

Field Note on Field Study on CEDAC's work as a partner organization of the M-POWER network.

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In 2006 - 2007, CEDAC has significantly worked to fulfill its role as a partner organization in the M-POWER network. During this period, we have achieved the following things:

Irrigation work

CEDAC initiated an irrigation dialogue forum series in Phnom Penh. CEDAC has organized meetings, presentations and discussions on irrigation. The regular (monthly) meetings involved key presentations, a summary of the previous meeting minutes, stimulating discussions and then dinner for informal discussion and networking. The participants came from the Department of Water Resource and Meteorology (DOWRAM), provincial departments of agriculture, NGOs, university lecturers, graduated and undergraduate students, NGO activists, researchers, and water user community representatives. Key presenters at the meetings included representatives from the Provincial Department of Water Resource and Meteorology (PDOWRAM), members of civil society, NGOs working on irrigation/water issues, an Irrigation Engineer, and private sector groups working on irrigation work.

The dialogue has been very helpful for CEDAC and other actors, we are now able to collect information and understand the perception of irrigation in Cambodia; as well as form networks of people working in the field of irrigation and irrigated agriculture.

The situation of irrigation systems

The Government Officials

There were three major presentations on the situation of irrigation, constraints, issues and potential plans in three provinces.

The first presentation was done by Mr. Ros Rithy, Deputy Director of the Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology in Prey Veng. The presentation covered how the provincial department operated and its structure; the inventory of dams, canals, pumping wells and total irrigated areas; and the status of underground water and pumping machines. There were 20 participants in total. The second presentation was on the situation of the irrigation system in Battambang and was presented by Mr. Khay Soda, Director of the Irrigation Office. The presentation focused on the current practice, potential of irrigation schemes and its potential plan for renovation in the provinces. There were 19 participants at the presentation. The third presentation took place in Kampong Spue, and was by Mr. Hy Rithy, Deputy Director of the Provincial Department of Water Resources and Metrology. Mr. Rithy discussed the current status of irrigation schemes and total irrigated areas, and the current development on the

green areas of Phnom Penh's city belt. Seven people participated in this meeting.

The NGOs

There were four presentations made by NGOs, the first one was done by Mr. Tep Bunarith, Director of CEPA. He presented the current development plan of the Mekong River Basin, in particular the planned hydropower developments. Major discussions included the issues, practices and environmental destruction of the current dam's development and the current plan Cambodia has regarding hydro-power schemes.

The second presentation was presented by Mr. Tang Sophat, a GRET officer based in Prey Nup polder, Sihanoukville. The main discussions included the scheme's operation, FWUC management and irrigation fee collection. The third presentation was done by Mr. Y-Kadum, a CEDAC officer. The focus then was on the experiences from the Sdau Kaong irrigation schemes in Prey Veng province; mostly concerning farmer mobilization, scheme operation and maintenance. The fourth presentation was done by MWBP staff and was about E-Flow methodology, it was translated into Khmer by IUCN.

The Irrigation Engineering

Mr. Cheng Saroen, an Engineer at MOWRAM and consultant was invited to present the way an irrigation scheme is constructed: the procedures of irrigation construction and corruption involved. He revealed the hidden agenda of the scheme construction, using the example of Prey Nup, Stung Chinit irrigation schemes and other flooded protection schemes in Takeo province.

The Private Sector (Irrigation)

Mr. Sok Touch, Director of a private irrigation company presented his working experience with the Kbal Por irrigation scheme in Takeo. The scheme irrigated 1764 ha with his total investment of US\$30,000. He said the average rice yield per ha is 4 tons in the dry season. He managed to collect a water fee of almost 100% and this would be much better if the local authority supported this model. Sometimes local politicians want to get support from local people and provide a pumping machine or do not collect irrigation service fees. This he felt made it difficult to collect water fees within his irrigated areas. However, private irrigation is seen as option for local investments in order to sustain the O&M and ISF.

Study tours

We organized three study tours for the irrigation working group. The first was to visit the Stung Chinit Irrigation Scheme in Kampong Thom province. The second was to visit the Sdau Koang irrigation schemes in Prey Veng province, and the third was to visit the reservoir construction (for dry rice cultivation) in Kampong Cham (Tonle Sap flood plain). The participants were asked reflect on what they had seen and their opinion of irrigation developments in Cambodia

During this period, we enabled students from different Phnom Penh universities to conduct technical visits to the Sdau Koang Irrigation Scheme in Prey Veng and Stung Chinit in Kampong Thom. After their visit we asked them to write a reflection report to explain their perception of irrigation and their conclusions on the irrigation perspective. The reports were written in Khmer and shared among their peers.

Cycling tour

From 4 - 12th February 2007, Dr. Koma from CEDAC led a cycling tour around Tonle Sap Lake (six provinces, approx. 900km) in order to raise awareness and draw attention to the dangers facing Tonle Sap Lake. The lake is the heart and soul of Cambodians, the message on the T-Shirts worn by the cyclists was:

*No Tonle Sap. No fish. No food for us!
Our Tonle Sap. Our life!
How many people do we need to preserve Tonle Sap? You!*

Awareness raising material included: 10,000 brochures on Tonle Sap Lake, 7,000 brochures on pesticides and 2,000 T-Shirts with logos and messages related to Tonle Sap were produced. The cycling tour stopped mostly at village centers, schools, and public centers so that questions and answers could be posed to those participating. At least 1,000 people in 32 villages and 8000 students from secondary schools were made aware of the campaign's message and received T-Shirts.



The issues discussed with the public during the cycling and stops included soil erosion linked to deforestation, watershed, floods, the role of flooded forests, the role of trees, problems associated with the use of pesticides, waste disposal, plastic sheets, fish resources of the Tonle Sap, floating rice ecosystems, grassland, birds, etc.

The activities attracted attention from various types of media included: the BBC, Voice of Democracy, Voice of America (Khmer), Radio Free Asia (Khmer), Radio Australia (Khmer), Cambodge Soir, Rasmey Kampuchea, Koh Sante Pheap and TVK. The activities were considered as one of the most effective ways to make all the Tonle Sap stakeholders rethink their working strategies.

The workshops (On the left is the exchange workshop between M-POWER Cambodia and the Chinese academy, right is the CEDAC workshop/dialogues on irrigation in Cambodia)



During these periods, CEDAC hosted two workshops. The first workshop was held on 24 May 2007 at the Sunway Hotel. It was co-organized by CEDAC and other Cambodia M-POWER network members in Cambodia. The objective was to exchange research between Cambodia and the Chinese academy.

The 22 participants were M-POWER network in Cambodia representatives, graduated students from the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), seven representatives/researchers/professors from Yunnan University in China, representatives from other NGOs and the World Fish Center (lunch was supported by Helsinki University, Finland). Key presentations included:

1. Tonle Sap Great Lake: Its strategic important and multi-functionality, by Try Thuon and Pech Sokhem
2. Study Tour to Tonle Sap, by the Chinese academy
3. Flood Pulse of the Tonle Sap Lake, by Matti Kummu, Helsinki University of Technology, Finland

4. Major Research Progress of Transboundary Environmental Change in the Upper Mekong Basin, by Professor Daming He, Yunnan University, China
5. Rice Production System in Tonle Sap Basin, by Pel Sokha, Program Advisor of CEDAC
6. Tonle Sap Lake and Fishery Management: A case from Cambodia, by Mak Sithirith, Fishery Action Coalition Team (FACT).

The second workshop was held on 11 June 2007 by CEDAC on "National workshop and dialogues on irrigation work in Cambodia" held at the Cambodiana Hotel. The dialogue was part of the Cambodia National Water Group, a network of water managers in Cambodia in order to create a dialogue among a core group of members on this specific water sector, with the longer-term objective of broadening the dialogue to include more dialogue partners. There were 50 participants, included the national consultants, lecturers and researchers from different universities, representatives from NGOs, FWUC, MoE, MRD, MOWRAM and MAFF.

The dialogue involved a plenary session, group discussion, reflections, and the identification of the way forward. The plenary session included presentations and reflection on:

- The results of the national water working group by Khim Sophanna from CEDAC.
- Last year's Mekong Region Water Dialogue: exploring water futures together by Mr. Pech Sokhem (Senior Researcher on policy and NRM at Yamada University, Japan).
- The socio-economic and environmental concern on Stung Chinit Irrigation scheme by Try Thuon (M-POWER/CEDAC).
- The impact of land concession for irrigation reservoirs construction at Tonle Sap Lake (Kampong Thom province) and the implication for Integrated Farming and Biodiversity Areas by Prak Sereyvvat from CEDAC.

TV Talk show

Dr. Yang Saing Koma, President of CEDAC was invited to talk and provide reflection on the current practice of irrigation and water work in Cambodia in the equity weekly program. In particular he was asked to raise the issue of scales of the irrigation scheme and community participation in irrigation development and management. The talk created the greatest advocacy for the policy development and debate in Cambodia. The show is organized weekly by the (TVK) Khmer Television program; mostly it airs on Sundays with financial support from UNDP, SIDA, AUAID, CIDA and other donor agencies. The program provides a good chance for experts and activists to talk out their opinions on the social, environmental and economic issues happening in the country.

Hosting fellowship

CEDAC hosted one fellow, Mr. Troun Thy conducted research on "Localizing Development and Irrigation System Management in Cambodia: Case studies from Sdau Koang in Prey Veng, Kamping Pouy in Battambang and Stung Chinit in Kampong Thom province". Four fellowship candidates were assisted to submit

applications to M-Power, however only one fellow, namely Mr. Suon Seng was successful. Now, he is the second fellow to be hosted by CEDAC and will focus his research on flood issues.

Activities related to the Steering Committee of M-Power

The CEDAC President is a member of the M-Power Steering Committee. He attended two meetings of M-Power steering committee in Bangkok, and has been involved in the evaluation of the research proposal of the M-Power fellowship. He also communicated regularly with the other members of the steering committee to support the coordination unit in coordination and implementing the M-Power project.

Publications

During this period, Mr. Try Thuon, our former research fellow had contributed majority articles updates to be shared regularly with the M-POWER research update from early 2006 to mid 2007. However, there were other publications/articles produced by the CEDAC in relation to M-POWER work, they were:

1. Koma, Yang Saing (2005) "Initiating the Cambodian discussion group on water resources", *M-POWER Research Update 1*, Chiang Mai: Thailand.
2. Yang Saing Koma (2007) "Tour De Tonle Sap (Tonle Sap Cycling Tour)", *M-POWER Research Update 17*, February 2007.
3. CEDAC (2007). *Summary Progress Report on Cambodia Water Working Group Activities from November 2005 - December 2006*. Phnom Penh: Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC).
4. Try Thoun and Yang Saing Koma (2008) *Socio-Economic and Environmental Concerns in Stung Chinit Irrigation Project in Cambodia: Issues and Reflections on Practice and Implementation (Draft Discussion Paper)*. Phnom Penh and Chiang Mai: Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC) and Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience (M-POWER)
5. Try Thuon (2008) *Localizing Development and Irrigation System Management in Cambodia: Case Studies in Sdau Kaong, Kamping Puoy and Stung Chinit Irrigation Schemes, Cambodia*. Phnom Penh and Chiang Mai: Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC) and Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience (M-POWER).

Assessments

During 2007, CEDAC continued to be active with M-POWER work. We managed to organize 13 regular meetings (including reflection meetings), three study tours for the team, two national workshops, one TV-talk show on irrigation, one

cycling tour to raise awareness among villagers, students and other stakeholders around Tonle Sap Lake.

We managed to develop the survey project on the perception on irrigation; about 200 questionnaires were distributed to key informants. However, there has been very limited response; we will continue to follow-up this perception survey and we expect to produce the report in 2008.

In general, we were able to take some leadership in organizing the debate, sharing and dialogue on irrigation in Cambodia; we are heading in the right direction to reinforce this leadership role in Cambodia.

Plans

CEDAC wishes to continue its active role within the M-POWER framework. CEDAC has proposed three research fellows and one fellow applicant has been successfully accepted by the steering committee. We expect two more fellows will re-apply their proposals to become active research fellows with M-POWER in the upcoming round. CEDAC plans to:

- Conduct situation analysis on irrigation sectors and work in 10 provinces, to identify where CEDAC should intervene on irrigation work based on PPP models. The models will also be presented to the line institutions in the provinces, to ensure that they clearly understand the important of the models.
- Hold internal meeting among CEDAC working groups on irrigation, we expect there will be four meetings.
- Produce a reflection report on CEDAC experiences in working in 3 different irrigation schemes in Cambodia
- Hold three irrigation dialogue meetings with representatives of the POWRAM and other stakeholders to discuss the estimated budget (May to December 2008).
- Hold a national workshop on the situation of irrigation in Cambodia.
- Continue to completion the irrigation perception survey
- Increase our activities regarding producing and sharing publications within the M-Power network.
- Host a fellowship on irrigation and flooding.
- Be involved in the activities of Steering Committee of M-Power.
- Other activities related to irrigation and water works, for example attending training courses and attending and presenting at workshop and conferences.