

CAMBODIA



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Swiss Agency for Development
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NURTURING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN CAMBODIA (NURTURE) - PHASE I



School garden in Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia

Photo@ Caritas

BACKGROUND

Cambodia's climate vulnerability is characterized by frequent flooding, droughts, storms, and irregular rainfall, as well as an agrarian economy, low human and financial resources, insufficient physical infrastructure, and limited access to technology. Women and marginalized groups are the most affected by climate change. According to data from the last 20 years, production losses were primarily caused by flooding (62%), and drought (36%). The proportion of the population living below the national poverty line nearly doubled to about 18% during the COVID-19 crisis. The country has wide access to water, but only 2% of total surface water is utilized. Around 2,300 irrigation schemes in the country irrigate only 1.2 million hectares, or 22% of total arable land, and most of them are not or only partially operational. There are therefore two key challenges in irrigation: the lack of irrigation schemes and the failure to sustainably manage the existing ones.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has shown a strong commitment to mitigate against and adapt to climate change. Cambodia is a co-signatory of the Paris Agreement, and at the end of 2021, it submitted a plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, known as the "Long-term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality (LTS4CN)" to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). RGC has steadily increased its funding and expenditure on climate change adaptation and mitigation over the years. In 2022, the budget for agriculture and water combined was USD 180 million.

Responding to these challenges and opportunities, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), together with the two Swiss NGOs, Caritas and HEKS, have developed the project "Nurturing Climate Resilience in Cambodia" (Nurture) in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries through the General Department of Agriculture and the provincial departments of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology.

OBJECTIVES

Nurture's overall goal is to make vulnerable smallholder farming households and their communities more resilient to climate change and to increase their incomes through climate proofing of agro-ecosystems.

Three specific outcomes will be achieved:

Outcome 1: Vulnerable smallholder farmers have increased yields and reduced climate risks through better and more stable access to water for irrigation.

Outcome 2: Vulnerable smallholder farmers and their communities benefit from improved social accountability, planning and policies related to climate change adaptation.

Outcome 3: Vulnerable smallholder farmers adopt agro-ecological practices and diversify their sources of income.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE:

Duration
 Inception phase: Feb - Dec 2022
 Phase I: 1 Dec 2022 - 31 Dec 2026

Budget
 Total budget: USD 9,468,000
 Swiss contribution: CHF 4,200,000

Implementing Agencies
 - HEKS/EPER (Swiss Church Aid)
 - Caritas Switzerland

Other partners
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
 - Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM)

EXPECTED RESULTS

By the end of phase I in 2026: 6,000 farmers will benefit from increased yields, income, and reduced climate risks as a result of improved and more stable irrigation water access. 5,300 farmers will have used proper agro-ecological practices; 2,500 people will have participated in community-led platform dialogues; Ten climate change adaptation business models for vulnerable farmers have been piloted, with four being scaled up; and 36 commune climate change adaptation and irrigation management plans finalized, including with commune budget allocation and prioritization for implementation.

APPROACH

Nurture Phase I strengthens the climate resilience of smallholder farmers using a systemic approach and will address a range of problems associated with financial, technical, institutional, and informational gaps that prevent farmers from transitioning to greater levels of resilience.

Nurture will create synergies and coordinate with ongoing projects. It builds on the successful results of the SDC-CHAIN project by integrating experiences in smart water solutions, water governance, lead farmers’ incubator and extension approach, private sector engagement, and collaboration with district and provincial authorities.

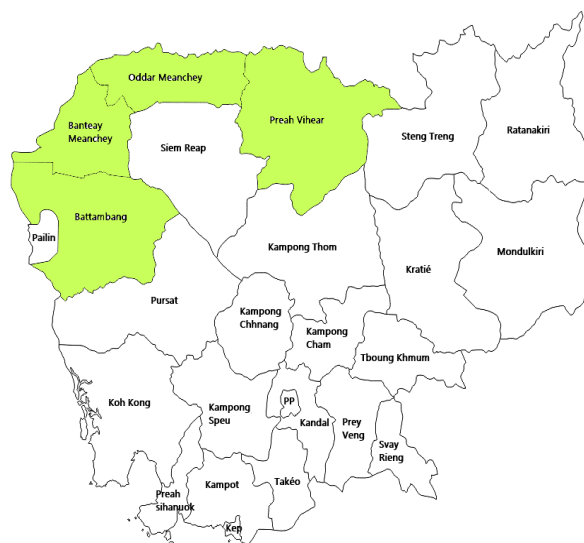
Nurture will also build on projects implemented by Caritas, including the Community Based DRR-Integrity Management Toolbox for Irrigation to address governance issues and the Green Cashew Project, using HEKS’ market system development approach to promote the inclusion of poor people in local market systems to secure better access to quality agricultural inputs and quality services for sustainable year-round and market-oriented production of diverse, safe products and to gain higher incomes.

Furthermore, Nurture will build on synergies with SDC projects in the Governance and Citizen Participation Portfolio: the ISD project in improving the delivery of services related to climate-change adaptation and water at the district and municipal levels; and the ISAF project in strengthening the development process of commune development and investment plans by increasing the accountability of office bearers and enhancing the currently weak coordination among the key concerned ministries at the provincial level.

The project will further coordinate with loan projects by IFAD: The Agriculture Services Programme for Inclusive Rural Economy and Agricultural Trade (ASPIRE-AT) project, which concentrates on smallholder farmers and provides credits and grants for productive assets of producer organizations and agriculture cooperatives; and the AFD: Water for Cambodia (WAT4CAM) project, working on the rehabilitation and extension of irrigation systems.

TARGET GROUPS AND PROJECT LOCATION

In its first phase, 15,000 households (70,500 men, women, and LNOB people) living in 36 communes of 12 districts in the four provinces of Oddar Meanchey, Preah Vihear, Battambang, and Banteay Meanchey will directly benefit from improved access to public and private services, become more resilient to climate change, and have increased incomes through agro-ecological farming systems, and approximately 88,000 will benefit indirectly.



Target provinces highlighted in green colour

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