

LAND ALLOCATION FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - LASED

LASED – Fighting Rural Poverty with Local Social Land Concessions

GIZ has supported Cambodian land reform efforts since 1995. Since 1998, GIZ has been providing capacity development to the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC), land departments at the sub-national levels, and supports the design and implementation of the Cambodian Land Administration, Management and Distribution Program (LAMDP).

The Declaration of the Royal Government of Cambodia’s Land Policy has set out 3 main pillars to be supported namely Land Administration Sub-Sector Program, Land Management Sub-Sector Program and Land Distribution Sub-Sector Program. Under the Land Distribution Sub-Sector Program, the Royal Government of Cambodia has committed to implement a Social Land Concession Programme.

Within the frame of the Cambodian Land Administration, Management and Distribution Program, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has implemented the “Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development” (LASED) program with technical support from GIZ and financial support from the World Bank since 2007. Responsibility for implementation is shared between the General Secretariat of Social Land Concessions at the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (GSSLC/MLMUPC) and the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat of the Ministry of Interior (NCDSD/MOI).

In rural areas, many households are landless and often lose their land as a result of economic and social hardship. With support from GIZ, LASED has piloted the distribution of private state land to landless and land-poor families for agricultural and residential purposes as an option to socially balance access to land. Entire new villages have been established with necessary infrastructure such as roads, schools, water wells and health care facilities. Services such as agricultural extension and community development enable women and men to use their newly acquired land productively. Five years after

allocation of the land, the land recipients have the right to become legal owners of the land.

Until today, Social Land Concessions under the LASED project have been implemented in 7 communes in the provinces of Kratie, Kampong Cham and Kampong Thom. A total of 10,173.13 ha of state land had been allocated to 3,148 land recipient families.

The project has successfully introduced and tested the necessary legal, institutional, organizational and technical requirements for a countrywide mechanism for the identification of suitable land, the selection of beneficiaries for social land concessions and the appropriate means of social and economic support for the target land recipients and their families. A cost-efficient replicable model guaranteeing significant positive impact on rural livelihoods is now available for nationwide dissemination and up-scaling.

LASED – The Process

At sub-national level, the responsibility for implementing the process lies with the Provincial and District Working groups under the Provincial Governor who chairs the Provincial Land Use and Allocation Committee. This committee is responsible for all decisions regarding Social Land Concessions.

Commune councils play the most important role in initiating and implementing LASED Social Land Concessions. Throughout the process, they receive technical support from the provincial and district working groups. The process follows the Project Implementation Manual which has been constantly adjusted to new developments and outlines the following main steps:

1. Land Identification, Mapping, Classification and Registration
2. Land Recipient Selection
3. Rural Development



Pg. 1 Photo left: Land recipient in Kampong Chham province in front of the map of his new village

Pg. 1 Photo right: Senior Minister Im Chhun Lim (MLMUPC) handing the land use agreement to a land recipient in Kampong Thom province

Pg. 2 Photo left: Proud farmers harvesting mung beans in Kratie province

Pg. 2 Photo right: Training on forming farmers’ groups in the new community hall of the social land concession village in Kratie province



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The whole process has been carefully monitored to study the impacts on local livelihoods. A number of existing tools and methods have been used. In particular, the Food and Nutrition Surveillance System and the Poverty and Economic Development Observation System (PEDOS) have been developed as additional monitoring tools based on the specific monitoring requirements of LASED.

LASED – The Achievements

LASED has been working with the poorest of the poor. This element of the Cambodian society had in the past no or very limited access to land for housing and production. They often suffered from malnutrition, had only limited income sources, low education, limited agricultural skills, and often suffered under high debt burdens.

A total of 15,266 people including 7,846 women benefitted from Social Land Concessions under the LASED project until now. More than one third of the households are headed by women. The role of women in development and their specific needs have been carefully considered within the overall LASED process. Social Land Concessions have been used to empower women and their rights to land.

The 3,148 households received a residential plot and depending on their family size between 1 and 3.5 ha of land for agricultural production. With help from the project, land recipients started with agriculture on their allocated land. Cultivation of rice, cassava and maize plays an important role as a staple and cash crop on recipients' land. Some families already managed to save parts of their earnings to plant rubber trees as an investment in the future of their children. In addition, home gardens, orchards, fish raising and animal production contribute to their diversified income.

Some of the benefits accruing to LASED land recipients on some sites are huge in financial terms. A number of beneficiaries are already doing very well in vegetable production and marketing, earning several hundred dollars from produce on their intensively used residential plots.

Considerable achievements have been made in terms of improving income of beneficiary households. The project management beneficiary assessments, reported average annual household incomes of up to 2,300 US Dollar, which signify an impressive improvement over pre-project levels as low as 400 US Dollar.

The project developed a socially and economically adapted technical assistance approach in line with the needs of project target groups.

Based on LASED interventions, the majority of land recipients in the LASED project have been able to considerably improve their livelihoods. At the time of settling in their new environment, almost all families belonged to the group of poor households (classified as IDPoor 1 and 2) and suffered of severe food shortages. Today nearly 70% of all households have been classified as food secure during the last LASED Food Security Survey. More than 80% of the land recipient families don't belong anymore to the group of population classified as poor (IDPoor 1 and 2).

For various reasons, not all allocated sites have been fully occupied and not all agricultural land has been developed, but on average 72% of land recipients settled on their new land holdings. Today, on average 40% of their land is already under cultivation, and infrastructure and social services are in place.

Of equal or even greater importance are the other changes that the project has helped to bring about for the beneficiaries' families. The transformation from landless, poor farm workers to being proud and independent farm owners and managers is remarkable and an important achievement for the beneficiaries and the LASED implementation teams. Behavioural changes and resulting changes in status have created examples for other community and commune members to follow.

Following the example of LASED Social Land Concessions, the Royal Government of Cambodia is replicating the approach and started implementing additional Social Land Concessions in 6 Provinces.

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
 Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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Layout

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Printed by

GIZ Cambodia

As at

May 2014

Implementation by



On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic
 Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Division

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

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