

ANNUAL PROJECT REVIEW REPORT

Project Title: Tonle Sap Conservation Project (Project No 00038552)
Atlas Award ID. 00035752, GEF PIMS 962
Period covered: 01 January 2005- 31 December 2005 __ First Annual Report

PROJECT PERFORMANCE—CONTRIBUTION TO THE CP OUTCOMES

Brief Summary of the major works achieved during the reporting period are:

- 1) Office mobilization at previous MRC building,
- 2) Project orientation to key stakeholders
- 3) Staff recruitment (TL, NPM, PA, Driver, ITS, NTS, NSLS, IEES and NEES and counterpart staff) and subcontract for biodiversity monitoring;
- 4) Prepare and present the Inception Report to project steering committee including structure, institutional arrangement and work plan breakdown structure;
- 5) Initiation of core area planning for the Prek Toal Core Area,
- 6) Review and compilation of background information on biodiversity in the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve.
- 7) Training need assessment and curriculum development
- 8) Initial assessment of local livelihoods
- 9) Coordination and cooperation with relevant ministries and NGOs to conduct on going assessment of biodiversity status of the lake.

Performance during the period focuses on:

1. Improved capacity of national/sectoral authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management and energy development that respond to the needs of the poor.
2. The policy and planning framework of the country incorporates a comprehensive approach to and specific targets for reduction of human and income poverty, taking into account the MDGs.

The TSCP will provide government staff at national, provincial and local levels with the knowledge, planning frameworks and other tools, and basic equipment required to protect and sustainably manage the globally important biodiversity of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve. At the same time, it will identify unsustainable natural resource-based livelihoods, identify alternatives, and support implementation of these alternatives on a trial or demonstration basis. The implementation framework of the Project has been established during 2005 and activities will be implemented over the next six years.

The Project does not contribute directly to the national level policy and planning framework through specific activities, but lessons learned –particularly but not

exclusively regarding biodiversity-based livelihoods– will be available for informing future policy formulation and planning exercises.

PROJECT PERFORMANCE—IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The three main challenges faced during implementation were as follows:

1. Obtaining government commitment to assignment of counterpart personnel required revision of the Project budget and reassignment of US\$293,000 for "salary supplements" for the period Q3 2005 - Q4 2011. This need apparently was underestimated during project formulation and approval. The approved budget allocated only US\$50,000 to Technical Staff - Government Counterparts. The remaining US\$243,000 was taken from budget allocations for National Consultants. While payment of government staff from donor funds is inherently unsustainable, balanced against this is the potential capacity development increment gained from assigning project tasks directly to government personnel rather than National Consultants.
2. The TSCP provides grant funding provided by GEF through UNDP, whereas the TSEMP (into which the TSCP is incorporated as most of Component 3) is funded by an ADB loan. Operating procedures of ADB and UNDP are vastly different (ADB's being based on a lender-client approach, and UNDP's on a partnership model), and it has taken some time to differentiate our activities and approach, and to gain the trust of government counterparts. Also, in our opinion, at least part of the ADB funding has been squandered on a "spending spree" on inappropriate equipment, and it is a work in progress trying to ensure that use of the GEF grant funding is carefully thought out and technically appropriate.
3. The TSEMP has established Project Implementation Offices in Ministry of Environment, Department of Fisheries and Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve Secretariat at national level, and Project Implementation Units in Departments of Environment and Departments of Fisheries at provincial level in the five provinces bordering the lake. Three problems have arisen from this construct. Firstly, these counterpart offices have been in place since well in advance of TSCP implementation, leading to some "frustration" on their part while waiting for the TSCP to become operational. This problem remains to date, although it is slowly being overcome as project activities are initiated. Secondly, these offices have essentially created elite but temporary units within the GoC counterpart organizations, potentially diluting the impacts of TSCP support on the organizations themselves. Thirdly, because the Project was not involved in their establishment, they do not have optimal staffing levels or types of staff for support of project activities; they tend to be overstaffed, but with persons having minimal or the wrong qualifications. Exacerbating this, much of the work of the Project is being done by national consultants, and while this is expedient and to a large extent necessary, it does pose an additional barrier to bringing PIO and PIU staff completely into TSCP activities implementation.

RATING ON PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS

OUTCOMES/OUTPUTS	RATING
CPAP Outcome 1: improved capacity of national/sectoral authorities	Initiated in 2005.
CPAP Outcome 2: national policy and planning framework	TSCP is unlikely to have an impact at this level until its mid-point or beyond.
Output 3.1: Capacity for management of biodiversity in the Core Areas is increased	Initiated in 2005. Progress is on target
Output 3.2: Systems for monitoring and management of biodiversity are developed	Initiated in 2005. Progress is on target.
Output 3.3: Awareness, education and outreach on biodiversity conservation in the TSBR are promoted	Initiated in 2005. Progress is on target.

SOFT ASSISTANCE NOT PROVIDED THROUGH PROJECTS OR PROGRAMMES

Not applicable during the period

LESSONS LEARNED

- The Project is being implemented in a structured way based on established project management principles, and, where applicable, international best practice. Experience with implementation of the Project to date has confirmed the need for this approach. However, there is also a continuing need to communicate from the National Project Manager/Team Leader level both up and down the chain of responsibility, so that all participants feel adequately informed consistent with their roles and responsibilities.
- As the project was newly implemented and there are many key stakeholders involved in the project in both indirect or direct influence. To get support and cooperation in effective way from those, we would plan to establish a powerful information mechanism which any key project information can be shared and distributed. This would be considered to include the Environmental Education Team tasks regarding to that matter.
- National Execution (NEX) modality can be a powerful tool to build local capacity, accountability and ownership if there is a well-prepared of management arrangement, accounting and implementation procedures including supplementary salary incentives and capacity. If not, many challenges are debated between donor's implementing and government implementing/executing agencies regarding their role in managing and decision making. Each agencies has its own common goals, needs and responsibilities and those in some extent do not go across.

UNDP should improve its services by assisting the government to establish and implement such simple systems and procedures for NEX, which would also be consistent with the UNDP policies and procedures. Those were considered as recruitment, financial/accounting and procurement. In some circumstances and reality, these guidelines can causes some delays of implementation and cost. However, the involment and support from UNDP will ensure tha quality, transparency and accountability of the project.

- In particular for the NEX modality, the role of advisers and their time slotted are considerebly critical (i.e. they should provide technical inputs rather than day to day managment of the project). Their time slotted should be at key stages of the project cycle such as pre-planning, mid terms review/evaluation and reporting.
- As the project has designed to have government partners who are from various key stakeholders (PIO/MoE, PIO/TSBRS, PIO/DoF) and they are based on their office. This brings some difficulties to coordination due to time conflict and agenda. However, their direct involment of government counterparts in implementing project activities with technical assistant staff (i.e. project consultants or specialists) is critical for capacity building of local staff.
- Select local government staff who already assigned in target areas and have relevant experience and qualification are significant success of the project. However, relatively low supplementary payment did not allow the project to select the best available project counterparts. There is some chalenges in structure the payment (i.e. DSA) as they are receiving supplementary salary from different sources.
- Relatively limited project budget for government staff does not allow the project to be flexible to select counterparts staff based on the project needs.

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