

Improved living standard of the people through community participation in sustainable forest management (Cambodia)

Final Report

PPD 22/99 Rev. 1 (F)

I. Introduction

The pre-project was approved by the Council in its Twenty-fifth Session in 1999, and funds for its implementation were made available during the Twenty-ninth Session in November 2000.

II. Pre-Project Objective

The development objective of the pre-project was to contribute to increasing the living standard of the people through their organization and participation in the sustainable management of their natural resources, while its specific objective was to demonstrate the technical, economic, and social feasibility of forest management with the organized participation of the communities.

III. Pre-Project Strategy and Activities

A baseline survey was conducted to examine the situation of the communities around the area including demographic and socio-economic aspects, and participatory attitudes. Based on the results of the survey, an initial community participation programme in forest management, including a local institutional strengthening component, was designed for further discussions among stakeholders.

IV. Pre-Project Achievements and Outputs

The pre-project outputs have been fully achieved. Forest utilization by local communities and the forest management situation have been surveyed and assessed in eleven villages in two districts using PRA methods. Socio-economic baseline data have been collected from local sources and have been analyzed by a community research team drawn from local officials, teachers, and students. Also, a project proposal entitled "Reforestation of Degraded State Forest Through Community-based Fuelwood Plantations and Agroforestry Enterprise Development" [PD 180/03 (F)] has been submitted to ITTO and has been appraised by the Twenty-fifth Expert Panel.

V. Target Beneficiaries Involvement

The participatory research carried out in the context of the pre-project has started the process of stakeholder identification, and community participation in problem definition and strategy formulation. This participatory analysis will continue as the communities work through the

establishment of village-level Community Forestry Committees. Equitable distribution of costs and benefits has already been discussed in the focus groups, especially as regards changes in formal and informal tenure. Local government officials, teachers, students, and local communities at large had been directly and indirectly involved in the implementation of the pre-project.

VI. Lessons Learnt

The local communities recognize that poverty is their basic problem. As community-based forest resource development was seen by the local communities as a promising means to reducing poverty and improving their welfare, they very actively supported project implementation.

VII. Dissemination of Results

Pre-project results will be disseminated through the Cambodian Forestry Offices, and the Project Proposal submitted to ITTO.

VIII. Recommendations Related to Future Work

Engaging local communities in a forest resource development program will be facilitated if they see the development activities as an opportunity to improve their income.

IX. Concluding Remarks

As the Pre-project Completion Report has been received by the ITTO Secretariat, PPD 22/99 Rev.1 (F) can be considered as completed pending the Final Financial Audit Report.