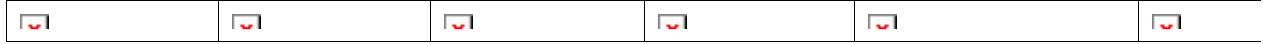


Core Programme's Document



ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003

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CORE PROJECT

Key Impacts: 1. NGOs cooperated to speak with one voice to donors and government regarding their concerns about Cambodia's development. 2. The projects of NGO Forum were supported and strengthened.

Between January and December 2003, the Representative had approximately 100 meetings with government official, donor agencies and development consultants, and made around 15 speeches at government workshops and public gatherings. This included a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, which helped smooth relations between NGOs and government following conflicts over sustainable livelihoods in forested areas.

Quarterly Members meetings were held in January, March and September. Problems in the forest livelihoods sector dominated discussions in the first half of the year, though time was also taken to discuss new draft By-Laws. The Annual General Meeting, held in June, began discussion on the next Two-Year Action Plan of the NGO Forum, with further discussion taking place at the September members meeting. The members elected a new Management Committee, to meet monthly, guide the work of the NGO Forum, approve applications for membership, make financial decisions and approve the Action Plan.

The Representative and Deputy Representative devoted much time to helping the project staff achieve their project objectives, and coordinating the external advocacy of the projects. The Representative became chair of the Management Committee of the Commune Council Support Project, a joint NGO initiative which seeks to influence and contribute to decentralisation reforms. The Representative also helped represent the Project to high levels of the Ministry of Interior.

Internal strengthening, seen as a precursor to localization of the Representative's position, was largely completed with the implementation of new financial regulations and drafting of By-Laws, with the latter being passed by the membership in January 2004. The Management Committee is still concerned about some of the risks of localisation, but discussions continue. The Fisheries project became fully localised in January 2004 through becoming an independent local NGO after the major components of the localization plan were fully implemented (see *Appendix 1*). As this project, known as the *Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT)*, now makes its own reports directly to relevant donors, an additional report on their activities is not included here.

The list serves on human rights, gender, environmental and development issues were relocated to the NGO Forum and recommenced beginning July 2003. An IT specialist was hired, and some additions have been made to the website. Reorganisation of the website is planned for 2004.

Following the separation with FACT, NGO Forum's bank reserves at the end of December were roughly equal to those it had at the beginning of the two-year Action Plan period (see *Appendix 4*). NGO Forum was required to relocate its office in December, causing an over-run in core expenditures due to the need to pay a three month security deposit and to equip the new office with air-conditioning, computer network, and telephone system. In December, NGO Forum also purchased a second-hand Camry sedan, as the organization has previously had no vehicle.

An evaluation was conducted in July 2003. A summary of the evaluation findings is shown in *Appendix 5*.



GENDER PROJECT

Key impacts: 1. NGOs cooperated to share information and inform the public regarding important gender-related issues. 2. NGOs and commune councillors improved their ability to resolve and prevent conflicts. 3. Political parties shared their gender policies with the public.



Participants asks questions at the panel discussion with political parties on gender, environment and poverty reduction, July 2003

The group continued to meet monthly to prepare the advocacy campaign for International Women's Day, to provide inputs on gender indicators for the localised Millennium Development Goals, to prepare a Gender Paper for the NGO Statement on NPRS Implementation, and to prepare a Gender Project plan for 2004-05.

International Women's Day events were held in Battambang Province. Information about Domestic Violence Against Women and Children, Trafficking, Drugs, Rape, and Discrimination Against Women, Children and Disabled People were disseminated to around 3000 people in the province during the Campaign. Based on the findings of a

Gender Forum survey, two workshops on conflict resolution and prevention were organized for a total of 90 commune councillors and NGO officials from the Gender Forum members' target areas. Gender Forum members and commune councillors also joined the workshops on Environment, Gender and Globalisation organised under the Environment Project with the collaboration of Oxfam Hong Kong.



DEVELOPMENT ISSUES PROJECT

The Development Issues Project aims to ensure that loans and technical assistance, especially that provided by the multilateral banks and the IMF, are used more effectively, and benefit local communities and the poor.

DEVELOPMENT POLICY:

Key impacts: 1. NGOs cooperated to inform government and donors their perspectives on improving poverty reduction efforts in Cambodia.

2. NGOs discussed and learnt about the various impacts of trade liberalisation and privatisation on poor communities.

The NGO Forum on Cambodia was given a privilege to be a lead agency to bring back to the national level the local perspectives regarding the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) during its launching in three provinces, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap and Prey Veng. In order to convince policy decision makers and multilateral banks to pay more attentions to the concerns of the local people on the NPRS formulation and implementation, a Development Issues Bulletin entitled *Listen to Grassroots Perspective about the NPRS* was produced and disseminated to interested government agencies and NGOs in every level. A comparison of NGO input to the NPRS and the actual document was completed, and a document on *Cambodia's NPRS: Suggestions for NGO Follow-Up, Monitoring, and Advocacy* was prepared, distributed to the relevant sectoral groups, and placed on the NGO Forum web-site. In addition, a special meeting was organized in June 2003 for provincial and national NGOs to discuss appropriate monitoring approaches for NGOs to monitor the implementation of the NPRS. The Development Issues Forum's active members participated in the Fourth Meeting on ADB-Government-NGO Cooperation to provide comments on ADB's Country Strategy and Program in Cambodia.

From September to December, the NGO Forum led the process of producing an *NGO Statement on the First Year of NPRS Implementation*, in consultation with the CCC and MediCam and with contributions from 19 NGO sectoral groups. Most sectoral papers are already complete, and have been submitted to government officials preparing the government's Annual Progress Report on NPRS Implementation. In 2004, the NGO Main Statement will be released, and then further updated prior to government-donor Consultative Group meeting scheduled for May. The Statement will be placed on the NGO Forum web-site and widely distributed to Government, Donors, Agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

The Development Issues Project successfully organized 4 regional training workshops on Privatization and Trade Liberalization, in Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, Battambang, and Svay Rieng provinces, for a total of 88 participants including NGO staff, small farmer organizations and some government staff. A Public Forum with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights in Cambodia on the topic *Human Rights in Development and Poverty Reduction in Cambodia* was held in Phnom Penh with 72 participants including provincial & urban project-affected communities,

forestry communities, national and international NGOs, and civil society representatives.

RESETTLEMENT:

Key impacts: 1. NGOs improved their cooperation to protect the rights of project-affected-people. 2. NGOs learnt how to improve their advocacy on behalf of project-affected-people. 3. Project-affected-people on Highways One, Four and Seven who were previously not fairly compensated are now having the needs addressed.

A series of five resettlement training and field research exercises were conducted for 30 Resettlement Action Network members and communities. A study tour to six provinces (Prey Veng, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Kratie, Stung Treng and Ratanakiri) was organized for active Resettlement Action Network members to learn about and share information regarding resettlement issues.

Follow-up on with the ADB and government on Highway 1 continued, and the government finally bought land for the homeless and a compensation amount of \$300 per family was agreed. Another section of the same road is slated for development by JICA, with whom a number of meetings were held leading to a JICA study into the environmental and social issues related to the road construction. A survey on outstanding resettlement claims on Highway 7 was completed and submitted to the ADB for follow-up with the government, who subsequently interviewed the people and promised to organise compensation. On Highway 4, the government agreed to reduce the required right-of-way in Dang Kao district, in order to reduce the impact on PAPs.

The Resettlement Action Network (RAN) successfully organized a Second Workshop on Community Organizing for Land & Housing Resolution in Sihanoukville attended by 67 participants, from RAN members, affected communities, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights network and others. Finally, the RAN dispatched 15 participants to Chiang Mai, of which 6 persons attended a Seminar of the Asian Land Network and all participated in a study tour examining Thai NGO responses to resettlement issues.



ENVIRONMENT PROJECT

ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS:

Key impacts: 1. NGOs cooperated to share information and inform the public regarding important environment-related issues. 2. Political parties shared their environmental policies with the public.

A Panel Discussion on Gender, Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction was organized at which 16 of the 23 invited political parties presented their policies, including all three parties that have seats in the National Assembly. More than 150 NGO officials participated in this public hearing. The discussions were also brought to the wider attention of the public through a five-hour broadcast of the entire panel discussion on TV channel number 9 and Beehive FM105 radio.

Monthly meetings, with up to 30 people attending, were held regularly to debate and discuss environmental issues in Cambodia. National Environment Day was celebrated in three places this year – Pursat Province, Kratie Province and Phnom Penh City, with approximately 900 people participating. The international campaign theme of the Environment Day in Phnom Penh City was " Water: Two Billion People are Dying For It", and in Cambodia this issue was connected to the issue of Sesan River protection. A study

tour to Ratanakiri was organized for 8 Environment Forum members to learn about natural resources management in Ratanakiri and to strengthen the cooperation of communities and NGOs from various provinces and Phnom Penh with the Sesan Protection Network. Two sessions of the Environment, Gender and Globalization workshop were held with the cooperation of Oxfam Hong Kong and with the participation of over 60 members of the Gender and Environment Forums. A study tour to Thailand was organized with the participation of 10 Pesticide Reduction Network members. This study tour aimed to witness how Thai farmers reduce the use of pesticides and turn to practice organic agriculture.

MEKONG RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT:

Key impacts: 1. NGOs cooperated to coordinate their advocacy on behalf of communities affected by dam building on the Sesan River. 2. Sesan River issues were brought to the attention of donors, the government and the public. 3. The Cambodian National Mekong Committee has begun to take action to support the rights of Sesan communities.



Participants of the community forestry study tour, December 2003

Meetings of NGOs working for Sesan River protection were held in Ratanakiri, Stung Treng and Phnom Penh to discuss the Sesan advocacy strategy, and the Sesan Project 2-year Action Plan 2004-05 was developed. On behalf of NGOs working on Sesan issues, the NGO Forum sent letters to various international agencies that support hydropower development in Vietnam. A number of meetings were held with the Cambodian National Mekong Committee at the request of NGO Forum. As a result of this advocacy, in August 2003, the World Bank Country Director went to visit communities living along the Sesan River to get an insight into Sesan issues. In the period July-December 2003, the Sesan issues were raised several times in local magazines and newspapers. Following greater realisation of the impacts on Sesan River communities, the Cambodia National Mekong Committee sent a fax to the Vietnam National Mekong Committee to express concerns and suggestions of the Cambodian downstream community and requested them to take necessary measures. In October the Sesan Protection Network also met with Sida's representative to discuss Sida's involvement in the National Hydropower Plan of Electricity Vietnam, especially dams along Sesan river. NGO Forum staff and Sesan community representatives also participated in an international meeting "River for Life" in Rasi Salai, Ubon Rachathani province, Thailand where the concerns of Sesan communities were made known to more than 300 participants from 62 countries, and brought to the attention of governments and the public.

PESTICIDES:

Key impacts: 1. NGOs cooperated to share information and to inform the public regarding the risks associated with pesticides. 2. NGOs received close collaboration with Ministry officials, leading to a ban on the pesticide Endosulfan.

Information about living modification organisms and genetic modification organisms was shared during the pesticide bi-monthly meetings, the topic of water standard quality was discussed and the Pesticides 2-year Action Plan was developed. An indication of the advocacy success of the Pesticides Reduction Network in Cambodia is that, recently, the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Wildlife banned Endosulfan from the Cambodia market. With help from Mr Carl Middleton, CEDAC's pesticide advisor, monthly training on pesticide issues started from June 2003 to strengthen capacity of the Pesticide Reduction Network Members. A Pesticides Forum was held in collaboration with the Agricultural Legislation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Farmers, pesticides traders, pesticides import companies, NGOs and government officials from relevant institutions participated and had a very active discussion on pesticide problems and impacts and measures to reduce the use of pesticides in Cambodia. Bi-monthly pesticides bulletins were distributed to the PRN members and farmers in Takeo province where a workshop was held to highlight the impacts of pesticides on people's health and environment.



FOREST LIVELIHOODS PROJECT

The two principal components of the NGO Forum forestry project have been networking activities and advocacy on policy issues with potential to impact on the rights and livelihoods of forest dependent communities.

NETWORKING ACTIVITIES:

Key impacts: 1. A nationwide forestry network involving a committed group of Cambodian NGOs and community leaders has been established and strengthened. 2. NGOs, local government officials and communities cooperated to share information about forest protection and management and to delineate areas for community forestry activities.

Regular meetings involving local NGOs, international NGOs, local government officials, and local communities have been held to discuss issues related to illegal logging, the establishment of community consultation committees (CCCs) and community forestry committees (CFCs), and the recognition of community forestry areas. These meetings have been held at village, commune, district, provincial and national levels. In organizing these meetings, increasing attention is being devoted to strategies to work closely with elected Commune Councils and influence the commune level planning process. Political conditions continued to be an impediment to some network activities due to ongoing high levels of logging and the inability or unwillingness of government institutions to exercise control. Forestry and other local government officials have been participating in some of the activities required for the delineation of community forest areas including the preparation of maps, by-laws, and management plans, but there continues to be a lack of national level support for any substantive involvement of communities in forestry management, especially in areas attractive for logging operations or conversion to plantation developments.

POLICY ACTIVITIES:

Key impacts: 1. NGO and community concerns regarding government and donor forestry reform efforts have been expressed, and in some cases acted upon. 2. The project has contributed to the maintenance of the ongoing moratorium on logging in concession areas (since January 2002), with this including ensuring livelihood issues are considered in the process of reviewing strategic level forest concession management plans and bringing to light illegal logging activities of concessions.

Substantial attention has been devoted to the procedure by which Forest Concession Management Plans are to be reviewed by the Department of Forestry and Wildlife and the role of the World Bank in this process. A key point of policy advocacy has been that the World Bank funded Learning and Innovation Loan on Forest Concession Management risks legitimating Forest Concession Management Plans that might not otherwise be of sufficient standard to warrant approval, even while implementation of these plans is contingent upon the Department of Forestry operating transparently and in the public interest. This would entail it achieving governance standards rarely met in Cambodia and is most unlikely to occur given the value of forest resources and the remoteness of the areas where harvesting occurs. Representations have been made to World Bank officials in Phnom Penh and Washington on this issue. The World Bank Forest Concession Management Loan, which was graded as unsatisfactory, has recently been upgraded following the reinstatement of compartment level forest concession management plans. While this is a positive development, it is becoming increasingly irrelevant, as the government has in recent years preferred to facilitate logging using other legal vehicles such as land concessions, rubber plantation schemes, and other types of permits. These are having a serious impact on local communities, and seem destined to contribute to high levels of environmental degradation, given the continued reliance of local communities on forest resources for meeting their livelihood needs.

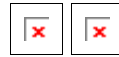
Another key area of policy advocacy has been on the issue of independent monitoring and the terms of reference under which a new monitor will be appointed. The NGO Forum wrote a detailed critique of the Monitor Terms of Reference, which seems to have led to some attempt to modify both the Terms of Reference and contractual arrangement between SGS and the Cambodian government.

A detailed critique of the 2003 draft of the community forestry sub-decree was also prepared, with the outcome that the draft was returned to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries for further work. In early December 2003, the community forestry subdecree was approved by the government. Opinions on the standard of the final subdecree vary, but it seems to provide a relatively weak basis for the promotion of social forestry initiatives in Cambodia given the centralized control over the allocation of forest areas for community forestry and the very limited rights it grants to community forestry user groups to enforce rules within the boundaries of recognized community forests.

As the year has progressed the focus of policy work has increasingly shifted to questioning the assumptions underpinning the Cambodian government's rural development strategy, which seems focused on the creation of a network of large scale plantation developments designed to generate foreign exchange and soak up a rapidly expanding labor supply. This nexus of forest issues with land issues, and the Royal Government's economic development strategy, is likely be the key focus of the forestry project's policy work in the coming year.



The NGO Forum Representative, Mr Russell Peterson, and provincial officials greet a forestry network meeting in Stung Treng Province, March 2003.



APPENDICES:

Progress in Separation of the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT) from NGO Forum

Objectives: 1. To assist the separation of the Fisheries Actions Coalition Team.

2. To strengthen FACT's financial management, staff management and governance.

No	Descriptions of outputs	Status	Respor
			FACT
	FACT's Identity was developed	COMPLETED	Organize a retreat to pre and finalize FACT Logo, Mission Vision and Goal.
	FACT's Advisory Board was formed	Board was initiated but only met once and needs strengthening.	Set up Advisory Board.
	FACT was recognized by-law	By-Laws completed but not yet adopted by Board.	Prepare and follow up the law statement
	FACT was registered	COMPLETED	Register with relevant Minist
	Financial and staff policies were prepared	REGISTERED with Ministry of Interior	Advisory Board reviews Forum financial and staff pol and makes decision whether FACT will adopt NGO Forum policies.
	Inform donor about budget separation	NGO Forum policies were completed, but specific policies for FACT not yet adopted.	
	FACT's bank account was set up	COMPLETED	
	(co-signatory with NGO Forum)	COMPLETED	
	FACT's staff was recruited		Prepare job advertisements, descriptions. Train new staff

	FACT's inventories were separated	COMPLETED	Record and take over FACT inventories.
	FACT Project was evaluated	COMPLETED	
	FACT's action plan and budget for 2004-2005 were developed	COMPLETED	Prepare plan and budget 2004-2005
	FACT's plan and budget were sent to donor(s)	COMPLETED	Follow up approval of plan budget
	<p>FACT Project completely handed over.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Board was changed to full Board. • Management and authority were handed over to FACT and Board. • Financial management was transferred to FACT. • Signatory was given to FACT Leader and Board 	COMPLETED	FACT Leader report to the Board



Budget and Expenditures: January-December 2003

			Desired Budget	Approved Budget *
CORE PROJECT			121,692	109,102
GENDER PROJECT			28,794	21,794
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES PROJECT			87,246	61,966
ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS - CORE PROJECT			102,511	94,151
ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS - FOREST LIVELIHOODS			99,500	99,500

TOTAL:			439,743		386,513
FISHERIES ACTION COALITION TEAM (2003)			111,825		111,825
GRAND TOTAL:			551,568		498,338
* Approved , Management Committee meeting - June 2003					
Note: Over-run of Core Project costs is due to cost of relocating NGO Forum's office in Dec					



Sources of Income for 2003

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	Comments	2003 Only
Membership fees		4,970
Miscellaneous		
Bank Interest		1,775
Gain on exchange rate		207
Sales		153
		2,135
Whole Action Plan		
Oxfam GB		33,350
SCI AF		31,029
Oxfam America		19,985
CAFOD		10,473
ICCO		8,424
Diakonia		6,705
Misereor		6,531
DanchurchAid		3,000
JVC		200
Christian Aid	\$14,000 not yet received	0
SEACA	return unused funds from previous years	(3,953)
		115,744
Core		
DFID	for core costs forestry/fisheries	6,346
Oxfam GB	for core costs development issues	4,000

NPA	for core costs starting up land project	3,842
DFID	\$ 9,329 not yet received	0
		14,188
Environment Project:		
Oxfam America		20,000
DFID		15,442
Danida		5,000
The Asia Foundation	for Political Party Panel	4,857
Environmental Justice Foundation	for FACT staffing 2002	1,665
Lutheran World Federation	for Environment Day	400
CIDSE	for Environment Day	300
DFID	\$ 4,290 not yet received	0
		47,664
Forestry Sub-Project:		
Danida		25,149
DFID		8,773
Oxfam GB	for national meetings	6,636
SEACA	for capacity building	2,503
		43,060
Development Issues Project:		
Oxfam America		20,000
Oxfam GB		12,650
Norwegian People's Aid	to start-up Land Project	12,218
		44,868
Gender Issues Project		
The Asia Foundation	for Political Party Panel	4,500
Diakonia	for staff training	1,693
Forum Syd	for International Women's Day	1,000
Oxfam GB	for International Women's Day	450
CIDSE	for International Women's Day	300
CWS	for International Women's Day	200
LWF	for International Women's Day	200
Oxfam GB	for PRSP workshop	183
		8,526
Total		281,155
Fisheries Project		
(see report of FACT)		129,205
Grand Total		410,360



Statement of Sources and Application of Funds 2002-2003

(Note: This preliminary report is subject to verification by independent audit)

		2003	2002
	Notes	US\$	US\$
Sources of funds:			
Opening balances:			
Advance account	1	25,371	11,228
Cash on hand	2	125	239
Cash at bank	2	122,347	74,346
		147,843	85,813
Receipts for the year:			
Grants for 2002-2003 Action Plan		403,256	360,390
Membership subscriptions		4,970	5,910
Other income 2003 (bank interest, sale, gain on exch.rate)		2,135	1,635
		410,360	367,935
		558,204	453,748
Application of funds:			
Core costs		117,296	74,433
Environment - Core project expenses		75,739	63,217
Environment - Forestry subproject expenses		52,918	68,708
Environment - Fisheries subproject expenses		81,189	37,585
Civil society project expenses		0	10,728
Development issues project expenses		59,014	40,117
Gender project expenses		21,182	11,117
		407,338	305,905
Closing balances:			
Advance account		12,004	16,759
Cash on hand	2	273	125
Cash at bank	2	74,760	122,347
FACT Advance Account	3	24,315	8,612
FACT Cash on hand	3	8	0
FACT Cash at bank	3	39,507	0
		150,866	147,843
		558,204	453,748
Notes:			
1. The Advance Account records advances made to projects before the execution of			

activities
2. Shaded areas highlight NGO Forum cash reserves at beginning and end of Two Year Action Plan
3. The Fisheries Project, "FACT", separated from NGO Forum on 1 January 2004



Evaluation Findings

In July 2003, NGO Forum on Cambodia commissioned an external evaluation, performed by DevGroup International Development Consulting of Canada. The Evaluation found that the "NGO Forum has made significant improvements over the past two years that strengthen its ability to be effective in achieving its goals." 92% of recommendations from the 2001 Program Evaluation had been implemented. However, "project performance is challenged by the difficult subject matter that projects address." The evaluation made a number of recommendations for the Core Project to address, to improve reporting structures within the organisation, improve planning and monitoring, and upgrade skills and expertise in all projects. The evaluation showed a clear relevance of, and need for, the work of NGO Forum in Cambodia, and highlighted a number of successes over the past two years. Below is a summary of the Evaluation comments on NGO Forum's projects:

Core Project

"86% of member organisations of the NGO Forum report satisfaction with the way they are being represented through the NGO Forum."

Gender Project

"Participants report that they found the project to be 72% relevant to their needs."

Development issues project

"There is 75% participant agreement that concerns of NGOs have been incorporated into decisions of advocacy target groups as a result the Project activities."

Resettlement sub-project

"There is 73% agreement of participating NGOs that implementation of development projects and strategies has been improved as a result of NGO watchdog and monitoring activities."

Environment project

"There is 75% confidence of participants of the Environment Forum in their understanding of how environmental degradation impacts on both women and men in different contexts."

Pesticides sub-project

"There is 75% agreement that NGOs, government officials and local people who have participated in the pesticides network understand the dangers of pesticides, and that the pesticides network has helped them or others change their current practices or take new precautionary measures."

Sesan River Protection sub-project

"80% of members believe that co-operation and linkages between national and international organisations have been enhanced."

Forest Livelihoods sub-project

"Local community representatives feel that project has helped them secure rights of use and management of forest resources and forest lands essential to meeting their livelihood needs." The Forest Livelihoods sub-project was found to be 80% effective in achieving its objectives.

The above results are based on average results of a survey of member organisations, in which 100% corresponds with "strongly agreed", 75% corresponds with "agree", 50% corresponds with "do not know", 25% corresponds with "disagree", and 0% corresponds with "strongly disagree." The survey was backed up by in-depth interviews with member and non-member NGOs and government officials.

