent sources (90% of beneficiaries reporting home consumption of alternative livelihood produce, 60% reporting an impact on health/hunger/food availability in the final monitoring survey at the end of the project, and beneficiaries experience an average increase of disposable income by 25%, as measured by CBO records and annual monitoring survey).
- Reduced natural resource dependency of communities, shown through reduced exploitative livelihood activities, especially illegal fishing, wildlife trade and timber trade (35% reduction in natural resource exploitation, measured by surveys showing number of days beneficiaries spend fishing and exploiting forest resources, and perceptions of and levels of engagement in the wildlife trade).
- Increased capacity to engage in and manage independently sustainable livelihood activities and engage in government planning and consultations (30 CBOs are still functioning at the end of the project, and are still functioning 1 year later, and 70% have participated in Commune planning processes by the end of the project (Measured by CBOs and Commune council records).
- Ability and motivation to independently take local action on conservation issues (eco-tourist number increases by 25% at the end of the project, 3 Environmental Action CBOs are still functioning at the end of the project and after 1 year, and general population show a 25% increase in awareness of environmental issues, as measured by CBO records and annual monitoring survey).

This will have a short term impact on the protection of priority species and habitat, which CRDT will monitor in cooperation with the WWF team (who have the technical expertise to design effective monitoring tools) to ensure alternative livelihood activities have maximum impact on conservation.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

The percentage of target communities who consumed alternative livelihood products (87%) at the end of the project is very close to the expected achievement (90%). Even though there was no available information of the impact on hunger/food availability and impact of health of target communities in the baseline survey report, the actual achievement of both indicators (73% and 66% respectively) are above the expected results (60%). The figure of disposable income of target communities was also not available in the baseline survey report. However, the income of rice contributed to 30% of the total medium annual income per household of the target community at the beginning of the project while the income of rice reached 38% of the total medium annual income at the end of the project. The result presents that the income of rice has increased by 8%. In addition, the income for the chicken production was USD55.2 per annum per household before the project started while it was USD80.3 at the end of the project, which shows a 45% increase.

The final survey reported that the time people in the targeted communities spent fishing was reduced slowly by only 1.4% which is far behind the expected results of 35%. Indeed, most of respondents (72%) still heavily relied on fishing as main sources for food and income. However, among those who went fishing, 45% said that the time they spent fishing was decreased compared to the beginning of the project because of a decreasing number of fishes in stock and as they were busy with other livelihood works including chicken and pig productions; 23% increased their fishing time as they wished to earn more income while 32% said that they spent the same amount of time than before. The time people in the target communities spent exploiting forest resources was decreased by 38% which is over the expected achievement (35%). Alternative livelihood activities such as pig and chicken productions contributed to this reduction. In addition, the decrease in wildlife and forest; a stricter implementation of the forest law enforcement; and selling labor for cassava plantation, and Chinese company (gold exploitation) were also the main contributions to the reduction of time spent to forest. In regards to the level of engagement in wildlife trade, 59% of respondents thought that it decreased which is higher than the expected result (35%), but mostly it was due to a low remaining population of wildlife in the area and at the same time the law enforcement against illegal wildlife trade was more strictly implemented by relevant agencies. However, pig and chicken productions are also the cause of the decreasing wildlife trade in the area.

The final evaluation showed that all CBOs (30) are still functioning which meets the set short-term impact of the project. However, only 43% of CBOs actively involved in monthly meetings with commune councils while the rest were unable to join which is lower than the set results (70%). The main reasons given were the long distance between the villages and the communes' offices which made the cost for transportation be quite high, limited education among committee members, and less commitment in voluntary work for their group. For those who were representatives of their CBOs and joined monthly meeting with commune councils, they were able to report to local authorities about the progresses of their group activities and raise voice for the need of their group members.

Overall the capacities of CBOs' committee members are at average in terms of management, budget management, proposal writing, report writing and book keeping

which indicates that they are able to engage in and manage independently sustainable livelihood activities. But the understanding of objective and process of CIP/CDP among committee members is low which will require further strengthening in the future and most of them also asked for further capacity building on management, proposal writing, report writing, and budget management. In addition only 59% of CBOs' members actively participated in groups' meetings. Those who infrequently involved in groups' meetings, were in fact busy with rice production and work at home, selling labor outside villages, and forgetting meeting date or having no confirmation for the meetings.

The average number of tourists who visited the CBET in 2011 and 2012 increased by 12% compared to the number in 2010 which didn't reach the set result (25%). This could be the cause of setting the expected result too high as the standard of service delivery was good and the promotion of environmental stewardship have been improved. And at the same time the average amount of income from tourists for the CBET in 2011 and 2012 was increased by 24% compared to the amount in 2010 (\$8,528 to \$10,580). In order to contribute to the natural resource conservation, CBET's committees approved to have 30% of their annual development budget for community fishery to be used for patrolling against illegal activities which harms dolphins and other fishery resources.

Three Environmental Action CBOs or Environmental Action Groups (EAGs) were established with official recognition from commune councils and are still operating which meets the set result. Even though EAGs have had slow progresses on all activities, their committee members have raised awareness of natural resource conservation among target communities during group meetings. Waste management has improved among target villages. Overall, the reliance on natural resources has decreased among target communities while the empowerments have been built among them. These help contribute to a positive impact to conserve the critical biodiversity and endangered habitats of the flooded forests of the Mekong River. However, further investments on conservation within this area should be continued for a longer-term impact. However, the EAG's committee members have raised awareness of natural resource conservation in other CBOs' meetings in which they have participated in terms of wild bird nest protection, replanting trees and conserving dolphin and fish. Actually, two of the groups have been germinating fruit trees seedlings to be sold to the target communities in pursuit of contributing to environmental management.

In regards to the awareness of target communities on environmental issues, 59% of respondents were able to raise 3 environmental issues happening in their area which are not much lower than the expected result (64%). The main issues raised included deforestation (71%), illegal fishing (53%), climate change (48%), pollution/waste (42%), illegal wildlife hunting (41%), and dolphin harm (14%). Also, 45% of respondents could raise 3 potential solutions across those problems which are beyond the set expected result (32%). Most respondents raised quite similar solutions for those issues such as replanting trees and stopping clearing forest for deforestation; applying fishing law, strengthening community fishery forces for patrolling, building cooperation among community fishery, chief of village and commune councils, and increase alternative livelihood for decreasing illegal fishing; protecting forest, digging ponds to store water for crop irrigation for climate change; cleaning waste around houses and continuing raising awareness of waste management among communities; stopping any illegal activities for wildlife hunting; and not fishing and using illegal fishing in or near dolphin pools.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: This is not relevant regarding CRDT project; this should be covered by the report of WWF

Species Conserved: This is not relevant regarding CRDT project; this should be covered by the report of WWF

Corridors Created: This is not relevant regarding CRDT project; this should be covered by the report of WWF

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The project interventions were improvement of food, livelihood security, and income generation of target communities; increasing capacity to engage in and manage independently sustainable livelihood activities and engage in government planning and consultations; increasing local co-operation with conservation activities through decreased reliance and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources among the target communities; and ability and motivation to independently take local action on conservation issues. These above interventions followed the development plans/strategies of government and stakeholder NGOs working there. The interventions were also fit to CEPF's conservation strategy. Importantly, the interventions were fit to the priority needs of local communities especially improving food security and income.

The project has effectively met the short-term impacts in most cases in terms of consumption of alternative livelihood products, improvement on food availability and health, decreasing time spent exploiting forest resources and engagement in wildlife trade, number of CBOs functioning, function of Environmental Action Group, increasing awareness of potential solution for environmental issues and the importance of natural resource conservation, and waste management among target communities. However, the comparison between the annual incomes of the target communities in the baseline and final assessment is not available due to the limited information in the baseline report. The time people spent fishing slightly decreased as most target communities rely on fishing as the main resource for food and income. In addition, the participation of CBOs in CIP/CDP and monthly meeting with commune councils remained limited as most villages where the CBOs are located are in remote areas and far from commune offices which cost a lot of money for transportation to join any meetings; limited education, less commitment for voluntary work, and the understanding of CIP/CDP among CBOs' members is also limited. The habit of communities burning different kind of waste altogether including solid and organic wastes is inappropriate in which solid waste can be recycled and organic can be turned into compost. According to the project monitoring, regarding the awareness of target communities on environmental issues, 59% of respondents were able to raise 3 environmental issues happening in their area which are not much lower than the expected result (64%). The main issues raised were deforestation (71%), illegal fishing (53%), climate change (48%), pollution/waste (42%), illegal wildlife hunting (41%), and dolphin harm (14%). Contrastingly, 45% of respondents could raise 3 potential solutions across those problems which are beyond the set expected result (32%). Most respondents raised quite similar solutions for those issues such as replanting trees and stopping clearing forest for deforestation; applying fishing law, strengthening community fishery forces for patrolling, building cooperation among community fishery, chief of village and commune councils, and increase alternative livelihood for decreasing illegal fishing; protecting forest, digging ponds to store water for crop irrigation for climate change; cleaning waste around houses and continuing raising awareness of waste management among communities for waste management issues; stopping any illegal activities for wildlife hunting, and not to fish and to use illegal fishing in or near dolphin pools for wildlife and fish harvesting issues.

Fish exploitation has decreased among most fishermen. But if chicken and pig productions had some contribution to the reduction, the main reason was due to the decreasing of fish in stock (partly due to illegal fishing activities conducted by outsiders). Forest exploitation has also reduced among target communities with the help of chicken and pig productions but it was mainly due to the reduction of forest resources and increasing law enforcement. CBET helped improve the empowerment to take action for conservation through approving over one third of its development budget for Community Fishery to patrol against illegal fishing activities. Even though EAGs have had slow progresses of their activities, their committee members have raised awareness of natural resource conservation among target communities during group meetings. Waste management has improved among target villages. But the habit of burning wastes without segregating them still took place among most target communities. Overall, the reliance on natural resources has been decreased among target communities while the empowerments have been built among them. These helped contribute to the positive impact of conserving the critical biodiversity and endangered habitats of the flooded forest of the Mekong River. However, further investments on conservation within this area should continue for the longer-term impact.

However, we also faced some problems in the communities living on the Mekong River like: monstrous dams, pesticides, deforestation, destructive overfishing, algae, mine investment, wildlife hunting. These are some problems that currently threaten the people who are living on the Mekong River and will affect them in the future. A rich biodiversity is now dying and several people are in danger. Communities living on the Mekong are the most at risk, because they rely on agriculture products and fishing. The future of the Mekong is awaiting the impending decision concerning the construction of a 1,260-megawatt dam proposed for Xayaburi province in Laos. The Xayaburi dam poses serious threats, not only to the communities directly impacted in Laos, but particularly the populations of Vietnam and Cambodia, who will see little benefit from the sacrifices made, as 95 percent of the energy generated by the dam will be exported to Thailand. The Mekong River is the lifeblood for more than 60 million people and home to an exceptional range of biodiversity, including the critically endangered Irrawaddy river dolphin. According to International Rivers in Cambodia, the Xayaburi dam threatens the nation's US\$300 million a year freshwater fishery and the successful rice production, reliant upon the unimpeded Mekong floodplain and fertilizing silt flows. It threatens 41 species with extinction and risks depleting current fish stocks which provide 80 percent of the protein in Cambodia's diet.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The project has not had any negative impact on the livelihood and culture of indigenous people in the target areas. On the opposite, the project managed to encourage strong team work among CBOs' members and engaged them to improve their agricultural techniques in terms of pig, chicken, and rice productions in order to increase food security and income generation (Based on information from household survey and stakeholders interviews).

The project has also not had negative impact on environmental safeguard of the Mekong Flooded Forest. Inversely, the project has improved capacity of communities on waste management and organic agricultural products (rice). In addition the project has contributed to protect the natural resources such as fish, forest, and wildlife through engaging target communities in decreasing illegal activities in terms of shocking fish, trapping and poisoning wildlife, and logging timber in the project area (According to the information from stakeholder interviews). But 57% of CBOs have not yet actively involved in monthly meetings with commune councils as well as CIP/CDP which caused

them to miss opportunity to report their progress activities and needs from the commune councils. At the same time 41% of respondents who were all CBOs members were not very actively involved in their monthly CBOs' meetings which caused them to lose information from their groups and to miss involving in problem solving and saving money in groups. These have affected the groups' sustainability.

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned:

30 Community Based Organizations with a membership of at least 450 direct beneficiaries are established, that are able to manage their own activity and engage with the government

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

30 community based organization were completely established, with 507 direct beneficiaries including 383 women as group members and 2,562 household members as indirect beneficiaries. The CBOs have a clear by-law and regulation and are recognized by commune authorities in the area of the Mekong Flooded Forest in Sambour district in Kratie province. Those CBOs have been managed and led by 98 executive committee members with 56 women. During the project implementation a lot of trainings have been conducted to CBO members and committees on proposal writing, financial management, reporting, livestock raising, rice growing, and how to save money and recording. The regular monthly follow up and reviews on the quality of CBOs showed that some CBOs were able to record their progresses for each member on sold chicken, pig income and saving from livelihood activities. 9 CBOs have regularly sent their progress reports with clear data and grant expenses to the project team, 12 CBOs randomly sent reports, while 9 other CBOs didn't manage to record their progresses and still need support.

The sustainability of CBOs really depends on the capacity of the group management of committees and the generation of incomes. In fact, there were two main income sources for CBOs: the grants and monthly saving of their livelihood income by the provision of loan to get interests. 28 out of 30 livelihood CBOs had been saving money almost every month. During the project intervention, CBOs reported that the average amount of saved money was between USD150.00 and USD500.00. However, the CBOs didn't petition for funds at the commune council like the project forecasted it, as their ability was still limited on proposal writing and commune authorities in the project area had no small fund availability for them. Even if the CBOs faced these challenges they still managed to be really involved with local authorities better than before the project thanks to a better communication through working groups. For instance, 7 CBO chiefs in Koh Khnhaer commune have participated in monthly commune meetings to report on progresses and to raise about their needs. Or also, 15 CBOs in Beong Cha commune have been supported by the village chiefs or commune chief when they conducted meetings and all achievements have then been passed on by the village chief to the commune council. Conversely, 8 CBO in Okreang commune didn't receive support from their commune authorities as these communities are located far from the commune offices and committees are made of indigenous people whom mostly have low education. Taken as a whole 73% of members have participated in the commune planning processes.

Component 2 Planned:

500 families undertake alternative livelihood activities to produce food for home consumption

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

The techniques in chicken, pig raising, rice intensification, study tours, extension workers and village veterinaries has been taught to all members. There were many remarkable achievements on livelihood training activities to CBOs during 3 years. 30 CBOs with 507 families have been implementing project activities in the target area by following some parts of new techniques such as SRI, chicken and pig raising. 274 members raised chickens and 233 members raised pigs. However, vegetables were already being produced and the fish raising activity didn't raise much interest as the locations were not suitable for that with challenges like unstable levels of food and water level.

Animal husbandry, livestock raising and rice plantation were the main sources of income and food delivery for rural farmers who have worked on this following traditional raising techniques. Through their collaboration with CRDT during training courses and real practices, most of them could improve their food consumption. For instance, the chicken production started from 3 heads to 100 chickens and for pigs from 1 pig to 5 pigs for almost every family. This could be done by moving from normal raising habits to applying new techniques. The rice yield has also increased from 2.5 tons to 3 tons per hectare thanks to the new techniques they have learned. According to CBO reports collected by the project team during the project period, around 445 out of 507 CBO members have eaten chicken and used the income from pig selling and have had enough rice to eat in a year. However, some members failed with their activity implementation because they didn't provide enough work and also some were amongst the poorest and oldest or immigrants and didn't have much capacity on group management. According to our final monitoring report, the food consumption increased from 69% (baseline survey) to 87%. This growth is close to the result expectation of 90% beneficiaries produce home consumption from alternative livelihood.

Component 3 Planned:

Surplus produce created through alternative livelihoods is sold to increase disposable incomes by an average of 25%

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

As the capacity of CBOs on agricultural techniques were increased and the beneficiaries had more knowledge on the market situation and the relationship between producers and consumers, it was explained to the participants about opportunities in each market value chains to be considered for community products for them to be able to set a fair price. One key member in each commune was selected as a community representative to collect products and sell them to Sambour markets. Through the market networks, community products have been produced and accessed the markets. Usually, the food production for the family consumption was higher than the surplus to be sold, but it has in the last few months slowly evolved, as the follow-up reports have shown, the quantity of food eaten was smaller than the sold one. Each semester the income generated from selling the products was USD27,750.44 (from chicken USD10,528.69 and pig USD17,221.75).

Market value chain analysis was an important aspect of business operation for communities while CRDT has worked in Mekong Flooded Forest in Sambour district but they still face challenges even if networks were already established. This is because of the geographical location, and the previous way of selling products is still being implemented. The beneficiaries usually sell their products along the Mekong River which is far from the crowded town and gives a difficult access for their local products to the market. 3 CBO networks were established to facilitate the community products access to the market. As a result of the follow-up with those groups, fewer activities of committees were implemented because of their still limited capacity in market accessibility. The products have still been taken by individuals to sell at markets. So the price was unstable sometime even though the price information was shared by network committees. However, productions of CBOs especially chicken, pigs vegetable, fruits have been taken to sell in local markets like Sambour town, and some were sold to villagers, traders who come to the village and to neighbors.

Component 4 Planned:

Beneficiaries understand conservation issues and are enabled to take action for conservation

Component 4 Actual at Completion:

Regarding the expected outcomes of the project to enforce communities understanding on conservation issues, communities have indeed more understanding through working with the community based ecotourism, environmental action groups, and community-based environmental art-group. In fact, 47 members of Koh Phdao Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) and their family members now have clear understanding on dolphin conservation and waste management, both which help them raise income from tourists. The annual number of tourists has increased from 289 tourists in 2010 to 373 tourists in 2012. However in 2011 the number of tourists had decreased with only 276 visitors because of the floods which took place in that area. CBET also reported that there were already 112 tourists by June 2013. Additionally, their income from tourism has grown (8,528.00\$ in 2010, 9,094.00\$ in 2011, 12,065.00\$ in 2012) as the numbers of tourists increased and the services provided were of better quality. Moreover, Koh Phdao Community Based Ecotourism was appreciated and received the Certificate of Appreciation by the Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia within the competition “Clean City, Clean Resort and Good Service”. This community has been recognized for its good environment and good service in Kratie Province.

The environmental action groups have been formed and registered with communes in the project proposed area. They were created in order to spread information on environmental issues and conservation. 554 CBO members involved with CRDT activities and were not only undertaking livelihood activities but conservation engagement was also implemented. EAG committees in Okreang commune has been responsible for educating about environmental issues to 107 CBO members, 300 members by EAG in Beong Cha commune, 100 members in Koh Khnhear commune, and 47 members by CBET in Kampong Cham commune. The topic on environmental conservation was raised during every CBO monthly meeting. In addition, tree nurseries in each commune have been managed by EAGs. However, the capacity of committees on conservation issues was still limited.

The populations of the 19 target villages have greater understanding about environmental issues and increased willingness to engage in conservation activities. According to the final monitoring survey, a significantly high number of respondents

thought that natural resources' conservation was very important (70%) and the rest said that it was important (30%). Both groups have raised quite similar ideas on the advantages of natural resource conservation such as remaining fish and Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) for food and income; timbers for house and boat constructions; forest to protect against storms and absorbing rainfall; dolphins to attract tourists; natural resources for next generations. Furthermore, their perceptions of environmental problems and solutions was that 72% of respondents had the habit of burning diversified wastes (organic and solid wastes) and the number was quite similar to the baseline survey information (73%). However, there has been a significant increase in a better waste management in terms of increasing the recycle use of solid wastes (bottles and plastic bags), burning plastic wastes, burning organic waste and making compost, bury wastes, and other (putting waste in rubbish bin and livestock manure in biodigester); and a decrease in throwing waste outside without burning, burying, or making compost compared to the baseline information (final monitoring survey report 2013).

Component 5 Planned:

CBOs and Environmental Action Groups manage, implement and monitor livelihood and conservation interventions under their own initiative

Component 5 Actual at Completion:

The project team has established 30 livelihood CBOs (16 CBOs raising chicken and 14 CBOs raising pig), with 507 members which is higher than the 450 beneficiaries expected as the project raised a strong interest among the population. CRDT has not only trained them on agriculture techniques but small grants have been released to start running up their groups to ensure all operations of CBOs are sustainable in livelihood development. The grant was appropriately spend by those committees. They spent the grants on materials for chicken coops, for group administration, chicken seed, piglet, and the remainder kept in reserve in case of problems, such as having a sick chicken or if a coop gets broken.

3 Environmental Action Groups (EAG) with 19 members were established and had the materials, equipment and technical/social support to engage in local environmental protection. There were 3 components in each group which have been responsible for developing and managing a fruit tree planting like mangos or jackfruits and these have sold those to community members to support livelihoods and to create a small income stream for the EAG. The groups have also been implementing waste management activities to clean up villages' environment and improve villages' sanitation as well as reducing household pollution. They also involved in waste recycling. The community committee members played an important role to educate group members to design and implement environmental education activities to CBO members in target areas.

Component 6 Planned:

Compliance with CEPF safeguard policies on involuntary resettlement and indigenous people will be ensured

Component 6 Actual at Completion:

Project partners have conducted semi- annual meeting report to CEPF.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

No.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

CRDT undertakes all activities according to the organization's Implementation Strategy. This is a working document used by all projects, which sets out the strategy and methodology for all CRDT activities, detailing how to implement for maximum effectiveness. This document ensures a consistency in all CRDT project implementation, and also ensures that learning is collected from across all projects and areas of experience. In order to ensure project sustainability, the following approaches will be undertaken:

Education and Training Programmes - Central to the project are farmer education and training programmes, in which the beneficiaries themselves participate in all stages of project implementation under the instruction of the project field team. This provides the beneficiaries with a sense of ownership and ensures project sustainability and success. Also, environmental education components are included in all training activities to inspire communities to value their environment through participation in the project's activities.

Community Based Sustainable Livelihood and Savings Groups – The establishment and training of community based organizations around sustainable livelihood products imparts skills which allow group members to effect change in their communities and their own lives, access commune NRM funding and/or resources and have a voice in local government to communicate their needs and concerns as well as participate in commune development planning. Such groups put community support structures in place that allow beneficiaries to exchange knowledge and experiences as well as work together to set prices, access markets and secure revenue for their products. Project teams also conduct training and facilitate the establishment of savings group components within groups as a means for members to purchase the necessary materials for the continuation, repair, and/or expansion of livelihood activities upon CRDT project completion.

Model Farmer Extension Workers: CRDT builds the capacity of selected model farmers/group members and provides them with intensive training in skills identified by the group as needed to build their capacity related to sustainable livelihood activities. These skill sets remain with village model farmer extension workers providing a source of information and assistance on technical implementation to all group members long after the project finishes.

Agricultural Practice - Additional training is also delivered on improved agricultural practices by providing study tours for beneficiaries to learn about the success of other CRDT projects and/or other selected facilities in Cambodia. Study tours allow farmers to exchange experiences with each other on related to project activities thereby generating increased motivation and interest in these activities. Seeing results among other like-minded farmers before activities are undertaken allows new project participants to visualize success and contributes to the sustainability of the project.

Improved Living Conditions - Based on the benefits and success of other project activities, the combination of supplying renewable resource infrastructure, clean water supply, seeds and a detailed training programme ensures that the benefits of this

integrated organic system will be self sustaining and aid in breaking the local cycle of poverty. As a result, the living condition within villages improves substantially and continues to do so into the future.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

1. Have enough consultation with the technical department and local authority before selecting target areas- seeking good cooperation and support.
2. Project partner selection is very important to reach the project goal. They have their own specific ways of implementing projects but we share the same goal and experiences.
3. Some selected project target areas are too far from the office which affected the projects' objectives as the project team was struggling to follow up and coach beneficiaries to ensure the projects' effectiveness.
4. The schedule of the project partnership meetings/workshops should be clearly designed in the proposal to allow all partners to develop a better structured work plan, share experiences and solve problems.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

1. The team learned that while we conducted village meetings to introduce the new project activities funded by CEPF in collaboration with WWF, we firstly needed to select new interested groups to participate with the project and then, encourage these groups to form CBOs by themselves and the project only guided the process of formation. With this method, CBOs are strong and able to avoid problems caused by their members; they are all understanding clearly the regulation and by-law before the activities in their group start.

2. Following the successful experience of the existing saving groups led by CRDT, other villagers have been willing to replicate this and have created their own saving groups. Then, beneficiaries in Ampel Thek village were able to form a new group of saving by themselves, and submitted by-law to the commune to get a registration by themselves as well. Thus, internal exchange visit to other project sites is very important to get this result.

3. By an observation, during all meetings and trainings, we found that many participants often asked why the organization and foreigners always had interest in dolphin conservation when we talked about the dolphin situation along the Mekong. This showed that the local community doesn't fully understand the issue with dolphins. In order to provide information to these new communities, the project should conduct village trainings on dolphin conservation for all communities surrounding the dolphin pools in the central section.

4. As most villagers went away from the village to their farm during rice season, we needed during that period to inform them one or two days ahead of the organization of a meeting/training. And we had to re-inform or follow up again prior to the meeting/training. Thus with this alternative, we could get more people to attend the meeting/trainings course.

5. After preparing CBO by-law and releasing small grant to CBOs, some CBOs were able to conduct monthly meeting and the committees were able to organize meetings such as inviting local authorities to join meetings and preparing the agenda for the meeting without the assistance from CRDT staff. Furthermore, they also improved the communication between CBOs and commune council members.

6. Follow-up activity which have to be the responsibility of both staff and CBO executives are effectively improving CBOs activities implementation because they live closely with beneficiaries which is easier to find problems and solve them and understand clearly about their own situation in each village.

7. The saving component in livelihood groups is of vital importance for CBOs to ensure their sustainability. CBOs which had both livelihood and saving activities in their groups worked really well and could easily implement the project activities. Besides applying for animal raising activities they were also active with taking money to save in the group as well. Moreover, they were able to conduct regular monthly meetings to share about agricultural techniques and saving.

8. After conducting the trainings and study tour, we prepared the work plan or action plan with participants for the project team to follow-up with them. We have noticed that they were strongly committed to follow their plans as after they attended the training on CIP concept and study tour, they designed the plan and submitted it to the commune council and in addition, the lessons they learned from the study tour were also shared with CBO members during the CBO monthly meetings and many members have been applying those new techniques.

9. When the project team regularly followed up with the CBOs savings, we found that they could clearly record incomes and prepare documents.

10. Set up clear indicators of chicken raising with CBO members guarantees the success of the project implementation.

11. CBOs can only be sustainable if they are supported from local authorities and other agencies.

12. Providing clear target or indicator of project objective to commune council is the way to success of the project implementation

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

In order to be sustainable, community fisheries and forestry really need the support of livelihood CBOs. Even when the project is finished, those communities could continue to work thanks to a small income provided by the livelihood CBOs and a share of the interests from internal lending will go to committees of fisheries and forestry to operate conservation in their communities.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Wetland Alliance Program (WAP)	A	USD 24,915.00	Dolphins for development: a chance for Mekong wetlands conservation
WWF	A	USD 80,117.00	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use of Mekong Wetlands (2012-2013)
UNDP/CCBAP	A	43,600.00	Developing Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in the Critical Mekong Conservation Area

**Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:*

- A Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Reliability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or reliability of project components or results.

The project is in the process of being handed over to the commune council and the Community Based Organization (CBOs) to manage it themselves but this process takes a long time. It is very important to make sure after the project completion, it can still keep going on, receive a strong support from the commune council and the CBOs can implement it themselves. During the implementation of the project, the project team always gave the opportunity to the communities to take ownership of their activities and the project team would just assist on technical issues or when their help was required. Out of the 19 project villages, two villages (those with CBET groups) have reached a point where activities are financially and social self-sustaining, while CRDT expects to have to provide additional support to the CBOs in the other 17 villages to reach this point.

The project staff continued to strengthen the management committees on team work, financial management, leadership, management and communication to make sure the management committees could implement the project by themselves.

Saving and internal lending is of capital importance for the communities to expand their businesses, create job opportunities and to ensure they increase their income to support their families. Especially, the community contributed to the project, which allowed the project to run well and be sustainable for the community development.

The most successful activities in the project were the Community Based Eco-tourism, chicken and saving in Mekong Flooded Forest site. We could continue to support those activities, build capacity and extend to other communities, but we could also focus on market demand and qualities products to make sure the community products can compete with imported products from other sites.

The night shows were a success for the people living in rural areas, so we could continue this activity, but we should have more capacity building for the professional art group. And we could consider installing a bigger stage for the art group. Especially we could build communication and make partnership or coordinate with other NGOs and government agencies to promote the art group performance.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or reliability achieved.

The project encouraged women's participation. However, there has been less progress in encouraging men to support increased decision-making authority among women, which could affect the project quality. Although women attend meetings and certain training sessions in greater numbers than men, men continue to have more power over decisions about whether to accept project inputs and which livelihood activities to implement. In cases where men are away from the family for long periods of time, this has an impact on length of time that women – and families – have to implement activities. This is true both within families and within the community in the case of CBOs. The project team thinks the gender mainstreaming in terms of increasing women's opportunities to engage in project activities rather than in terms of ensuring the project responds to the different needs and circumstances that the target community – both men and women – face. In fact, one of the biggest challenges that the project faces is the frequent and long-term absence of men in the community, yet there is little evidence that steps have been taken to address this gender issue within the project. Therefore, it is critical that project staff increase their understanding of gender mainstreaming concepts and how to put them into practice.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

The project's partnership approach to conservation and resource management activities linked with livelihood activities has the potential to strengthen social cohesion, and the community's ability to interact effectively with Fisheries Administrations and other government agencies that they collaborated with in the project. This approach seeks to reduce community dependence on ongoing NGO support, within the framework of WWF's long-term commitment to this area. The community-based conservation and alternative livelihoods components of the project was delivered through technical and material support to community-based organizations. Technical support have assisted these organizations to continue alternative livelihood work independently and if necessary to seek future financial and or technical support from commune level structures. The project team always reviews or asks the beneficiaries during every village meeting/ training about the natural resources conservation and management, and how they get involved with conservation activities. For example, they were active in reporting

when they saw illegal fishing, logging, or wildlife hunting taking place in their community. In addition, they also raised up many good ideas or other comments related to Natural Resources Conservation and Management while the training on Natural resources conservation took place in their village.

Communities understood about CRDT project which works in cooperation with CED and WWF in the Mekong Flooded Forest (MFF) Site in Kratie province. So, Communities of Fisheries and Forestry always sent information and report of violation to the commune council and Mekong Safe Guard, WWF team or the project team every month. After WWF identified MFF for conservation; the communities improved their conservation laws. So, project staff brings the conservation law or other information to continue sharing to community in those areas during conducted meeting with communities. So, the CBOs livelihood and CBOs conservation were committed to decrease fishing violations and prevent it.

The project team also conducted movie shows on environmental issues during the night time to explain more about environmental issues including natural resources conservation, dolphin conservation, waste management, climate change, and even water pollution. And the project team also showed the beneficiaries about the impact of Xayaburi dam at Lao border.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- Illegal fishing especially by outsiders which sometimes are supported by the chief of villages, communes and police' relatives could contribute to decrease the fish population in stock. Thus it is important to take action from not only the communities but also from all relevant stakeholders.
- At the same time forest resources (NTFP, timbers, and wildlife) have mainly decreased through land concession, illegal logging and hunting from outsiders. Therefore, the participation from all relevant stakeholders is very important to conserve the remained resources and take action for reforestation.
- Consider targeting women for individualized trainings, for example by providing women in savings groups with training in leadership skills. Also, ensure that the project staff understands that a gender approach involves more than simply ensuring that women participate in project meetings.
- Ensure that project staff understands the link between 'livelihood' and 'natural resources conservation'.
- Environmental Action Groups didn't engage enough in waste management, and raising awareness on natural resources conservation among target communities. Therefore, the follow-up of groups should be continued after the project completion.
- Most households have habit of burning both organic and solid waste together. In a future project it would be important to improve their waste management through segregating wastes where solid waste can be recycled and organic waste can be turned into compost for crop productions.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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