



Strengthening Democratic and Decentralized Local Governance in Cambodia (DDLG)

Background

While much progress has been achieved in the decentralization reform process, the government confronts three key challenges:

- **Weak capacity:** The majority of Commune Council members lack sufficient educational qualifications and skills to enable them to effectively perform their tasks. Although councillors are required by law to be literate, many of them are not at a functional level. Intensive training has been conducted during the past three years to develop the capacity of councillors, as well as commune clerks and national, provincial and district staff, but continuing training remains a priority
- **Lack of effective mechanisms for development dialogue:** The weakness of Commune Councils also results from poor access to information on development issues. Ironically, the existing mechanism for decentralization policy development is centralized and top down. Direct inputs into policy-making, by the poor in particular, are extremely limited. The kind of systematic internal consultations and opportunities for suggestions from lower tiers of administration which are found in other countries are rare, if not totally absent, in Cambodia
- **Inadequate financial resources:** The Commune-Sangkat Fund (CS Fund) is the inter-governmental fiscal transfer mechanism to support commune level investment projects identified through a participatory planning process. Own-sources of revenues and the system for their implementation are yet to be developed. Thus, Commune Councils rely exclusively on fiscal transfers through the CS Fund. International development experience shows that decentralization not backed by reliable financial resources from transfers and own revenue will not succeed.

Purpose of project

The project contributes to poverty reduction in Cambodia by strengthening democratic and decentralized local governance institutions, systems, mechanisms and processes. It strengthens local democratization and development processes through cooperation between Commune Councils and other stakeholders for more effective and responsive local governance policies and greater local ownership, participation, civic engagement, and implementation of pro-poor inter-commune projects.

Key results and reports

- Clearly defined operational mechanisms and increased capacity have been put in place for good communication, accountability, dialogue, and partnership between Commune Councils and all other stakeholders to address issues of local governance
- A network of Commune Councils has been established with institutional guidelines, and a with long-term objective to create a national league of Commune Councils for improved cooperation and promotion of good practices (16 associations established in 2007)
- Local development needs have been addressed through implementation of pro-poor inter-commune projects as a means of developing good management capacity, processes and practices

Main activities

The main activities of the project are:

- Development of better mechanisms for multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnership by taking into account existing structures such as Commune Councils, sub-national authorities, citizens, nongovernment and other organizations
- Identification, promotion and recognition of best practices in governance at all administrative levels
- Promotion of a local-to-local exchange program for Commune Councils, local authorities, community organizations and local citizens
- Capacity development for better participation, management and implementation of local governance activities
- Formation of a network (association) of Commune Councils at provincial and municipal levels in support of a new national league of Commune Councils
- Development of capacity of Commune Council networks for better cooperation between Commune Councils, policy dialogue, exchange of information and management of the network
- Adaptation of existing planning and budgeting systems for pro-poor inter-commune projects and joint undertakings, review of pilot experiences and development of implementation guidelines

- Capacity development activities for implementation of pro-poor inter-commune projects and joint undertakings
- Identification, funding and implementation of pro-poor inter-commune projects and joint undertakings in relevant development areas
- Policy analysis to identify issues develop policies and options to further advance decentralization reform implementation and improve coordination between the Royal Government of Cambodia, local authorities, donors, community organizations and other stakeholders

Contributing donor(s)

- **EC:** Euro10,000,000
- **UNDP:** Euro500,000

Duration

2006-2010 (this project is under implementation)

Total budget

Euro10,500,000

Project Partners

Executing agencies: Ministry of Interior
National League of Commune/Sangkat Councils

Project delivery

2006: US\$931,387

Location

Nationwide

Thematic Area

Corporate Thematic Area: Democratic Governance

UN Country Programme Outcome: 2.6: Capacities and partnerships developed of local governance actors in urban/rural areas for policy formulation, service delivery and resource management

Millennium Development Goal

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Good governance is a prerequisite for Cambodia to reach its Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty and hunger by 2015.

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