

REDD AND POVERTY IN CAMBODIA

Robin Biddulph

Focali Report

2012:03



Focali - Forest, Climate and Livelihood research network - Focali is a Swedish research network focusing on forest, bioenergy, climate change and poverty issues. Researchers from a broad range of Swedish universities and institutions are part of the network. Focali aims to increase the flow of relevant information between scientists, government authorities, industry, and civil society in Sweden and Internationally. Focali further focuses on tools responding to the identified challenges such as: improved land and forest management, responsible land and forest investments and certification schemes.

This publication may be reproduced in full or in part if accompanied with the following quotation: Biddulph,R. 2012. *REDD and Poverty in Cambodia*, Focali Report No 2012:03, Gothenburg

Cover photo: Transportation of charcoal in Siem Reap. Demand for fuel from urban centers are provides a strong incentive for rural villagers to harvest wood unsustainably. Photo: Robin Biddulph.

More information about Focali and other Focali publications can be found on www.focali.se

Postal address:
Focali
Box 170
405 30 Gothenburg,
Sweden

ISBN: 978-91-86402-27-3



This document has been financed by **Sida** in collaboration with **the Swedish Forest Agency** and **the Swedish Forestry Association**. It does not necessarily reflect the view of these main partners. Responsibility for its contents rests entirely with the author.



Content: REDD and Poverty in Cambodia

SUMMARY:	1
1.BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE	6
1.1 FORESTS AND GOVERNANCE IN CAMBODIA	7
1.1.1 <i>Cambodian Political Economy and Forests</i>	7
1.2 AID AND FOREST POLICY AND PRACTICE 1991-2010	9
1.2.1 <i>Support to the Forest Concession System</i>	9
1.2.2 <i>The Rise of Community Forestry</i>	10
1.2.3 <i>The National Forestry Programme</i>	12
1.3 FOREST PEOPLE	13
1.3.1 <i>Forest People’s Livelihoods in Cambodia</i>	13
1.3.2 <i>Forest People’s Activism in Cambodia</i>	14
2.REDD IN CAMBODIA	15
2.1 NATIONAL REDD PREPARATIONS	15
2.2 INTERNATIONAL NGOs SUPPORT DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.....	16
2.2.1 <i>REDD Pilot Community Forestry Carbon Credit in Oddar Meanchey</i>	17
2.2.2 <i>The Seima Protection Forest REDD Project</i>	18
2.3 PROSPECTS FOR REDD	19
3.PRO-POOR REDD: PROSPECTS AND RESEARCH ISSUES	21
3.1 DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS (AND OPPORTUNITY COSTS) OF REDD PAYMENTS.....	21
3.1.1 <i>Context for financial transfers</i>	21
3.1.2 <i>Oddar Meanchey Communities guaranteed a portion of net incomes</i>	22
3.1.3 <i>Community benefits compromised because start-up costs not funded</i>	22
3.1.4 <i>Additionality: Impact of REDD on Funding for Forest People</i>	23
3.1.5 <i>Scale and Distribution of benefits to the community</i>	23
3.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REDD AND POOR PEOPLE’S LIVELIHOODS.....	24
3.2.1 <i>Evidence of win-win as avoided deforestation supports livelihoods</i>	25
3.2.2 <i>Evidence of trade-offs as forest dwelling people rely on deforestation and post-forest land use</i>	26
3.3 IMPACT OF REDD ON TENURE SECURITY FOR THE POOR	27
3.3.1 <i>Securing Agricultural Plots for Forest People</i>	27
3.3.2 <i>Achieving Secure Forest Tenure</i>	29
3.3.3 <i>Indigenous People’s Communal Tenure</i>	30
3.4 RIGHTS AND POWER OF FOREST PEOPLE WITHIN AND BEYOND REDD	31
3.4.1 <i>Rights and Powers within Communities</i>	31
3.4.2 <i>Community Role in Negotiating Benefits in Pilots</i>	31
3.4.3 <i>Consultation and Information on REDD</i>	32
3.4.4 <i>Discursive Power and Disempowerment</i>	33
3.4.5 <i>Broader issues of Rights and Empowerment</i>	33
4.CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE AUTHOR	34
REFERENCES	35

Summary:

In modern Cambodia, forests have sheltered revolutionary guerrilla movements, been cleared for security reasons, and then logged commercially by parties to the conflict to finance their struggles. Following the Paris Peace Agreements of 1991 and the UN sponsored elections in 1993 deforestation and forest degradation have been continued as opposing factions continued at first to struggle for power and then a new elite sought to consolidate its dominance.

While figures for forest degradation are not available, deforestation has been long-term and rapid. During the last quarter of the twentieth century it proceeded at 0.7% per annum and despite a logging ban in 2002 it continued at 0.5% per annum during 2000-2005¹. While central political struggles and deforestation and degradation have been closely linked, the direct local agents of deforestation have been top down in the form of logging, then agricultural and mining concessions issued to national and international companies, and bottom up in the form of migration of smallholders into forest areas.

Ranking 139 (of 187) in the 2011 Human Development Index, Cambodia remains one of the poorer countries in the world. Many of Cambodia's poorer rural population are directly dependent on forests for a small but often important element of their livelihoods. If Reduced Emissions from avoided Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) are to be implemented on any meaningful scale in Cambodia they therefore carry important opportunities and threats for poor people in the country.

During the 1990s forest policy and official development assistance focused on achieving poverty reduction aims by increasing revenues from forest through the effective management of a forest concession system. More recently, culminating in the National Forest Programme 2010-2029, focus has shifted to supporting a broadly defined sustainable forest management and specifically to supporting the rapidly expanding community forestry sector in Cambodia.

In 2010 a national taskforce with inputs from government, donors and NGOs was established to develop a REDD roadmap. The completion of the roadmap led to the securing of financing from UN-REDD and the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), as well as from bilateral sources, particularly the Government of Japan, for preparing for REDD with the aim of enabling Cambodia to be able to qualify for emissions payments from REDD by 2015.

Meanwhile, pilot activities are also in process. These have thus far been initiated through collaborations between international NGOs with existing projects and the government. These have sought to link the existing activities to the voluntary carbon market thereby securing long-term funding for the community participants and generating 'demonstration' effects for REDD. The most advanced of these are the Oddar Meanchey Community Forest REDD pilot and the Seima Protected Forest REDD pilot.

Notwithstanding progress both nationally and locally, there is not yet evidence of sufficient support either internationally or nationally for REDD to effectively neutralise either the top-down or the bottom-up drivers of deforestation in Cambodia. This report reviews official documents and research reports

¹ By comparison, Achard et al (2002)'s frequently cited study recorded an average deforestation rate of just over 0.5% in tropical humid forests during the 1990s.

over the 2009-2012 period, supplemented by field visits in 2010 and 2011, in order to summarise lessons learned from Cambodia's early engagement with REDD from the viewpoint of poverty reduction.

The report's analysis is organised under four headings, with key findings summarised below:

Key Findings:

1. Financial Benefits to the Poor

Preparations for the Oddar Meanchey pilot have seen the government commit in principle to sharing the benefits of REDD payments with local communities. The pilot has established the noteworthy precedent of 50% of net REDD payments being shared with the local communities.

Projections indicate that this might be the equivalent of approximately 100 USD² per household per annum (or 17 USD per person), unevenly distributed over time and between households. This scale of funding will not in itself either reduce poverty or incentivise avoided deforestation and degradation. Depending on how it is used it may nevertheless be significant for example by directly rewarding forest management activities or by financing public infrastructure.

2. Relationship between REDD and Poor People's Livelihoods

In Cambodia, even amongst forest people, agriculture is a more significant element of livelihoods than forest resources. Many members of community forestry communities where REDD is being piloted are new migrants in search of agricultural land. Even while they protect their community forests they are clearing forests outside the pilot sites. The full extent of the conflict between local livelihood imperatives and avoided deforestation and degradation will not be realised until pilot activities are scaled up, at which point effective REDD may threaten the livelihoods of the poor.

3. Impact of REDD on Tenure Security for the Poor

The threat that REDD itself might become a driver of displacement as state authorities take direct control of forest lands and evict communities has not emerged. However, the continued use of large-scale concessions as a development strategy means that people living in settlements in or near forests are under more or less constant threat of losing their access to forest land. Communities in the REDD pilot sites cannot be confident of retaining their forests, and neither are authorities able to guarantee their security.

Attempts have been made to secure individual farmers tenure for their agricultural plots in the forest using mapping techniques and informal agreements with the Forest Administration. If this could be linked to formal processes of land registration under the auspices of the Ministry of Land Management this could be a valuable pro-poor contribution generated by REDD-related activities.

² Latest approximation, assuming a price of 7 USD per metric tone, would yield 31,878,906 USD divided between 10 000 households over thirty years (pers.comm Amanda Bradley 3 september 2012).

4. Rights and Power of Forest People within and beyond REDD

Within the demonstration activities community benefits have been negotiated on behalf of the people rather than by the people. Given uncertainty about either funds from the carbon market, or international commitment to significantly fund REDD pilots, the absence of intensive processes of consultation and negotiation about benefit sharing is perhaps reasonable.

Some, but by no means all, forest-dwelling communities in Cambodia are also members of indigenous ethnic minority groups. REDD preparations have included specific consultations with these minority groups. While this inclusiveness is seen as a positive, there is no evidence yet that REDD will either improve or worsen the position of these or other forest communities in their attempts to realise goals within or beyond REDD.



Picture 1. Forest area cleared for Agriculture, Siem Reap province 2012. Photo: Robin Biddulph

List of Abbreviations:

CCB	Climate Community Biodiversity Alliance
CPP	Cambodian People’s Party
CSF	Commune Sangkat Fund
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Fund
FPIC	Free Prior Informed Consent
FUNCINPEC	National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NFP	National Forestry Programme
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
REDD	Reduced Emissions from avoided Deforestation and forest Degradation (used in this term as a general term to include both REDD and REDD+
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from avoided Deforestation and forest Degradation and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank a number of reviewers for kindly taking the time to read and comment on a draft of this report, in particular Amanda Bradley, Lasse Krantz, Donal Yeang, Maya Pasgaard, Sarah Milne and Madelene Ostwald. Your comments have significantly improved the quality of the report. On the other hand, I did not take all of the reviewers' advice and the responsibility for any shortcomings in the report remains wholly mine.

RB

Gothenburg, 25 September 2012

1. Background and Purpose

Since its formation one of Focali's key areas of interest has been the relationship between the emerging REDD agenda and poverty. One of our first initiatives was to write an inception report which departed from key texts analysing the prospective impacts of REDD on the poor (e.g. Angelsen et al., 2009; Griffiths, 2008; Peskett, Huberman, Bowen-Jones, Edwards, & Brown, 2008) and went on to review existing research in relation to seven issues which emerged from these analyses (see Biddulph, Westholm, Pettersson, Strömberg, & Mattson, 2009).

Subsequent to that inception report, during 2010-11 Focali have conducted national case studies in Burkina Faso (Brief 2011:03), Bolivia (Brief 2012:04) and Cambodia (2011:07). Each of these are countries where Sweden has devoted funding and technical assistance to mitigation and adaptation of climate change. As a suite of case studies they provide inputs from three continents and represent a range of both physical and governance conditions.

In Cambodia we commissioned a practitioner case study aimed at drawing lessons from the early stages of implementation of a REDD pilot intended to benefit poor communities engaged in community forestry in north-west Cambodia (Bradley, 2009a) by linking their activities to the voluntary carbon market. We have also reviewed academic and "grey" (i.e. studies commissioned by donors and NGO implementing agencies) literature on forests and forest governance in Cambodia generally and on the emergence of REDD in particular. Additionally we have conducted some field work in Cambodia involving overnight village stays and interviews in both Oddar Meanchey province (see Biddulph, 2011) and Phnom Penh.

The purpose of this report is to analyse the early experiences of Cambodia with REDD in order to draw lessons with regard to REDD and poverty reduction.

The report begins by providing some background firstly to the political economy of Cambodia and the terms of forests' incorporation into that political economy, secondly to the evolution of aid and forest policy since the Peace Agreements of 1991 and thirdly to Cambodia's engagement with REDD.

The report then discusses the relationship between REDD and poverty in Cambodia under four inter-related themes:

1. Distribution of benefits (and opportunity costs) of REDD payments
2. Relationship between REDD and forest people's livelihoods
3. Impact of REDD on forest people's tenure security
4. Rights and power of forest people within and beyond REDD

We intend that this report will be of value not only to analysts seeking contextualised cases of the relationship between REDD and poverty, but also as a useful introductory text for researchers and practitioners beginning to engage with REDD-related issues in Cambodia.

1.1 Forests and Governance in Cambodia

1.1.1 Cambodian Political Economy and Forests

Cambodia has an official forest cover of 57% or 10.1 million hectares. Deforestation has been long-term and rapid, with annual deforestation proceeding at 0.7% per annum during the last quarter of the previous century and continuing at 0.5% per annum from 2000-2005 despite the logging ban introduced in 2002 (Clements et al., 2010, p. 1284). And, ranking 139 (of 187) in the 2011 Human Development Index, it remains one of the poorer countries in the world. These facts illustrate the potential for implementing REDD in Cambodia, and the potential importance of REDD being pro-poor, or at least doing no harm. However, before examining issues in relation to REDD and poverty it is necessary to consider the historical and political context of forests in Cambodia.

Cambodia was a French protectorate from 1863 to 1954. The colonial forestry authority, established in 1902, did not have extensive reach over the nation's abundant forests; however it did establish practices which are still recognisable in modern forest governance. These include the assertion of State ownership and authority over access and use of forests and the specific strategy of displacing local forest people in order to smooth the way for modern concession companies, in particular large companies with strong links to the ruling power (French companies with links to the French colonial government at that time) (Cleary, 2005a, 2005b).

Cambodia's modern history has been bloody (see, for example, Becker, 1998; Chandler, 1992). During the late 1960s the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk fought a losing battle to keep the country as an "Island of Peace" and prevent it from being dragged into the American war in Vietnam. His removal by coup d'état in 1970 set the scene for a five year civil war fought between a US supported city and a countryside resistance containing a broad coalition of communists and royalists. By the time the countryside had triumphed and the US forces withdrew in 1975 a nationalist communist faction dubbed the Khmer Rouge had taken control of the resistance. Included amongst this faction were a number of leaders who had vanished, during the late 1960s and were assumed killed by Sihanouk's security forces, but had been living in hiding amongst indigenous groups in the forests of the north-east of the country. During nearly four years of misguided and brutal rule over a quarter of the population either died of starvation related disease or were killed.

The Khmer Rouge were driven out by a Vietnamese supported coup at the beginning of 1979. China and the west responded to the threat of Soviet expansion by establishing refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border and rehabilitating both the Khmer Rouge and non-communist factions as military forces. The international community then supported a guerrilla war against the Cambodian government and maintained an isolation of the country. The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the implosion of the Warsaw pact changed the geopolitical equation: a peace agreement was brokered in 1991 and democratic, multi-party elections held in 1993. The Khmer Rouge left the peace process prior to the elections and remained as a guerrilla force in the forests in the northwest of the country until the movement finally died out in the late 1990s.

While the military forces on both sides of the conflict engaged in commercial logging during the 1980s, the larger picture of insecurity and the consequent lack of infrastructure development meant that

Cambodia's forests survived in tact to a much greater extent than, for example, those of Thailand to its west. With the end of international support to parties in the civil war, the Cambodian political leadership sought alternative sources of finance to maintain their own grip on power and outmanoeuvre opponents (Le Billon, 2000, p. 792). Rapid, illegal logging of the country's forests therefore became central to the contests for power in the country during the 1990s. The 1993 election resulted in an uneasy coalition with two prime ministers: Prince Norodom Ranariddh (son of Sihanouk who had returned to the throne) and Hun Sen (the Prime Minister under the Vietnamese-supported People's Republic of Kampuchea regime). On 29th October 1993, the day of the investiture of the new government, both prime ministers spent the morning concluding logging deals in their personal capacities (Le Billon, 2002, p. 571). In the course of the 1990s all of Cambodia's productive forests (Le Billon, 2000, p. 792) and 60% of its total forest (Poffenberger, 2009, p. 288) were leased to private logging companies.

The importance of illegal logging concessions in Cambodia declined as the stocks of high value timber were rapidly degraded (Barney, 2007, p. 3). Furthermore, after the mass defections of the Khmer Rouge to the government, and the consolidation of the Cambodian People's Party's grip on power at the expense of their FUNCINPEC coalition partners in the late 1990s, the government was able to respond to demands from donors to clean up the forestry sector (see below). Successive logging bans, however, seemed to have been used against small scale cutters whilst well-connected companies continued their activities with impunity (Le Billon & Springer, 2007, p. 29).

While forest concessions declined in importance, economic land concessions for agro-industrial purposes rapidly took their place as sources of off-budget income and patronage (A. R. Cock, 2007, pp. 216-220)³. During the first decade of the 21st Century it has been approximated that over half of the country's agricultural land has been issued as agro-industrial or mining concessions. The way in which these have been issued, often secretly and with disregard for legislation that safeguards the interests of local communities and the national treasury, has attracted condemnation (e.g. Leuprecht, 2007; Vrieze & Naren, 2012).

Most authors have seen concessions as the projects of a comprehensively networked and integrated national elite which is successfully consolidating its power through a mixture of family and commercial ties (Global Witness, 2007; Heder, 2005; Le Billon, 2000; Vrieze & Naren, 2012). This method of rule partly characterised by violent abuse of human rights and favouring of a small, super-rich group at the apex of Cambodian society, has been compared with failed, predatory, resource-cursed and shadow states elsewhere in the world (see Global Witness, 2009; Le Billon, 2002; McKenney, Chea, Tola, & Evans, 2004). However, peace, stability and economic growth in the order of 8% per annum have also been forthcoming. While the sustainability of this impressive growth is open to question, and inequality has increased even as poverty has reduced, (Sjöberg & Sjöholm, 2007), it is nevertheless possible to argue that many of the economic and social gains experienced by the Cambodian people over the past decade and a half are partly due to the (mis)management of Cambodia's forest resources. The key point to note for our analysis is that, even when communities appear to be remote or excluded, and the companies they are in conflict with seem shadowy and external, the land and resource conflicts in which they are

³ See Focali Brief 2012:03 for more information on global land-based investments generally, and the newly adopted principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment.

involved actually relate directly to the way that central power is reproduced and maintained in Cambodia.



Picture 2. A large-scale sugarcane plantation in former forest land in Oddar Meanchey, 2011. During the first decade of the 21st Century it has been approximated that over half of the country's agricultural land has been issued as agro-industrial or mining concessions. Photo: Robin Biddulph.

1.2 Aid and Forest Policy and Practice 1991-2010

1.2.1 Support to the Forest Concession System

During the 1990s the main engagement by the aid community in forest governance related to the management of logging concessions. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) initially took a leading position, arguing that potential revenues of 100 million USD per annum were being lost to the country through illegal logging and mismanagement of the concession system. The IMF applied pressure on Thailand (a principle market for the illegally logged timber) and also made the release of structural adjustment loans to the Cambodian government conditional on improved revenues from the forestry sector. The IMF's strident approach attracted limited solidarity from other donors who provided some verbal support but ultimately preferred to retain the good will of the Cambodian government (Boyce, 2003, pp. 7-8).

Towards the end of the 1990s The World Bank, also concerned to increase government revenues from forestry, agreed a loan which sought to address some of the problems in the forest concession management system. This was to be achieved through an approach that prioritised sustainable forest management and effective forest crime monitoring (A. R. Cock, 2007, p. 207).

This approach was mired in controversy not least because it made the World Bank project complicit in the illegal practices of the logging concessionaires. The World Bank received criticism for the narrowness of its focus which "disregarded the needs of local communities" (De Lopez, 2001, p. 392). The Bank's involvement in the government's (mis)management of the concession system and in the behaviour of the companies led to complaints from local communities that "through a flawed design and poor implementation the Bank promoted the interests of the logging concession companies, rather than those of the people" (World Bank Inspection Panel, 2006, p. x). These complaints were delivered via the Cambodian NGO Forum to the World Bank Inspection Panel which investigated and concluded that the

Bank had not complied with key provisions of its policies on environmental assessment, indigenous people and forests (World Bank Inspection Panel, 2006).

Meanwhile, fears that logging concessions were facilitating a rapid depletion of the country's forest stocks appeared to be substantiated as a succession of donor studies between 1996 and 2003 incrementally revised down the estimates of the potential revenues that could be generated by a rational and sustainable management of the concession system (A. R. Cock, 2007, p. 212). Thus, the 100 million USD figure emanating from the Cambodia Forest Policy Assessment and frequently quoted by the IMF was revised down to 40-80 million USD by 1999, then to 25-50 million USD by 2000. Finally, in 2003 it was argued in a World Bank study that the forestry concession system could "not generate substantial revenue".

In December 2001 a decree ("Prakas") was issued by the government banning further logging from forest concession areas until the respective concessionaires had written revised management plans and had them approved (A. R. Cock, 2007, p. 251). The Prime Minister declared that he would rather have the support of the international community than the revenues from logging. However, it appeared that much of the logging continued with impunity, ensuring that opportunity costs to the elite were minimised (Le Billon & Springer, 2007, p. 29).

1.2.2 The Rise of Community Forestry

As the concession management system fell into disrepute alternative forms of forest management came into focus. Community forestry was initially introduced to Cambodia in the form of two projects by international NGOs in 1991 in Takeo and Kampong Chhnang provinces. The number of initiatives grew steadily. By 2002, 57 projects had been identified, and by 2005 the head of the national Forestry Administration listed 274 community forestry project sites spread through 19 of Cambodia's 24 provinces/municipalities (Heng & Sokhun, 2005).

As the momentum for community forestry continued so did lobbying by NGOs to have community forestry recognised as a legitimate way of managing Cambodian forests. This resulted in community forestry being legislated for in the 2002 Forestry Law and in the drafting of a Community Forestry Sub-decree in 2003. Finally an implementation regulation, the Community Forestry Prakas, was issued in 2006. Community forestry was therefore no longer purely an NGO or community based initiative, but had become a government regulated programme. The 2002 Forestry Law outlined in principle how communities might acquire management and user rights over forests, the 2003 Sub-Decree established Community Forestry as a policy preference of the government and finally the 2006 Prakas provided a 6 step process by which communities could first identify potential sites for community forestry, then have them approved and then develop detailed proposals for management of a defined area by a community group with identified members and leadership. The form of tenure allowed under community forestry management is relatively weak. The land continues to be state public land, community forestry agreements are only for 15 years and can be terminated by the government with six months notice.

This expansion of community forestry under State supervision continues up to the present day. By 2011 there were 450 documented community forestry sites, covering 400 000 hectares, in the process of being registered, with 100 of them having obtained legal agreements. According to RECOFTC (an

international NGO with offices at the national Forestry Administration which seeks to give technical assistance to Cambodian community forestry) the community forestry movement in Cambodia might therefore include as many as 900 villages and 120 000 people (RECOFTC, 2011).



Picture 3a&b. Cutting of hardwood trees deprives villagers of access to resin rendering NTFP based livelihoods non-viable and leaving villagers little option but to participate in transporting and cutting of timber. Photo: Robin Biddulph

While community forestry has received much attention, and has expanded vigorously, it has also been repeatedly noted that it has tended to be channelled towards areas where the forest resource is severely degraded. Fichtenau et al. (2002, pp. 25-26) found that none of the 57 community forestry sites they surveyed was in undisturbed forests, so all were to a greater or lesser extent degraded, with 67% located in areas that were defined as either “heavily degraded” or having “little or no forest”. McKenney et al. (2004) were amongst those who criticised this approach and argued that communities should be allowed high value forest in order that they could engage in forest management practices that would be both commercially and environmentally sustainable. A related criticism was that areas with resin trees were systematically avoided. Resin has provided a high-value and sustainable livelihood resource for forest people in Cambodia, and it was therefore illegal to log resin trees even in concession areas. This law was routinely flouted (resin trees also being a source of valuable hardwood) and activists therefore sought to use community forestry as a means by which to protect resin trees (A. Cock, 2004). However, they found that when local officials were consulted communities were not given the land with resin trees which they had requested, but other degraded land (Biddulph, 2010, p. 103).

The form of community forestry is also weak in the sense that community forests remain State property. Community forestry agreements are only renewable for 15 years at a time, and the State can revoke them at any time if the terms of the agreements are judged not to have been respected. It has also been the case (as we shall see when we look at the REDD demonstration areas) that community forests have been by no means immune to the threat of economic land concessions being issued over them. Even as this report is being prepared, a community forestry site in Battambang province was being cleared of

forest by police and military officials wanting to claim the land. Forestry administration, district authorities and NGOs were reported as being powerless to prevent this (Boyle & Titthara, 2012)

1.2.3 The National Forestry Programme

In 2010 a National Forestry Programme covering the following two decades was issued with a preface by the Prime Minister. The first two of its nine strategic objectives relate to first, sustainable forest contribution to livelihoods and poverty reduction and second, contribution to adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

According to the National Forestry Programme document, the Permanent Forest Estate covers 59% of Cambodia. Of this, 28% is classified as protected areas (under the management of the Ministry of Environment), 14% as protected forest (under the management of the Forestry Administration), 30% as forest concessions and the remaining 28% as “other forests” (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2010, p. 126). Reflecting the shifting emphasis in Cambodian forest policy over the past two decades, it is anticipated that most land currently allocated as concessions will be reclassified (see table 1).

Table 1: Classification of Cambodian Forest in the National Forestry Programme.

Classification	2010 Classification (million hectares)	Reclassification anticipated in NFP (million hectares)
Protected area (under Environment Ministry)	3,0	3,0
Protected Forest	1,5	3,0
Community Forest	2,0	2,0
Production Forest	1,2	2,6
Concessions	3,2	
Other concession land to be reclassified		0,3
Total	10,9	10,9

Source: National Forestry Programme (2010, p. 128)

However, notwithstanding the apparent support from senior levels of the government, the National Forestry Programme does not seem to be fully confident of the directions that will be taken. Economic land concessions, the issue of which is entirely in the hands of government, are listed as an external threat which may or may not impinge significantly on planned allocations of forest land (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2010, pp. 127-130).

The NFP sees REDD as the principle strategy for enabling progress towards its second objective of climate change. Given that the foremost objective is poverty reduction the NFP provides a sympathetic context for pro-poor REDD. The document is cautious about the prospects of REDD financing (sustainable financing of forestry is the 9th of the NFP objectives) and stresses that REDD is seen as one possible source of financing the NFP amongst many.

Arguably, the vision of REDD in the NFP is in line with the rather reduced scope for REDD internationally that has been circulated recently (Angelsen, Brockhaus, Sunderlin, & Verchot, 2012). It seems that, notwithstanding policy statements elsewhere, the authors of the NFP may not envisage REDD as a

national accounting system covering the entire forested area of the country, but rather as an alternative land use which might be adopted in limited areas:

To enable expansion of the SFM in production forest, it is a priority to review and clarify the future of all remaining forest concessions. The FA will, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, develop a transparent review-system and clarify the future of remaining concessions. That is, the FA may implement a wide range of alternative SFM systems in line with the NFP vision and mission, i.e. certified commercial forestry, community forestry, REDD, protected forests and conservation areas (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2010, p. 51)

1.3 Forest People

1.3.1 Forest People's Livelihoods in Cambodia

Overall data on the extent of people's dependence on forests for their livelihoods in Cambodia is difficult to come by. FAO suggest that 75% of rural Cambodians depend to some degree on access to natural forest for essential products, energy and food. They further suggest that for a third of the population, forest resources account for 10-20% of household consumption and income resources. Implicit in these data is the sense that forest resources are often a significant element to rural people's livelihoods, but are rarely the major component of them.

Biddulph's (2010) case studies of two villages, one in a lowland rice field village in Takeo province and the other in a forest village in Kracheh province, and particularly his interviews with older people, provide an illustrative insight into the changing role of forests in people's livelihoods. Fifty years previously, the lowland village had been surrounded by forests, which provided a ready source of new agricultural land as the village population slowly expanded. Today, the rice fields of one village abut with the rice fields of the next village and no forest remains, only trees grown on house plots and in rice fields. In the forest village, 50 years ago people had highly forest dependent livelihoods. While a small amount of rice was grown, the main source of rice was through trading timber and non-timber forest products with lowland rice producers living along the Mekong River. Amongst the rich array of products from the forest, natural resin, tapped from hardwood trees was particularly important. Since the 1990s, however, when industrial scale logging included the illegal cutting of resin trees by the concessionaire, these forms of sustainable forest-dependent livelihoods have almost been extinguished. For the past decade (and especially since the imposition of the national logging ban), villagers have mainly been dependent on incomes from participation in the logging of the forests. As the forests disappear the villagers see no prospect of either sustainable forest management or logging incomes, but rather hope to secure agricultural land from the degraded forests. However, the prospect of affordable agricultural land, has, however, prompted rapid demographic transformation as villagers from agricultural areas in neighbouring provinces have moved in to secure agricultural land: between 2006 and 2008 the village population rose from 83 to 135 households, and less than a third of the people living in the village were born in the village.

In common with many areas in Southeast Asia, then, the traditional 'forest dependence' in Cambodia has been transformed irreversibly, and the make-up of forest communities has been correspondingly transformed and continues to be dynamic.

1.3.2 Forest People's Activism in Cambodia

Cambodia's brutal history arguably serves as a profound discouragement to dissent, as do the bloody deaths of critical journalists, activists and trade union leaders in recent years. For this reason, the current growth in community forestry is attractive to participants partly because it allows a form of activism that is sanctioned by the State, even though it does tend to channel energies towards more degraded, marginal forest areas.

On the other hand, there is also evidence of people willing to take risks in order to oppose forest crimes. In some situations this puts them in direct opposition to international conservation and development organisations working alongside government and turning a blind eye illegal activity. Milne (2012) made this case in relation to Conservation International and the illegal logging of Rosewood in the areas it manages in the Cardamoms:

One of Chut Wutty's most critical achievements, therefore, was that he broke the deadlock of fear and complicity that so often paralyses villagers, community leaders and NGOs in Cambodia, preventing them from taking action against illegal logging and other injustices. Many have argued that this paralysis is part of Cambodia's national psyche, and that the country is forever doomed to suffer from a 'lack of local agency' and civil society (Brinkley, 2012; Öjendal & Sedara, 2006). But Chut Wutty and his allies were beginning to prove otherwise.

Chut Wutty was an activist who, as head of the Natural Resources Protection Group, worked in both the Prey Lang forest in central Cambodia and also in the Cardamom mountains in south-west Cambodia and had been influential in calling attention to and confronting illegal logging in protected areas and forests. His activities attracted broader media attention to issues⁴. Milne was writing after he was shot and killed on 26th April 2012 by a military policeman who objected to him bringing journalists to the forest to witness illegal logging (Lambrick, 2012). She concluded that:

Wutty's story and his tragic death in the Cardamom Mountains should serve as a wake-up call for conservation organisations and donors working in partnership with the Cambodian government on natural resource management. It is now no longer enough for them simply to choose a politically correct path of 'capacity building' and 'technical advice' for government, without challenging the status quo in some way. Or, if they are unwilling to do this, then they should at least commit to nurturing local social movements and protecting those who are prepared to stand in the firing line, as Chut Wutty did (Milne, 2012).

Cambodia's 'forest people', then, are a diverse and dynamic group, whose livelihoods may be more or less dependent on forests, and in ways which may be more or less sustainable in terms of forest management. Their interests may on occasion coincide with those of senior politicians, forestry officials and international conservation and development organisations. However, often there are fundamentally conflicting interests and agendas. We will be concerned here, then, with the way in which the planning and implementation of REDD in Cambodia might play out in relation to those interests and agendas, to the benefit or detriment of the poor.

⁴ An Al Jazeera video report illustrates:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2011/11/2011111213059173371.html>



Picture 4a&b. The activist Chut Wutty, head of the Natural Resources Protection Group, was shot and killed on 26th April 2012 by a military policeman who objected to him bringing journalists to the forest to witness illegal logging.

2 REDD in Cambodia

2.1 National REDD Preparations

As a country with relatively high forest cover and high deforestation rates (FAO Representation in Cambodia, 2011, p. 14), Cambodia has engaged with reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) since it came back onto the global policy agenda at Bali in 2007 (see Bradley, 2011 and Table 2 below).

Following the development of the National Forest Programme, Cambodia has developed a REDD roadmap (and in parallel with that a Readiness Preparation Proposal to the World Bank's FCPF). The roadmap was developed and completed in 2010 by an interim task force including members from the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction. The regional NGO RECOFTC and the Clinton Climate Initiative served as observers and UN FAO, UNDP and UNEP as advisors. The roadmap outlines a plan for REDD preparations during the period 2011-14 such that Cambodia can start participating in REDD from 2015. These preparations are scheduled to include the establishment of management and consultation processes, the development of strategies and implementation frameworks, the creation of reference levels and systems for monitoring reporting and verification (Lao, 2012).

Support for Cambodia's national REDD preparations has come from the Japan International Cooperation Authority (JICA) and the Government of Japan (12 million USD pledged), UN-REDD (3 million USD plus over a 1 million USD collaboratively from other UN agencies) and the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) (3.6 million USD) as well as a number of smaller donations via a range of support projects (Lao, 2012). Both UN-REDD and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility keep websites

where the Roadmap, the Readiness Preparation Proposal (RPP) and various evaluation reports and civil society comments and exchanges are published⁵.

Table 1: Selected Events in Cambodia's Engagement with REDD

2006	Establishment of National Climate Change Committee with representatives from 21 ministries
2007	Cambodia supports Decision on REDD at COP 13 in Bali
2008	May. Decision 699 of the Council of Ministers endorses the first REDD demonstration project in Oddar Meanchey. 60 000 hectares.
2008	October. Forestry Administration authorises a second REDD demonstration project in Seima Protection Forest covering 187 698 hectares.
2008	November. Sub-decree 188 designates Forestry Administration as official seller of REDD credits and gives it responsibility for carbon stock assessments and trading in Cambodia.
2009	March. Cambodia submits a Readiness Project Idea Note to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and becomes a member.
2009	October. Cambodia becomes a member of UN-REDD policy board (as observer).
2009	October. National Forum on REDD with government, donors, civil society and indigenous people's participation.
2010	Task force to convene a REDD readiness roadmap is convened and holds national level consultations
2010	May. Cambodia joins the REDD Partnership of developed and developing countries.
2010	November. National Forestry Program signed by the Prime Minister.
2010	December 5 th . Cambodia REDD roadmap submitted to UN-REDD board, which authorises grant of 3 million USD to support REDD preparations
2011	FCPF reviews Cambodia's Readiness Preparation Proposal (RPP) and authorises 3 275 000 USD to support REDD preparations

Source: Bradley (2011), Lao (2012) and UN-REDD and FCPF websites

2.2 International NGOs support Demonstration Projects

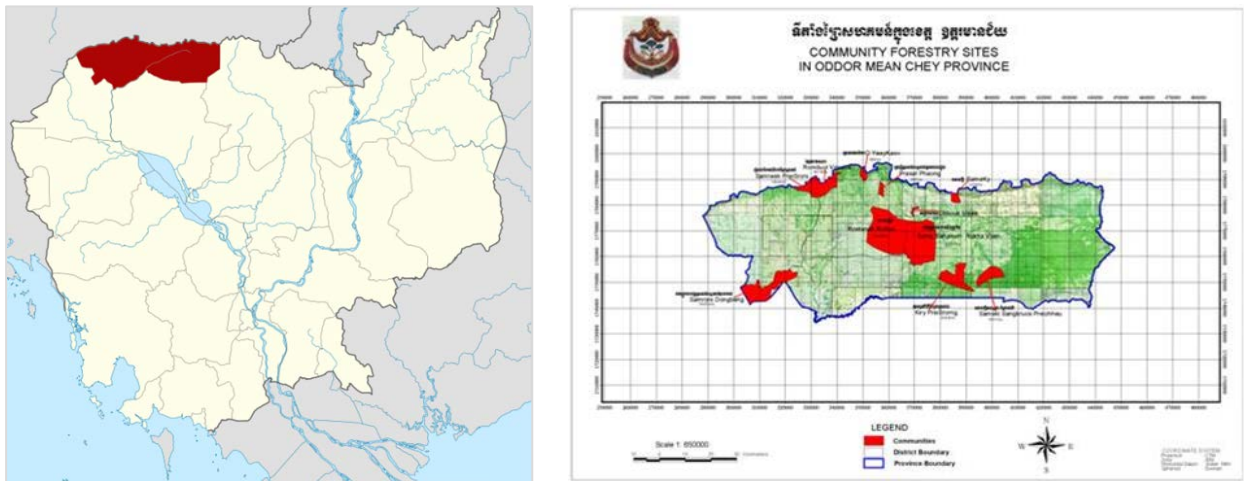
In addition to the preparation at national level, three initiatives are under way attempting to pilot REDD. Each of these involves international NGOs working with the national government to attempt to link their already existing programmes to the voluntary carbon market. The most advanced of these is in the north-western province of Oddar Meanchey where existing community forestry projects have been supported by Pact (who incorporated an earlier Community Forestry International programme). In the north-eastern province of Mondul Kiri the Wildlife Conservation Society is supporting a pilot working with indigenous peoples in the Seima Protection Forest and, more recently, in the south-west of Cambodia the Wildlife Alliance have been preparing a project in the Southern Cardamom Mountains. Bradley (2011, pp. 28-31) provides an overview of other initiatives and agencies also seeking to contribute to REDD pilots and development.

⁵ A number of preparatory studies, not referenced in this report, were commissioned for the roadmap and the RPP and can be located via those documents.

Focali commissioned a case study (Bradley, 2009a) of the Oddar Meanchey pilot as well as conducting some field research there in 2010 and 2011 (see Biddulph, 2011). We have also had discussions in Phnom Penh with representatives from the Seima project. A little more background to these two initiatives is provided below⁶.

2.2.1 REDD Pilot Community Forestry Carbon Credit in Oddar Meanchey

Oddar Meanchey province in Cambodia has the highest rates of deforestation in the country. It also has an extensive network of community forestry activities covering 10% of the area of the province (64 318 of a total 663 165 hectares) and having a total membership of about approximately 10,000 households about one third of whose members are below the poverty line.



Picture 5a&b. Map over the location of the north-western province of Oddar Meanchey in Cambodia and a map displaying community forest sites within the Oddar Meanchey province. Source: Bradley 2009.

In 2008 Community Forestry International initiated a REDD pilot in Oddar Meanchey which was subsequently taken over and developed by US NGO Pact in collaboration with the Cambodian Forestry Administration, US company Terra Global Capital, a local NGO CDA and the Monk's Community Forestry Association in Oddar Meanchey. The project bundled 13 existing community forestry groups and sought to establish them as a pilot REDD project.

In the course of the project all of the community forest groups have been registered with the Forestry Administration, and they have further received a guarantee that they will receive 50% carbon revenues after project costs have been covered. The project has involved gaining certification from both the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and the Climate Community Biodiversity Alliance (CCB).

As well as generating Cambodia's first experience of engagement with the certification bodies, the project has also developed a number of standard operating procedures with wider applicability, including for biomass assessment, social assessment, assisted natural regeneration and biodiversity assessment. Furthermore, practitioners working on the pilot have sought to document progress and to circulate

⁶ Unless otherwise stated details on Oddar Meanchey CF pilot and Seima Project Forest pilot are taken from Bradley (2011, pp. 25-28).

lessons for wider consideration beyond Cambodia (Bradley, 2009a; Poffenberger, 2009; Poffenberger, De Gryze, & Durschinger, 2008).



Picture 6a&b. View into a Oddar Meanchey community forest area and view from a Oddar Meanchey community forest area out over a state forest area.

2.2.2 The Seima Protection Forest REDD Project

The REDD pilot at Seima was initiated in 2008 with the Forestry Administration as the proponent supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). A core area of 187 000 hectares in the protected forest has been designated for the REDD pilot. The area is inhabited by about 10 000 people, most of whom belong to the Bunong ethnic minority. They were displaced by the fighting during the 1980s and returned after conflicts ceased during the early 1990s. Native ethnic minorities in Cambodia are able to register as legal entities and then to apply for communal title for their lands: the project is supporting the people in the project area to achieve this.

Seima was declared a Protected Forest in 2009 as a result of its high biodiversity value. It contains 23 different species of carnivore including rare cats, bears, canines and the world's largest populations of Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbons and Black-shanked Douc Langur. As such, the aim of the pilot is "to ensure long term support for reserve operating costs and financial incentives for local communities and local authorities participating in conservation".

The Seima initiative is regarded as complementary to the Oddar Meanchey pilot, because it pilots REDD under different legal frameworks. Seima involves Protected Forests which place additional restrictions on the ways that forest may be exploited. The fact that it is in native ethnic minority areas means that it will be trialling arrangements under the provisions of the Land Law that allow for native ethnic minority groups to develop community title. The Seima and Oddar Meanchey projects have both worked closely with the Forestry Administration and have collaborated and shared information with each other.



Picture 7a,b&c. Community members are thumb-printing to confirm their participation at the end of a process of information and consultation about the Seima pilot demonstration project in the Mondulkiri province. This process is called FPIC (Free Prior Informed Consent.) Photo: Sarah Milne.

2.3 Prospects for REDD

Reviews of the readiness preparations have praised the technical aspects of the proposal and also the quality of the consultation processes that have been initiated and that are ongoing (Blaser & Lakanavichian, 2011). However, there are concerns about the scale of some of the institutional and technical tasks which have not yet been addressed. These include, for example, the demarcation of forests where a pilot project in the north-east of the country supported by an international NGO has demarcated 276 km of the estimated 120 000 kilometres of forest boundary in Cambodia and the national arrangements for REDD payments and how these might “nest” the pilot projects (Bradley, 2011, pp. 8-9).

Inevitably, development assistance organisations and Cambodian authorities find it useful to analyse potential difficulties in terms of capacity, which might be built by external technical assistance. RECOFTC has contributed one study in this regard (RECOFTC, 2012) and Ashwell et al. (2011) have expressed concern that:

While Cambodia has agricultural and economic analysts, it lacks highly skilled forest ecologists experienced in researching vegetation dynamics and linking them to the design of management frameworks. Indeed, international environmental organizations sometimes lack capacities in vegetation dynamics that are required to inform decision-making in relation to rehabilitation and fire dynamics that could have major implications for reducing emissions (Ashwell, Ogonowski, Neou, & McCulloch, 2011, p. 68)

More fundamental doubts, however, relate to on the one hand, the question of whether there is really serious high level commitment to avoided deforestation at national level in Cambodia, and, meanwhile, whether there will ever be sufficient financing internationally to provide the scale of financing required to incentivise large-scale avoided deforestation.

While some observers believe that Prime Ministerial pledges constitute evidence that “Cambodia has the political will and basic infrastructure for implementing sustainable forest management or REDD-plus projects” (Sasaki & Yoshimoto, 2010, p. 390) others remain much less sure. The reviewers of the Readiness Preparation Plan, writing in early 2011, were unsure that the authorities vested with responsibility for REDD would have the power to deal with drivers outside the forestry sector (Blaser &

Lakanavichian, 2011). They were also concerned about the lack of clear specification of post-concession land uses or about the way production forests are to be managed in the national forestry programme. Notwithstanding these doubts, they judged that standards in respect of Land Use, Forest Law, Policy, and Governance had been “largely met” (Blaser & Lakanavichian, 2011). Mather (2010) talked about the “inevitability” of Cambodia hosting REDD activities and the need to balance this with “the deficiencies in institutional capacity” which for him included legal-political issues relating to human rights, a culture of impunity, illegality in the granting of concessions and which he believed cast doubt on Cambodia’s suitability to host REDD projects.

In addition to such concerns, the worry remains that even if funding is secured for REDD preparations, and REDD activities and mechanisms are successfully implemented at national level, international funding might not be forthcoming (Bradley, 2011, p. 9). Ashwell et al. (2011) analysed the potential costs and benefits of REDD using a case study area west of the Cardamom mountains in Koh Kong province in the south-west of the country. They concluded that “*the gains from projects on the voluntary REDD market are unlikely to compete with agricultural uses, and thus cannot be relied upon as the sole means to protect Cambodia’s forests*” (Ashwell et al., 2011, p. 69).

In sum, then, REDD has generated small but significant funding in Cambodia, and this has resulted in the preparation of plans and strategies at national level which will likely yield new official regulations and substantial technical capacity building in the coming three or four years. Meantime, international NGOs are seeking to obtain secure long-term funding for the initiatives they have supported and at the same time to generate useful practical experience. However there is nothing to suggest that the main drivers of deforestation, in the form of both ‘top-down’ granting of concessions for agriculture or mineral extraction and ‘bottom-up’ large-scale migration into forests of farmers seeking to clear land for smallholder agriculture are about to be reversed. Unless there are dramatic changes in national land management practices and/or much higher than anticipated levels of international financing, it appears likely that REDD will proceed *alongside* business as usual. In other words, pilot activities might achieve success in limited areas, but these will not lead to major reductions in deforestation and degradation throughout Cambodia. With this in mind we now turn to the prospects for poverty reduction in relation to REDD in Cambodia.



Picture 8a&b. Cutting of hardwood inside in one of the Oddar Meanchey community forest areas. The field to the right is an area in Oddar Meanchey under preparation, by a businessman also a ruling party senator, for a sugar cane plantation. This reduced the size of the largest planned community forestry area by 40% (Bradley, 2009; Biddulph 2011).

3 Pro-Poor REDD: Prospects and Research Issues

This analysis of the prospects of REDD being pro-poor, or at least of doing no harm, in Cambodia is structured under the following headings:

1. Distribution of Benefits (and Opportunity Costs) of REDD Payments
2. Relationship between REDD and Poor People's Livelihoods
3. Impact of REDD on Tenure Security for the Poor
4. Rights and Powers of Forest People within and Beyond REDD

3.1 Distribution of Benefits (and Opportunity Costs) of REDD Payments

3.1.1 Context for financial transfers

The way in which the National Forestry Programme and the REDD Roadmap are formulated suggests that poverty reduction will be a priority and that there will be support for the principle of sharing the benefits of REDD payments locally. This principle is also evidenced in the Government Decision (No.699), authorizing the Oddar Meanchey REDD pilot project, which stipulated that as well as improving the quality of forest and studying potential sites for new REDD projects, they will be used to “maximise the benefits flows to local community who is participating in the project” (Yeang, 2010, pp. 53, 72-53). In order to pass on REDD payments received at national level to local forest people a legal framework with clarification of roles and responsibilities will be required as well as clarification regarding who has the right to sell credits in different jurisdictions (Bradley, 2011, pp. 7-8). Achieving such a framework is part of the scope of work during the implementation of the REDD roadmap, but researchers have already been assessing the prospects.

A number of authors have pointed out that there are reasons to be concerned at the lack of institutional capacity for managing the sort of national to local financial transfers that would be implied by a pro-poor REDD. Yeang (2010), in his study of benefit sharing and tenure rights in the first two REDD pilot projects in Cambodia, noted that Cambodia is ranked 158 out of 180 in Transparency International's corruption index, making it one of the most corruption-prone countries in the world, this notwithstanding the establishment of a government anti-corruption unit to address the problem. Mather et al (2010) in a study aimed at supporting the design of a REDD-compliant benefit distribution system in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia concluded that Cambodia warrants a particularly cautious approach suggesting that it “requires considerable investment and extra pre project preparation compared to other countries” (2010, p. 8).

Notwithstanding the above concerns, and noting, as Stephenson et al. (2012) do, that existing providers of REDD services are not strong in designing fiscal transfer systems, there may be reasons to suggest that national to local financial transfers may be a comparative strength rather than a weakness in Cambodia. Following pilot activities in the 1990s, and Cambodia's first local elections in 2002, the State has been transferring money from national to local level via the Commune Sangkat Fund (CSF). This has enabled the construction of significant local infrastructure and has proved to be a relatively efficient and

relatively corruption free way of supporting local development, especially with respect to construction of public infrastructure. By 2010 2.8% of Cambodia's national revenue was allocated to the CSF each year (Pak, 2011, p. 8). If REDD were to become a national programme, there would therefore be potential to link to an existing well-functioning financial infrastructure to enable REDD payments to be delivered locally. Having said that, much of the progress with decentralisation in Cambodia has involved creating new mandates for infrastructure construction and maintenance at local level; there is not yet a substantial track record of reassigning responsibilities from line ministries in Phnom Penh. Such an attempt in relation to REDD might meet resistance from the Forestry Administration and the Ministry of Environment.

3.1.2 Oddar Meanchey Communities guaranteed a portion of net incomes

In the Oddar Meanchey pilot, Decision 699 has been interpreted in such a way that 50% of net income will be distributed to the communities and 50% of the net income will be disposed of by the Forestry Administration (Poffenberger et al., 2008, p. 62). Meanwhile, in order to establish a short-term financial intermediary at the national level, a joint donor-government institution called the Technical Working Group on Forest and the Environment (TWG F&E) will act as the channel for REDD revenues, and will be subject to external audit. Yeang (2010, p. 53) sees this as somewhat reassuring, although according to Decision 699 the arrangement is only for five years, and therefore it represents a short-term solution whilst the modalities of a national system are negotiated.

Whilst these commitments have been made, and are regarded as credible by observers of the project, there remains uncertainty over how much income will actually accrue to the communities. This is only partly due to uncertainty about the price of carbon on the voluntary market (Yeang, 2010, p. 39). The benefits from the Oddar Meanchey pilot have been conceptualised as gross and net. This means that a range of project management costs (for the international and national NGOs and the Forestry Administration) are taken from the total income, before the communities are paid their share. In some respects the local communities are at the very bottom of a financial chain where risk and uncertainty are at their highest.

There is a potential conflict of interest between the organisations and companies who receive their payments out of the gross income, and the communities receive their share as a proportion of what remains. This is addressed under heading four below. Meanwhile, however, it should also be noted that local people also stand to benefit from employment in forest management activities which are funded by the gross incomes and managed by the intermediary organisations (Poffenberger et al., 2008, p. 65).

3.1.3 Community benefits compromised because start-up costs not funded

A source of frustration for the designers and implementers of the Oddar Meanchey pilot is that they have been unable to secure funding for the pilot's start-up costs. As a result they have had to strike deals whereby the broker has provided services up front which will be repaid with a proportion of carbon credits once the credits begins to flow. This means that an undisclosed percentage of credits will have to be paid to Terra Global Capital before the communities can receive their payments (Bradley, 2009a, p. 22). As a consequence, Bradley recommends that more donor funds be allocated to funding such set up costs as well as to identifying low-cost technologies in order that accessing REDD mechanisms can be more affordable for poor communities (Bradley, 2009a, pp. 26-27). Poffenberger et al (2008, pp. 58-64)

detail some of the financing alternatives (pre-paid carbon sales, equity funding, equity and debt funding) for REDD projects and calculate the trade-offs involved for communities if the set-up costs are not funded.

Effectively, there is insufficient political will or international finance to fully establish REDD pilots. As a result their set-up is being financed from the anticipated revenues of the poor communities who are hosting them. Whilst Terra Global is accepting some of the risk in this matter, it is ultimately the poor paying a price for the fact that, in the Cambodia case at least, the international community and the bodies invested in supporting REDD are not willing to pay the price of setting up REDD pilot activities (never mind guaranteeing that a decent price will be paid for emissions reductions).

3.1.4 Additionality: Impact of REDD on Funding for Forest People

One concern that has been raised in development assistance circles is that rich country commitment to climate change mitigation may come at the expense of development assistance to poor countries. It has been suggested that REDD payments should always be additional to existing financing (Working group for the Norrköping Protokoll for REDD+, 2011).

Such issues are clearly much easier to trace in donor countries than they are in recipient countries. However, it was notable during our visits in 2010 and 2011 that the international and national NGOs that had been supporting community forestry in Oddar Meanchey were now struggling to find any funds at all to continue with those support programmes. The local NGO staff specifically linked this to the strategy of seeking climate financing. They said that donors thought that they no longer needed money now because they would be receiving support through payments for avoided deforestation. This, while not a conclusive finding in itself, serves as a reminder that there is a need to be alert not only to how REDD money is being spent in relation to poor people, but also to whether other programmes to support poor people are declining even as REDD-related programmes are increasing. Potentially, interventions that seem to have a pro-poor impact may in fact represent business-as-usual if they do no more than replace existing programmes that would have been continued had REDD not arrived on the scene.

3.1.5 Scale and Distribution of benefits to the community

Notwithstanding the uncertainties and compromises above, some efforts have been made to calculate the likely incomes for the communities in the form of REDD payments. Earlier calculations anticipated an average annual income for communities of between 50 000 and 90 000 USD, which would have constituted an average of 5-9 USD per household per annum (Bradley, 2009b, p. 56). This is clearly not insignificant (it is more than double what is transferred per household by the Commune Sangkat Fund and would be equivalent to three or four day's labour) but equally clearly it is not sufficient to make any substantial difference to the poverty levels of poor households. The payments would not be evenly spread as in the early years there would not be any net income for the communities, whereas by 2011 net income might be in the order of 280 000 USD (assuming a carbon price of 5 USD per metric ton) or 515 000 USD (assuming a carbon price of 7 USD per metric ton)(Bradley, 2009a, p. 24). Recent calculations (not yet complete) suggest that benefits may be of the order of ten times greater than this, and therefore could amount to 100 USD per household per annum. At that level, there is more chance that the financial transfers could make a significant impact on a household's wellbeing, especially if the

transfers were to become predictable (enabling families to plan, for example, for extra years of schooling for a child).

Precisely how the benefits will be distributed in the Oddar Meanchey pilot remains to be decided. It is envisaged that some benefits will be extended to all of the 58 villages participating in the project, but that some will be targeted towards households or communities with key strategic roles to play in projecting the forests. It has likewise been envisaged that in order to “respond to the concerns of local villages and households”, there should be “a menu of resource management and livelihood projects, rather than a simple cash distribution” (Poffenberger et al., 2008, p. 66).

Pasgaard and Chea (Forthcoming, pp. 10-13) raise the possibility of elite capture of benefits within the community forestry groups. They place this concern in the context of research from other community forestry projects especially in Nepal and India where this commonly occurs. In their research in Oddar Meanchey they found examples where people who were unable to contribute to forest protection activities were likely to be excluded, sometimes because they were not invited to become members, but in any event, because they were unable to participate in activities for which payment might be made. In other cases they cited villagers who believed that the committee had excluded them from activities either in order to be able to get the payments themselves, or in a couple of cases, because the committee members were abusing their position in order to commit forest crimes themselves with impunity. Since the Pasgaard and Chea study, however, there have been moves to elect a new community forestry committee. CCB standards require that in order to achieve gold standard for community benefits, at least 50% must reach the poorest. This has led to extensive wealth ranking as part of the project and a strengthened commitment to identifying and reaching the poor within the REDD pilot project (see Terra Global Capital, 2012, pp. 163-164).

Overall, then, the financial benefits to communities in the Oddar Meanchey pilot promise to be moderate, from a poverty reduction viewpoint, but not insignificant. Furthermore, there are risks in terms of elite capture and/or exclusion of the poorest, and these risks are particularly high to the extent that payments are directed specifically towards people who are more active in the community forestry organisation (therefore creating an incentive to exclude as well as an incentive to perform). We return in a later section on Forest People’s Rights and Powers to the role that communities have had in negotiating the 50% net arrangement and in the distribution of risks and benefits amongst different actors. Meantime, though, it appears that REDD payments themselves are not going to be sufficient to transform behaviour, therefore questions about existing livelihoods and communities’ relations to forests become particularly important.

3.2 Relationship between REDD and Poor People’s Livelihoods

People who live in or near forests can have a variety of relationships to that forest. They may be highly dependent on the forest for their livelihoods, they may be highly dependent on the destruction of the forest for their livelihoods (as for example if their living revolves around unsustainable logging practices or post-forest land-uses), or they may be somewhat neutral in that the forest may be of use or value or interest to them but without its survival being a central issue from a livelihood perspective. Forest people are often particularly vulnerable to having their livelihoods misrepresented. Indeed, they may themselves need to misrepresent their livelihoods in order to escape sanction. This phenomenon has

been noted for example by Walker in Thailand and Li in Indonesia and the Philippines who demonstrate the extent to which forest people are often agriculture dependent but are represented as chiefly forest dependent (Li, 2002; Walker, 2004).

These distinctions are crucial from the point of view of REDD. If, for example, communities are forest-dependent, then they may be much better off as a result of conserving and managing standing forests. As such, the fact that REDD payments may not be very large is not so important because the forest provides its own incentives. On the other hand, if communities are surviving in the forest by participating in unsustainable logging or by clearing forests for agricultural use, then for their participation in REDD to be beneficial to them they will need to be compensated both for any efforts they make towards protecting forests, and also for any income they lose from not being able to deforest or degrade themselves. So, what is known about the livelihoods of forest people in Cambodia and what are the implications of that for REDD and poverty?



Picture 9. Community forestry committee member shows undisturbed forest near Bak Nim village in Oddar Meanchey, 2011. Photo: Robin Biddulph.

3.2.1 Evidence of win-win as avoided deforestation supports livelihoods

Unpublished research carried out in the Prey Lang forest in central Cambodia by Lambrick and colleagues has compared the state of community forests with carefully selected control sites outside community forest areas. Prey Lang is sometimes described (somewhat optimistically) as the largest undisturbed natural forest in Southeast Asia. In contrast to most other areas of Cambodia the forests assigned to community management here are not always degraded (Lambrick, Bebbler, Brown, & Lawrence, 2012, p. 5). The community forestry sites were established 2-5 years before the sampling for the study, and the results showed that they had less damage and more canopy cover than the control sites. This significant effect on reducing degradation was greater in communities who were more reliant on forest products.

This finding at least suggests that in cases where forest is relatively high value and where people are relatively forest dependent, the incentives for local forest management and/or local forest conservation might line up well from a REDD point of view and lead to results that are win-win in the sense that they

are good for the local people, good for the forest and perhaps even (depending on the terms incorporation of REDD into the global carbon economy) good for the global climate. However, as we have noted above, after the widespread, unsustainable logging of the 1990s, and given the general tendency for community forestry to be located in forests that have been heavily logged, many forest people in Cambodia are not in a position to be forest dependent.

3.2.2 Evidence of trade-offs as forest dwelling people rely on deforestation and post-forest land use

While the Prey Lang findings suggest that attempts to link REDD with community forestry would support local livelihood priorities, other researchers, in areas more subject to degradation and rapid in-migration find local livelihoods dominated by activities relating to deforestation and post-forest land uses. In Oddar Meanchey the rural population is growing rapidly, with a 9% per annum increase leading to a trebling of the rural population in the province between 1998 and 2008 (Bradley, 2009a, p. 7): this is one of the key causes of deforestation in the province.

Here, Pasgaard & Chea (Forthcoming) documented not only the extent to which forest people are migrants seeking agricultural land, but also the inequalities within communities. They found that earlier arrivals were usually wealthier households who tended to have more diversified livelihoods and own land that was closer to the village settlement and less vulnerable to expropriation. Households that arrived later, on the other hand, had to claim land that was further away from the village and therefore less secure. While it was clear (and unsurprising) in Pasgaard and Chea's work that poorer households were more vulnerable in a number of ways, it was also clear that their current livelihoods were more non-timber forest products (NTFP) dependent than the better-off, more established households. Thus while closing the agricultural frontier and protecting forest would frustrate their ambitions to more rapidly move out of poverty, it would, on the other hand, benefit them more than the better off households to have the NTFP resources in the forest secured.

Both Pasgaard & Chea (Forthcoming) and Biddulph (2011) have found that most villagers participating in the community forestry activities in the REDD pilot are mainly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. While they participate in protecting the community forestry sites (which cover approximately 10% of the provincial area) they are also actively clearing other forest lands, albeit not usually those within the CF sites. This means that while the REDD pilot might seem in harmony with local livelihoods when conducted on 10% of the land, any attempt to scale up to the whole province would put poor people's predominantly agricultural livelihoods (which rely on clearing forest land) in direct conflict with the sustainable forest management ambitions of REDD.

At this stage, whilst the community forest groups have been formed, they have very limited funding and are waiting for REDD payments to start flowing in order that the pilot can begin in earnest. It is therefore very difficult to judge whether the agriculturally dependent forest people can be supported to have livelihoods that are both decent for them and their families and also sustainable in the sense that they neither destroy the community forests nor the surrounding forests that are not yet scheduled for inclusion in REDD pilots. The degree to which the population is dominated by people who "migrate to the forest to farm the land" suggests that initiatives to introduce agricultural intensification, efficient fuelwood stoves, and improved marketing and production of NTFPs etc may be insufficient to prevent

the wholesale degradation and deforestation of forest beyond the community forestry CF areas in the pilot. This will be important to monitor if the implications of REDD at a larger scale are to be correctly understood from the pilot.

Biddulph (2011) conducted field research in two of the pilot communities in Oddar Meanchey, one located far from its community forest and the other located within the community forestry boundaries. He observed that where accessing agricultural land involved regular travel through local forests this appeared to have enabled effective protection activities by local communities despite the fact that they were not particularly dependent on forests for their livelihoods. As a result, he suggested that a priority for any REDD initiatives involving forest people was to ensure that they had sufficient agricultural land in order that their livelihoods were secure, and that land use should be strategically planned such that everyday journeys to agricultural fields took people past the forests for which they were responsible.

3.3 Impact of REDD on Tenure Security for the Poor

3.3.1 Securing Agricultural Plots for Forest People

If, as the previous section implies, agricultural incomes are the cornerstone of forest people's livelihoods, then any plan to secure their participation in forest management implies a need to provide them with secure access to agricultural land. Indeed, a number of Biddulph's (2011) respondents reported that they claimed more agricultural land than they needed precisely because they feared that some land might be taken from them. Extending agricultural land tenure to people in forests is, however, challenging. In Cambodia there is a national programme of land titling in progress, but the provisions of the Land Law (which enable community recognition of possession rights to be converted into formal legal ownership rights) do not extend to land classified as state forest. As such, there is no readily available legal mechanism by which people living in or near forests can secure tenure to agricultural land within those forests. Applying current laws would be more likely to lead to their eviction than to recognise their current land occupation and use.

In the pilot areas in Oddar Meanchey, in at least some community forestry sites, the local NGO supporting the community forestry initiative had worked with local communities and Forestry Administration officials in order to try and mark and map all existing agricultural plots in the forest. This was to both get some security for the households already farming, and also to enable a line to be drawn such that no more farm land could be cleared. The fact that this was bitterly complained about by villagers who wished to clear more land indicated both that it had some success and that it impinged on poor people's livelihoods.

While the initiative in Oddar Meanchey was gaining a foothold in terms of informal recognition other initiatives are seeking to achieve a more formal recognition. There are some indications elsewhere that a process to register usufruct rights for private agricultural plots on forest lands may emerge. This has been largely a response to conflicts that have arisen between land concessions and local populations. While it is not legal to clear and farm forest land, the practice is widespread. Concessionaires who have been awarded forest land find themselves displacing people who are long-term occupants and users of land. In such situations there is a political pressure to find a solution whereby the occupants are given a legal right to remain on what is legitimately (at least according to custom) their land. An EU programme

elsewhere in Oddar Meanchey has begun looking at such possibilities by beginning to title people whose land is in forests; likewise officials from the Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction have taken the first steps towards the possible allocation of usufruct rights to land scheduled for concessions in Kampong Speu province. If REDD is to become a catalyst for recognising and making secure poor people's rights to agricultural land in forests then links to such initiatives may be fruitful.

Milne and Adams (2012), however, have been looking at avoided deforestation payment for environmental services (PES) activities in the Cardamom mountains in the south west of Cambodia, where there are also plans to link existing activities to the carbon market in order to generate a REDD pilot. Here they found that rather than recognising existing rights to agricultural land, the nascent REDD activity (PES for avoided deforestation) resulted in precisely the opposite outcome,

... by forcing the definition of a forest boundary in order to implement PES, government actors were able to step in and silence local claims to fallow and old pre-war farmland that appeared to be 'forest'. Although these local claims to forested land had been mapped in the earlier 'participatory land-use plans' of 2003–05, the FA used its authority to push for a simplified binary interpretation of the maps. Forests in Cambodia are classified as state property, so the NGO unwittingly facilitated government control over forest land and resources in the area through PES implementation (Milne & Adams, 2012, p. 150)

These conflicts between agricultural land and forest land were also apparent in the Oddar Meanchey in the more successful community forestry sites. Here there were bitter complaints from poor farmers that they had not been able to farm land or to clear new farm land because of the community forest. There was therefore a direct conflict between securing the forest for the community and securing farmland for private use, and therefore from a poverty reduction point of view success was not being achieved without an opportunity cost.



Picture 10 The cut tree marks land that villagers intend to clear. While villagers actively protect the designated community forest areas, they also participate in the destruction of the state-managed forests beyond the community forest area, Oddar Meanchey 2010 Photo: Author.

3.3.2 Achieving Secure Forest Tenure

The apparent progress towards securing tenure for forest communities through community forestry, is undermined by the extent to which there remains doubt about the extent of the government's commitment to honour the tenure rights that are established. Yeang (2010) suggested that both the Seima and the Oddar Meanchey projects have effectively "legitimized tenure rights of local communities in the project areas as provided for through the Land and Forestry law in Cambodia". On the other hand, he remained concerned by the threat of Economic Land Concessions which he described as "the most challenging issue for REDD implementation in Cambodia" (Yeang, 2010, p. 55). More recently, on the 7th May 2012, the Prime Minister issued a moratorium on issuing land concessions, although a number which he says were agreed before the moratorium have been signed since then (Hance, 2012). The contradiction between moves to protect forest and moves to authorise its destruction is at the heart of the political economy of forest management in Cambodia. The highest powers in the land are clearly behind both the National Forestry Programme and REDD Roadmap, and even the Oddar Meanchey REDD pilot, where the support of the Prime Minister was reported to have been key in enabling the initiative to get underway. But those same powers are also behind the issuing of economic land concessions which frequently overlap with protected areas, community forests and existing settlements.

It is for this reason that Ribot and Peluso (2003) have drawn a distinction between rights and powers. They suggest that tenure is not simply a matter of acquiring rights, but rather of being able to exercise that right. If communities have rights to forest, but they lose it anyway, then that is hardly secure tenure. For this reason they advocate thinking of tenure not so much as "bundles of rights" as "bundles of powers".

In Oddar Meanchey, Bradley's case study illustrates some of the tensions in practice. The Ratanak Ruka community forest had been due to be over 21 000 hectares, but then two economic concessions were awarded to a senior CPP senator and his wife which overlapped with the forest. Bradley describes the conflict thus:

Undaunted by the fact that the concessionaires included some of Cambodia's most powerful businessmen, the communities tirelessly lobbied the FA and the MAFF for the right to retain their stewardship over the land. Their zeal prompted the government to work towards a compromise solution (Bradley, 2009a, p. 17).

The compromise was that the CF was reduced to 12,782 hectares, which Bradley described as "a moral victory for the community". Having stayed in that village, I can testify to the sense of pride and relief felt by the villagers that they had managed to retain a proportion of the CF. On the other hand, the fact that losing 40% of the territory of a CF site can be represented as a victory illustrates the extent to which actors lack confidence in the tenure outcomes achieved so far.

In my field visits in 2011 I took up the issue of forest tenure security with authorities at provincial, district and commune levels. Respondents were united in explaining that concessions are awarded over their heads and without local consultation by national level, and they are left to tidy up the pieces. When asked about his ability to guarantee the security of the community forests in the REDD pilot, the provincial governor could only guarantee one forest, the Sorng Rokavorn community forest.



Picture 11. The author of the report together with treasurer of the community forestry group in Bak Nim village in Oddar Meanchey, 2010.

The Sorng Rokavorn community forest is the largest of the 13 CFs in Oddar Meanchey covering a total of 18 164 hectares or just over a quarter of the total pilot area. However, it is also exceptional in that it was established by a charismatic Cambodian monk who came back from a stay with forest monks in Thailand determined to protect some forest in his homeland. While he has participated in the CF pilot and has also received funding from Pact, he has also received funding and pledges of funding (some of which he has not called in), and is utterly confident that nobody would issue a concession on his land because of the legitimacy and support he has at all levels (Interview with

Venerable Bun Saloth, November 2011). In other words, any security accruing to the monk's community forestry can quite possibly be seen as part of a business as usual rather than an impact of the recognition of the REDD pilot.

Tenure security is, however, not just a blanket binary of "secure" versus "insecure". Some forest is more insecure than others, and the provincial governor felt that there was more chance of the community forests in the REDD pilot surviving than there was of forests in his province that were not part of the pilot.

One specific danger that has not thus far arisen is REDD displacing or threatening to displace forest people from forests. The idea in the original PEP report on Making REDD work for the Poor (Peskett et al., 2008) was that State actors keen to appropriate the benefits of REDD might drive out poor people in order to gain control of the forest and the REDD revenues that it might deliver. Arguably, the failure of this threat to materialise may relate to the low (relative to potential gains from post-forest land uses) levels of REDD finance that are anticipated.

3.3.3 Indigenous People's Communal Tenure

The provisions of the 2001 Land Law established the rights of native ethnic minority groups to assert community title to their lands. Since then, progress in passing subsidiary legislation (sub-decrees and implementation guidelines) and then in processing applications from minority groups has been slow. The fact that the second REDD pilot, in the Seima protection forest, is largely inhabited by minority groups who are attempting to gain legal title to their lands will provide an opportunity to observe whether REDD does in fact give any additional leverage in enabling communities to have the powers to realise their rights. It is this general issue, the rights and powers of forest peoples, that is our final stage of analysis.

3.4 Rights and Power of Forest People within and beyond REDD

3.4.1 Rights and Powers within Communities

It is well-established in development studies that communities are not uniform and homogenous (Chambers, 1983), but it is nevertheless important to be reminded of this truth in each new context, and to understand its implications in each case. Milne and Adams (2012) make the case that avoided deforestation PES schemes (of which REDD is an example) like the one they studied in the Cardamoms are particularly prone to simplifying and reducing both communities and ecologies such that only carbon is recognised and valued (and then valued only in a narrow monetized way) and all of the other values and motivations that might lead communities to protect natural resources are marginalised and may be closed off (2012, p. 149).

Pasgaard and Chea (Forthcoming) anatomise the kinship and power relations in the REDD pilot community forests and warn that it is likely that the poorest households will be marginalised from benefits. They see wealthier households in the villages being elected to senior positions within the community forests and argue that the community forestry committees will tend to be biased towards the sort of (relatively wealthy, with land nearer the village centre) households who sit on the committees. As a result poorer households are more likely to be marginalised from any benefits that accrue from the community forestry scheme.

On the one hand, the existence of such studies suggests that it is unlikely that issues of marginalisation within community based initiatives to implement REDD will be neglected. This applies also to gender relations, as a forthcoming study by Pact and WOCAN will address issues in relation to women's inclusion/exclusion in the REDD pilot processes. On the other hand, the message from current studies is quite clear: there is a risk that within the communities the leadership may operate in ways which facilitate the goals of REDD, but which nevertheless work against the interests of the poorer within those communities.

3.4.2 Community Role in Negotiating Benefits in Pilots

A particular issue which the supporters of the Oddar Meanchey pilot are well aware of, and which will demand continued monitoring, is the role that the beneficiaries have in negotiating their own financial benefits. Bradley (2009a, p. 26) thus concluded that the "project was successful in securing substantial carbon funding for local communities" but also that the question of future division of benefits should be addressed early and that guidelines for community consultation and criteria for securing free, prior and informed consent should be in place before communities are engaged. Simply put, it remains open to question as to whether the members of the populations in the 13 community forestry groups would have regarded at least 50% of net payments as a success or not, nor whether they would have seen the payments taken for other actors before themselves as legitimate or not. Given that communities may also benefit substantially by being paid for activities within the project in addition to the REDD payments, and given the national character of REDD negotiations they may regard this as a good deal. At the time of writing there is still opportunity for further clarification of what "at least 50%" might amount to. One respondent reports Forestry Administration officials being prepared to contemplate 90% of payment going to the communities; it may therefore be the case that further community negotiations will follow and will have beneficial outcomes.

Yeang's finding that communities were not interested to know about REDD payments because their priority was tenure security rather than obtaining payments may be related to the sensitive nature of the question and the fact that it came somewhat after the fact:

Furthermore, the communities have not demanded to know the specific payout from the project since their strong motivation is the ability to safeguard their forest as well as securing their tenure rights (Interview 2, 3, 7). The interview also indicated that the first priority for the communities is to secure their tenure rights over forests with legal support. Secondly, the communities are expecting to gain technical and financial support to carry out key protection and resource development activities (Yeang, 2010, p. 39).

On the other hand, this issue also points to more fundamental issues in relations to poor people's powerlessness in the face of REDD. It would no doubt have been possible (though time-consuming and expensive) to organise representation and participation for the 10,058 households from 58 villages in the negotiations to decide how much of the REDD payment would accrue to them. However, what would they be negotiating for? The terms of the pilot – namely that payments for avoided deforestation will be available to the extent that they are valued and purchased on the voluntary carbon market – means that nobody knows what the REDD payments will be worth. Thus, while the idea of REDD purports to represent a commitment to the global climate, and a commitment to pay poor countries (and possibly poor people) for avoided deforestation and degradation in that cause, there is no commitment to pay a particular price. Given this lack of commitment to the pilot on behalf of the sponsors of REDD globally, and given that being poor in Oddar Meanchey means struggling to feed your family, to send your children to school and to set them up for lives as adults, and all of the stress that that involves, it is questionable whether a FPIC process that demands their time and engagement in return for very uncertain rewards would be ethical or legitimate⁷.

3.4.3 Consultation and Information on REDD

While the ultimate goal of participation may be to enable people to influence decisions that affect them, the starting point is usually to ensure that they have enough information to develop an informed opinion. Clearly in Cambodia efforts have been made to consult widely in the course of the development of the REDD roadmap both during 2010 and since (Blaser & Lakanavichian, 2011). According to the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA, 2011), indigenous people were consulted and able to contribute their comments on both the National Forest Programme in general and REDD in particular in the course of the readiness process. Additionally, provincial workshops involving indigenous organisations in five provinces were scheduled for both capacity-building and consultation in relation to REDD. The extent to which this has resulted in forest people being able to influence decisions is not yet clear, nor is it clear which particular decisions might be open to influence. Gurung et al (2010) emphasise the importance of people's participation as key to an effective and pro-poor REDD in Cambodia, and Stephenson et al (2012) look at these issues from a capacity-building viewpoint.

While clear lessons on information sharing and its practical outcomes have not yet been forthcoming, there has been attention paid to the issue of how to explain REDD to poor people in Cambodia. One

⁷ Though see Gurung et al (2010) for an account that emphasizes the importance of people's participation as key to an effective and pro-poor REDD+ in Cambodia, and Stephenson et al (2012) for an analysis that looks at these issues from a capacity-building viewpoint.

point of discussion during my fieldwork was whether carbon or carbon dioxide need to be part of the explanation, or whether the fairly self-evident fact that forests are cooler is sufficient to explain why people worried about global warming might want to reward people for not cutting down or degrading forests.

3.4.4 Discursive Power and Disempowerment

As noted above in relation to Milne and Adams' (2012) article, the way that people are represented or misrepresented in policy dialogues can be profoundly disempowering. If communities are represented as only "forest dependent" and not as "agricultural" this serves to legitimise policies that (certainly in the majority of cases in Oddar Meanchey) ignore the people's first priority, namely secure access to private agricultural plots. The temptation to present donors with win-win scenarios where governments and people are in harmony and climate change mitigation and poverty reduction are two birds that can be killed with one stone must be tempting in the face of struggles to raise funds and to support communities and protect forests. It seems that this temptation has been yielded to in some cases, for example in relation to Oddar Meanchey:

The communities have long advocated for a collective, local approach to protecting the forest, in large part because it provides them more secure tenure for the forest resources they depend upon for their livelihoods, which they want to conserve for their children and grandchildren (Bradley, 2009a, p. 6)

And more subtly:

While many of the project communities are comprised of recent migrants who have settled in the area over the past ten to fifteen years, they are motivated to retain their local forests, have substantial local knowledge of the forest ecosystems and are economically dependent on forest resources. Due to their physical presence in and around the forests, they are well positioned to defend forest resources from illegal logging and further clearing by more recent migrants (Poffenberger, 2009, p. 289)

Descriptions such as these which conceal or distort the motivations of the poor risk being profoundly disempowering if they contribute to denying poor people the objectives that are their priorities. Villagers may be well positioned to defend forest resources, but many of them are also desperate to clear more land. In the Oddar Meanchey pilot the discourse of the external rhetoric (understating the importance of agriculture) has not been reflected in the discourse of programme practice (so staff still work to secure villagers' tenure to currently cultivated agricultural land). On the other hand, understating the extent to which current residents want to clear more farm land and therefore may begin to resist or oppose the community forestry, risks failing to anticipate serious conflicts between community forestry leaders and other villagers.

3.4.5 Broader issues of Rights and Empowerment

The main questions regarding REDD and the entitlements and possibilities for poor forest people remain unanswered. There is limited evidence at this stage of REDD either greatly weakening or greatly strengthening people in their struggles to prevent forest land from being expropriated. The processing of the Oddar Meanchey community forest sites (which are larger and more valuable than any other community forests in the country) was rather quicker than the processing of other sites in the country,

so in that narrow sense, REDD may have speeded the process of people acquiring some formal rights. The extent to which those rights prove durable remains to be seen. It remains uncertain as to whether formation of community forestry groups or any of the other negotiations around REDD will strengthen or weaken the capacity of poor people to organize in their own interests and achieve their own goals.

4 Concluding remarks by the author

The findings of this report are summarised on pages 2-3.

A recent Focali brief (2012:05) shows interest and commitment for REDD peaking at around 2010. The Cambodian experience demonstrates just how little that peak amounted to in the context of the local realities of competing land-uses and political agendas. At the current time there is no willingness to pay for REDD on any meaningful scale and no prospect of carbon markets leading to a decarbonised global economy and climate change mitigation (Lohmann, 2012). When REDD itself is so flimsy and inconsequential it is a mistake that so many of us are devoting so much ink and so much time to considering its prospects. Perhaps those who care about climate change should be more scrupulously addressing climate change and its causes, and those of us who care about poverty should be addressing poverty and its causes. And REDD should be taken off the research agenda until it has sufficient political and financial force to make a difference to either climate change or poverty.

Those reflections prompted comments from reviewers which I reprint below with their permission.

Amanda Bradley:

I also think there's too much energy spent on researching REDD which has not gone to market yet. It's hard to be conclusive when credits are not yet being sold by the government. It is interesting to think about what impact the research interest has had. There have been so many visitors and researchers in Oddar Meanchey that perhaps it has raised the profile of the project and expectations among communities and government.

Sarah Milne, Australian National University:

At some point people need to start speaking about the elephant in the room, which is that effective REDD implementation is pretty unlikely. I do keep one foot in the camp of wanting to channel money and attention towards forests, in whatever form that may be, but practitioners need to maintain a healthy scepticism.

Lasse Krantz:

Though I agree with Robin that REDD has become too much of a research topic in itself I think that one should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The "baby" for me in this context is the attention that REDD has helped to draw on forest/land tenure and rights issues at the local level (in the context of climate change) which should remain on the (Focali) research agenda.

References

- Angelsen, A., Brockhaus, M., Sunderlin, W. D., & Verchot, L. (Eds.). (2012). *Analysing REDD+. Challenges and Choices*. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.
- Angelsen, A., Brown, S., Loisel, C., Peskett, L., Streck, C., & Zarin, D. (2009). *Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD): An Options Assessment Report*. Oslo: Meridian Institute.
- Ashwell, D., Ogonowski, M., Neou, S., & McCulloch, C. (2011). *Assisting Cambodian Policymakers with Designing REDD Plus Approaches under a Post-2012 International Climate Change Policy Framework*. Washington D.C.: Centre for Clean Air Policy.
- Barney, K. (2007). *A Note on Forest Land Concessions, Social Conflicts, and Poverty in the Mekong Region*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Poverty Reduction and Forests, Bangkok.
- Becker, E. (1998). *When the War Was Over: Cambodia's Revolution and the Voices of its People. 2nd Edition* New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Biddulph, R. (2010). *Geographies of Evasion. The Development Industry and Property Rights Interventions in Early 21st Century Cambodia.*, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg.
- Biddulph, R. (2011). *Avoided Deforestation and Agriculture: Insights from Cambodia into a Complex Relationship. Policy Brief 2011:07*. Gothenburg: Focali.
- Biddulph, R., Westholm, L., Pettersson, J., Strömberg, J., & Mattson, E. (2009). *Focali Theme 2 Inception Report: Making REDD work for the Poor*. Gothenburg: Focali.
- Blaser, J., & Lakanavichian, S. (2011). Cambodia RPP TAP Synthesis Review-March7. Retrieved 12th August, 2012, from <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/fcp/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Document/s/PDF/Mar2011/Cambodia%20RPP%20TAP%20Synthesis%20Review-March7.pdf>
- Boyce, J. K. (2003). *Aid, Conditionality and War Economies. PERI Working Paper Number 70*. Amherst: Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts.
- Boyle, D., & Titthara, M. (2012, 2nd August). Land Grab in Battambang. *The Phnom Penh Post*. Retrieved 2nd August, from <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2012080257779/National-news/land-grab-in-bbang.html>
- Bradley, A. (2009a). *Communities and Carbon: Establishing a community forestry-REDD project in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: PACT/Focali.
- Bradley, A. (2009b). *REDD working for the Poor in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: PACT/Focali.
- Bradley, A. (2011). *Review of Cambodia's REDD Readiness: Progress and Challenges. Forest Conservation Project, Occasional Paper No.4*. Kanagawa: IGES.
- Brinkley, J. (2012). *Cambodia's curse: The modern history of a troubled land*. US: Public Affairs.
- Chambers, R. (1983). *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*. Harlow: Longman.
- Chandler, D. (1992). *A History of Cambodia, Second Edition*. Chiang Mai: Silkorm Press.
- Cleary, M. (2005a). Managing the Forest in Colonial Indochina. *Modern Asian Studies*, 39(2), 257-283.
- Cleary, M. (2005b). "Valuing the Tropics" Discourses of Development in the Farm and Forest Sectors of French Indochina, circa 1900-40. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26(3), 359-374.
- Clements, T., John, A., Nielsen, K., An, D., Tan, S., & Milner-Gulland, E. J. (2010). Payments for biodiversity conservation in the context of weak institutions: Comparison of three programs from Cambodia. *Ecological Economics*, 69(6), 1283-1291.
- Cock, A. (2004). Forest Destruction for Poverty Reduction: The Tum Ring rubber plantation. *Watershed*, 9(3), 30-39.
- Cock, A. R. (2007). *The interaction between a ruling elite and an externally promoted policy reform agenda: the case of forestry under the second Kingdom of Cambodia 1993-2003*. La Trobe, Bundoora, Victoria.

- De Lopez, T. T. (2001). Deforestation in Cambodia: a stakeholder management approach. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 8(4), 380-394.
- FAO Representation in Cambodia. (2011). *Cambodia and FAO: Achievements and success stories*. Phnom Penh: FAO.
- Fichtenau, J., Beang, L. C., Sothea, N., & Sophy, D. (2002). *An Assessment of Ongoing Community Forestry Initiatives in Cambodia - Implications for the Development of a Forestry Extension Strategy*. . Phnom Penh: GTZ/Department of Forestry and Wildlife.
- Global Witness. (2007). *Cambodia's Family Trees: Illegal Logging and the Stripping of Public Assets by Cambodia's Elite*. London: Global Witness.
- Global Witness. (2009). *Country for Sale: How Cambodia's elite has captured the country's extractive industries*. London: Global Witness.
- Griffiths, T. (2008). *Seeing REDD: Forests, climate change mitigation and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Update for Poznań (UNFCCC COP 14)*. Moreton-in-Marsh: Forest Peoples Programme.
- Gurung, J., Hou, K., Long, K., & Maginnis, S. (2010). *Communities Must See the Plus in REDD-plus: REDD-plus demonstration projects are providing important lessons for a REDD-plus framework in Cambodia that works for communities*. Yale: The Forest Dialogue.
- Hance, J. (2012). Flouting moratorium, Cambodia approves four land concessions in protected areas Retrieved 24 September, 2012, from <http://news.mongabay.com/2012/0627-hance-cambodia-land-concessions.html>
- Heder, S. (2005). Hun Sen's Consolidation: Death or Beginning of Reform? *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 114-130.
- Heng, S., & Sokhun, T. (2005). *Cambodia Community Forestry 2005*. Paper presented at the First Regional Community Forest Forum: regulatory framework for community forestry in Asia.
- IWGIA. (2011). Update 2011 - Cambodia. Retrieved 8th August, 2012, from <http://www.iwgia.org/regions/asia/cambodia/854-update-2011-cambodia>
- Lambrick, F. (2012, 1st May). Who is responsible for the death of Cambodia's foremost forest activist? *Guardian*. Retrieved 15th August, from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2012/may/01/death-cambodian-forest-activist-chut-wutty?intcmp=239>
- Lambrick, F., Bebber, D., Brown, N., & Lawrence, A. (2012). An Ecological Assessment of Community Forestry in Prey Lang Forest, Cambodia (unpublished draft).
- Lao, S. (2012). Cambodia REDD+ Readiness Status/Overview presentation 13th February 2012. Retrieved August 11th, 2012, from http://www.undp.org.my/files/editor_files/files/PDF%20presentations/Microsoft%20PowerPoint%20-%203.%20Cambodia%20REDD%20Roadmap%20Mr.Sethapal%20Lao%20Legislation%20and%20Law%20Enforcement%20Dept%20Cambodia.pdf
- Le Billon, P. (2000). The Political Ecology of Transition in Cambodia 1989-1999: War, Peace and Forest Exploitation. *Development and Change*, 31, 785-805.
- Le Billon, P. (2002). Logging in Muddy Waters: The Politics of Forest Exploitation in Cambodia. *Critical Asian Studies*, 34(4), 563-586.
- Le Billon, P., & Springer, S. (2007). Between War and Peace: Violence and Accommodation in the Cambodian Logging Sector In W. D. Jong, D. Donovan & K.-I. Abe (Eds.), *Extreme Conflict and Tropical Forests* (Vol. 5, pp. 17-36): Springer Netherlands.
- Leuprecht, P. (2007). *Economic land concessions in Cambodia: A human rights perspective*. Phnom Penh: United Nations Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Li, T. M. (2002). Engaging Simplifications: Community-Based Resource Management, Market Processes and State Agendas in Upland Southeast Asia. *World Development*, 30(2), 265-283.

- Lohmann, L. (2012). A Rejoinder to Matthew Paterson and Peter Newell. *Development and Change*, no. no.
- Mather, R. (2010). *Supporting REDD Implementation in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia through the Design of a REDD-compliant Benefit Distribution System*. Hanoi: IUCN Asia Programme.
- McKenney, B., Chea, Y., Tola, P., & Evans, T. (2004). *Focusing on Cambodia's High Value Forests: Livelihood and Management* Phnom Penh: Cambodia Development Resource Institute/Wildlife Conservation Society.
- Milne, S. (2012). Chut Wutty: Tragic casualty of Cambodia's dirty war to save forests. Retrieved 14th August, 2012, from <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2012/04/30/chut-wutty-tragic-casualty-of-cambodia%E2%80%99s-dirty-war-to-save-forests/>
- Milne, S., & Adams, W. (2012). Market Masquerades: Uncovering the Politics of Community-level Payments for Environmental Services in Cambodia. *Development and Change*, 43(1), 133-158.
- Pak, K. (2011). *Fiscal Decentralisation in Cambodia: A Review of Progress and Challenges*. Phnom Penh: CDRI.
- Pasgaard, M., & Chea, L. (Forthcoming). Double Inequity? The Social Dimensions of Deforestation and Forest Protection in Local Communities; a Case Study from Northern Cambodia. *Ecology and Society*, in review for special issue "Beyond Carbon: Enabling Justice and Equity in REDD+ Across Levels of Governance"
- Peskett, L., Huberman, D., Bowen-Jones, E., Edwards, G., & Brown, J. (2008). *Making REDD Work for the Poor*. Geneva: Poverty Environment Partnership.
- Poffenberger, M. (2009). Cambodia's forests and climate change: Mitigating drivers of deforestation. *Natural Resources Forum* 33, 285-296.
- Poffenberger, M., De Gryze, S., & Durschinger, L. (2008). *Designing Collaborative REDD Projects: A case study from Oddar Meanchey province, Cambodia*: Community Forestry International.
- RECOFTC. (2011). Community Forestry in Cambodia. Retrieved 2 August, 2012, from <http://www.recoftc.org/site/Community-Forestry-in-Cambodia>
- RECOFTC. (2012). *REDD+ in Asia-Pacific: Are capacity building services meeting countries' needs?* Bangkok: RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests.
- Ribot, J. C., & Peluso, N. L. (2003). A Theory of Access*. *Rural Sociology*, 68(2), 153-181.
- Royal Government of Cambodia. (2010). *National Forest Programme 2010-2029 (Unofficial translation)*. Retrieved 3rd August 2012. from <http://www.twgfe.org/nfp/Docs/Publication/Living%20NFP%20document/NFP%20Strategic%20and%20Implementation%20English.pdf>.
- Sasaki, N., & Yoshimoto, A. (2010). Benefits of tropical forest management under the new climate change agreement - a case study in Cambodia. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 13(5), 384-392.
- Sjöberg, Ö., & Sjöholm, F. (2007). The Cambodian economy: ready for take-off? *The Pacific Review*, 19(4), 495-517.
- Stephenson, J., Marona, S., Enters, T., Patwa-Shah, W., Yasmi, Y., & Silori, C. (2012). *Cambodia REDD+ Capacity Building Services Assessment*. Phnom Penh: RECOFTC, UNEP, UN-REDD.
- Terra Global Capital. (2012). *Reduced Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation in Community Forests - Oddar Meanchey Cambodia. Project Design Document for validation under Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standard (Version 3-0) July 26, 2012*.
- Walker, A. (2004). Seeing Farmers for the Trees: Community Forestry and the arborealisation of agriculture in northern Thailand. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 45(3), 311-324.
- Working group for the Norrköping Protokoll for REDD+. (2011). *The Norrköping Protokoll for REDD+*. Norrköping: Swedish Forestry Association, Focali, Swedbio, Sida.
- World Bank Inspection Panel. (2006). *Investigation Report 35556. Cambodia: Forest Concession Management and Control Pilot Project (Credit No. 3365-KH and Trust Fund. 26419-JPN)*. Washington DC: World Bank.

Vrieze, P., & Naren, K. (2012, 10-11 March). Carving up Cambodia One Concession at a Time. *Cambodia Daily*,
Yeang, D. (2010). *Tenure Rights and Benefit Sharing Arrangements for REDD. A Case Study of Two REDD Pilot Projects in Cambodia*. Wageningen University, Wageningen.
Öjendal, J., & Sedara, K. (2006). Korob, Kaud, Klach: In Search of Agency in Rural Cambodia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 37(03), 507-526.



Picture 12. Demand for fuel from urban centers are provides a strong incentive for rural villagers to harvest wood unsustainably, like charcoal production. Photo: Robin Biddulph.



Picture 13. Community members thumb-printing to confirm their participation at the end of a process of information and consultation about the Seima pilot demonstration project in Mondulkiri province. Photo: Sarah Milne.

