

An abstract graphic consisting of multiple overlapping, white, jagged lines that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized mountain range or a series of peaks and valleys. The lines are more densely packed in some areas, creating a 3D effect.

SUBSTUDY 6

02  
2020

**EVALUATION OF THE SWEDISH CLIMATE  
CHANGE INITIATIVE, 2009–2012:  
ADAPTATION FUND CAMBODIA CASE STUDY**

Mehjabeen Abidi Habib



# Evaluation of Swedish Climate Change Initiative 2009 – 2012: Adaptation Fund Cambodia Case Study

*Mehjabeen Abidi Habib*

*Delstudie 6, 2020:02*

*till*

*Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA)*

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# Abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund
AFCPA	Enhancing Climate Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia Project
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCCCD	Commission on Climate Change and Development
CCI	Climate Change Initiative
CNRP	Cambodia National Rescue Party (Main opposition party in Cambodia)
CPA	Community Protected Area
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EBA	Expert Group for Aid Studies
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Programme
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MSEK	Million Swedish Kroner
MTR	Mid Term Review
NCCD	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RBM	Results based management
SES	Social-ecological system
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNE	United Nations Environment
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC COP	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Conference of Parties
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollar

## Preface by the EBA

In 2009, the Swedish government decided to start using ODA to deal with climate change and its negative effects. With a primary focus on the poorest countries, and mainly on their adaptation to climate change, Sweden set aside 4 bn SEK to be used over a four-year period. Furthermore, this constituted a major part of Sweden's 7 bn SEK contribution to the internationally agreed 'fast-start' of climate finance.

Ten years later, this surge of climate finance, including the bilateral, regional and multilateral activities to which it was put to use, has been evaluated. This report contains a case study of how the multilateral Adaptation Fund has worked in Cambodia. This forms a part of the climate change initiative (CCI) evaluation. Together with ten other case study reports this study is published on-line and may be found at <https://eba.se/en/ebarapport/>. The synthesis report of the evaluation, together with a separate summary of the evaluation are available in print and on-line.

It is our hope that this evaluation may provide guidance for the future use of ODA in the efforts to curbe climate change. The intended users of the evaluation are primarily staff at the MFA and Sida who engage in this challenge on a daily basis.

The evaluation has been accompanied by a reference group. This group has taken active part in a particular learning process the evaluation has facilitated. The reference group has been chaired by Johan Schaar, vice chair of the EBA. The responsibility of the analysis and the recommendations rests entirely with the evaluators.



Helena Lindholm, EBA Chair



# 1. Cambodia's context: framings and contradictions

At the outset of this case study of the Adaptation Fund project 'Enhancing Climate Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia' (AFCPA), we took note of a number of important framings about Cambodia and the context within which this project is situated.

First, we referred to the new Swedish EBA studies on Cambodia, one on governance and the other on infrastructure<sup>1</sup>. An additional incisive commentary is a book by a well-known journalist who had investigated Cambodia since the 1970s<sup>2</sup>. Second, we took note of the Swedish assistance to Cambodia as well as the AFPCA recent evaluation<sup>3</sup> that shows the highly satisfactory results of the project. Third, we reflected on the context of contradictions within which our evaluation was to take place. Below is an introduction to these framings.

The EBA report on democracy aid to Cambodia refers to a 'competitive authoritarian hybrid regime model' of governance. This is a model that helped the EBA investigation to charter unintended effects of Swedish aid to democracy in the country over the past 20 years. While this language may not be easy to fathom, the report elaborated that "state-building has become increasingly authoritarian... democratic culture in Cambodia remains weak... women are severely under-represented in all parties" as single party rule now dominates politics. Participatory development is likely to be repressed as "consolidation of power in the hands of the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) is reflected in its electoral success

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<sup>1</sup> Andersen, H, et al (EBA). 2019. Supporting State-Building for Democratisation? A Study of 20 Years of Swedish Democracy Aid to Cambodia. Report 2019:3 for Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA). AND BenYishay, A. et al. (EBA). 2019. Building on a Foundation Stone: The Long-term Impacts of a Local Infrastructure and Governance Program in Cambodia. Report 2019:4 for Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA).

<sup>2</sup> Brinkley, J. (2012) Cambodia's Curse, The Modern History of a Troubled Land, Public Affairs, New York.

<sup>3</sup> Mid Term Review AFPCA. Final Report, April 2018

at national and commune levels, and has been achieved through the enforcement of personal and deeply hierarchical relationships of patronage [and] protection”<sup>4</sup>.

In this context, of particular concern were the land and forest concessions given by the government in 2013, overlapping with the AFPCA project tenure as reported by Brinkley<sup>5</sup>. Periods of concessions coincided with a low turnout of votes for the CPP<sup>6</sup> first in 2013 and then again in 2017 when CPP was further weakened at the commune level elections – the level at which the AFPCA project was made operational in forest communities. Coupled with patronage, land and forest concessions have a direct bearing on CPP’s efforts to enforce single party rule through a system of favours, protection and repression of local resistance movements. This squeezed resource space augurs poorly for adaptation efforts.

Furthermore, EBA’s study notes that corruption has been “acknowledged as a major problem and seen as a weakness in the system, although it could just as well have been seen as a fundamental part of the system”<sup>7</sup>. Coupled with this, the freedom to hold public demonstrations and to engage in criticism of government policies has been severely restricted both in law and in practice. Expecting citizens (many of whom were traumatized by the Khmer Rouge and deeply distrusted the state) to actively monitor the selection, design, and implementation of local infrastructure projects and hold local leaders accountable for results may have been a bridge too far<sup>8</sup>.

In 2017 the Swedish government ended direct bilateral assistance to the Cambodian government in response to the crackdown on

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<sup>4</sup> Andersen, H, et al (EBA). 2019. Supporting State-Building for Democratization? A Study of 20 Years of Swedish Democracy Aid to Cambodia. Report 2019:3 for Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA). Pg 13

<sup>5</sup> Brinkley, J. (2012) Cambodia’s Curse, The Modern History of a Troubled Land, Public Affairs, New York.

<sup>6</sup> Brinkley, J. (2012) Cambodia’s Curse, The Modern History of a Troubled Land, Public Affairs, New York.

<sup>7</sup> Andersen, H, et al (EBA). 2019. Supporting State-Building for Democratization? A Study of 20 Years of Swedish Democracy Aid to Cambodia. Report 2019:3 for Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA). Pg 14

<sup>8</sup> BenYishay, A. et al. (EBA). 2019. Building on a Foundation Stone: The Long-term Impacts of a Local Infrastructure and Governance Program in Cambodia. Report 2019:4 for Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA).

civil society organizations<sup>9</sup>. Sweden had given Cambodia an estimated USD 100 million in bilateral aid over the previous five years and ranked third among individual EU member states in Cambodia's database of donors, after France and Germany.

However, the AFPCA project was approved in 2012, when international efforts had determined that peace and stability were returning to Cambodia<sup>10</sup>, and has directly assisted the Cambodian government as Executing Authority with a total project amount of nearly USD 5 million. At the time of AFPCA approval, Sweden was the second largest donor to the multilateral Adaptation Fund after Germany<sup>11</sup>.

The above analysis overlaps with the AFPCA project's operational period (2013-2019), contextualizing the AF's contribution within a framing fraught with contradictions and tensions in the social, ecological and political spheres.

The following box briefly summarises the objective and documented results of the AFPCA project to introduce the reader to the project's intentions and approach to design and delivery.

***Box 1: A summary of the AFPCA project: Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas***

“The **objective** of the AF project is to enhance the climate change resilience of communities living around five CPA intervention sites, as well as downstream communities, to the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall. [...]

**Component 1** will use bio-physical, ecological and socio-economic research to develop restoration and conservation agriculture protocols to be implemented in Component 2. This first component is necessary to ensure that the protocols are grounded in a participatory approach and capture indigenous knowledge, as well as being scientifically appropriate for the selected intervention sites. **Component 2** will ensure that the restored forests and productive agricultural areas are maintained,

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-politics/sweden-stops-some-new-aid-for-cambodia-in-protest-over-crackdown-idUSKBN1DL18S>

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, TANGO (2018), Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund, Adaptation Fund

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

and the benefits maximised. Alternative livelihoods established through the AF project will increase the resilience of local communities to the effects of climate change. **Component 3** will create an enabling environment for the ecoagriculture concept to be implemented in other protected areas (PAs) in Cambodia, through awareness raised at a local and national level, and an upscaling strategy supported by policy revision where required.”<sup>12</sup>

Findings from the overall AF evaluation conducted in 2018<sup>13</sup> are summarised as follows:

“This community-based project is best understood as a broad-based subsistence food security project nested within ecosystem-based adaptation and integrated rural development approaches. It squarely addresses the intersection of climate hazards and population vulnerability in a way which advances both human livelihoods and environmental sustainability. Local communities’ livelihoods are meant to be enhanced and diversified [...]. Socio-economic and ecosystem monitoring of the project impacts down stream of CPA intervention sites are meant to be done.”

The Project Management Unit (PMU) of AFPCA is housed in the Ministry of Environment’s Department of Local Livelihoods. The PMU has further technical and other part-time support from Ministry of Environment staff and consultants, including one part-time international chief technical advisor. The Project Board approves annual work plans and procurement plans, and reviews periodical project reports as well as any deviations.

Overall, the project was deemed to be appropriate to the context in the 2018 evaluation, which stated that it “directly addresses both climate hazards and underlying drivers of population vulnerability, as well as sustainable natural resource management. By partnering with villages located within Community Protected Areas, vulnerable indigenous people are supported through eco-agriculture and other interventions which enable them to remain in their traditional communities, improve health and livelihoods, and enhance the integrity of the surrounding forest”. The project includes a diverse set of

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<sup>12</sup> AFPCA project / programme proposal. 11. June 2012, pg 29

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, TANGO (2018) Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund, Final Report Adaptation Fund

activities which aim to stabilize and diversify local livelihoods and food security in a holistic way.

The project's achievements are widely attributed to strong, fair, and committed management and leadership by the Ministry of Environment, and their aptitude for both community-based project management and navigating the government bureaucracy.

Some express in this evaluation that local-level knowledge, insight, and requests are ignored or overruled, such as the expectation that villagers should plant trees or crops even if they know these cannot grow in local soil. There is a sense from some that decisions are pre-determined by outside experts and that the project cannot or will not change track to take into account local knowledge and experience in an ongoing way.

The 2018 evaluation states that women's participation – including local-level leadership – is appropriately high. It notes that while the project has done very good work with women at the village-level, this is partially because activities overlap with traditional women's work. It also notes that the project has neither challenged the boundaries of women's work, nor contributed to mainstreaming beyond the village level.

The same evaluation notes that villagers are able to provide enthusiastic and detailed answers about how the project has helped them, and how they can and will continue over the long term. Reforestation efforts are proving more problematic insofar as the seedlings are dying, although the PMU is aware of this issue and is trying to address this. While the ecotourism efforts are in the early pilot stage, incisive market research is needed to explore the viability of this effort. Nevertheless, the project is overall strong, sound, and on the right track; moreover, its high-profile and early successes position it to scale ecoagriculture up and out.

The evaluation goes on to note that the project's goal and objective offer a way for a new type of natural capital to be produced that is specifically tailored, using ecological and soil science expertise, to enable local communities to adapt to climate change. Although NGOs and other actors have successfully implemented similar interventions, stakeholder interviews suggest that the project's position within the Ministry of Environment both legitimizes it and allows it to serve as a springboard to scale up and out. Key players are exploring funding options to do just

that. The benefits of this landscape management to enhance ecosystem services will extend to downstream communities, beyond the CPA intervention sites.

In addition to this evaluation, in early 2018, the project mid-term review (MTR) was conducted and resulted in the following main finding: “The MTR’s overarching conclusions find that the AFCPA project is Highly Satisfactory. It is well designed, proving to be well equipped, and proceeding in a way that contributes to the project’s goals and is appropriate [...] No tangible evidence can be found regarding economic or social externalities which may have impacted on project implementation to date. [...] The MTR also concludes that the AFCPA is following a logical pathway towards the intended impact.”<sup>14</sup>

Within Cambodia’s history and its recent developments in political, social and ecological spheres, a context of contradictions in which our case study is situated became apparent. What outcomes and unforeseen impacts did the delivery of the AFPCA actually have on the ground in Cambodia? How did these address the goals of the AF? And how did these outcomes align with the CCI principles in this context?

Given the EBA’s learning mandate in this evaluation, we offer a transect of the AFPCA streams of governance and outcomes through brief research within Cambodia. Whilst not an extensive story, we reveal the surprises that emerge when context is unattended to and history overlooked.

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<sup>14</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018, pg ix

## 2. Methodology

The purpose of this study is two-fold: on the one hand to provide country-based insights into the Adaptation Fund case study, and on the other hand to interchange with the Cambodia bilateral case study, both a part of the overall CCI evaluation.

We drew on four main sources of data, the first three being primary data gathered for the purpose of this study alone. Firstly, 16 interviews were held with individuals at various levels of governance in relation to the AFPCA project; these ranged from those directly involved in the project (e.g. Chief Technical Advisor and National Manager) to leaders in the national government (e.g. Ministry of Environment and NCSD) as well as representatives of ODA in Cambodia (including the Swedish Embassy).

Secondly, community dialogues were conducted in two CPA sites inside and near to Kulen National Park. Out of the three protected areas the AFPCA project works in (see map below), Kulen was selected on the basis of its prominence in the Cambodian nation with respect to both current politico-economic and historical aspects. Phnom Kulen National Park is a high visibility site since most Cambodian citizen who can afford it will try to visit the area as a site of the ancient Khmer civilization, a source of national pride. The Chop Tasok CPA site dialogue in Kulen consisted of approximately 20 community members, and two senior provincial project officers from the Ministry of Environment, responsible for the implementation of the AFPCA project. The second CPA dialogue near to Kulen National Park was attended by 18 community members including a representative of the NGO that is responsible for project activities.<sup>15</sup>

Thirdly, observations were made in and while approaching the field sites. Our field interviews and observations were aided by a young female interpreter who works as an independent consultant and peace activist. The fourth source of data included published

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<sup>15</sup> This brief evaluation visit did not attempt to access the representational aspects of the Kulen site in comparison to the other two AFPCA sites. Albeit, we noted the prominence of this site within the national context of Cambodia and recognized its 'show case' value.

documents to gain more insights into Cambodia's context through secondary literature including recent studies commissioned by Sweden.

For the analysis of our data, we drew on two main approaches. First, the method of outcome harvesting<sup>16</sup> allowed for the collection of various layers of narratives<sup>17</sup>, while putting the most vulnerable people's perspectives first since these are the people that the AF is aiming to impact. In other words, we were able to observe adaptation outcomes through the community lens.

Stemming from the learning approach that formed the mandate given to this evaluation of CCI, the second main approach which we brought to this analysis was one in which we engaged in early context and pattern sensing. Thus seeking insights for longer-term impact and sustainability, and drawing on very recent evaluations of both this project and the AF globally, we queried the context of politics, ecology and socio-ecological history surrounding this field case, as well as future pathways and trajectories that are so important to understanding adaptation to climate change. This case study offers a small slice or a transect as a sample of such a contextualised approach and could be continued into a complete story with a more detailed pathways and scenarios analysis.

In our line of evidence gathering, we also noted a pivot point demarcated by the interviews with UNDP GEF/SGP and the Swedish Embassy in Phnom Penh. The pivot point of evidence from these interviews was the surfacing of the 'dual narratives' that

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<sup>16</sup> Outcome harvesting is suitable for evaluations in dynamic, uncertain, and complex situations. Outcome harvesting surfaces outcomes defined as significant by others, rather than tracing only those initially planned for. Unlike some evaluation approaches, outcome harvesting does not measure progress towards predetermined objectives or outcomes, but rather, collects evidence of what has changed and, then, working backwards, determines whether and how an intervention contributed to these changes. The outcome(s) can be positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect, but the connection between the intervention and the outcomes should be plausible. A highly participatory process is a *necessity* for a successful outcome harvesting process and product. (Based on [www.betterevaluation.org](http://www.betterevaluation.org)).

<sup>17</sup> Layers of narratives is our way of saying that we collected various views on common themes of enquiry from people involved at different levels of governance of this project e.g. from national policy-makers, to ministerial to provincial management, to NGO and community members. Each of these levels were then juxtaposed in layers to reveal patterns that were sometimes aligned or sometimes contradictory and together formed narratives that we used for observation in our enquiry.



exist in Cambodia today – one face to the outside world and another to the domestic populace. Noticing this pivot allowed us to further analyse for dual narratives as well as for unintended outcomes.

### Map 1: Map of Cambodia



*The three yellow stars indicate protected areas with AFCPA project sites locations, from left to right: Phnom Kulen National Park; Boeng Peae Wildlife Sanctuary; Phnom Preah Wildlife Sanctuary.*

### 3. Context to the AFCPA project

This chapter provides context to Cambodian political and ecological factors, the AFCPA project phases, and AF developments in three timeframes. The first timeframe is during CCI from 2009 to 2013, the second of the following years from 2013 to 2016, and the third from 2016 to date. These short paragraphs are intended as descriptive context-setting information and do not interpret or seek patterns between the various occurrences.

#### **2009 to 2013**

The first timeframe covers the period 2009 to 2013, which is also the CCI period and coincides with the AF start-up phase, which became operational in 2007 and launched its first call for proposals in March 2010. The CCI contribution to the Adaptation Fund was MSEK 300 (USD 42 million), which represented a significant portion of the AF's early income. Besides Sweden, Germany was another notable contributor in the Adaptation Fund start-up phase.

A concept paper on the AFCPA project was submitted on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011, prepared by international consultants<sup>18</sup> on behalf of UNEP as implementer and the Cambodian government as Executing Authority (endorsed by Ministry of Environment), and resubmitted on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012. The full proposal was submitted on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and approved on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012. This was one of 12 projects approved by the AF Board in 2012, each granted between USD 4.5 and 7.8 million<sup>19</sup>.

Thereafter, changes to the project document were requested by UNEP, such as aiming for tailored restoration and agroforestry rather than afforestation<sup>20</sup>, or including more local government staff for project implementation<sup>21</sup>. With the approved changes, the project officially commenced in May 2013, although expected

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<sup>18</sup> AFCPA Concept Note, pg 81: "C4 Ecosolutions".

<sup>19</sup> AF website

<sup>20</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018. pg 10-11

<sup>21</sup> Project management, interview. 17. July 2019

timelines were delayed further due to the necessity to build trust with the selected CPA communities.<sup>22</sup>

Two investments preceded AFCPA and were the earliest adaptation projects in Cambodia. First, GEF funding for the development of a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) was approved for Cambodia in 2006. Second, and related to capacity building for local adaptation options, the LDCF granted USD 2.145 million plus 2.34 million co-financing over 4 years (July 2009 to June 2013) to Cambodia for a project called ‘Building Capacities to Integrate Water Resources Planning in Agricultural Development’.

## **2013 to 2016**

In the 2013 national elections, the ruling Cambodian People’s Party lost a significant share of their seats to opposition parties.

In 2015, the Cambodian government passed the ‘Law on Associations and Non-governmental Organisations in Cambodia’, which monitors advocacy in human rights, natural resources and land tenure.

In May 2015, the apex body NCSDD (National Council for Sustainable Development) was formed as an expansion from the former NCCC with more power, overseeing out-of-budget allocations to five ministries. The Council comprises high-level representatives (Secretaries and Under-Secretaries of State) of concerned government ministries and agencies, with the Prime Minister as its Honorary Chair and the Minister of Environment as its Chair.<sup>23</sup>

Under the single party government, Cambodia has seen several eras of forest concessions. 2013 to 2016 is one such window in which logging and land concessions for commercial timber harvesting within protected areas were granted through the

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<sup>22</sup> Project management, interview. 17. July 2019

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.camclimate.org.kh/en/policies/ncsd-structure.html>

government.<sup>24</sup> Siamese Rosewood is the most valuable and extensively logged wood in Cambodia, most of which has been smuggled out of the country.<sup>25</sup> Plantations of cashews and a few other cash crops proliferated during this latest period of concessions.

In this time period, LDCF commenced a notable project on ‘Strengthening climate information and early warning systems in Cambodia’ with USD 4.9 million, covering the period from 2015 to 2019. Other notable donors to help address climate issues in Cambodia at this time included UNDP, FAO, EU, Japan and USAID.

In the Adaptation Fund, two major programming changes were made at the suggestion of Sweden, including the ‘Gender Policy and Action Plan of the AF’ that was approved in March 2016 and the ‘Environment and Social Policy’ approved in November 2013 and amended in March 2016.

## 2016 to date

In addition to the 2013 election losses for the CPP at national level, 40 percent of votes went to the main opposition party CNRP in the 2017 commune elections, resulting in panic by the ruling party. Later in the same year, the CNRP was outlawed at the government’s request.<sup>26</sup>

Given the increasing limits on democracy and human rights, Sweden stopped its ODA funding support to the government, except in education and research.<sup>27</sup> Civil society space has been dramatically shrinking over the years, especially after the NGO Law. In 2019, the USA passed the Cambodia Democracy Act that would allow the US to intervene against Cambodian officials.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile,

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<sup>24</sup> Brinkley, J. (2012) *Cambodia’s Curse, The Modern History of a Troubled Land*, Public Affairs, New York.

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-02/18/c\\_137831903.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-02/18/c_137831903.htm)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-politics/sweden-stops-some-new-aid-for-cambodia-in-protest-over-crackdown-idUSKBN1DL185>

<sup>27</sup> Swedish Embassy, interview. 16 July 2019

<sup>28</sup> Phnom Penh Post. 17. July 2019. ‘Cambodia Democracy Act’ passed by US House.

China's influence in Cambodia has been growing across many sectors and political spheres.<sup>29</sup>

A recent UNDP evaluation<sup>30</sup> shows that while climate change awareness is high among CSOs, significant challenges lie in ensuring synergy between budgeting and implementation (which is the work of NCSD). There may be low trickle down effects to communities in terms of funding whereby little funding actually reaches communities. Meanwhile, the Cambodian government, via NCSD, is hoping to attract major multilateral climate funds from sources such as the GCF, via its direct accreditation.<sup>31</sup>

In July 2017, an important conference titled 'International Symposium on Flood Pulse Ecosystems' was held in Siem Reap, finding that the Tonle Sap ecosystem (which, inter alia supplies most of the country's protein through fish) was at a "point of no return"<sup>32</sup> meaning that ecosystem services are significantly diminished owing to overuse, degradation and interruption in water flows needed for wetland productivity. Deforestation rates have remained alarmingly high and most primary forests have been lost<sup>33</sup>, largely fuelled by the corruption behind illegal logging.<sup>34</sup>

The mid-term review for the AFCPA project commenced in late 2017. From 2016 to date, Cambodia has been part of three processes to develop AF project proposals; the first process commencing in 2016 by UNESCO for the Mekong basin; the second in 2017 by UN Habitat for coastal infrastructures, and the third in August 2018 by UNDP with three other Asian countries on DRR and adaptation. The latter was approved for a project formulation grant in September 2018 and it is reported that "UNDP Cambodia might be involved in this later".<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Burgos, S. Ear (2010); The Diplomat (2018).

<sup>30</sup> Interview with UNDP, 16. July 2019

<sup>31</sup> National management (NCSD), interview. 18. July 2019

<sup>32</sup> The point of no return. 1. August 2017. Phnom Penh Post.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/ap183e/ap183e.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/corruption-fueling-deforestation-in-cambodia/a-42674051>

<sup>35</sup> Interview with UNDP, 16. July 2019. "...At present, we don't know much about it".

## 4. Unintended Outcomes of AFCPA Project and Surfacing Dual Narratives

This chapter of the case study provides a vertical transect of the primary data findings, in that it cuts through layers of governance, perspectives and meanings.

Figure 1 organises the data into the following layers in columns from left to right: the Adaptation Fund's intended outcome for the AFCPA project; the Adaptation Fund's own evaluation findings from two sources (the AFCPA project's own mid-term review and the AF global evaluation 2018 that included Cambodia and this project as a case study); evidence from government, which includes the Cambodian national government, ministries, the national project advisor, sub-national level government, as well as insights from the Swedish Embassy in Phnom Penh (the latter in a different colour); and findings and observations from the community level that were gained during a field visit to one of the 5 CPA project sites. The final column presents plausible unintended outcomes of the AFCPA project given the aforementioned findings at various layers. Furthermore, the findings not only observe the multi-layered nature of governance, perspectives and meanings, but also add new insights arising from socio-political histories of the last two to four decades and the site-specific ecological history. In this way, Figure 1 offers a sample of a contextualised, historical, and multi-layered positioning of the social-ecological system around Cambodia's AFCPA project.

Outcome harvesting as a method allowed us to engage with Cambodian and field site realities, and only thereafter begin to pull the analysis threads into a whole fabric starting from the perspective of where impact was meant to be manifest, namely at the community level. This process of sense-making thus started from the position of the community's realities, both as reported by them as well as observed during interactions coupled with expertise of forest communities from other contexts.

Certain interviews further offered critical perspectives into both up- and down-stream governance layers, and hence we chose to call these pivot points. Pivot points indicate evidence in our analysis where the outcome harvesting process pivots both towards community challenges as well as towards national and international narratives and framings. These pivots were critical in this case study's harvesting and sense-making process. These pivot points are the foci that surfaced the dual narratives in the case of Cambodia.

Importantly, the layers of governance and meaning in Figure 1 do not suggest linear connections between the evidence pieces. Rather we decided to peel away layers in the deepening of our understanding of what was happening in Cambodia and AFCPA project, and superimpose veiled perspectives<sup>36</sup> onto existing realities and widely accepted narratives.

The four themes of Figure 1, represented in the four rows, are based on the architecture of the AF portfolio, namely targeting the most vulnerable countries and communities, working on adaptation through participation and inclusiveness, Direct Access, and fostering resilient communities through concrete adaptation interventions. These four themes were also clearly reflected in AFCPA as the four main pillars of the project.

Figure 1 is available in Annex 1 with references.

## **Description of findings in Figure 1**

The following paragraphs describe the main findings as read thematically, i.e. horizontally per row of the table.

*Addressing the most vulnerable, including gender:* The findings show that in 2013 the project document did not specify a gender strategy, relegating this to overall national strategies and commitments.

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<sup>36</sup> Veiled perspectives here refer to verbal references in interviews and some documents, as well as observations made by the EN team, that hint at dual narratives but do not overtly name them as such. Cambodia is currently a state in which surveillance and punitive action by state authorities is rampant but lies below the surface of official narratives. This has created an atmosphere that is not conducive of clarity and healthy critique. See also Brinkley, J. (2012) *Cambodia's Curse, The Modern History of a Troubled Land*, Public Affairs, New York.

However, national level approaches to gender reportedly require improvements. A ‘gendered cultural backlog’ is referenced by the project management to lie outside of the scope of the project. Yet, the history of microfinance reveals crisis in this sector that leads to entrenching vulnerability for the poorest, which includes women. Field observations revealed the submissive position of women with the most vulnerable sub-section, the elderly women, traveling out of habitations onto road sides to beg. The project beneficiaries expressed a continued inability to meet their food and livelihoods security. An important indicator of this ‘vicious downwards cycle’ within which forest dependent communities are trapped, is that the country is experiencing resistance movements attempting to reclaim rights to forests, frequently led by women<sup>37</sup>.

This multi-layered evidence leads to the plausibility that hierarchical relationships that exacerbate gender disparities and other forms of (climate) vulnerability are entrenched. Further, there are early signs that the vulnerable are beginning to move away from their habitations and forests and using displacement as an extreme form of coping.

*Delivery through inclusiveness and participation:* The AFCPA project reported that communities requested particular adaptation interventions for specific field sites, although an evaluation finds that local knowledge was at times ignored. Project delivery is reportedly not negatively influenced by social or economic factors. The project manager explained that the project was designed at a UNFCCC COP and the government’s role in project design and delivery has been central since the beginning. In Cambodia, natural resources management has not always been linked well with a rights-based approach, which is also evidenced by the community displaying a receiver relation towards the government as provider of inputs and services. Furthermore, such service delivery is used by the ruling party to garner votes. This multi-layered evidence thus leads to the plausibility that state-community polarities are

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with UNDP, 16. July 2019 : “...it is interesting to know that community women are rising up to resist forest concessions”



reinforced, with increasingly centralised political power while community dependency on the state is increased.

*Direct Access:* Although Cambodia does not have accreditation with the AF for direct access, we see evidence in this project of the attributes designed by the AF under the direct access facility. This project has UNE as a distant implementing agency based in Nairobi that plays a necessary audit role, both financially and technically. National ownership of the climate change agenda is high, for example high level learning events at the national and COP levels have created political buy in to the climate change agenda, which is anchored at the supra-ministerial level in an apex body (the National Commission of Sustainable Development, NCSD). In expectation of accreditation by the GCF, the government has already prepared a large proposal using AFCPA project learnings, which it is preparing to scale up and out. However, the national government has enforced an NGO law that limits civic space, especially around natural resources and land tenure, and at the sub-national level the government restricts community access to natural resources and tenure. This multi-layered evidence suggests the plausibility of an appropriation of the climate change agenda in Cambodia's context. While the interface between national and international climate fora is positive, at the local level authoritarian, non-inclusive relations persist. Internal path dependencies of an authoritarian regime do not match well with Cambodia's international climate related tactics, pointing to a dual narrative.

*Resilient communities through concrete interventions:* The AFCPA project aims to enhance resilience by restoring protected areas as well as providing alternative livelihoods for the communities living in CPAs. Given extensive degradation, benefits of this project are expected to accrue to the entire community. Interventions related to water supply and management are considered most successful, overall being recognised as a model project with a highly satisfactory rating, and with early successes from innovative interventions that can be scaled up and out. The two largest challenges in the project are forest tenure and logging concessions that are issued by the government, in anticipation of which the communities have practiced 'slash and burn' agriculture in the hope of claiming use

titles. While the government has an economic imperative for reforestation of watersheds, communities under the AFCPA project have been excluded from areas that were confiscated by the government for reforestation and instead were offered luxury-wood and multi-use trees as an incentive. Cambodia has seen extensive smuggling of natural resources without value addition out of the country; history underlines that it is unlikely that the communities would benefit from slow growing, coveted Siamese rosewood plantings. Also, water supply to the communities is visibly inadequate even in the wet season. Overall, efforts appear to be too small and too late for the scale of degradation – this is further detailed in Annex 2 that documents the forest area that the project aims to restore and enrich as a percentage of each CPA (between 5 percent and 50 percent) and of each protected area (between 0.2 percent and 0.4 percent), while project results in terms of forest areas are below their targets<sup>38</sup>. This multi-layered evidence leads to the plausibility that the social-ecological system (SES) is being driven further down maladaptive pathways and towards tipping points, given an inadequate understanding of the ecological scale and history. Early signs of displacement of people owing to diminishing livelihoods from agroecosystems and forest resources may further pressure adjacent SESs that are themselves in crisis.

## Conclusions to Chapter 4

The AFCPA project in Cambodia has defined objectives and intended outcomes in its project document, and these are shown to be highly satisfactory in the regular Project Progress Reports. The AF's own evaluation<sup>39</sup> also shows highly satisfactory results and achievements. The global AF evaluation<sup>40</sup> in its Cambodia case study shows similarly positive results with some reservations and observations.

The evidence in this case study does not contravene these evaluation results, rather, it reaffirms that if setting out to monitor

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<sup>38</sup> Project Progress Report 5, October 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018, pg ix

<sup>40</sup> World Bank, TANGO (2018).

intended objectives and outcomes, the resulting evidence would be similarly satisfactory. However, given the very recent evaluations of both this project and of AF globally, we were able to take another approach in this broader learning study to explore *unintended* outcomes of and surrounding the AFPCA project. Without these recent evaluations of the AF, we might also have been confined to a more traditional evaluation approach.

Furthermore, our broader approach enabled us to account for ecological and political history and thus to uncover veiled perspectives. In addition, the aforementioned pivot points in critical interviews allowed ‘dual narratives’ that exist in Cambodia today to be surfaced, such that we witnessed one face of the climate agenda as presented to the outside world and another face of top-down service delivery in working with the domestic community. As we interacted with various layers of actors and evidence, we were able to explore the meanings and repercussions of the dual narratives that are a reality of the socio-political context of Cambodia today.

It is noteworthy that this study is a brief transect of the governance layers and relations within the context of Cambodia and within the AFPCA project. It invites a deeper study that would, for example, take a longer historical perspective to look at the unfolding time frames of this story.

Our approach and exploration into how these framings play out helped us to detect early signs of plausible unintended outcomes. These arise from hierarchical relations that entrench vulnerabilities, polarities that increase community dependency, centralisation of power with the appropriation of the climate agenda in an authoritarian regime, and an ecosystem increasingly under pressure.

It is worth noting that unintended outcomes may be positive or negative for the beneficiaries and system in question. In our case study in Cambodia, however, all four plausible unintended outcomes are negative. In other words, the social-ecological system which received the AF grant funding may be intricately tied up in path dependencies, which are creating pressures leading to maladaptation and tipping points (e.g. Kulen and Tonle Sap). These unintended outcomes are thus to be seen in contrast to the project

overall goal of fostering resilience. The next chapters articulate and analyse these observations further.

We call these unintended outcomes ‘plausible’ as more detailed study of sustainability and impacts of the AFCPA project in its Cambodian context would be warranted, and as they require framing in the context of what the global body of climate change knowledge tells us about maladaptation. The next chapter will link our evidence with concepts from the literature to analyse the pathways of how the unintended outcomes may have come to be, as well as to link back to the original CCI principles that are in evidence in this case study.

## 5. CCI Principles and AF Outcomes

This chapter moves from the primary evidence towards analysis, with a threefold purpose. Firstly, it surfaces the connections between the CCI Principles as set out in 2009 with the architecture of the Adaptation Fund and more specifically with the intended outcomes of the AF CPA project. Secondly, it directly aligns the intended outcomes with the plausible unintended outcomes. These two purposes are represented in Figure 2 below. Thirdly, the following text makes note of patterns resulting from our analysis that resonate with the global body of literature on climate change adaptation, specifically the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C<sup>41</sup>.

### CCI principles and AF intended outcomes

As a first step, we aimed to surface connections between the CCI principles and the AF intended outcomes. These connections are indicated by coloured dots, corresponding to the CCI principles represented in colours in the first column of Figure 2, with each AF intended outcome in the second column.

All CCI principles could be aligned to at least one of the four AF intended outcomes, and all AF intended outcomes were in at least one way connected to the CCI principles. Certain value judgements had to be made in prioritising more apparent connections. As a result, the AF intended outcomes ‘adaptation through participation’ only has one apparent link to the CCI principles, which is not surprising given the latter were more intended to steer decision making at the policy and programming level than at implementation level. By contrast the AF intended outcomes ‘benefits of direct access’ and ‘resilience through concrete interventions’ each reveal connections to four CCI principles. Noteworthy is the CCI principle 5 on reflecting the work of the CCCD that is apparent in all four AF intended outcomes, given its comprehensive work and outlook at the time.

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<sup>41</sup> IPCC. 2018. Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5° C Chapter 5: Sustainable Development, Poverty Eradication and Reducing Inequalities.

## Aligning intended and unintended outcomes<sup>42</sup>

Figure 2 places the intended and plausible unintended outcomes side by side to enable a comparison and commentary to emerge. The analysis that follows results from linking both the intended outcomes and the plausible unintended outcomes as well as the layers of evidence in between as shown in Figure 1.

The following paragraphs give two pieces of analysis to each outcome area and draw out some key patterns (in bold font) that resonate with the wider body of adaptation literature.

AF intended outcome aims at addressing the most vulnerable but leads to plausible unintended outcomes that sustain hierarchical relationships resulting in increased vulnerability

- **Maladaptation** can occur despite intentions to reduce vulnerability and gender inequality. The history of Kulen National Park, our field visit site, is shaped by hierarchical and oppressive relationships within the communities, as well as between community level and state political power. Neglecting to address this context has reinforced path dependency, thereby making the poor ever more dependent on the powerful service delivery of the government. In this setting, this is an example of maladaptation, which has been defined as “action taken ostensibly to avoid or reduce vulnerability to climate change that impacts adversely on, or increases the vulnerability of other systems, sectors or social groups”<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> It is important to qualify that plausible unintended outcomes as identified in this report are most likely to be systemic problems within Cambodia’s socio-political context, many of which were already set in motion when the AF project was implemented. Thus the project may not have been the cause of the unintended outcomes, instead it may have exacerbated and entrenched the phenomena offered in our analysis. In other words “some of these [unintended outcomes] may be structural phenomena that stand in the way of realizing intended outcomes, others may be unintended actual outcomes of the project” (Schaar, J. first review 1 September 2019). The former exemplified by sustained hierarchical relations at community level; the latter exemplified by the contradictions inherent in excluding forest dwelling communities from CPA reforested patches as part of the AF project.

<sup>43</sup> Barnett and O’Neill. 2010. Maladaptation. Editorial in *Global Environmental Change*, 20, pg 211

- Various early signs of **outmigration**<sup>44</sup> are evidenced in this study. This can be a short-term coping mechanism to compensate for declining ecological services that formed a basis of livelihoods. At the same time, however, pressures may spill over into adjacent systems, such as Tonle Sap wetland that itself is already on the verge of an ecological tipping point.

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<sup>44</sup> Further evidence on outmigration states that “Cambodia is being reshaped by increasingly complex and diverse population movements. Domestic and crossborder migration is one of the most significant transformational changes in Cambodian society and is set to continue. Increasing pressure on the lives and livelihood of rural communities caused by the intensification of environmental degradation and climate-related disasters is anticipated to intensify the current trend of high rural to urban migration and international migration in the coming years. [There is] a concurrence of climate change and high rates of outmigration”. <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/assessing-vulnerabilities-and-responses-environmental-changes-cambodia> Title: Assessing Vulnerabilities and Responses to Environmental Changes in Cambodia (IOM, 2016)

Figure 2: CCI Principles, AF Outcomes and Analysis

CCI Principles	AF: intended outcomes	Cambodia: Plausible unintended outcomes	Analysis across our evidence
	Address the most vulnerable	Sustained hierarchical relationships entrench vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maladaptation</b> can occur despite intentions to reduce vulnerability and gender inequality. Neglecting to address context and history has reinforced path dependency.</li> <li>• Early signs of <b>outmigration</b> are evidenced, which is also an example of maladaptation, leading to increased pressures on other SES or groups of people and increasing vulnerability.</li> </ul>
	Adaptation through participation	Reinforced state – community polarities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We find a <b>narrowing of option spaces for adaptation</b> given linear institutional contact. The exclusion of mediating actors has narrowed innovation options in location-specific forest communities.</li> <li>• <b>Polarity between central government (provider) and communities (receivers) is seen as a precursor to conflict.</b> Inadequate attention is paid to the site where the interaction and potential conflict takes place, which is often the meso level.</li> </ul>
	Benefits of direct access	National appropriation of climate change agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Cambodia, climate change has reached the highest corridors of political power. The national government has positioned itself as a <b>single monolithic adaptation agent</b>, drawing from existing practice to gain traction and funding.</li> <li>• A <b>technocratic approach</b> to implementation and to M&amp;E reveals highly satisfactory achievements, but fails to uncover unintended outcomes. This case study has reflected more openly on diverse impact pathways and sustainability problems.</li> </ul>
	Resilience through concrete interventions	Driving social-ecological systems towards tipping points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design for adaptation interventions in the AF-CPA project was found to be <b>ahistorical and uncontextualised</b>, despite secondary literature for Cambodia at the time of project formulation warning of forest, watershed and nearby wetland tipping points.</li> <li>• Ten years after calling for the integration of DRR and adaptation, the disaster-climate nexus is <b>ripe for multi-level conflicts</b>. Adaptation work for the most vulnerable can benefit from the conflict sensitivity lens and ‘do no harm principles’ to be integrated into adaptation framings.</li> </ul>
			
			
			



Outmigration in this setting is also an example of maladaptation, and may lead to increased pressures on other socio-ecological systems, on other groups of people, or in other time frames. Without adaptive measures and conditions in both sending and receiving regions, climate induced migration can thus further impoverish towards vulnerability.<sup>45</sup>

AF intended outcome aims at adaptation through participation but leads to plausible unintended outcomes that reinforce state-community polarities

In this case study, when probing for adaptation futures, we find a **narrowing of option spaces for adaptation**. Given that the AF CPA project is primarily delivered through government actors and structures, it shows linear institutional contact and service delivery. The exclusion of other mediating actors (such as e.g. CBOs, NGOs, academia, business) hence narrows innovation options in location-specific forest communities. The IPCC describes this as follows: “Past development trajectories as well as transformational adaptation plans can constrain adaptation futures by reinforcing dominant political-economic structures and processes, and narrowing option spaces; this leads to maladaptive pathways that preclude alternative, locally-relevant, and sustainable development initiatives and increase vulnerabilities”.<sup>46</sup>

**Polarity is seen as a precursor to conflict.** As seen in the case study, the project not only continued the power differentials between state organs (as service providers) and beneficiaries (as receivers), but possibly further entrenched this polarity without enabling real alternatives. The power differential is neither released through enriched networks nor improved through participatory iterations or local learning cycles. This goes to show that too much attention is being paid to the national level by the AF and little or no attention is paid to the site where the interaction actually takes place (such as between communities and NCCD). This meso level is the real site of interaction for delivering adaptation options and also the site where tensions and conflicts may occur. “Meso-level

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<sup>45</sup> See also IPCC. 2018. pg 457

<sup>46</sup> IPCC. 2018, pg 458

organisations are by no means insignificant, [these] inhabit an often opaque ‘twilight’ area between the central state and the community [...] where mandates and everyday actions are often open to interpretation and where public authority and ‘reach’ are sometimes fragmented, ambiguous and contested... Nationally these disjunctures can be compartmentalised within different ministries; at the meso-level they are harder to ignore.”<sup>47</sup>

AF intended outcome aims to enhance benefits of direct access but lead to plausible unintended outcomes such that a national appropriation of the climate change agenda may be underway

In Cambodia, climate change has reached the highest corridors of political power (led by the National Commission for Sustainable Development, which is an apex body to five ministries), yet direct ODA to the Cambodian government has diminished in recent years due to democracy and human rights concerns. Multilateral windows of funding have thus become the opportunity for this government to gain international traction as well as climate change funding. In this way, the national government has positioned itself as a **single monolithic adaptation agent**. Another representation of this is the yearly learning events held by NCSA, which rather than sharing location-specific and bottom-up learning, aims to draw out existing practice to gain more traction and funding at the highest levels.

A results-based management (RBM) and **technocratic approach** to both implementation and to M&E reveals highly satisfactory achievements, but has failed to uncover unintended outcomes. The IPCC summarised as follows: “A narrow view of adaptation decision making, for example focused on technical solutions, tends to crowd out more participatory processes [...], obscures contested values, and reinforces power asymmetries.”<sup>48</sup> Similarly, a study in the region identified four framings for adaptation projects and concluded: “The *infrastructure, information, and capacity* frames are apolitical and privilege expert knowledge, whereas the *access* frame places rights and justice issues centrally, and thus holds more potential for addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities and supporting more just distribution of resources

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<sup>47</sup> Christoplos, I. 2016. Page 56.

<sup>48</sup> IPCC. 2018. pg 459

and power (*italics in the original*).”<sup>49</sup> This case study’s learning-based remit has opened a broader lens through which to challenge the way the Cambodian government reports favourable results from the project. Thus it has been able to reflect more openly on diverse impact pathways and sustainability problems possibly related to the adaptation interventions in their particular socio-political context.

AF intended outcome aims at resilience through concrete interventions but leads to plausible unintended outcomes that drive social-ecological systems towards tipping points

Design for adaptation interventions in the AFCPA project was found to be **ahistorical and un-contextualised**, instead of being embedded in ecological history and socio-political contexts. Nowhere in this project is history and context foregrounded to create a basis for choices of concrete interventions that are location specific, and furthermore local knowledge is at times ignored or overruled. Secondary literature at the time of project formulation is replete with warnings of forest, watershed and nearby wetland tipping points.<sup>50</sup>

The CCCD in 2009 called for integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and adaptation. This study shows that ten years later, given the extent, gravity and complexity of climate change impacts, the disaster-climate nexus can spin into undesirable pathways. The combination of ecological shock such as drought, together with resource extraction and community disempowerment, as evidenced in this case study, is **ripe for multi-level conflicts**. Thus, working on adaptation with the most vulnerable can benefit from the conflict sensitivity lens. In the humanitarian realm, attention has been directed to the finding that agencies and government actors themselves may be contributing, inadvertently, to tensions between groups, thus calling for ‘do no harm principles’ to be integrated throughout planning and implementation, and for assessment of dividers and connectors in conflict-prone settings.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Lebel L., et al. 2018.

<sup>50</sup> See for example: Archaeology and Development Foundation (2017); The Learning Institute. October (2012); International Rivers. 16. December 2014.

<sup>51</sup> UNOCHA / UNDP. 2015.

## Conclusions to Chapter 5

Figure 2 brought together various layers of analysis in this case study. First, it linked the CCI principles to the AF intended outcomes. A high level of correspondence could be found, though not all CCI principles had the same level of bearing on the intended outcome level. However, at results level and even more so when uncovering unintended outcomes by querying for impact and sustainability in this case study, the links back to the CCI principles are no longer evident. Instead maladaptation and path dependencies are surfaced when a learning-based approach is applied.

This chapter then went on to examine the connections between intended and unintended outcomes in detail, enabled by moving away from the primary data to analysis and explanation. With regard to vulnerability, this case study showed that maladaptation may occur despite the aim for adaptation, and further that the most vulnerable are showing early signs of increased vulnerability such as through displacement. With regard to the delivery of adaptation through participation, this case study found little iteration, innovation or multi-scalar involvement, leading to reinforced polarity and dependency that creates a fertile ground for conflict. With regard to Direct Access, this case study explained that the dual narrative employed by the government, as well as the technocratic approach to project management, contributed to an appropriation of the climate agenda by a singular, national actor. With regard to building resilience through concrete interventions, this case study found that project formulation did not account for contextual factors, and was thus not able to assess the continued degradation of the SES and its services for the communities and for future adaptation, while also playing into the nexus for conflict.

The analysis in this chapter moved from the particular findings to emergent patterns across project design and implementation, as well as patterns that lie at institutional and governance levels. The analysis was thus able to show pathways to maladaptation, entrenched path dependencies and reinforced power asymmetries. It also shows that adaptation is situated in both contested governance landscapes and contested physical landscapes, as well as in the context of uncertain climate futures. Through abduction the

analysis further superimposed theory from many streams of literature onto the patterns found in this case study. Interestingly, this required bringing together various bodies of literature and analysis, ranging from maladaptation literature to conflict analysis and that of the IPCC. In this way, this analysis has already given suggestions that resonate with the IPCC summary and the need for “inclusiveness, place-specific trade-off deliberations, redistributive measures, and procedural justice mechanisms to facilitate equitable transformation.”<sup>52</sup>

Drawing out patterns at once grounded in the particular setting of Cambodia and with relevance far beyond, sets the stage for the next chapter to draw out themes and recommendations with relevance to more places and more contexts than Cambodia. These are formulated as three main lessons with particular resonance for Sweden and its work with the Adaptation Fund.

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<sup>52</sup> IPCC. 2018. pg 459

## 6. Learning for Swedish AF influence

After describing the evidence and analysing the findings in the previous two chapters, this chapter aims to answer a sub-set of the CCI evaluation question 2: “What learning emerges from this case study which Sweden should consider in developing future development cooperation, especially in terms of climate financing and programming?”

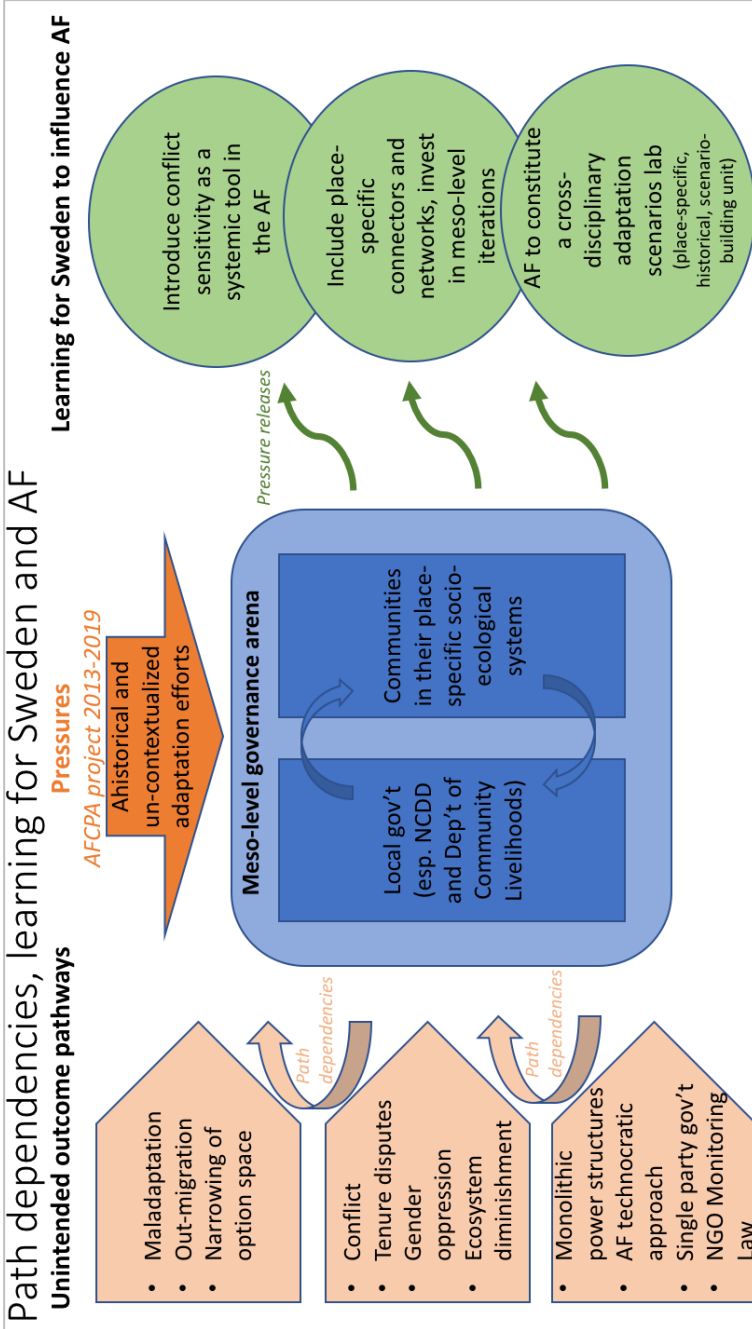
To contextualise the three learning offerings set out in this chapter, Figure 3 is shown overleaf.

The first noteworthy element in this model is the central blue box that represents the meso-level governance arena with two interacting sub-sets: local government agencies and actors, and communities in their place-specific context. Adaptation literature tells us that this meso-level is often unaddressed by donor agencies, and it is here that interactions between political actors, the state delivery mechanisms and communities take place. It is where climate change adaptation is actually delivered and its implementation negotiated. The literature names it a ‘twilight zone’<sup>53</sup> because of its central yet overlooked position in the system of delivering adaptation.

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<sup>53</sup> Christoplos, I. 2016.

**Figure 3: Path dependencies, learning for Sweden and AF**



A second feature of note in this model, is that it illustrates how the meso-level arena comes under pressure from the adaptation project. We have found that reasons for negative pressure being exerted revolve around the ahistorical and un-contextualised nature of the project's design and implementation.

As a third element, this pressure has led to possible path dependencies, shown in pink arrows on the left, which positioned the project for the plausible unintended outcomes.

The fourth element in this model shows three suggested pressure releases that together could help this system move away from these path dependencies. Other pressure releases and learning for Sweden and AF are possible, however given our close understanding of the evidence in this case study analysis, we have prioritised the following three learning elements. Each of the learning elements suggests an area in which Sweden should consider influencing the AF.

The first learning involves the introduction of conflict sensitivity as a systemic tool in the Adaptation Fund. The second learning is to include place-specific connectors and networks and to invest in meso-level iterations. The third learning suggests that the AF might constitute a global, cross-disciplinary adaptation scenarios lab that offers place-specific, historical, and scenario-building insights. The following sub-sections explore each of these learning elements in more detail, drawing on relevant literature and with offerings that can be considered relevant well beyond Sweden's climate ODA and the Adaptation Fund.

## **Learning 1 – Introduce conflict sensitivity as a systemic tool in the AF**

This Cambodia case study elicits some early warning signs at the intersection of ecological and social conflict signalled *inter alia* by polarities in power, contested tenure and maladaptation. Importantly, the country has a history of conflict with patterns that have become systemic<sup>54</sup>, and it can be considered likely that

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<sup>54</sup> Brinkley, J. 2011.



pressures from climate change are going to exacerbate or accelerate these patterns towards conflict.

Ten years after the CCCD suggesting that DRR and adaptation should be addressed together, this nexus is ripening at the current time as a setting for conflict. Poverty and vulnerability are oftentimes results of people having been deprived for a long time, with rights withheld, or violated on various grounds including access to resources. Climate change impact is most manifest where there is extreme vulnerability and thus a fertile ground for conflicts around topics such as rights and resources access, or where conflict has already become systemic. The climate crisis is now at a level of escalation as indicated in the Cambodia case.

Given the Adaptation Fund's mandate of addressing the poorest countries and most vulnerable communities that are impacted by climate change, we suggest this to be a conflict postulate that should be applied as a framework throughout planning, design, analysis, implementation and monitoring.

This study indicates that conflict analysis will become a systemic need in the most vulnerable communities impacted by climate change, and thus we recommend the introduction of conflict sensitivity as a systemic tool in the Adaptation Fund. Such tools are now relevant for adaptation actions for the most vulnerable and areas that historically have experienced conflict. Were the focus to remain on an RMB approach to adaptation, there are significant risks of being blind to ecological and social history and entrenching into path dependency; good results for project delivery may also get subsumed by elite capture – both can be seen in this case study. A 'do no harm' principle as used in conflict work should be operationalised in the Adaptation Fund, enabling expertise with a more cross-disciplinary range of design and analysis; this would augment good development approaches that are already in place within the AF.

Conflict analysis is a structured process of assessment and analysis to better understand a vulnerability profile, taking account of its background and history, the groups involved, each group's

perspective, identifying causes of conflict, and other aspects<sup>55</sup>. Further, conflict sensitivity recognises that all assistance has context, in other words, assistance (or adaptation interventions) do not fall onto neutral ground. Instead such interventions can set off their own chain of intended as well as unintended responses and reactions amongst and within groups.

Design aspects for conflict sensitivity involve 1) understanding the context, 2) analyzing dividers and sources of tension, 3) analyzing connectors and local capacities for social cohesion, 4) designing the assistance program, 5) analyzing the assistance program's impact on the context of conflict through actions and behaviours, 6) generating programming options alongside a risk analysis, and 7) testing programming options and redesign of the project<sup>56</sup>. It is therefore a highly dynamic analysis that needs to be updated as tensions and conflicts evolve. As part of the conflict sensitivity approach, we suggest the use of a principles based approach, as the CCI also applied, to allow enough flexibility for various contexts while at the same time setting boundaries. One such principle might be 'do no harm'<sup>57</sup> as widely used in overtly conflict-ridden situations.

Given Sweden's global leadership over the past decades in peace building, mediation, and conflict resolution, for example through the Folke Bernadotte Academy (and in the case of Cambodia, Sweden's role in the national arbitration council<sup>58</sup>), Sweden is very well positioned to advise the Adaptation Fund and provide expertise in this area.

For the AF, conflict sensitivity could well become a central part of how adaptation interventions are conceived, especially those for the most vulnerable upon which the AF is focused. Reminiscent of how Sweden brought in the gender lens to the Adaptation Fund, so that gender safeguards and planning are now firmly anchored in every project design and implementation, so in the present time,

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<sup>55</sup> UNOCHA / UNDP. 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, pp 5–7.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. Pg 4

<sup>58</sup> Swedish Embassy, interview. 16 July 2019

such an impetus from Sweden within the AF may focus on conflict sensitivity.

Furthermore, in this realm of conflict sensitivity there is also a need to focus on climate induced migration. As weather patterns and thus traditional (e.g. seasonal) migratory patterns shift and agricultural, forest or coastal subsistence systems are disturbed, climate induced migration becomes a reality. In this case study, a severely reduced resource base and access reveal that the next 10 years may well witness climate migrations out of AF field sites such as Kulen National Park. The next proximate ecosystem that communities would shift to is Tonle Sap, Cambodia's largest wetland and keystone ecosystem for national food security. Such migrations would place additional pressure on a system that is described to be already at the tipping point.

While out-migration can be a coping strategy, it can easily lead to maladaptation in other systems or for other people. Given its extensive peace-building work, Sweden will be aware that fleeing out of a conflict zones is a common coping strategy and may be able to advise the Adaptation Fund on necessary planning and monitoring tools in anticipation of climate induced migrations. Clearly, greater analysis of displacement and maladaptation from the commencement of project design, and through implementation as well as monitoring, is an essential element of climate related adaptation projects. This will further strengthen the Adaptation Fund to allow a more aware and nimble approach in situations of high vulnerability and work towards achieving desirable adaptation impacts.

## **Learning 2 – Include place-specific connectors and networks; invest in meso-level iterations**

This case study has shown that the project mainly works through government functionaries interacting with vulnerable communities in a meso-level arena where adaptation service delivery actually takes place. This suggests a linear institutional contact that is fraught with polarities between community and state, given historical trajectories.

Furthermore, the study did not find involvement of mediators<sup>59</sup> beside the government, nor did it evidence enriched networks of other institutions or self-organised efforts by the community. Also, support that would allow adaptation or livelihood options to be explored, tested and iterated was missing. In this way, the exclusion of mediating actors has narrowed innovation options in location-specific project sites.

We therefore recommend that place-specific connectors and networks as well as investments in meso-level iterations are included in all phases of Adaptation Fund projects to improve desired adaptation outcomes, especially towards uncertain futures.

Place-specific connectors might be persons such as scholars, local leaders, respected and trusted figures or institutions. Their role will typically be to stabilize and mediate cohesion for making good collective choices (such as considering which adaptation or livelihood options to try out), negotiating with government (on selection of adaptation locale, timing, delivery method, etc.) or bringing to bear networks that assist with collaborative decision-making.

Networks in this context can be organizations, resource centers, and knowledge access systems. These may also support community decision-making, especially surrounding trial and error or experimentation, or may connect to other sets of knowledge fields that feed into the adaptation actions and risk assessments to be made in a place-specific way.

Meso-level iterations are trial and error and learning processes that collaboratively adjust, alter and learn from the adaptation project interventions. They are evidenced through variations of project delivery from place to place, reflecting a negotiated and collaborative approach to adaptation interventions.

Viewed as a combination of connectors, networks and meso-level iterations, inclusion of this combination into Adaptation Fund project framings will release the tensions of path dependencies and unintended outcomes. Our recommendation to the Adaptation

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<sup>59</sup> Also referred to in the literature as ‘intermediaries’. See e.g. Kilelu et al. (2011).

Fund is thus to systemically design for connectors, networks and meso-level iterations as these are safeguards for communities that are climate vulnerable and for settings that are conflict-prone. This is important enough to specifically require project design requirements and commitments to encourage and fund these elements as part of project proposals.

The connectors terminology comes from network theory and resilience literature, and more recently has also found its way into conflict research that differentiates between connectors and dividers<sup>60</sup>. It is therefore crucial that adaptation approaches are not only conscious of the actors in this contested meso-level space, but are invested in diversifying approaches, viewpoints, and networks.

In other country settings, NGOs sometimes take up the role of connectors, conduits, facilitators and observers in this meso-level arena. These are not necessarily operational mediators, but actors who can shed light on different histories and futures while joining the meso-level negotiations. In the present case study, for example, the AFCPA project worked with the divider, which is the government, and missed out on working with connectors, which could have been anthropologists, ecological historians, journalists, foundations, academia, and others, but also could have been the Swedish Embassy with its history of development investments in the country as well as its intensive support to the Adaptation Fund itself.

### **Learning 3 – AF as adaptation scenarios lab**

The case study noted an adaptation project that did not pay sufficient attention to place-specific ecological history and socio-political context. Thus, path dependencies leading to unintended outcomes may have plausibly been further reinforced.

We suggest that the Adaptation Fund, being a small fund, can develop the agility to ‘mirror’ the system it wants to influence towards achieving desirable adaptation impacts.

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<sup>60</sup> See e.g.: UNOCHA / UNDP. 2015.

The Adaptation Fund’s recent evaluation noted that “the Adaptation Fund’s knowledge products are currently centered on institutional processes and activities and documentation is only emerging on portfolio experiences.”<sup>61</sup> We suggest a step beyond ‘documentation’ to use AF’s extensive knowledge on adaptation for the most vulnerable in order to become a learning institution that is more future oriented to the climate realities that are emerging. The IPCC asserted that effective adaptation for development requires “co-learning among communities of practice at different scales”.<sup>62</sup>

To commence this, we recommend for the Adaptation Fund to constitute an ‘adaptation scenarios lab’ as a needs-based unit with the objectives to understand histories, governance context and present options for place-specific adaptation, and to apply its expertise for developing scenarios, risks, and future choices. The adaptation scenarios lab could be an on-call-group of global specialists, including a range of cross-disciplinary specialists who have a particular understanding of meso-level arenas where climate decisions are made and negotiated.

To start, the adaptation scenarios lab might collect sub-project i.e. community level perspectives from across the Adaptation Fund portfolio. Based thereon, it could create perspectives and draw up pathways based on a contextualised understanding of location-specific project site and model these into larger thematic areas.

The framings of the adaptation scenarios lab could reach well beyond the work of the Adaptation Fund to become a knowledge source for different communities of practice, including for other multilaterals, with regional learning initiatives, and with reach right down into ecosystem based learning. The Adaptation Fund evaluation suggested: “The feedback loops and learning within the Adaptation Fund and with other climate finance partners needs to be institutionalized in an organized manner”<sup>63</sup>, whereas the suggested scenarios lab could even act as a think tank to support other multi-lateral funds.

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<sup>61</sup> Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund. Final Report, 04 June 2018. pg xiii

<sup>62</sup> IPCC. 2018. pg 459

<sup>63</sup> Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund. Final Report, 04 June 2018. pg 51

Finally, such a lab would be well advised to draw upon Sweden's in-country resources, including but not limited to the Stockholm Resilienc Centre, as well as experts from academia, governance and from within the Adaptation Fund panel of consultants, and others.

## 7. Final Reflections

In this final chapter, consolidated reflections of our findings are set out on why the unintended outcomes of the AFPCA happened, what the literature says about these problems and what Sweden might do within the AF while relating to global research on delivery of desirable adaptation to climate change among the most vulnerable.

Our AF Cambodia case study shows that unintended outcomes are plausible in a context of socio-ecological contradictions and conflict. Climate change adaptation efforts like those discussed in our case study “might be going softly, silently awry”<sup>64</sup>. Both place-specific social and ecological context has been significantly overlooked in the AFPCA project. Further the meso-level arena at which adaptation service delivery is negotiated between community and state is also unexamined. A narrow view of adaptation decision-making, for example focused on technical solutions, tends to crowd out more participatory processes<sup>65</sup>.

New literature on adaptation shows that many projects across the world are not helping the most vulnerable, instead strengthening established sectors and particular interests<sup>66</sup>. In consequence it happens that projects may “constrain adaptation futures by reinforcing dominant political-economic structures and processes”<sup>67</sup> – systemic attributes of winning and losing impacts of adaptation projects include enclosure, exclusion, encroachment and entrenchment<sup>68</sup>. We discuss very similar problems in the AFPCA project.

But this does not mean that contributions to Cambodia or adaptation actions should be curtailed. Instead we suggest that Sweden ought to use its relative advantage to introduce conflict sensitivity, incorporate project design for meso-level iterations and persuade the AF to set up an adaptation scenarios lab at the global

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<sup>64</sup> Sovacool, B. Linner, B. (2016). pg 2.

<sup>65</sup> Lawrence, J. and M. Haasnoot, (2017).

<sup>66</sup> Ford, J.D., Berrang-Ford, L., & Paterson, J. (2011).

<sup>67</sup> IPCC. 2018. pg 458

<sup>68</sup> Sovacool, B. Linner, B. (2016).



level. Overall these measures would contribute to adaptation pathway approaches to prepare for 1.5°C warmer futures with “considerations for inclusiveness, place-specific trade-off deliberations, redistributive measures, and procedural justice mechanisms to facilitate equitable transformation”<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> IPCC. 2018, pg 459

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# Appendix 1 AFPCA Cambodia outcomes

Key AF intended outcomes	AF's own Cambodia evaluations	Evidence from government	Community evidence and observations	Plausible unintended outcomes
<p><b>Addressing the most vulnerable (incl. gender)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invoke existing national 'gender sensitivity' without project-specific gender strategy.<sup>i</sup></li> <li>• Cambodia ranks 146<sup>th</sup> of 189 countries on the HDI. Siam Reap is one of the poorest provinces in the country, with over 30% of the population living below the national poverty line.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Improvements to the inclusion of national level gender inclusion should have occurred at the project design stage as no gender disaggregated data exists in the logframe".<sup>ii</sup></li> <li>• "The project directly addresses both climate hazards and underlying drivers of population vulnerability [...] vulnerable communities are supported through eco-agriculture and other interventions which enable them to remain in their traditional communities, improve health and livelihoods, and enhance the integrity of the surrounding forest".<sup>iii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We have monitored parity in attendance such as during trainings, but there is no evidence of shifts in leadership roles. The cultural backlog is not focus of the project".<sup>iv</sup></li> <li>• Central government emphasises Cambodia being highly climate vulnerable. Discourse and research, incl. assessing cost-benefit of climate impacts, remain about economic growth, and government fails to recognise vulnerabilities and inequalities within Cambodian society.<sup>v</sup></li> <li>• "Rather than imposing gender safeguards, we need flexibility to contextualise gender to our specific challenges".<sup>vi</sup></li> <li>• "Communities are first frontier of climate change, so local action is required".<sup>vii</sup></li> <li>• Microfinance and saving schemes have history of corruption and entrenching vulnerability.<sup>viii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community dialogues reveal submissive position of women (give disclaimer about not knowing about climate change, abusive language by men) in relation to men and to government officials.</li> <li>• Most vulnerable (i.e. elderly women) seen begging on access road.</li> <li>• Community says alternative livelihoods are not enough to sustain them and they have diminished rights to forest use (45 hectares confiscated by government for reforestation within the 306 ha of the Chop Tasok CPA in Phnom Kulen National Park).</li> <li>• Community savings are done through the local commune (i.e. party members). This was revealed to be a highly</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sustained hierarchical relationships vulnerability and gender disparities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most vulnerable showing early signs of displacement out of forest ecosystems.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: hierarchical relationships triangulated in EBA Cambodia Democracy Study (2019).*</i></p>

			<p>contentious issue because commune had not accounted for community savings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At national level, forest resistance movements and activism driven by women.<sup>x</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Key AF intended outcomes</b>	<b>AF's own Cambodia evaluations</b>	<b>Evidence from government</b>	<b>Community evidence and observations</b>	<b>Plausible unintended outcomes</b>
<p><b>Delivery of climate change adaptation through inclusiveness and participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interventions are “response to community requests”.<sup>xi</sup></li> <li>“consultative and participatory approach” in implementation<sup>xii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Some express that local-level knowledge, insight, and requests are ignored or overruled, such as the expectation that villagers should plant trees or crops even if they know these cannot grow in local soil. There is a sense from some that decisions are pre-determined by outside experts and that the project cannot or will not change track to take into account local knowledge and experience in an ongoing way”.<sup>xiii</sup></li> <li>“No tangible evidence can be found regarding economic or social externalities which may have</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project was conceived at COP, where UNEP introduced national manager to technical consultants from RSA.<sup>xv</sup></li> <li>“We ... sent government employees with questionnaires to 50-60 CPAs in Cambodia. Based on these results we selected the 5 most vulnerable”.<sup>xvi</sup></li> <li>Highlight need for and encourages flexibility of design and implementation with changing circumstances.<sup>xvii</sup></li> <li>“One cannot transform social structures through climate adaptation work, but can understand multiple routes to addressing social and ecological vulnerabilities”.<sup>xviii</sup></li> <li>“We also worked with the branch of government that had been involved with establishing CPAs and provide the ongoing support to CPAs”.<sup>xix</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews showed that local community played a weak participatory role in the design and evolution of the project. Their critical abilities were poor, either because they could not think critically or because they could not express criticism in front of government officials.</li> <li>Local Communities are selected by the commune councillor (party member), relevant authorities, forest administration and influential local people.<sup>xxiv</sup></li> <li>Very noticeable was the power differential between how the government was seen as the provider of services and the community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reinforcing state-community polarities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Decentralise to centralise”: decentralized government service delivery to communities increases centralized political power.</li> <li>Top down delivery mechanisms reinforce community dependency on government.</li> <li>Funds from global AF level bypass local expertise, incl. that at Swedish embassy despite significant Swedish funds to AF, and no CSO intermediaries.</li> </ul>

	<p>impacted on project implementation to date. In fact, based on interviews conducted during the field mission with project partners, the review finds that certain external risk factors (including institutional change within the MoE) appear to have been mostly well considered and managed".<sup>xiv</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42 international consultants had been planned for this project; they were reduced to 16 in order to increase government teams at local levels.<sup>xx</sup></li> <li>• MoE, which has jurisdiction over national parks, used opportunity of existing trust with CPAs for project delivery.<sup>xxi</sup></li> <li>• "One of the keys [to success of AFCPA] was that they addressed the right problem. You deal directly with the affected communities, supporting community protected areas, and supporting livelihoods".<sup>xxii</sup></li> <li>• There is a deficit of linking natural resources to a rights based approach in Cambodia, thus recommend investments in education and rights sectors.<sup>xxiii</sup></li> </ul>	<p>as the recipient. Reflected in the use of Khmer words 'children' for community and parents for government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every meeting is hosted by Department of Environment officials, who say community is lazy and unresponsive. Community members referred questions to government employees or sometimes community leader.</li> <li>• Kulen National Park rangers office location is supported by the AF project, yet the power and body language of the rangers who use this office is more like a military and aggressive stance to outsiders, including locals.</li> <li>• Political party propaganda signs are located next to AF project boards, and they encourage the local population to vote for the ruling party.</li> <li>• It was felt that the AF project unintentionally reinforces the single party rule by</li> </ul>	
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			<p>demonstrating public service in exchange for local votes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO's that receive international funding are 'not in the good eye of the government and civil society space is clearly shrinking.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Key AF intended outcomes</b></p> <p><b>Attributes of Direct Access:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased national ownership</li> <li>Strengthen readiness for climate financing</li> <li>Transparency through full project cycle</li> </ul>	<p><b>AF's own Cambodia evaluations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Ensure a close involvement of the National Committee for Sub-national Democratic Development (NCDD) in all adaptation mainstreaming activities into Communal Investment Plans to secure ownership of AFCPA activities."<sup>xxv</sup> i.e. Ministry of Interior structures used to scale up and out.</li> <li>"The program has a high profile within the Ministry of Environment and, therefore nationally. This high profile is seen as both a cause and result of its successes to date. The support and interest at high levels has been an enabling factor which contributes to</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evidence from government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project is "Cambodia led and UNE flavoured"<sup>xxvii</sup></li> <li>"This is not really a direct access project. UNE plays a necessary audit role, both financially and technically, such as when Cambodia wanted to do roadside plantation, we have to ensure that the activities are adaptation related"<sup>xxviii</sup></li> <li>UNE has no presence in Cambodia; distance presents opportunity to be flexible, but is also seen also as a challenge for project efficiency such as some delay in release of funds. "UNE has an adaptive approach, instead of telling us what to do they consult us"<sup>xxix</sup></li> <li>"Local government teams were employed to build trust with local communities" showing that there is a</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community evidence and observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community in buffer zones of Kulen National Park engaged in a sudden rush of slash and burn in the face of forest concessions given by the government, and planted cashew. They aimed to claim use rights for the land. There was a great surge of such forest clearing 7 to 8 years ago, which corresponds to the age of the cashew. AF project with support of the same government came to tell communities to stay away from forest and replanted areas in the promise to be provided alternative sources of income.</li> <li>"We love and hate the forest. We love it because it gives us</li> </ul>	<p><b>Plausible unintended outcomes</b></p> <p><b>Appropriation of CC agenda in single party rule</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National level ownership in relation to climate change agenda is manifest – interface with COP is positive.</li> <li>Local government relation to communities remains authoritarian and non-inclusive.</li> <li>While internal path dependencies of authoritarian regime persist, climate finance is expected to grow: national government forecasts large multilateral climate change funds flowing into</li> </ul>



	<p>effective program management. Although NGOs and other actors have successfully implemented similar interventions, stakeholder interviews suggest that the project’s position within the Ministry of Environment both legitimizes it and allows it to serve as a springboard to scale up and out. Key players are exploring funding options to do just that.”<sup>xxxvi</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence on transparency.</li> </ul>	<p>trust deficit. This, i.a., delayed project start by nearly two years.<sup>xxx</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High national ownership of project, e.g. “we decided to build road rest areas from project funds to have something tangible – which is what we call adaptation – rather than just documents, and we felt community needed it”<sup>,xxx</sup></li> <li>• Cambodia hosts yearly, high-level learning events for bottom-up learning about climate adaptive practices. In turn, these create political buy-in for the climate agenda at national level. Climate change agenda is part of highest corridors of political power (NCS D). The government thus ups its international COP image.<sup>xxxii</sup></li> <li>• Government is expecting to be accredited by GCF (PWC evaluation of NCS D helped with this) and is developing a 13 mio dollar proposal, based on successes of AF project. They note that even UNE sees this as a highly successful project. The government portrays enhanced national confidence in raising further climate financing.<sup>xxxiii</sup></li> </ul>	<p>a livelihood, and we hate it because we cannot use it. What we have from the farms is not enough, so we need more support. The alternatives are inadequate”<sup>,xxxvii</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community land was given by the government as a gift to veterans who had helped the current government get into power. Community in the local elections of 2017 voted out the standing party. As government wanted to gain back votes, the community started to bargain. In this way, the community got their land back and promised to vote for the leading party next time.<sup>xxxviii</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Cambodia in expectation of NIE accreditation.</p> <p><i>Note: triangulates double narrative described in Brinkley (2011).<sup>xxxix</sup></i></p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The national development agenda supersedes the climate agenda”.<sup>xxxiv</sup></li> <li>• Communities struggle even with support to get communal land titles, but are still scared government may give it away with land concessions or anyone with money may claim area.<sup>xxxv</sup></li> <li>• Ministry of Interior is responsible for implementation of NGO Law of 2016, of which key monitoring points are natural resources, human rights advocacy, and land tenure. Civic space is increasingly limited. Ministry of Interior for its devolved work has NCDD structures.<sup>xxxvi</sup></li> </ul>		
<b>Key AF intended outcomes</b>	<b>AF’s own Cambodia evaluations</b>	<b>Evidence from government</b>	<b>Community evidence and observations</b>	<b>Plausible unintended outcomes</b>
<b>Resilient Communities through Concrete Interventions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restore protected areas through multi-use forests</li> <li>• Agroforestry</li> <li>• Provide alternative livelihoods in CPAs<sup>xl</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Reforestation efforts are proving more problematic insofar as the seedlings are dying, although the Project Management Unit is aware of this issue and is trying to address this. [...] Nevertheless, the project is overall strong, sound, and on the right track.”<sup>xli</sup></li> <li>• “One area of improvement typically cited by</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Two largest problems of project are community forest tenure and large scale logging concessions in protected areas (2013-2016)”<sup>xlv</sup></li> <li>• “Large scale logging was driven by economic interests within the protected areas. These overruled ecological concerns. No concessions were given since 2016”<sup>xlvi</sup></li> <li>• “Communities practiced ‘slash and burn’ agriculture to lay claim to land in the face of forest concessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luxury wood (Siamese Rosewood – already considered in AFCPA project proposal) is very slow growing (at least 60 years to harvest) and extremely valuable (“more valuable than gold”), thus doubtful that communities can reap profit.</li> <li>• Rainwater ponds and reservoirs fed from perennial springs were seen as nearly</li> </ul>	<b>Driving social-ecological system towards tipping points</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of ecological scale and history is inadequate to create adaptive responses that would alter entrenched pathways.</li> <li>• Indications of ecological displacement of local communities have</li> </ul>

	<p>stakeholders are the tree planting activities. Two issues people agree on are that there is more focus on good tree nurseries than on a comprehensive reforestation strategy and that the villagers just plant the seedlings anywhere in order to collect the cash benefit. The underlying reason for the latter issue is that the villagers expect the seedlings to die....”<sup>xlii</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The most successful aspects of the AFCPA project most definitely are those interventions that relate to the supply or management of water [and] are believed to contribute most towards the achievement sustainable project outcomes and results. Hence it is recommended that the project keep the focus on the importance on water supply in tandem with the importance of climate</li> </ul>	<p>around 2013, thus extensive cashew plantations in protected areas”<sup>xlvii</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Initial proposal foresaw restoration but then we altered it to ‘tailored restoration’ or enhancement planting and agroforestry. Some are multi-use (fruit and fodder) trees, some are for luxury wood but these are also indigenous” given to the communities as incentive to stay away from plantations.<sup>xlviii</sup></li> <li>• “Cambodian economy is increasingly shifting from agriculture to manufacturing.”<sup>xlix</sup></li> <li>• “The success of the project is due to working directly with the communities, supporting CPAs and livelihoods by diversifying incomes. We have taken an adaptive approach based on good baseline data. We trained local union council to receive inputs from the community”.<sup>l</sup></li> <li>• “National parks are under the legal jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment. Buffer zones allow for customary use by communities. In 2013-2016 when land concessions were allotted, communities asserted their rights by clearing and planting</li> </ul>	<p>dried up despite wet it being season. Domestic water taps and plant nurseries are inadequately supplied with freshwater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some income reported from NTFPs.</li> <li>• Communities say enhanced home gardens are not enough, and they lost their rights to use the forest.</li> <li>• Some community members are already migrating out to look for work such as construction.</li> <li>• Water scarcity and seed quality is a problem; community fears that project inputs will diminish after project completion.</li> <li>• Community has demarcated 50% of their protected forests, request visitors for inputs for rest of demarcation.<sup>lv</sup></li> <li>• Kulen mountain is a watershed to Tonle Sap, already described in 2017 as wetland at point of no return<sup>lvi</sup>. Kulen itself is 80% deforested and</li> </ul>	<p>become apparent in protected area (Tonle Sap, adjacent SES is also in crisis).</p>
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	<p>change (the latter sometimes being often too technical and not broadly understood as a “concept” unless the focus relates to the supply or water).<sup>xiii</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize extensive forest degradation, state that restoration benefits will accrue to entire community.</li> <li>Overall both evaluations find this to be a model project, scalable, innovative, and highly satisfactory.</li> <li>Innovations in this model project that others can learn from; AF projects are often the first in the country.<sup>xiv</sup></li> </ul>	<p>cashews. This became saleable asset for communities.<sup>iii</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“in 2015 we legally confiscated 45 hectares from the community and reforested them under the AF project, while offering luxury wood and alternative livelihoods to communities. This reforestation is important as Kulen mountain is the watershed to supply Siam Reap’s tourism industry”.<sup>iii</sup></li> <li>Valuable natural resources (luxury wood, rattan) are extensively smuggled out of the country without value addition.<sup>iii</sup></li> <li>“Cambodia is replacing natural environments with monoculture” while majority of economic growth is based on natural resources.<sup>iv</sup></li> </ul>	<p>substituted with cashew, which by observation are 7-8 years old and only start giving fruit after 10 years. The area is facing drought.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forest restoration efforts in patches appear to be too small and too late to impact the larger watershed. Project disregarded ecological scale of problem and adequacy of solutions.</li> </ul>	
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<sup>1</sup> AFCPA project / programme proposal. 11. June 2012

<sup>1</sup> UNDP. 2018. HDI. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2014. Country Poverty Analysis. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/151706/cambodia-country-poverty-analysis-2014.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018. pg xi

<sup>1</sup> Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund. Final Report, 04 June 2018. pg 129

<sup>1</sup> Project management, interview. 17. July 2019

<sup>1</sup> National management (NCS), interview. 18. July 2019

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- <sup>1</sup> AFCPA project / programme proposal. 11. June 2012. pg 2
- <sup>1</sup> AFCPA project / programme proposal. 11. June 2012. pg 32
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- <sup>1</sup> National management (Ministry of Environment), interview 15 July 2019
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- <sup>1</sup> Swedish Embassy, interview. 16 July 2019
- <sup>1</sup> Interviews and observations from an NGOs project site. 19 July 2019
- <sup>1</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018. pg xiii
- <sup>1</sup> Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund. Final Report, 04 July 2018. pg 127
- <sup>1</sup> Project management, interview. 17. July 2019
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- <sup>1</sup> Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund. Final Report, 04 June 2018. pg 127
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- <sup>1</sup> Alessandro Marazzi Sassoon. 1. August 2017. "The point of no return". The Phnom Penh.

## Appendix 2: Planned CPA restoration and enrichment planting

<b>CPA name</b>	<b>CPA size</b>	<b>Restoration and enrichment planting by AFCPA as % of CPA area (and in ha)</b>	<b>Restoration as % of total Protected Area (and in ha)</b>
<b>Chop Tasok</b>	306 ha	50% / 37% (153 ha / 113 ha)	0.4% (Phnom Kulen National Park: 37,500 ha)
<b>Ronouk Khgeng</b>	1737 ha	50% / 5% (869 ha / 89 ha)	0.4% (Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary: 225,000 ha)
<b>Chom Thlork</b>	4684 ha	50% / 30% (2342 ha / 1403 ha)	0.2% (Beng Per Wildlife Sanctuary: 242,500 ha)
<b>Skor Mreach</b>	3449 ha	50% / 19% (1724 ha / 642 ha)	
<b>Chiork Beung-prey</b>	1500 ha	50% / 3% 750 ha / 41.5 ha	

*Own calculations*

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<sup>i</sup> AFCPA project / programme proposal. 11. June 2012

<sup>ii</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018. pg xi

<sup>iii</sup> Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund. Final Report, 04 June 2018. pg 129

<sup>iv</sup> Project management, interview. 17. July 2019

<sup>v</sup> National management (NCSD), interview. 18. July 2019

<sup>vi</sup> National management (NCSD), interview. 18. July 2019

<sup>vii</sup> Interior Ministry, interview. 15 July 2019

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<sup>xiii</sup> Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund. Final Report, 04 June 2018. pg 127

<sup>xiv</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018. pg ix

<sup>xv</sup> National management (Ministry of Environment), interview 15 July 2019

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<sup>xxv</sup> Mid Term Review AFCPA. Final Report, April 2018. pg xiii

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- xlv Project management, interview. 17. July 2019
- xlvi Project management, interview. 17. July 2019



The international Adaptation Fund (AF) finances adaptation interventions in poor countries. The Cambodia case shows, among other things, that even though projects are positively assessed, they may still, under certain conditions, lead to maladaptation. Connectors at intermediate level are needed to avoid this from happening.