

FINAL PROJECT REPORT
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - CAMBODIA
TONLE SAP CONSERVATION PROJECT
[JANUARY 2005 – JUNE 2011)



Project ID: 00038552

Duration: 7 Years

Total Budget: US\$3,246,421

Implementing Partners/Responsible parties: TSCP, CNMC, UNDP

Country Programme Outcome: National and Local Authorities and Communities are better able to Conserve Biodiversity and Respond to Climate Change

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CAD	Core Area Director
CAMP	Core Area Management Plan
CNMC	Cambodia National Mekong Committee
CPAP	Cambodia Programme Action Plan
EE	Environmental Education
FiA	Fisheries Administration
FA	Forestry Administration
GDANCP	General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ITA	International Technical Advisor
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries
MIST	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NEES	National Environmental Education Specialist
NGO	Non-government Organization
NLS	National Livelihood Specialist
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NRM	Natural Resources Management
PA	Project Assistant
PIO	Project Implementation Office
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PDE	Provincial Department of Environment
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TSA	Tonle Sap Authority
TSBR	Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve
TSCP	Tonle Sap Conservation Project
TSEMP	Tonle Sap Environment Management Project
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

I. Executive summary

This Terminal Report summarizes the Tonle Sap Conservation Project which was implemented from early 2005 until end 2010 in the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, Cambodia. This report focuses on the main project achievements (i.e., project outputs, contributions to project outcomes, etc.) vis a vis the UN Cambodia Programme of Action Plan (CPAP 2006 – 2010). The TSCP was originally scheduled to conclude at the end of 2011, however due to a variety of logistical (i.e., most Outputs already achieved) and financial (i.e., limited funding for 2011) considerations, the project is being concluded in 2nd Quarter 2011.

Significant improvements in protected area management were generated by the project to date and provide a solid basis upon which the government institutions can build if adequate resources are identified and allocated. These include: the required infrastructure and centers for protected area management and the beginning of a comprehensive management program based on Core Area Management Plans; TSCP provided support to core areas for building floating centers and centers in five target provinces.

Three Core Area Management Plans to guide future program development and implementation; the creation of a strategy and system of procedures for biodiversity monitoring and protected area management; increased understanding of the patrol and management functions, and improved technical and management skills of selected project staff and 52 rangers in three core areas.

There are 52 rangers were trained and equipped in 3 core areas such as MIST training, Law enforcement training (Refer to assessment report of Dr Sean at the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve's three Core Areas); a wide range of outputs that provide the technical tools for conservation (e.g., plans, training packages, education curricula, livelihoods assessments, etc.); increased local awareness in total number 9,681 participants, 6,266 participants were from 125 communes of 5 provinces around Tonle Sap in environmental awareness and 3,415 participants were school students. There were 562 school students with 326 female students in three target schools in core areas) in eco-club awareness campaign and recognition of biodiversity values in the Tonle Sap. Now most of target community members they understood the environmental and bio-diversity concept and the significant of conservation for their livelihoods. They have changed their attitude and activities from illegal access to involve in diversified alternative livelihoods by using saving group money. For the time being, the saving groups have created some employments through some activities for their alternative incomes. There are; 1) Water hyacinth handicraft with 25 families; 2) Fish Processing with 120 families (30 in SS, 50 BTC and 40 in PT); 3) Pig production with 25 families (9 in SS, 9 in BTC and 7 in PT); 4) Fish culture with 75 families (20 in SS, 25 in BTC and 30 in PT). Majority of people in community changed their direct use of water from lake for their drinking water to use water filter for purifying instead, included school children. The effective environmental education and awareness curriculum successfully integrated into local schools in and around the TSBP's Core Areas;

Self-help/Savings Groups (there are 25 saving with 511 saving groups members) in local communities that are potentially self-sustaining and replicable; There is 98% of saving group benefited alternative diversified income generation such as fish and eel raising, pig raising, mobile sale, trading, fish processing and handicraft activities.

Initial linkages between livelihoods, quality of life and biodiversity conservation (linked how. How small grant program contributed to livelihood component.

The basic framework and many of the tools (please find the attached Core Area Management Plan and Management Information system tools) for conservation have been established by the project. These need to be further refined and especially translated and transferred to government and community organizations in a way that they can be effectively used and sustained. As noted throughout this report, institutional change and sustainability are keys to further strengthening conservation management in key government agencies and throughout the Tonle Sap region.

In 2008, a Mid-term Evaluation recognized that in the first half of the project, the design of the TSCP followed more of an activity-based approach rather than a results-based approach. The outcomes were implicit rather than explicit and monitoring systems emphasized completion of activities rather than sustainability of project achievements. In response the TSCP initiated a number of activities to improve project impact and sustainability, improve monitoring and reporting of project activities, improve capacity building efforts, and enhance project communication.

A revised 3-year Strategic Results Framework was developed to address these issues by developing new, targeted Outcomes and Outputs that emphasized sustainability, improved coordination and communication, and greater, more focused project impact.

All of the Outputs in the Revised Strategic Results Framework were directly addressed in Annual and Quarterly Work plans and overwhelmingly the activities were completed. Some outstanding activities/outputs remained (e.g., Communication Strategy), whereas others components did not have adequate time for implementation and integration into project delivery (e.g. Capacity Building Strategy, Monitoring Framework) due to early closure of the project .

The TSCP has established the conservation infrastructure and management system where none existed previously at Tonle Sap. The project's activities were extensive and well organized, however, the quality and sustainability of project results could have been improved in terms of the effectiveness of the law enforcement, data collection, planning and management functions, alternative livelihoods and environmental awareness (see project's lesson learned).

The management methods and systems for biodiversity monitoring, ranger patrol reporting and technical databases were been an important contribution of the project but would have benefited from being further integrated within the government structures and operations. The management system for the core areas was a substantive contribution, although the limited institutional development and the dependence on extensive salary supplements worked against sustainability.

The following were the main risks/challenges to project success and ensuring sustainability of project impact beyond project conclusion:

Government ownership and commitment: The need for closer collaboration with government agencies was needed to ensure increased government involvement and ownership, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainable impact. Site staffs, rangers, provincial officers, teachers, local authority and core area director have highly made commitment and work closely with relevant development partners in the region on sustainable management of bio-diversity conservation, livelihoods improvement of beneficiaries, especially vulnerable groups in three target areas and school and environmental education/awareness. High ranking collaboration meeting picture between recipient institutions should be organized and show clear in commitment from institution.

Salary supplements: Project support to government salaries seriously impedes sustainability beyond project conclusion.

The complicated management structure at the Core Areas (i.e., Fisheries Administration coordination over Fishing Lots and GDANCP authority over the Core Areas which include large Fishing Lot areas).

UNDP approval process for work plan approval, fund disbursement, staff recruitment was slow and impacted project delivery.

At project conclusion, a comprehensive Lessons Learned document was developed that provides significant detail on the many lessons that were learned during the 6 years of implementation of the TSCP. In summary, the main Lessons Learned from the project was related to:

The need for closer collaboration with government agencies is to ensure increased government involvement and ownership, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainable impact.

The need for increased coordination of Project components from Project inception through to completion

Sustainability, both financial and operational, should be a primary concern of the project at all phases, not only from mid-point forward.

Capacity building requires a greater investment and greater emphasis of the Project, i.e., more training, more hands-on “learning by doing” skill building, more backstopping and follow-up support, and more Training of Trainers to build lasting capacity of government institutions

The greater the involvement of local communities in planning and project design, the greater the likelihood of lasting community support toward Project activities

Project communication needs to be a priority from inception to increase support, awareness, and ownership by all stakeholders.

Project should be designed into two phases, Phase 1 –should be in capacity building/training for both core areas, institutions and team work and some studies (2 years period) and Phase 2 should be project implementation (5 years period).

Both the Mid-term Evaluation and the final Lessons Learned document highlight numerous themes and specific lessons that future projects can consider during project design and implementation to achieve greater country ownership and collaboration, improved capacity building impact, more effective in situ conservation management, and ultimately, more sustainable conservation impact.

I. Context

The Tonle Sap Conservation Project (TSCP) is a seven year conservation project (2004-2011) aimed at building management capacity for biodiversity conservation within the TSBR through: 1) enhancing the capacity for management of biodiversity, 2) developing systems for monitoring and management of biodiversity and, 3) promoting the awareness, education, and outreach on biodiversity conservation in the TSBR. The project is the third component of the broader Tonle Sap Environmental Management Project (TSEMP), co-financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), GEF, Capacity 21, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). Core funding of US\$3,246,000 is provided by the Global Environment Facility, through UNDP as the GEF implementing Agency. Additional funding from UNDP-Capacity 2015,

Asian Development Bank, Wildlife Conservation Society and the Royal Government of Cambodia contributes directly to the attainment of Project outputs. The project was integrated within the Tonle Sap Environmental Management Project, with which it shared execution, implementation, management and monitoring arrangements until the TSEMP concluded in 2009.

UNDP considers sustainable management and rational use of the natural resources of Cambodia as a necessary supplementary pre-requisite to the national strategy to alleviate poverty. Accordingly, and in line with the government's national priorities, support to good governance in the fields of environmental and natural resource management is also a priority area for both the UN system and the RGC. This is elaborated in the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2006-2010) and the second UNDP Cambodia Programme Action Plan (CPAP – 2006 - 2010).

The TSCP addresses several cross-cutting goals that are contained with 1) the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2006-2010 of the RGC; 2) the Law on Protected Areas, NSDP 2006-2010 reference items in this document, 3) the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve Policy, Strategy, and Action Plan as stated in key issue of Bio-diversity that “The Kingdom of Cambodia confirmed its commitment to bio-diversity conservation by ratifying the UN Convention on Bio-diversity in 1995. The Government set out its strategy in the National Bio-diversity Strategy and Action Plan in April 2002, which provides protection for freshwater fisheries, forests and wild life plant and animal resources, community participation, awareness, education, research coordination and development. The policy and Strategy for TSBR in 2007 was indicated in Goal 1: Contribute to bio-diversity conservation and habitat restoration and Goal 3: Build system for bio-diversity conservation and sustainable development; 4) the UNDP Country Programme for the Kingdom of Cambodia 2006-2010; 5) the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals Report; and 6) the Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4. As stated in the Strategic programme 4 of strategic objective 2 on the Strengthening the Policy and Regulatory Framework for Mainstreaming Biodiversity: It is related the incorporation of biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and benefit-sharing into broader policy and regulatory frameworks is not taking place in many GEF-eligible countries due to a number of constraining factors, some common to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity generally (e.g., poor governance, weak capacity, lack of scientific knowledge) and others specific to the challenge of mainstreaming biodiversity into productive sectors (e.g., lack of incentives, inadequate valuation data on biodiversity, etc.) and Strategic Program 5 is focused Fostering Markets for Biodiversity Goods and Services concerned

Markets for Biodiversity Goods and Services - GEF will support programs that demonstrate cost-effective, market-based instruments for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity that complement policy and regulatory measures. The GEF will build on experience gained in GEF-3 and continue to support the design and implementation of Payment for Environmental Service (PES) schemes to compensate resource managers for off-site ecological benefits. This would include support to identify potential opportunities for PES schemes that include private sector actors on the demand side.

Supply Chain Initiatives- Voluntary certification systems provide market-based solutions to the undersupply of social and environmental goods and services by enabling consumers to pay producers to deliver them. Environmental certification utilizes the willingness of the market to either pay a premium for goods and services whose production, distribution and consumption meets some kind of minimum environmental standards, or to limit entry for goods and services that do not meet the standards. This creates market incentives for improved environmental and social practices. Products and services already being certified as environmentally friendly include

organic agricultural products, timber, coffee, fish, and ecotourism, through a range of certification systems such as the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the Forest Stewardship Council, Rainforest Alliance, and the Marine Stewardship Council. It should be noted that certification systems such as “Fair Trade,” while generating socioeconomic benefits, do not necessarily generate environmental or biodiversity benefits.

This center on six themes:

promoting sustainable development that maintains and enhances the productivity of fisheries and agriculture of Tonle Sap for equitable poverty reduction;
mitigating the pressures of population growth, in-migrants and over-exploitation of the natural resources of Tonle Sap;
enhancing the protected areas system and the number and effectiveness of PA rangers;
identifying and protecting habitats and species of global significance;
promoting responsible utilization of resources and environmentally sensitive development;
increasing the capacity of Cambodian organizations to protect and manage the biodiversity of Tonle Sap.

The project’s Objective is “strengthened management capacity for biodiversity conservation in the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve” which falls directly under the guidance of the CPAP’s programme areas related to the Management of Sustainable Resources. Under the CPAP, UNDP’s support to Cambodia in the area of environment and natural resources management is focused on 1) Strengthening monitoring and assessment of environmental sustainability; 2) promoting national policy, legal and regulatory framework for environmentally sustainable development; and 3) Enhancing national capacity for participation in global conventions, regulatory regimes and funding mechanisms for environmentally sustainable development.

The Cambodia National Mekong Committee is the TSCP’s Government Executing Agency overseeing implementation through the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve Secretariat, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. Coordination of implementation at the national level is primarily through the TSCP Project Office which was originally to be in the Ministry of Environment but later chosen to be in a neutral site located with CNMC and the Tonle Sap Authority. The main beneficiaries of the project are the government agencies through improved capacity for natural resources management in the TSBR and the local communities living in and around the TSBR.

At the recommendation of the Mid-term Evaluation in 2008, the TSCP scaled back its geographic focus from the 5 provinces around the Tonle Sap to only the 3 Core Areas (Prek Toal, Boeung Tonle Chhmar, and Stung Sen) within the TSBR. Consequently, the biodiversity conservation work, the sustainable livelihoods activities, and environmental education work focused primarily on the staff, communities, and schools in and around these Core Areas.

II. Performance review

2.1 Progress review

1. Overall progress towards the UNDAF outcome

OUTCOME1: By 2015, national and sub-national capacities strengthened to develop more diversified, sustainable and equitable economy

OUTCOME 2: By 2015, National and local authorities, communities and private sector are better able to sustainably manage ecosystems goods and services and respond to climate change

OUTCOME3: By 2015, effective mechanisms for dialogue, representation and participation in democratic decision making established and strengthened

The country programme will contribute directly to **three UNDAF outcomes:** promotion of equitable, green, diversified economic growth; gender equality and empowerment of women; and accountability and responsiveness to the needs and rights of people and participation in democratic decision making. This is a demonstration of strategic choices made to focus the country strategy.

UNDP will do its best to ensure that the indicative amount of USD 33 million from UNDP's regular resources are committed as base funding for the execution of the CPAP, depending on availability of funds. UNDP together with the Government will also intensify its resource mobilization efforts, striving to mobilize complementary resources in the projected amount of USD 108 million from other resources. Should resource mobilization efforts not yield the expected results? UNDP and the Government shall review and re-prioritize programme focus and activities during the mid-term review of the CPAP.

UNDAF in 2001-2005 had stated in key areas 4: sustainable management of natural resource. Development outcome 2 of component 4.4: Environment Awareness and protection was to increase awareness about the uniqueness of the Tonle Sap Lake leading to create of an effective regional network among authorities and local communities and protection of the systems of Bio-Reserve. UN has provided technical assistance for development of national capacity, implementing strategy, research, database, management plan formulation, monitoring and implementation, effective mechanism of inter-ministerial coordination, development partner coordination, building local capacity, participatory in natural resource management of local communities, extensive awareness and education campaign.

UNDAF 2006-2010 indicated in point 2: By 2010, agriculture and rural development activities have been improved livelihoods and food security, as well as reinforcing the economic and social rights of the most vulnerable in targeted rural areas and in 2.2 point indicated that "increased and equitable access to and utilization of land, natural resources, markets and basic services to enhance livelihoods.

Provide Quote of Outcome/Output. How did project contribute?

When the TSCP was designed and initiated, it fell within the 2001 - 2005 UNDAF. Within that Framework, Sustainable management of natural resources was one of the four programme areas of concentration for Cambodia. The foci of that programme area focused on supporting national efforts in land-use planning, sustainable forestry and fisheries activities, and the promotion of environmental awareness and protection. The TSCP helped the partner institutions (General Department of Administration of Nature Conservation and Protection – GDANCP and the Kampong Thom Provincial Department of Environment – PDE) to establish a significant capacity for conservation management at the Core Areas and worked closely with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports to initiate a formal comprehensive Environmental Education programme in the schools at the Core Areas. The Sustainable Livelihoods component was coordinated by the United Nations Volunteers Program and Tonle Sap Conservation Project/UNDP and worked closely with local authority, commune council and communities to develop alternative livelihoods with diversified employment opportunities and mitigate the impact of the unsustainable practices in project areas.

2. Overall progress towards the CPAP outcome and output(s) relating to your project

Country Programme Action Plan of UNDP Cambodia (May 2010) indicated in OUTCOME 3 for BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE. Output 3.1 stated about Capacities of government and local communities enhanced for biodiversity conservation and livelihoods improvement. In this output TSCP is contributed to build the capacity of rangers in bio-diversity monitoring and conservation, make boundary delineating for conservation, support community-based for natural resource management, increase women benefit from natural resource management and alternative diversified livelihoods development and increase number species in project target areas in the red list of IUCN and conservation site.

Outcome 4 of the 2006-2010 CPAP states, “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”. More specifically, Output 4.1 states “National capacity developed to conserve biodiversity and promote land management for livelihood improvements”. The TSCP outcomes/outputs are focused directly on activities that also address CPAP outcomes/outputs, e.g., developing institutional capacity for conservation management, improving environmental education and awareness among communities and local schools, and assisting local communities with alternative livelihoods and the development of Self-help Groups. Project stakeholders of the project are the key government institutions responsible for sustainable natural resources management in the TSBR and the local communities most immediately impacted by resource management activities.

3. Capacity development

Target beneficiaries at each of the following three levels:

1. At individual level – self help group, rangers, school teachers, school children, fishery officer, commune council members, chief of commune, community natural resource members and community members in three target areas.
2. Organizational level - Project has building the capacity of provincial staff - counterpart – school teachers, environmental education focal points, local authorities, commune council, staff of provincial department of education and environment in target provinces.
3. Systemic Level - The implementation of Tonle Sap Conservation Project is reflected to the Sub-Decree on “the establishment, role and functions of the Secretariat for Tonle Sap Bio-Sphere Reserve” was approved in 2001 and the approach to strategic plan of TSBR stated in point 38 of ADB final report that By the end of 2020 and in line with the vision, strategic relationships at multiple level will be developed among a diversified of stakeholders (e.g. Gov’t Agencies, NGOs, target communities, community based organization, and the private sector). A national level TSEMP will have helped to improve understanding of bio-diversity conservation and development priorities, gaps and redundancies and have facilitated the collaborative action support of specific priorities. At local communities will be receiving tangible benefits (increased income and services) from improved natural resource management, will understand the importance of conservation and will have developed the relationships with the wider economy that able them to contribute to continues conservation of those natural resource upon which they depend. TSCP is working on the improvement of coordination and collaboration among two key agencies (GDANCP/MoE and FiA/MAFF) and a number of training indicated below.

Numerous trainings targeting several different management levels (i.e., rangers, technical staff, and institutional management staff) were conducted by the TSCP since project inception in early 2005. With the exception of Management Information System (MIST) training conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) from 2006 – 2009, all of the TSCP trainings were conducted prior to 2007. Early TSCP trainings covered the following subjects:

1. Awareness on Environment and Biodiversity Conservation
2. Basic Communication and Conflict Resolution and Basic Legal and Institutional Aspects
3. Fire Awareness and Control and First Aid
4. General Ecological Knowledge about Tonle Sap and Protected Area Management
5. Legal and Institutional Aspects and Organization of Office and Work

Those early TSCP trainings “were designed to equip the participants with fundamental knowledge and theoretical concepts with some specific tools related to protected area management and biodiversity conservation”. The trainers however recognized that even with a relatively comprehensive training program, “further methodologies and concrete tools concerned with environmental planning, work organization, law enforcement, and monitoring systems were still needed by the participants”. The trainers also noted that the subsequent trainings should emphasize “on-the-job training to equip them with specific tools related to their daily jobs in both office and field”.

The project reported the following specific achievements related to capacity building:

Rangers at multiple sites in the TSBR were trained and were carrying out law enforcement (patrolling) and biodiversity monitoring. Additional training was focused on recording and management of patrol data using a Management Information System (MIST).

Twenty-five rangers and senior government officials participated in study tours to Kenya, Bangladesh and Thailand to learn about management of natural resources in ecologically and socially similar conditions.

The Management Information System (MIST) was selected as a management and monitoring tool in all the core areas. Training on MIST for MoE staff and rangers started in late 2007 (sub-contracted to WCS).

“Biodiversity Monitoring Protocols on the Tonle Sap” were produced, and are being used particularly for large water bird and water snake harvest monitoring.

Other capacity building benefits included recognition of a management system for protected area management within MoE, management tools and plans that provided a framework for further advancement and increased awareness of the new Protected Area Law within government.

The trainings of the TSCP were extremely successful in building a foundation and capacity for improved natural resources management, however, it was often recognized that the trainings were too infrequent and of too short a duration to establish long-term sustainable capacity of skills and knowledge. In addition, issues such as staff-turnover and local literacy levels necessitated a more comprehensive training program. A comprehensive Training of Trainers program would have ensured more sustainable capacity within the partner government institutions.

The project did not aim for systemic or institutional capacity building but rather focused on individual skills development and the technical processes for applying these skills. Consequently, the issue of sustainability was of paramount concern as the project concluded.

4. Impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries.

1. Livelihoods - 25 saving group with 511 members (430 female members) in three target sites (123 members in Prek Toal, 268 members in Boeung Tonle Chhmar and 120 members in Stoeung Sen). Most of them are associated with diversified activities and income from different sources such as: 1) water hyacinth handicraft-25 families in Kampong Prohok; 2) fish processing – 120 families (30 families in Stoeung Sen, 50 families in Boeung Tonle Chhmar; 40 families in Prek Toal); 3) Pig production (9 in SS, 9 in BTC and 7 in PT) and 4) fish culture – 75 (20 in SS, 25 in BTC and 30 in PT).

2. EE stakeholders – 19 school teachers, 562 school students, 5 education officers, 6 core areas staff, counterpart staff and TSCP staff were benefited from eco-club. There were 9,681 participants were benefited from environmental education and awareness, 6,266 were from 125 communes in 5 provinces around Tonle Sap and 3,415 participants were student, MoEYS, PoEYS, school principal in each target school,.

3. Conservation management stakeholders – Core Areas Directors, provincial officers from provincial departments, commune council, local authorities, local communities, FiA, DANCP, CNMC, NGO and development partners

4. Biodiversity Monitoring – 52 rangers in three core areas (SS, BTC, PT)

As noted in the Lessons Learned report, the project had a significant impact on all of the project stakeholders, both at the community level and partner government institution level. This is reflected in the change in GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores from project inception in 2005 to project conclusion in 2010. At project inception, the partner government agencies and local communities at the Core Areas had a very low capacity for effective natural resources management and a very low awareness/understanding of biodiversity conservation and its links to livelihoods of local communities.

By cooperating with WCS to implement the biodiversity conservation activities it allowed the project to build upon the established coordination of WCS and GDANCP in one of the Core Areas. WCS was also able to bring its considerable experience and capacity to bear on the other Core Areas and successfully manage and monitor biodiversity.

Similarly, the project coordinated closely with the UN Volunteers to implement the sustainable livelihoods component and worked closely with local communities and local Commune Councils to initiate alternative livelihood activities (e.g., establishment of Self-help/Savings Groups, support to alternative livelihood activities, etc.).

The Environmental Education Specialist coordinated closely with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to develop the EE curriculum and identify the key communities and schools where the EE activities would be initiated. Local teachers were engaged to refine the curriculum and establish Eco-clubs to generate interest and enthusiasm among students.

Very few of these conditions existed before the TSCP was initiated in the TSBR. The biggest issue identified during the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) was sustainability and that remained until project conclusion. The paramount question remains: What happens to all of these achievements when the project concludes?

2.2 Implementation strategy review

1. Participatory/consultative processes

At all points during implementation, there was an open, participatory, consultative process to project management decisions. The project design required TSCP Board approval for all project work plans and budgets which assured all of the key project stakeholders would be informed of project direction, activities, and progress.

This process of TSCP Board approval at quarterly intervals proved to be a problem for timely, effective implementation of project activities. The Board changed quarterly meetings to meeting only twice a year which changed work plan/budget approval to the National Project Director and UNDP. However, many delays were encountered which delayed timely implementation of project activities (See Lessons Learned).

In terms of process, the TSCP maintained a collaborative approach with all stakeholders at the national, provincial, and local level in activity formulation, implementation and information dissemination.

TSCP has consulted with different stakeholders during the project implementation and operation included work plan formulation and prioritized the key implementing activities through an individual interview, group discussion, workshop and other technical meeting. Example for the case of the project work plan formulation in 2011, TSCP has organized workshop by inviting self-help group steering committees, commune council, school teachers, core area directors and deputy Director and other concerned officers to discuss and identified a priority needs for further actions. Core area Directors and Deputy Directors has been increasing their knowledge on how to use the Core Area Management Plan was signed by the senior Minister, Minister of Ministry of Environment include the identification of key priority activities for implementation and budgeting. For school teachers have learned and gain their knowledge from environmental education, eco-club development and awareness campaign. Self help groups gained knowledge and technical capacity from project such as pig raising, eel and fish culture, gender, family financial planning and gained experiences in saving fund management and problem solving. In 2010, TSCP Project Manager brought all project component and beneficiaries work together and do coordination of the environment education, core area management, self help group, commune council and local authority for the sake of conservation and improvement of people livelihoods. Three rangers were assigned to work with livelihoods component and two rangers were assigned to work with the environmental education component.

2. Quality of partnerships

The quality of partnerships varied from very close during all phases of planning and implementation to weak with limited input and coordination. They were: NGOs – 1) World Conservation Society, Live & Learn, Osmose International, United Nations Volunteers; 2) Commune Council in target areas; 3) Core Areas – Prek Toal, Stoeung Sen and Boeung Tonle Chhmar. The quality of partnerships speaks directly to the national ownership which was a frequently mentioned issue during Lessons Learned consultations, project's workshop and meeting.

Collaboration with partners such as UNDP, the United Nations Volunteers, Wildlife Conservation Society, other NGOs such as Osmose, Live and Learn, etc. were very good during the project

which resulted in tangible achievements by the project to cooperate with partners to improve natural resources management in the TSBR.

Partnerships with government agencies were mixed. At times, GDANCP and the Kampong Thom PDE coordinated closely with the project in terms of planning and implementing, however, there was a concern by stakeholders that the project was seen by these agencies as an additional burden rather than a valuable, close, collaborative partnership to achieve improved natural resources management. Within GDANCP, there was essentially one staff that was dedicated to working with/on the TSCP which distanced the project from the government agencies. Similarly, the relationship between the project and the Fisheries Administration was never fully explored by the project which ultimately limited project potential.

With respect to Environmental Education and Sustainable Livelihoods, the project developed strong positive relationships with partners, including government ministries, local commune council, local authority and communities, however, a greater investment in the early stages of the project to build and develop the relationships with government agencies would have paid significant dividends in the later stages of project implementation.

3. National ownership

As is evidenced by the Lessons Learned, government involvement in the project and national ownership was a concern in all components of the project. The following were some of the key issues relating to government ownership and commitment:

1. Part of the problem was the location of the TSCP project office in the CNMC building which distanced day-to-day operations and decisions from government institutions. The cumulative effect over time was to make the project more and more a UNDP initiative rather than government owned.
2. The fact that WCS was subcontracted to do the entire biodiversity monitoring component also distanced the project from government ownership.
3. Due to complicated government management structure and the lack of a history of close collaboration between key agencies, the project worked almost exclusively with GDANCP rather than also with FiA. This limited the involvement of multiple government agencies.
4. Local Authority, rangers and fishery field officer at ground have good collaboration, but some gaps occur due to the interpretation of the issue to the top and the top does not come close to the issue's solving.
5. Increased involvement by MoEYS would have ensured greater government ownership in the Environmental Education Components of the project. There were no any staffs from MoEYS to coordinate and take responsibility of tasks transfer beyond the project.
6. The TSCP Board's decision to only meet 2x a year also limited the involvement of the government in the project.

Increased government ownership would have had a significant positive impact on many project components ranging from planning to implementation to definition of priorities, joint monitoring and evaluation, allocation of national resources, etc. and ultimately achievement of Outputs with lasting impact.

4. Sustainability

The basic framework and many of the tools for conservation have been established by the project. However, even as the project nears completion, these continue to need to be further refined and translated and transferred to government and community organizations in a way that they can be

effectively used and sustained. Institutional change and sustainability remain the keys to further strengthening conservation management in the TSBR.

As with the issue of government ownership, there was a concern in the project that sustainability was not a priority from project inception forward. The mid-term evaluation pointed out that for the first half of the project, the focus was on completion of outputs rather than completion and impact of outcomes. At project mid-point the project revised its Strategic Results Framework to emphasize sustainable impact of project activities; however, this occurred in 2009 with the project concluding at end of 2010. It was not possible to institute truly sustainable, “beyond-project” achievement when this was not an emphasis from project inception forward.

The project has had a significant impact on the Core Area staff, the local communities, and the project partners during project implementation but there remains a real concern about the lasting impact of management actions beyond project closure. Much of this has to do with financial sustainability. From mid-point forward, the project was tasked with identifying funding to sustain management actions beyond project closure. With the onus for resource mobilization on the project and UNDP, it further distanced the project and responsibility for sustainability from government ownership.

Financial sustainability is the key to project impact sustainability. If no further funding is identified, there is a real concern about the ability of the government institutions to sustain management activities and effective natural resources management. If further funding is identified, it is very likely that many of the projects achievements, e.g., biodiversity conservation management, implementation of Core Area Management Plans, implementation of Environmental Education initiatives, sustainable livelihoods activities, etc. will be carried forward and a degree of sustainability achieved. However, the key issue of government ownership and government support remains a critical component to sustainable impact.

Sustainable Environment Education – MoEYS has strongly support and committed to the environment education around Tonle Sap, but we still have some reasons cause the environment education implementation at school level: 1) school teachers have limited capacity in environment concept and science; 2) lack of environmental education materials and library; 3)there is no clear guideline for mainstreaming the environmental education in official school curriculum (currently insert in school life skills and school week end); 4) most school teachers are outsider, they frequently leave school after teaching some months or a year; 5)less support from communal budget (annual budget from school should include in annual work plan and budgeting).

Sustainable livelihoods activities may exist for old saving groups (around 50%), but new ones are not expect to be survived and move in smooth condition. It’s due to some the following reasons: 1) there is no clear picture for responsible agency for saving fund beyond TSCP; 2) old saving groups have big amount of saving fund with some foundation and new saving groups freshly start by mid-2010 with very small amount of saving money (It is difficult to start the process if there is no further support) They are not able to run without support from project or development partners; 3) self help group steering committees have limited capacity in saving fund management; 4) vocational training for diversified and alternative job provided to saving group members in limited number; 5) technical training related to livelihoods development was not replicated widely into target communities.

Sustainable Gender was mainstreaming into TSCP target component and linked to three core areas for ground implementation. Series of training had been provided to target beneficiaries through focal point of self-help groups, rangers, teachers, counterpart staffs, commune council and

local authority. But the time is limited to replicate the concept and knowledge of gender development to community members. The gender activities were started in May 2010. Gender activity needs more support from key actors/project to continue the activity after project closure.

2.3 Management effectiveness review

1. Quality of monitoring

Quality of monitoring was mixed. The TSCP Board was able to monitor the project quality and the state of implementation but since these meetings were only held twice a year, the ability of the Board to coordinate and oversee change was limited.

The TSCP management team was responsible for developing quarterly and annual status reports that were submitted to UNDP and government agencies; however, there was limited on-going management feedback into project performance to allow for adaptive management. Much of the monitoring, i.e., project performance review was left to the mid-term evaluation and project terminal evaluation.

All of the TSCP's outputs, e.g., reports, training design, management support recommendations, etc. were circulated to government agencies for review but the feedback was limited and often very delayed which didn't allow for timely incorporation into project implementation.

In the second half of the project, a Technical Management Specialist was tasked with developing a Monitoring Framework to assist the project and Core Areas to more effectively monitor and manage project actions. This framework was developed but never adopted.

As the Mid-term Evaluation pointed out, the project focused most of its monitoring on achievement of outputs rather than achievement and impact of outcomes. This was a significant project limitation.

In 2010, Core Area Directors have conduct their regularly monitor the site bio-diversity, law enforcement, the implementation and operations of rangers in place. The environmental education and livelihoods components are monitoring the progress through routine field activities.

2. Timely delivery of outputs

Most of the project's outputs were completed, however, there were numerous delays to implementation primarily due to administrative processes within UNDP related to approval of work plans and budgets, recruiting of support staff, etc. This created numerous, significant delays to timely project implementation. Frequently, a quarter would have expired as its work plan and budget was approved thereby delaying all of the outputs for that period. Significant delays were also experience due to long turn-around by partner institution reviews of project reports, strategies, plans, etc. These delays in turn delayed implementation and delivery of Outputs.

3. Resources allocation

Development activities have always been balanced well within the project with running project costs. One of the characteristics of development and/or natural resources management projects in Cambodia is the issue of salary support and/or supplements provided to government staff. This consistently consumes a portion of the budget that would otherwise go directly toward development activity costs.

The proportion of project costs (i.e., project staff, running costs) vs. development activity costs will vary over the course of the project. At times, the development activity costs were high due to planned workshops and/or trainings.

Generally speaking, the project was overly ambitious given the existing budgets allocated to implementation. The project mid-term recommended focusing on project activities only at the 3 Core Areas rather than the 5 provinces as with the TSEMP. This was in part due to the financial restrictions of the project and the costs of working in such a large geographic area. Similarly, the Core Area Management Plans that were developed are only being implemented in part due to the cost of implementation and the limited budget of the project to implement these plans in their entirety.

4. Cost-effective use of inputs

The TSCP was initially scheduled to close at the end of 2011, however, this was changed to the end of 2010 due to the achievement of all of the project's key outputs and limited funds available for 2011. Based on this alone, one can make the observation that funds were not used entirely effectively if adequate funds were not available to continue project activities in 2011 according to the initial project work plan and Strategic Results Framework.

During the first half of the project, the implementation area was in all 5 provinces around the Tonle Sap Lake. This diffused the project impact and budget. The impact would have been more cost effective to focus on the 3 Core Areas from inception and expand to other areas only if appropriate and within allowable budgets.

Most of the project's goals and objectives were achieved; however, a real question of sustainability remains. One can infer that the project didn't adequately invest in areas that would ensure national ownership and sustainability beyond project closure.

III. Project results summary

3.1 2006-2010 UN CPAP Output 4.1:

National capacity developed to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable land management for livelihood improvements

TSCP Outcome 1: Institutionalized effective management and monitoring of Core Areas for biodiversity conservation

Output 1.1: GDANCP/PDE staff demonstrating Core Area management capacity

This Output focused specifically on the government institutions primarily responsible for direct management of the three Core Areas of the TSBR, namely, Prek Toal in Battambang Province, and Boeung Tonle Chhmar and Stung Sen in Kampong Thom Province.

The indicators used to verify achievement of this output were 1) the development and existence of annual Core Area Management Plan (CAMP) Implementation Plans (i.e. Annual and Quarterly Work plans), 2) CAMP priority actions and costs identified to prioritize actions, and 3) staff capacity to implement CAMPs exist within the relevant government agencies.

This Output was achieved successfully and within the agreed timeframe and budget. The TSCP Management Team (i.e., National Project Manager - NPM, Project Assistant – PA, National

Environmental Education Specialist – NEES, and National Livelihood Specialist – NLS) met on a regular basis with the Core Area Directors and Core Area Deputy Directors to develop annual work plans which would serve as the guiding documents for all annual project implementation activities at the three Core Areas. These work plans were drawn directly from the CAMPs and directly addressed those activities critical to effective Core Area management.

The TSCP allocated a consistent portion of operational budget toward supporting on-going conservation management activities at the three Core Areas. This included salary stipends, equipment maintenance, new equipment as needed, etc. which were required for effective in-situ protected area management. This TSCP support ensured the Core Areas were able to effectively implement the necessary management actions identified in the CAMPs and annual/quarterly work plans.

Throughout the project life, the TSCP worked closely with the GDANCP and PDE staff to address key human capacity issues to ensure that the necessary protected area management skills were developed, institutionalized and sustained beyond project closure. TSCP built the capacity of rangers and field officers and MIST assistant through the channel of WCS and TSCP. TSCP has built the capacity of 52 rangers with field equipped (field materials), staffs from provincial department of environment in six provinces around Tonle Sap Great Lake and technical staff from GDANCP/MoE. In 2010, TSCP provide the additional training on “Law Enforcement of Protected Areas” to rangers, core area Directors and provincial staffs. At the mid-term evaluation, it was recognized that capacity building needed to be a greater emphasis of the project to ensure long-term impact. In response to this recommendation, the project’s Technical Management Specialist developed a Capacity Building Strategy for the second half of the project. The recommendations of this strategy emphasized greater training in protected area management skills of Core Area staff however; the recommendations were not implemented as the decision was made to conclude the project early.

Similarly, the Technical Management Specialist developed a Monitoring Strategy to assist the TSCP Management Team and GDANCP/PDE staff to more effectively monitor and report on their Core Area management and biodiversity conservation efforts. The recommendations from this strategy were also not fully realized due to early project conclusion. These recommendations would have significantly assisted the GDANCP and PDE to more closely monitor their management actions and utilize adaptive management to improve biodiversity conservation efforts.

As is clear from the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores, the difference in GDANP/PDE capacity to conduct effective biodiversity conservation and protected area management between project inception and project conclusion is significant. From this standpoint, the TSCP was very successful. However, from the standpoint of achieving the target at project end vs. having developed sustainable, institutionalized effective management, it remains a question.

National ownership and commitment remained significant challenges throughout the project. Without this long-term national commitment (both operationally and financially), there is a real question of whether the significant accomplishment of the project to build capacity for biodiversity conservation will be sustained after project closure.

Output 1.2: Biodiversity monitoring enables effective Core Area management

This component of the project was primarily subcontracted to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for implementation. This is due to their previous commitment and involvement in the

TSBR, particularly the Prek Toal Core Area and their extensive and successful experience conducting biodiversity monitoring in Cambodia.

The indicators used to verify achievement of this output were 1) the institutional utility of the Management Information System (MIST) in Core Area management, 2) functional, reliable monitoring of Giant Mimosa invasive plants at the Core Areas, and 3) effective biodiversity monitoring at the three Core Areas.

Overwhelmingly, this project Output was very successful. WCS developed a comprehensive training program to institute and support the use of the MIST (which focused on management activities, e.g., patrolling and law enforcement at the three Core Areas). This system is now being used at all three Core Areas and at GDANP in Phnom Penh. The system is still in the early stages of use and without continued support, there is a concern that it will not be fully institutionalized.

The Technical Management Specialist's Capacity Building Assessment recognized that considerably more training is needed at the Core Areas before the MIST is truly sustainable and institutionalized. During the fact-finding to develop the Capacity Building Strategy, repeated concerns were voiced by Core Area staff and GDANCP/PDE staff that the trainings, while effective and helpful, were too infrequent, of too short a duration, and needed more hands-on "learning by doing" trainings. This was largely due to staff turnover at the Core Areas, limited literacy of Core Area staff, and limited technical capacity. The Capacity Building Strategy initiated discussions with WCS to develop more MIST trainings but these were never realized due to early closure of the TSCP.

During the Mid-term Evaluation and the final Lessons Learned assessment, the main observation from MoE staff and others was about limited communication between WCS and the government stakeholders and the fact that most of the capacity building was provided to MoE staff seconded to WCS, some who have been with WCS for many years. A MIST Training of Trainers program focused on a wider set of MoE/GDANCP/PDE staff would have been extremely helpful toward ensuring sustainability and institutionalization of MIST in these government institutions.

WCS effectively introduced MIST and developed a consistent, reliable reporting system whereby the Core Areas would collect the information for MIST and would send this information on to the PDE office in Kampong Thom and the GDANCP office in Phnom Penh. During the Lessons Learned, a number of stakeholders mentioned that the use of MIST would benefit from a standardized system for getting MIST results and/or summaries back to the Core Areas for adaptive, proactive (not merely reactive) management. Currently, the information leaves the Core Areas and the Core Area staffs never receive any feedback from higher management levels on MIST results, meaning of MIST results, result trends, etc. MIST data and information just installed in GDANCP database system and interpreted into progress report. But there is no evident of report for the interpretation of core areas' issues and changes to the top management for making decision and strategic action for change in specific site. There is no update of conservation map of core areas during the project implementation.

Early in project development, alien invasive species (IAS) management was recognized as a priority for effective, comprehensive Core Area management. Monitoring and management of IAS was a component of the CAMPs with detailed activities to be carried out by the Core Area rangers. During the first half of the project, the emphasis was on building essential basic capacity of Core Area staff and developing the CAMPs. Therefore, no specific IAS management activities occurred during this period. In 2009, when the revised Strategic Results Framework (SRF) was developed, Giant Mimosa monitoring was included as a key Core Area management activity. Initial discussions with WCS indicated that Giant Mimosa was a current part of MIST monitoring,

however, GDANCP and PDE staff indicated it was not. Consequently, this component was never adequately addressed by the TSCP due to limited capacity and the lack of a dedicated TSCP staff focused on biodiversity conservation.

Biodiversity monitoring was an extremely successful component of this project. Multiple annual and species monitoring reports were produced by WCS on the status, protection, and monitoring of waterbirds and other biodiversity in the Core Areas. WCS also developed a variety of biodiversity monitoring protocols for the Core Areas which were introduced and disseminated widely to all stakeholders. All of these tools and the information gathered were achieved with the close coordination and collaboration of key government agencies and with TSCP support. WCS has been able to impart a significant part of this knowledge and technical skill to GDANCP and PDE, however, the concern remains that much of the technical knowledge transfer has been to a handful of people, particularly those seconded to WCS, and not the wider staff within the government institutions.

WCS has indicated that Prek Toal will remain a strategic priority beyond the TSCP. Consequently, there is a very high likelihood that the MIST system and the conservation achievements (monitoring, patrolling, protection, research, etc.) and capacity at this Core Area will remain and grow. WCS will continue to be involved at Boeung Tonle Chhmar and Stung Sen but likely to a much lesser degree. Consequently, there is a greater concern about the sustainability of these achievements at the Kampong Thom PDE and the two smaller Core Areas.

Output 1.3: Sustainable Financing mechanisms for Core Area management are identified

The Mid-term Evaluation recognized that sustainability of project impact was a real concern and one that had not been adequately addressed in the first half of the project. Consequently, sustainability of management impact and institutional ownership needed to be high priorities of the project in the second half of implementation.

It was widely recognized that financial sustainability is a critical element to ensuring the achievements of the project would be lasting and could be built upon after the project concludes. In response to this recognition, the TSCP created Output 1.3 in the revised SRF to address financial sustainability for project Outcomes. The TSCP was tasked with identifying sustainable and/or alternative funding sources to support CAMP implementation and Core Area visitor centres beyond TSCP closure.

The Technical Management Specialist developed a comprehensive evaluation of sustainable and alternative funding options and presented this to the TSCP Management Team and government stakeholders at a formal workshop. The evaluation consisted of numerous meetings with public and private donors to explain the TSCP and its objectives, scope, etc.; evaluate donor strategic priorities and see if/where they align with TSCP priorities, and; discuss potential donor interest in supporting the TSCP's conservation management activities.

Additional meetings were held to evaluate major initiatives (e.g., climate change, GEF replenishment, etc.) and explore these as possible fund sources.

Results of the evaluation showed that there were no individual donors ready to contribute and pick up TSCP activities at project conclusion; however, the evaluation did make a number of specific recommendations for key government departments (e.g., MoE, CNMC) actions to explore the best opportunities. The workshop focused on the evaluation's recommendations and what the immediate priorities should be given these existing donor priorities and funding circumstances. It

was decided that a Task Force should be formed whose primary focus and responsibility will be resource mobilization for the TSBR Core Areas and implementation of the CAMPs. UNDP is currently discussing with the Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC) on the development of this Task Force and the specific scope of activities and responsibilities.

The TSCP was instrumental in trying to identify and secure financial resources to continue conservation management activities after project closure. From that standpoint, the project was successful in achieving this Output. However, as was recognized during the Lessons Learned discussions, by assuming the responsibility of identifying and securing financial resources to continue CAMP implementation, the onus was on the TSCP, not on the national stakeholders who are ultimately responsible for sustaining project achievements after project closure. By completely assuming this responsibility, it absolved the government agencies of their responsibility to secure and commit internal funds after project closure, or at least to provide support to a minimum core set of management actions.

TSCP Outcome 2: Core Area communities aware of and contributing to biodiversity conservation

Output 2.1: Environmental Education integrated into formal and informal education systems around Core Areas

The TSCP's Environmental Education (EE) program was one of the outstanding project programs that aimed to raise the environmental awareness of school children and increase the understanding of the need for sustainable natural resource management around the Tonle Sap Lake. The EE program was coordinated with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) and initiated through the school system's Local Life Skills Program. The program focused on primary and lower secondary school students from grade 4 through 9 around the Tonle Sap Lake, particularly near the Core Areas.

The first indicator for this Output was the use of EE curriculum in schools in/around the Tonle Sap Core Areas. This was relatively successful as the TSCP NEES coordinated with the Curriculum Development Department (CDD) of the MoEYS to develop all aspects of the EE program and material development. A variety of stakeholders, e.g., Live and Learn NGO, the Provincial EYS Department, the Ministry of Environment, and the Department of Fisheries were invited to contribute to develop key EE tools such as the "Teachers Manuals and Activities Guide (TMAG) which were used in local schools. A limitation to the EE curriculum being fully implemented and incorporated into the existing educational curriculum was limited involvement of the MoEYS from inception onward. Ultimately, adoption of the EE curriculum was up to individual teachers rather than a requirement from the MoEYS. As with many other components of this project, increased involvement and coordination by key national agencies would have improved this component of the TSCP and ensured greater sustainability.

For all those that were directly involved with the EE component, understanding and awareness of sustainable environmental management increased significantly. The project's emphasis on helping local schools and communities celebrate World Environment Day provided a venue for educating and informing key resource users at the Core Areas about sustainable natural resources management. One of the Lessons Learned however was that the EE component of the project focused almost exclusively on local schools and not enough on adults who are the key resource users at the Core Areas. Similarly, Core Area rangers frequently indicated their desire to be more closely involved in EE activities to be more educated and in turn impart that knowledge to local community members during their management activities.

The environment education programme is mainstreaming in school curriculum: 1) through subject study such as biology, geography and social science; and 2) through weekly life skills activities. The assessment of environment education specialist indicated that EE knowledge has been improved and behaviour of students is extremely changes. They change their behaviour in direct drink lake water to water filter or boiling. Change from direct dumping waste into water resource to keep or collect in waste platform.

World Environment Day Campaign is implemented under the environmental education. This event is yearly organized in order to invite the community people, school children, rangers, teachers, partner organizations, key institutions, commune council, local authority and stakeholders concerned to conserve, restoration and protect our natural resource and environment from threat, global change and degradation and extend the message of head of state (Government) on world environment day.

The initiation of Eco-club development did not start until Quarter 3 of 2010. One reason was the significant delay within UNDP to secure a new EE Specialist after the previous one departed. Consequently, there was not enough time for the TSCP to coordinate and strengthen the Eco-clubs due to the proposed project closure at the end of 2010. Initial indications showed promising signs of support for the Eco-clubs; however, there was not enough time to develop these fully.

There were 9 eco-clubs were established in nice target school with 19 volunteers teachers to lead, coordinate and implement the school eco-club. There are 562 students participate in eco-club with 333 female students. There are 131 (76 female) from Koh Chiviang secondary school, 51 (32) from Koh Chiviang Primary School, 54 (30) from Prek Toal Primary school, 36 (22) from Kompong Prohok primary school, 41 (28) Peam Bang primary school, 92 (56) Phat Saday secondary school, 90 (56) Phat Sanday primary school, 40 (19) Prek Skach primary school and 27 (14) Tuol Neangsao primary school. The school eco-club activities are focusing on school waste management, replanting the inundated forest, eco-club library; gardening, water sanitation and hygiene. School eco-club teachers, rangers and education officer from target province had exchanged experience with school teachers in Modulhiri under the target areas of WWF.

As with all of the other components of the Project, one of the more frequent Lessons highlighted during discussions was the need for closer coordination and collaboration with government agencies, specifically the MoEYS. It was felt that the ownership and responsibility of the MoEYS to sustain EE at the local schools was unclear, especially toward the conclusion of the Project. Greater ownership and commitment from the government would improve the effectiveness of the EE work as well as ensure greater sustainability of efforts beyond Project closure. Closer coordination with the MoEYS at the initiation of the project and EE work would also help to mainstream EE into the formal education curriculum rather than being left up to individual teachers whether or not to adopt and implement EE.

Most of the EE work focused on schools and school children and did not target the broader population of local communities in and around the Core Areas. The main impact on the environment is by the adults who are using the Core Area resources. The EE work would have been significantly improved by also having a component that focuses on adults and existing resource users. The EE component would have had a greater impact if it had two components, one focused on the school children organized through the MoEYS, and the other focused on the adult resource users organized through the Commune Councils.

Sustainability of EE activities was an ongoing concern of school teachers, project staff, and others as they did not want to see efforts and achievements lost as soon as the project stopped. As mentioned, closer coordination with MoEYS would mitigate these concerns as the Ministry would be able to make decisions that ensure sustainability of achievements, e.g., rotate teaching staff less frequently, mandate EE curriculum in schools, etc. Another recommendation was that the project should have worked with local Commune Councils to mainstream the EE work into Commune Development Plans and Commune Investment Plans to ensure a degree of financial sustainability and long-term support for the EE program from local authorities

Output 2.2: Core Area communities practicing “green” livelihoods

Green Livelihoods of TSCP means to assist in provision project framework which support the national socio-economic development policy, national poverty reduction strategy, rectangular strategy of the Royal Government of Cambodia, MDG Goals and UNDAF to achieve the sustainable development and conservation of natural resource through integrated intervention (environment education, bio-diversity monitoring, self-help group with diversified employment and income generation) to empower community natural resource dependency to utilize the existing local resource to improve and attain sustainable livelihoods to reduce poverty.

The sustainable livelihoods program of the TSCP improved household conditions through the development of Self-help/Savings Groups and the introduction of water filters and cooking stoves and provided a significant opportunity to create greater awareness of conservation values and protected areas. The effect of this program on core area conservation was limited since the primary threat to biodiversity was destructive fishing practices away from the households. As was realized by the TSEMP project and the TSCP project however, the only effective strategy for improved natural resources management, including biodiversity conservation, was through a community-based approach and the introduction of income-generating activities. While the TSCP’s sustainable livelihoods program was initially slow to find the appropriate interventions, and there were a number of key lessons learned during implementation, it nevertheless remained an important element toward achieving Outcome 2 of the TSCP: Core Area communities aware of and contributing to biodiversity conservation.

About 511 (430 female household headed) families in numerous Communes around within in the TSBR have benefited from the sustainable livelihoods component of the TSCP. There has been a positive attitude and behavior change in the communities regarding the development of Self-help/Savings Groups and the impact on improved livelihoods. The project’s system of assisting the Self-help/Savings Groups to accumulate capital in their own fund and on their own initiative, and not just by providing cash, elicited a greater sense of ownership and commitment from the Groups. Through the project’s activities, the Groups and wider local communities came to more clearly understand that if they help each other and work together (i.e., through these Groups), a positive and lasting change can be achieved, such as the greater awareness for the need for conservation of their natural resources and mitigating the immediate impact on their immediate environment.

Of the many specific constraints, challenges, lessons identified by Project stakeholders, the most frequently identified issue was the need for significant coordination and involvement of local communities from project inception forward. Community involvement in project design and implementation builds local support for activities and significantly increases the likelihood of sustainable impact. A bottom-up approach gives the local communities the right to manage and care for their own wealth which also increases the likelihood for the project to have a lasting impact.

All of the Lessons Learned discussions identified the need for closer coordination between the different components of the TSCP. Similarly, the stakeholders that discussed the sustainable livelihoods aspects of the TSCP felt that closer integration with the EEA and Biodiversity Conservation components would have helped the local communities better understand the overall scope and aim of the Project and how these components are inter-related.

Development of the Self-help/Savings Groups was a positive way to introduce natural resources management and protection and environmental education to local communities. Without having specific, separate education and awareness campaigns, the process of establishing the Self-help/Savings Groups provided many opportunities for the NLS to discuss the broader aims of the TSCP and how improved local livelihoods and economies can help the natural environment and ensure local communities live in a more environmentally sustainable manner.

There is positive progress in livelihoods component from the inception to the project conclusion. They change their behavior from illegal access to their alternative livelihoods from diversified activities which gained from TSCP such as fish processing, handcraft activity from water hyacinth, fish and eel culture, pig raising, mobile sale and trading. They changed their habit from using directed water from open lake for their drinking water to use water filter instead. Self help group members can make their families financial plan and do calculation for their business. They know on how to manage saving fund, solve problem among their communities, and they understand the saving regulation and statute. Handcraft group has a partners and customer for their after Koh Pich exhibition in December 2010. They work and collaborate closely with the rangers and field officers in core areas.

Output 2.3: Gender-biodiversity conservation links in Core Areas identified and strengthened if possible

The only indicator for this Output was the presence of gender-biodiversity links as a result of TSCP activities at the three Core Areas, particularly through project activities at the provincial level and with the sustainable livelihoods component.

In 2007, gender mainstreaming was discussed and agreed in a Project Board meeting and introduced into the project. A general analysis on gender mainstreaming with the project was conducted and this led to a gender mainstreaming activity plan and a budget of support to implement the work plan. From this point forward, the emphasis on increasing the involvement of women in the project and in conservation activities at the Core Areas increased significantly.

At the time of the 2008 Mid-term Evaluation, the total TSCP staffs was 67 (including the project support team members), of which three were women, i.e. two Project Implementation Unit (PIU) staff and an assistant of the project support team. Among 162 trainees attending ranger and technical trainings on protected areas management, 16 participants were women. There were 88 participants in the trainings for rangers; only two of them were women.

Gender issues were included well in the livelihood component. The most notable measures were in the Self-help/Savings Group formation with almost 95% of the members being women. In most of the communities, the participation of beneficiaries in capacity building (e.g., financial management or environmental awareness) was mobilized by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the TSCP team. This was achieved by the TSCP/UNV through visits and encouragement of the women to participate in meetings and relevant trainings. However, these women Self-help/Savings Group members were not always linked to environmental awareness, core area conservation and management activities.

In early 2010, an International and National Gender Specialist were contracted to the TSCP to assist the project to identify and strengthen Gender Mainstreaming links. A number of site visits were conducted to develop a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan after which relevant trainings were held with local communities from the Core Areas. The consultants led the following trainings in Quarter 2, 2010:

Training on Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Financial Education

Training on "Gender Policy Mainstreaming and Gender Equality Project Cycles" was provided to the national counterpart agencies, Core Area Directors, Deputy Directors and Provincial Officers

Training on "Gender Knowledge and Gender Roles" was provided to a "Gender Core Team" composed of rangers, Self-help/Savings Groups Steering Committees, local community members, and Commune Councils.

Given the limited time that the TSCP focused on this Output and specific aspect of implementation, it is fair to say that the project was quite successful in engaging and including women through the sustainable livelihoods activities. The leadership and management responsibilities within the national agencies and at the Core Areas fall almost exclusively on men and therefore, the project was limited in the extent that women could be engaged in these activities. As Cambodia develops and national agencies diversify and include more women, it will be easier for future projects to strategically include more women in decision-making roles and in a wider diversity of roles and responsibilities.

TSCP Outcome 3: Strengthened results-based project management

Output 3.1: Increased management capacity to monitor and promote project achievements

This Outcome and Output speak mostly to the operational implementation of the project, i.e. fiscal management, development and implementation of effective work plans, effective coordination and implementation of project activities, effective monitoring and reporting of project activities, effective communication and collaboration with government agencies, and synergies and collaboration with related projects/initiatives. The three specific indicators of this Output were:

Results-based monitoring plan and templates

Communications Plan

Synergies and collaboration with related projects

From the standpoint of operational management and effectively monitoring and promoting project achievements, the project had mixed results if viewed in its entirety. However, it is important not to overlook the significant accomplishments of the project. The significant improvements in protected area management were generated by the project which provides a solid basis upon which the government institutions can build if adequate resources are identified and allocated. These include:

the required infrastructure and centers for protected area management and the beginning of a comprehensive management program based on Core Area Management Plans;

Core Area Management Plans to guide future program development and implementation;

the creation of a strategy and system of procedures for biodiversity monitoring and protected area management;

increased understanding of the patrol and management functions, and improved technical and management skills of selected project staff and others;

training and equipping of protected area rangers at the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve's three Core Areas;

a wide range of outputs that provide the technical tools for conservation (e.g., plans, training packages, education curricula, livelihoods assessments, etc.);
increased local awareness and recognition of biodiversity values in the Tonle Sap;
an effective environmental education and awareness curriculum successfully integrated into local schools in and around the TSBR's Core Areas;
Self-help/Savings Groups in local communities that are potentially self-sustaining and replicable;
Initial linkages between livelihoods, quality of life and biodiversity conservation.
One of the reasons for early TSCP closure was the observation by the TSCP Board that the project had achieved all of its outputs and there was little remaining budget available for implementation in 2011. One has to conclude therefore that overall the project was successful in achieving its goals and objectives, although there were many Lessons Learned that can help to improve future projects. On the other hand, if the budget was limited in 2011, then financial management may not have been properly coordinated.

The Mid-term Evaluation recognized that in the first half of the project, the design of the TSCP followed more of an activity-based approach rather than a results-based approach. The outcomes were implicit rather than explicit and monitoring systems emphasized completion of activities rather than sustainability of project achievements. In response to the Mid-term Evaluation, the TSCP initiated a number of activities to improve project impact and sustainability, improve monitoring and report of project activities, improve capacity building efforts, enhance project communication, and increase collaboration with partners.

In 2009, a revised 3-year Strategic Results Framework was developed to address these issues by developing new, targeted Outcomes and Outputs that emphasized sustainability, improved coordination and communication, and greater, more focused project impact. The UNDP secured a Technical Advisor to assist the project to develop a Capacity Building Strategy, Monitoring Framework, and Sustainable Financing Strategy as well as assist the project with a number of key operational requirements, e.g., Exit Strategy, Lessons Learned Document, and day-to-day management activities.

The Technical Advisor was scheduled to work in 2010 and 2011, however, the project decision to operationally close the project at the end of 2010, meant that a number of the Consultant's outputs were never fully initiated or integrated into the Project. For example, the Capacity Building Strategy made a number of key observations and recommendations to assist the GDANCP and PDE with their on-going capacity needs and improve sustainable impact. Similarly, a Monitoring Framework was developed for the project and government counterparts; however this also was never implemented. The Sustainable Financing Strategy was developed and discussed and UNDP and government agencies are currently discussing how to act on the recommendations.

In fairness to the project's Management Team, all of the Technical Advisor's Outputs were immediately circulated to national counterpart agencies (e.g., CNMC, GDANCP, etc.) for review and consultation; however, it was routinely months before they were returned to the project. By then, the TSCP Board had made the decision to conclude the project at end 2010 and all focus turned to operational closure requirements, e.g., Exit Strategy, Lessons Learned Document, Terminal Report, etc.

During the entire implementation, greater communication from the project was needed. This was necessary purely from the standpoint of sharing project achievements and Lessons, but also to improve coordination and involvement of government agencies. Over the course of the project, this would have helped to garner more involvement and ownership of the government and ultimately improved sustainability of project impact. A tangible communication strategy was a

project Output from inception; however, this was never accomplished. The Mid-term Evaluation specifically recommended that the project enhance communication by increasing the information flow between the project participants including the Steering Committee, and provide more opportunities to discuss experiences and issues and increase the profile of the project within the government and with the Tonle Sap communities.

The revised 2008-2011 SRF retained a Communication plan as a key task to address Output 3.1; however, this was never completed. The final Lessons Learned document mentions the lack of a coherent, strategic communication strategy as an impediment to closer collaboration with government and project stakeholders. Future projects should make a Communication Strategy a specific high priority in the early stages of implementation.

The project coordinated with key counterpart staff, e.g., GDANCP, PDE, Core Area staff, etc. to garner input into developing the project's Annual and Quarterly work plans. These work plans were the guiding documents for project implementation. Activities were completed according to the work plan, however, there was never a formal monitoring plan in place other than Quarterly and Annual reports provided to UNDP and government counterparts. Other than the Mid-term Evaluation and the External Evaluation at project conclusion, there was never a formal process for reviewing project implementation and highlighting activities that were behind schedule. The Monitoring Framework developed by the Technical Advisor, had it been adopted and implemented, would have ensured a greater degree of monitoring and evaluation by the project and promoted adaptive management.

All of the project's components had a very good record of collaboration and synergy with related projects. The Environmental Education component collaborated closely with Live and Learn and Mlup Baitong NGOs to initiate its activities in the local schools of the Tonle Sap. This project component also coordinated and consulted with other organizations such as the Cambodian Red Cross, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and Wildlife Alliance to engage these organizations and learn from their experiences conducting EE in local communities. Similarly, the Sustainable Livelihoods component was coordinated by the UN Volunteers which linked the project to other UNV projects in Cambodia. As part of the Sustainable Financing Evaluation, the project consulted with a number of NGOs working in the TSBR, e.g., Conservation International, to coordinate activities and identify areas of synergy.

The on-going emphasis by the project's management to reach out to partners with the same geographic and/or thematic focus and priorities and collaborate on improved natural resources conservation in the TSBR was one of the many positive achievements. Project capacity and capacity of government counterparts increased consistently throughout project implementation, however, a variety of Lessons were learned that could improve project effectiveness and impact.

IV. Implementation challenges

4.1 Project risks and actions

The following were the main risks to project success and ensuring sustainability of project impact beyond project conclusion:

Government ownership and commitment: The need for closer collaboration with government agencies was needed to ensure increased government involvement and ownership, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainable impact.

Salary supplements: Project support to government salaries seriously impedes sustainability beyond project conclusion.

The complicated management structure at the Core Areas (i.e., FiA, GDACP). UNDP approval process for work plan approval, fund disbursement, staff recruitment was slow and impacted project delivery

Government ownership and involvement in the project was never adequately resolved and perhaps even got worse as the project continued and neared completion (see the annex of project risk log). Over the course of the project, TSCP Board meetings became less frequent and approval of work plans and budgets was shifted from the Board to the Project Manager and Director and UNDP which distanced the project's day-to-day implementation decision away from government counterparts.

From the mid-point forward and the revision of the Strategic Results Framework, the project assumed the responsibility of identifying (and securing) financial resources to continue management actions after the project concludes. This distanced the government from the responsibility of ownership and the responsibility of ensuring that the government identifies and commits adequate resources to ensure sustainability.

The issue of salary supplements is a sensitive topic with RGC staff who point out that they make up a relatively small proportion of the project costs. They are however a major impediment to self-initiated sustainable development as virtually all development assistance requires government counterparts to be widely subsidized and external incentives are a pre-condition to government participation. Incentives could be provided in the form of professional development, institutional development and/or productivity 'incentives' rather than direct payment in the form of salaries. As long as projects continue to provide salary supplements, there is a serious concern of sustainability when the project concludes and the salary supplements stop. The TSCP never addressed this issue directly.

All three of the Core Areas have significant areas covered by Fishing Lots that are under the management responsibility of the Fisheries Administration. However, the TSCP has worked almost exclusively with GDANCP which is legally mandated to manage the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve and Core Areas. This complicated management structure and the focus of the TSCP on GDANCP instead of both line agencies equally, limited the impact of management activities at the Core Areas.

At Prek Toal, there is reasonably good cooperation with the Fisheries Administration staff and the Fishing Lot staff. In contrast, at Boeung Tonle Chhmar and Stung Sen, there relationship between these multiple authority agencies is not cooperative which has created a challenge for the TSCP.

From the mid-point of the Project forward, the TSCP Project Manager has initiated engagement with the Fisheries Administration to coordinate joint meetings with GDANCP aimed at high-level coordination and collaboration for comprehensive Core Area management. This should have been a priority of the project from inception.

4.2 Project issues and actions

The following were key project issues and their impact on project implementation and goals to achieve sustainability of impact:

Limited involvement of Fisheries Administration in project delivery

The need for increased coordination of Project components

Project sustainability, both financial and operational, was a project priority only in the later stages of implementation

Capacity building did not receive adequate emphasis in investment. It requires a greater investment, e.g., more training, more hands-on “learning by doing” skill building, more backstopping and follow-up support, and more Training of Trainers to build lasting capacity of government institutions.

Project communication and information management were low project priorities.

The above points were identified during the Lessons Learned exercises near project conclusion. They were addressed by the project to varying degrees but never entirely resolved. For example, the Fisheries Administration has received a greater degree of emphasis in the later stages of the project. A communication strategy was planned for the second half of the project but this was never realised. Increased coordination of project components and a greater emphasis on project sustainability and improved capacity building need to be priorities of future projects.

V. Lessons learned and next steps

5.1 Lessons Learned

A comprehensive Lessons Learned document was completed by the TSCP to highlight the project’s key challenges, constraints, issues, etc. and based on these to develop priority Lessons Learned that can be used to educate and inform future conservation practitioners in Cambodia and elsewhere. Numerous discussions with TSCP staff, project stakeholders, and Core Area staff helped to identify these key issues and develop the main Lessons Learned. Several cross-cutting themes were identified during the consultations that were relevant to all of the Project’s components. The common Lessons were related to:

The need for closer collaboration with government agencies to ensure increased government involvement and ownership, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainable impact

The need for increased coordination of Project components from Project inception through to completion Sustainability, both financial and operational, should be a primary concern of the project at all phases, not only from mid-point forward.

Capacity building requires a greater investment and greater emphasis of the Project, i.e., more training, more hands-on “learning by doing” skill building, more backstopping and follow-up support, and more Training of Trainers to build lasting capacity of government institutions

The greater the involvement of local communities in planning and project design, the greater the likelihood of lasting community support toward Project activities.

Project communication needs to be a priority from inception to increase support, awareness, and ownership by all stakeholders.

The above points were highlighted at project conclusion which implies that these were outstanding issues during the course of the entire project.

Most of the 2008 Mid-term Evaluation Lessons Learned spoke to project design more than implementation and consequently, there was little the project could do between 2008 and project closure in 2010 to address these items from the MTE. The project did revise the Strategic Results Framework in 2009 to reflect the recommendations and Lessons from the Mid-term Evaluation. From 2009 forward, the Project reduced its implementation area from 5 provinces to 3 Core Areas. Project sustainability became a greater project emphasis from in 2009 and 2010 however, as previously mentioned in this document (See “Sustainability” Section) emphasizing sustainability in only the later phases of the project does not allow for real institutional change and sustainable impact.

5.2 Recommendations

Both the Mid-term Evaluation and the final Lessons Learned document highlight numerous themes and specific lessons that future projects can consider during project design and implementation to achieve greater country ownership and collaboration, improved capacity building impact, more effective in situ conservation management, and ultimately, more sustainable conservation impact.

VI. Financial status and utilization

This section includes the following:

- 1) A ‘*financial status report*’ covering all funding donated to the project (core and non-core resources); include reference to all donor contributions.¹ The purpose is to ensure that donors can identify, at a glance, how much of their contribution was expended during for the project as a whole.
- 2) A ‘*financial utilization report*’, which presents project disbursements vis-à-vis the project budget. This summary is presented by a) ATLAS Activity (or major budget line) and b) by donor.

Table 1: Contribution Overview [Project started: 02 July 2004 – Project end: 31 December 2011]

Donor Name	Contributions			Balance (D=A-C)
	Committed (A)	Received (B)	Cumulated Expenditure (C)	
UNDP (04000 - TRAC)	324,841.14	324,841.14	324,841.14	-
GEF (62000 - GEF)	3,246,420.00	3,246,420.00	3,244,449.38	1,970.62
Total	3,571,261.14	3,571,261.14	3,569,290.52	1,970.62

¹ Please note that the term “Committed” refers to funding which has been obligated by signed agreement, but not necessarily released by the donor. “Received” refers to funding which has already been committed and released by the donor.

Table 2: Quarterly Cumulative Expenditure by Activities [01 January – 31 December 2011]

Activities - Description	Budget [2011]	2011 Cumulative Quarterly Expenditure			Balance	Delivery (%)
		Govt/TSCP (Disbursed)	UNDP (Disbursed)	Total		
Activity 1: Enhancing Capacity for Management of Biodiversity in the Core Areas	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Activity 2: Developing Systems for Monitoring and Management of Biodiversity	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Activity 3: Promoting Awareness, Education, and Outreach on Biodiversity Conservation in the TSBR	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Activity 4: Project Management	142,108.81	35.68	142,073.13	142,108.81	-	100%
Activity 5: Scale up Sustainable Livelihood in the Three Core Areas of TSBRs.	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Activity 6: Women have an Active role in Participating in the Tonle Sap Conservation Project and are Equitable Beneficiaries of its Outcome, Outputs and Activities	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Activity 7: Institutionalize Effective Management and Monitoring of Core area for Biodiversity Conservation	80,244.94	-	80,244.94	80,244.94	-	100%
Activity 8: Core area Communities Aware of and Contributing to Biodiversity Conservation	4,219.60	-	4,219.60	4,219.60	-	100%
Total	226,573.35	35.68	4,219.60	226,573.35	-	100%

Table 3: Cumulative Expenditure by Activities [Project started: 02 July 2004 – Project end: 31 December 2011]

Activities - Description	Total Budget [2004-2011]	Cumulative Expenditure			Balance	Delivery (%)
		Govt/TSCP (Disbursed)	UNDP (Disbursed)	Total		
Activity 1: Enhancing Capacity for Management of Biodiversity in the Core Areas	1,277,218.88	454,443.63	822,775.25	1,277,218.88	-	100%
Activity 2: Developing Systems for Monitoring and Management of Biodiversity	403,936.60	77,623.16	326,313.44	403,936.60	-	100%
Activity 3: Promoting Awareness, Education, and Outreach on Biodiversity Conservation in the TSBR	450,738.13	235,343.12	215,395.01	450,738.13	-	100%
Activity 4: Project Management	894,510.27	359,555.65	534,954.62	894,510.27	-	100%
Activity 5: Scale up Sustainable Livelihood in the Three Core Areas of TSBRs.	165,549.23	145,039.16	20,510.07	165,549.23	-	100%
Activity 6: Women have an Active role in Participating in the Tonle Sap Conservation Project and are Equitable Beneficiaries of its Outcome, Outputs and Activities	10,793.35	10,793.35	-	10,793.35	-	100%

Activity 7: Institutionalize Effective Management and Monitoring of Core area for Biodiversity Conservation	141,748.11	29,991.19	111,756.92	141,748.11	-	100%
Activity 8: Core area Communities Aware of and Contributing to Biodiversity Conservation	224,795.95	167,925.36	56,870.59	224,795.95	-	100%
Total	3,569,290.52	1,480,714.62	2,088,575.90	3,569,290.52	-	100%
Remarks: TRAC =	324,841.14	187,201.33	137,639.81	324,841.14	-	100%
GEF =	3,244,449.38	1,293,513.29	1,950,936.09	3,244,449.38	-	100%
TOTAL =	3,569,290.52	1,480,714.62	2,088,575.90	3,569,290.52	-	100%