



Climate Change Adaptation through Small-Scale
and Protective Infrastructure Interventions in
Coastal Settlements of Cambodia (CCA4CS)

Report on Strengthening the Institutional System on Adaptation Investments and Replicating Their Benefits



July 2025
PHNOM PHEN, CAMBODIA

BRIEF SUMMARY

Under Component 2 of the project, the intervention aimed to enhance institutional systems for tracking adaptation investments and promoting the replication of good practices. The project focused on strengthening vertical coordination through an institutional review and the development of strategic recommendations.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Institutional Review on Climate Change Investments

A national consultant was recruited to conduct a mixed-methods institutional review, combining desk research, surveys, and interviews with representatives from provincial and district levels. The review identified systemic gaps and produced practical recommendations to strengthen institutional planning, coordination, and tracking mechanisms for climate adaptation.

2. Capacity-Building Training

On 7 September 2023, the project conducted a training workshop attended by 68 participants (25 per cent women), including representatives from Provincial Halls, Departments of Environment, and District Administrations. The session focused on disseminating the institutional review results and promoting stakeholder dialogue to support vertical integration and institutional ownership.

GOOD PRACTICES

1. Evidence-Based Institutional Assessment

The review applied a robust evidence-based methodology, incorporating both primary and secondary data. This enabled the project to develop a grounded understanding of the institutional landscape, identify practical challenges, and propose tailored solutions for sub-national capacity gaps.

2. Strategic Technical Review of Climate Investment Frameworks

The institutional review enabled a comprehensive diagnostic of climate investment mechanisms across key government functions, including planning, budgeting, and coordination. The results served as a platform for recommending systemic improvements.

LESSONS LEARNED

Role of National Line Ministries in Vertical Coordination

While sub-national stakeholders were effectively engaged, the project underscored the critical importance of national line ministry involvement to ensure policy coherence. Future interventions should incorporate structured knowledge-sharing sessions in Phnom Penh with focal persons from relevant ministries, including members of the Climate Change Technical Working Group (CCTWG), to build alignment and ownership at the national level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institutional Reviews as a Periodic Practice

Institutional strengthening is an ongoing process that requires continuous attention to coordination, human resource development, and financing systems. It is recommended that the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) lead periodic institutional reviews and multilevel dialogues to assess progress and adapt strategies over time.

2. Integration into Cambodia's NDC 3.0

To reinforce sustainability and scale impact, the project's institutional review findings and recommendations should be embedded into Cambodia's forthcoming Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0. This integration will help align institutional capacity-building efforts with national adaptation priorities through 2035.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since August 2021, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) have been implementing the Climate Change Adaptation through Protective Small-Scale Infrastructure Interventions in Coastal Settlements of Cambodia Project (CCA4CS), with financial support from the Adaptation Fund.

The project aims to strengthen climate resilience and adaptation in Cambodia's most vulnerable coastal settlements through targeted, on-the-ground interventions. By focusing on areas where ecotourism can support long-term sustainability, the initiative enhances communities' capacity to withstand climate-related challenges. The project is structured around three interconnected components to accomplish this in the highly vulnerable settlements in Kep Province and Prey Nob District of Preah Sihanouk Province:

Component 1: Community-scale knowledge and capacity enhanced to sustain the adaptation benefits of the project's investments.

Component 2: Government planning and technical capacity enhanced and knowledge captured and disseminated to sustain and enhance the project's adaptation benefits.

Component 3: Resilience built through investment in small-scale protective and basic service infrastructure and natural assets.

By integrating these components, the project addresses immediate climate risks and lays the foundation for long-term sustainability and resilience in Cambodia's coastal communities.

RATIONALE FOR THE INTERVENTION

Sustaining climate adaptation investments in Cambodia is constrained by limited institutional capacity, particularly at the sub-national level, where technical expertise, financial management systems, and planning frameworks remain underdeveloped. These systemic gaps undermine the ability of local authorities to effectively plan, implement, and monitor climate adaptation actions in a coordinated and accountable manner.

Recognizing this, the Royal Government of Cambodia has prioritized the strengthening of vertical integration between national and sub-national institutions. This is reflected in Strategic Objective 7 of the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP), which aims to enhance institutional systems and coordination mechanisms to integrate climate change into national and sub-national development plans and social protection strategies. Addressing these institutional barriers is crucial for strengthening long-term climate resilience, promoting the efficient use of resources, and expanding the adoption of successful adaptation practices nationwide.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Under Component 2, the project sought to enhance institutional systems for monitoring climate adaptation investments and facilitating the replication of successful practices. This was achieved by promoting vertical integration and coordination between national and sub-national institutions.

The intervention involved conducting an institutional review and formulating actionable recommendations to establish a system capable of systematically monitoring adaptation initiatives and advocating for their replication, upscaling, and sustained financing.

This report captures the key experiences, outcomes, good practices, lessons learned, and strategic recommendations that emerged from the intervention.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Institutional Review on Climate Change Investments

A national consultant was engaged to conduct an institutional review aimed at assessing capacity and identifying systemic gaps. The review employed a mixed-methods approach, combining desk-based analysis, structured surveys, and interviews with stakeholders at the provincial and district levels.

Key outputs included:

- Assessment of existing planning, budgeting, coordination, and reporting frameworks;
- Identification of institutional challenges; and
- Practical recommendations to enhance climate investment tracking and institutional functionality.

2. Capacity-Building Training

On 7 September 2023, the project facilitated a capacity-building workshop involving 68 participants, including 17 women (25 per cent). The training focused on disseminating the results and recommendations from the institutional review to key sub-national actors.

Participants included representatives from Provincial Halls, the Provincial Department of Environment, and District Administrations, with discussions oriented toward strengthening vertical coordination and institutional ownership.

GOOD PRACTICES

1. Evidence-Based Institutional Assessment

The institutional review stands out as a strong example of using evidence-based methodology, combining secondary research with primary data collection (surveys and interviews). This approach provided an accurate understanding of challenges and opportunities at the sub-national level.

2. Strategic Technical Review of Climate Investment Frameworks

The review enabled a comprehensive analysis of climate investment mechanisms across fiscal planning, budgeting, and coordination systems. This diagnostic served as a foundation for recommending systemic improvements.

LESSONS LEARNED

Role of National Line Ministries in Vertical Coordination

The active involvement of national line ministries is critical to ensuring policy coherence and vertical integration. While provincial-level focal points participated in the training, future interventions should include targeted knowledge-sharing sessions in Phnom Penh with line ministry focal persons, including members of the Climate Change Technical Working Group (CCTWG), to build alignment and ownership at the national level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institutional Reviews as a Periodic Practice

Institutional capacity building is a long-term process, of

ten constrained by coordination gaps, limited human resources, and fiscal bottlenecks. It is recommended that the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) institutionalise periodic reviews and structured dialogues involving relevant ministries and sub-national governments to monitor progress and align on priorities.

2. Integration into Cambodia's NDC 3.0

To ensure continuity and scalability, the insights and recommendations from the institutional review should be integrated into Cambodia's upcoming Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0. Embedding institutional system strengthening within NDC 3.0 will reinforce national commitments and guide targeted investment in institutional resilience through 2035.

DOCUMENTATION

Name	Type	Produced Date	Location
Report: Institutional Reviews on Climate Change Investments	Report	September 2023	Link
Refresher Training Report	Report	September 2023	Link



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