

Lower Mekong Basin Wetland Management and Conservation Project

The Challenge

Wetland areas in the lower Mekong basin provide a number of important ecosystem services. Wetlands provide a fundamental source of nutrition, drinking water, irrigation, building materials, and therefore also income. Moreover, their capacity to absorb floods and bind greenhouse gas emissions facilitates the adaptation to climate change.

However, there are some key challenges, included:

- Weak management structure
- Complex institutional structures and overlapping responsibilities
- Lack of funding from the central government
- Poor cooperation and ineffective coordination
- Lack of clarity in the legal framework caused by different and inconsistent laws and policies
- Problems of transparency and poor governance in relation to wetlands management.

Our Approach

In cooperation with MRC, National Mekong Committees and Environmental Ministries of Cambodia and Laos, the German Government provides funds to protect the biodiversity and ecosystems of selected wetlands in Cambodia and Laos.



Flooded Forest in Stung Treng Ramsar site during dry season, 2016

Project Name	Lower Mekong Basin Wetland Management and Conservation Project
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project Executing Agency	The National Mekong Committees of Cambodia (CNMC)
Target Group	Approximately about 25.800 persons of local population living in wetland around the targeted wetland areas will directly and indirectly benefit from the project
Project Areas	Stung Treng and Prek Toal Ramsar sites, Cambodia
Duration	2016– 2020
Financial Scope	8.0 million EUR: 4 million EUR for Cambodian Component

At the regional level, the project will support the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in the development of a database and knowledge management system for the dissemination of best practices in wetland management in the Lower Mekong Basin. At the national levels in Cambodia (and Lao PDR), project interventions will include: capacity strengthening of relevant management agencies for sustainable wetlands management and improvements for cooperative wetland management approaches/practices and financing.

Scope of Project

The project aims to contribute to sustainable rehabilitation, conservation and management of wetlands ecosystem services while improving the livelihood of local communities in selected wetlands sites. The project will also enhance the regional wetland knowledge base and information sharing. The two outputs under the Cambodia components are:

Output 1: Capacity in sustainable wetlands management of key stakeholders is strengthened

Key activities to achieve this output will include:

- Development of guidelines and management plans for integrated wetlands management

- Capacity building on Ramsar sites management and educational support on wetland ecosystem services
- Preparing a monitoring system and decision making mechanism for successful wetlands management.



Children taking a bath in Mekong river Stung Treng Ramsar site after fishing

Output 2: Wetlands management is improved and sustainable financing for wetland protection is ensured

While output 1 aims to create an enabling environment for wetlands management, activities to achieve the second output will focus on:

- Implementation of the wetland management plans
- Supporting livelihood activities
- Improving social infrastructure
- Assisting communities to prepare and implement their business plans
- Identifying options for sustainable financing

These measures also include ecosystem zoning in support of ecotourism and technical training. Further activities aim at strengthening patrolling systems and rehabilitating selected sites.

Benefits and Success Factors

On 23 October 1999 Cambodia acceded to the status of *Contracting Party* of the Ramsar Convention. The Convention provides the framework for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their ecosystem resources. The Lower Mekong Basin Wetland Management and Conservation Project contributes to sustainable wetlands management by strengthening human resources and the institutional capacity of stakeholders while enhancing livelihood opportunities among the local populations in selected wetlands sites. The success of the project is measured by the following criteria:

- Stabilization or increase in the density and frequency of selected key species in target areas
- Improved Ramsar sites management by using the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) or similar tools
- Increased social benefits of the households participating in livelihood activities
- Increased investments in sustainable management



Fishing activities in Stung Treng Ramsar site during dry season, 2016

Published by

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In cooperation with

Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia



As at

August 2016

On behalf of

German Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)