



Enhancing community-based forest management and utilization for the improvement of rural livelihoods

Background

The forest cover in Cambodia has rapidly declined in recent decades due to logging, forest fires, land-grabbing, encroachment, intensified shifting cultivation and rapid expansion of cash crop plantations of rubber, cashew and cassava. Between 1990 and 2010 Cambodia lost about 2 850 430 hectares averaging about 1.4 percent a year. As a consequence, Cambodia has been classified as a 'high forest cover, high deforestation country' under REDD+ with the highest forest loss in ASEAN. Forest degradation has a direct impact on watersheds and natural resources delivering ecosystem services to the community. Without sustainable management of the forest and its resources, these households are at risk of losing their only source of income and food security.

FAO Contribution to Community Forestry

Community forestry (CF) is a participatory approach to conservation and sustainable forest management. FAO Cambodia was the first agency to work with the Royal Government to start community based natural resources management (CBNRM) activities in Cambodia. In 1993, the Government of Belgium funded the first project, "Restoration and Preservation of the Inundated Forest Ecosystems of the Tonle Sap and Downstream Areas", which was followed by a second phase, "Participatory Natural Resource Management in the Tonle Sap Region" from 1995 to 2005. These projects successfully piloted the development of CF in Siem Reap and directly contributed to the recognition of the importance of involving communities in the

management of their natural resources and environment. This approach has been implemented by many of Cambodia's development partners.

These successes resulted in the Government developing three main community managed landscapes in Cambodia namely (1) Community Forestry, (2) Community Fisheries, and (3) Community Protected Areas. As of December 2012, over 1 000 communities have initiated activities to obtain tenure from the Government using these three avenues which demonstrates the replication potential of this model.

The National Forest Programme 2010-2029 has accorded CF a programme status among its six key programme areas to restore and reforest degraded and lost forest areas. The FA has set target to expand CF areas to 2 million hectares from the present 0.5 million.



FAO's Current Project

The project entitled "Enhancing Community-Based Forest Management and Utilization for the Improvement of Rural Livelihoods" funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID), has been under implementation in the four north-eastern provinces of Mondulkiri, Kratie, Stung Treng and Ratanakiri since 2010 with a total budget of USD 865 376 in partnership with the Forest Administration (FA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

The project goal is to promote responsible, productive, and sustainable management of forest resources by local communities to meet their needs and to stimulate development. This is expected achieved by building the knowledge and capacity of FA and CF User Groups in sustainable forest management and on responsible utilization of forest resources and nation-wide networks of stakeholders. The project directly benefits 4 369 CF members and assists them in managing 21 561 hectares and also builds the capacity of the forest officials in the four forest cantonments of the target provinces.



and can aid in the identification of new CF areas within districts.

- Hands-on training has been delivered on PRA and multipurpose forest inventory while national and international study tours have benefitted 374 male and 171 female participants from the communities, FA, NGOs and project staff to enhance their capacity in CF management.
- Training manuals and trainer guides for PRA, multipurpose forest inventory and market analysis and development have been adopted and translated in Khmer and 13 HD video tutorials have been produced to support training and capacity building.
- High priority Non-Timber Forestry Products for each CF area have been identified and enterprise group creation for community-based Green Growth Enterprise Development has been initiated for bamboo, resin, palm leaves, malva nuts, rattan and honey.
- Strengthened CF networks in four provinces.
- A complementary FAO-TeleFood has trained communities and established 15 farm nurseries in 10 CF sites where 2 172 bamboo cuttings are successfully grown for bamboo shoots.



Key Achievements

- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) reports and advanced remote sensing maps from 1990 to 2012 have been developed at CF level and at buffer zones, commune and district level to support the inclusion of participatory sustainable management of CF areas in commune development plans. The PRA reports serve as long term baselines for 13 pilot sites

