1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates DCA/CA’s Cambodia Food Security Programme (FSP) which has been operating from June 2005 to December 2009. The FSP focuses on supporting sustainable livelihood enhancement approaches that promote human rights and advocacy in order to assist poor Cambodians to successfully claim their constitutional right to food. Under the DCA/CA umbrella, seven partners work in tandem throughout Cambodia to achieve the objectives of the Programme. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to gain a better understanding of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the FSP; and to examine what could be learned from this to inform the development of the next FSP Plan. As such, this evaluation forms part of the Programme assessment and organizational learning.

In order to assess the FSP, highlight any gaps within the Programme, and document lessons learned, the study considered information from the original FSP log frame and a 2008 revised FSP log frame matrix; annual FSP reports; individual partner project reviews and evaluations; various monitoring reports and other relevant documentation; as well as comments from stakeholder interviews, backed up by field visit observations in three provinces where fieldwork was undertaken. The Programme evaluation was carried out by a team of four external evaluators over 29 days.

Main Findings

Overall, this evaluation found that the relevance of the FSP interventions was high at all stakeholder levels. Furthermore, the FSP strategy is consistent with DCA/CA’s worldwide mandates on Rights Based approaches to secure livelihoods, gender equality, and climate change, and supports the Cambodian Government’s overarching plans to reduce poverty and the Cambodia Millenium Development Goals on Food Security and Nutrition. The FSP interventions are relevant to the contextual food insecurity needs determined at the start of the Programme, and all immediate objectives are relevant to the Development Objective’s emphasis of ensuring food security through service delivery and advocacy. The effectiveness and efficiency of the FSP’s delivery; its short and longer term impacts; and sustainability potential; were all very good at the village and commune levels, but only moderate at district, province, national and indirect partner levels. The main reason for the comparatively lower results at higher levels was a lack of strong, operational linkages between partners and these higher stakeholder levels. Summarized findings for all stakeholders follow:

Village RH/DB level

- **Strengths:** The most significant changes included better health, nutrition and water supply (which save time and effort for women); Village Banks (VBs) which give access to credit (especially for women); and better FS through agriculture techniques (for men and women). FS months increased from 6-9 months in 2005 to 11-12 months by the end of 2009 according to FG respondents. Other significant changes were increased empowerment and solidarity through forming groups; raised awareness of claiming rights from government DBs, especially for infrastructure; and RH/DBs’ needs being met through joint development planning and more access to government funds to support communities.

- **Weaknesses:** Funding constraints hinder RHs from undertaking leadership roles in time consuming community and advocacy activities, particularly if these roles are voluntary and

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1 DANCHURCHAID Report 2008, Rolling Plan 2009-2012 and Budget 2010-2013
take RHs away from their normal income generating activities. In cases of land-grabbing or seizure of natural resources by outsiders, the results of FSP support have been mixed. While there have been some successes, some communities are yet to receive title or compensation for their land, even though they have gone through the appropriate channels to request land dispute resolution.

Commune and District DB level

- **Strengths:** The most significant changes were improved CDC/DDC roles and responsibilities, planning and management; DDPs/CDPs allocation of government funds to help solve FS problems, land rights and NRM issues; allocation of resources from PDPs to DDPs/CDPs; increased empowerment of females and males, and more opportunities for responsible and accountable leadership (for both sexes). A positive shift in attitude towards women being able to fill more roles in local government, reflects greater gender sensitization.

- **Weaknesses:** Overall DBs' actual accountability is low to moderate. This is due to a range of reasons including limited DB absorptive capacity; generic rather than specific training; and lack of operational linkages. Their accountability is unlikely to improve dramatically in the short to medium term because of the ongoing contextual problems with decentralization and deconcentration (D&D), low government wages and support for activities, and slow progress on anti corruption policies.

Partner level

- **Strengths:** Partner strategies were relevant to achieving the FSP’s objectives. Partners have gained greater management experience with FS issues; improved the quality of the Programme; and stimulated new initiatives, such as climate change interventions.

- **Weaknesses:** Joint activities, apart from the partner platform, to foster synergy of effort, are limited; and strong linkages outside of the community/commune/NGO context with provincial DBs and national level ministries, indirect partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) and private sector actors don’t exist. Some partner NGO networking groups are not able to provide long term support to their target communities, due to funding of discrete interventions within a project, rather than broader long term funding.

Indirect Partners

- **Strengths:** Annual FSP Reports indicate that significant advocacy outcomes have occurred at the national level, e.g. forums have challenged the government on issues of transparency and accountability in managing public property.

- **Weaknesses:** this evaluation found that meaningful linkages between partners and indirect partners were limited in comparison to the other levels.

DCA/CA

- **Strengths:** DCA/CA has gained Programme development experience to carry forward into the next FSP phase, and has maintained good relationship with stakeholders.
- **Weaknesses**: The reported lack of carry over of funds from one year to the next, may constrain activities. For example, if planting dry season rice is delayed in one year because of drought, funds are not able to be carried over to the next dry season.

In addition to the above, the following **findings** and **lessons learned** can be drawn from the evaluation:

1. The FSP has been largely effective in achieving its objectives because it has taken an integrated Programme approach which works at various levels through different partners delivering complementary FS components. Developing a clear strategy for how to expand the partnership base, as well as how to balance partnership strengthening and Programme development, is one of the challenges to be addressed prior to the next FSP phase.

2. Though the RBA is relevant to ensuring FS, there is a lack of clarity at a conceptual level about what this means, notably amongst lowly educated, poor target groups.

3. The relevance of cross-cutting issues (gender, governance, climate change, advocacy, empowerment, RBA) was high while HIV/AIDS and migration were comparatively low.

4. Partner FS Project models which encompass a balance of self-help, networking with support services outside of the government, and advocating for improved government DB accountability, could help to improve expected Programme outcomes and lessen the risk of inactivity while RHs wait for government DBs to become accountable.

5. Clear entry and exit strategies as well as clear guidelines for ownership and maintenance of assets, enhances sustainability.

6. The current FSP geographical spread was ranked highly. Any changes to it should be considered carefully by the FSP design team, since a spread which becomes too wide may result in the FSP losing focus and partners finding it difficult to work together because of sheer distances. A new context analysis should assist with this decision.

7. The effectiveness of land research and dissemination is low suggesting a lack of sound evidence based research and information sharing to inform the FSP. A broader range of research topics (not just land issues) could help meet the needs of more stakeholders.

8. DCA/CA has added value through partner capacity building; networking; and supporting funding applications. More value could have been added by making gender more visible throughout the FSP and supporting research more strongly.

9. Partners’ capacity building in facilitating linkages, proposal writing, and M&E, could have been improved to enhance effectiveness. Good proposal training is critical since success in obtaining funds is essential to sustainability.

10. The Partner Platform received mixed reviews since not all partners see mutual benefits in working together. Using the platform as an arena to present different partner models of
entry and exit strategies, or sharing success stories and lessons learned on issues like sustainability and land titling, could assist partner synergy and advocacy efforts.

11. Respondents suggestions regarding additional interventions in the next FSP phase which might make the Programme more relevant to target group needs, included health services, education, and youth focused components.

Conclusion
The evaluation findings have revealed that DCA/CA’s dual focus of service delivery (approximately 68% of funding) and advocacy (approximately 25% of funding), has been appropriate and largely successful, particularly at the village, commune and partner support levels over the last 5 years. A new contextual analysis which takes into account the impact of the GFC; the current social, political and economic operating environment; and the resources available to DCA/CA and partners; should guide DCA/CA in determining what combination of RBA and service delivery interventions might be appropriate for the next FSP phase. A thorough discussion with relevant stakeholders as to how DCA/CA should continue with the dual pronged approach, will be necessary prior to the next phase.

A summary of recommendations to be considered for the next design phase follow below. These draw on the conclusions and lessons learned from the findings and have been written under each objective in line with the 2008 FSP Revised Matrix which guided this study. For ease of reference, the recommendations are cross-referenced to the section and page numbers in the body of this report which present the relevant discussion.

Note: Due to the large number of Programme issues investigated under Objective 4, Objective 4 recommendations have been divided into suggestions dealing specifically with Objective 4 interventions, and General Programmatic considerations.
2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 1 Recommendations: (see 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 pg 11)
1. that FSPs which improve the basic needs of food, water and income be promoted by partners and funders, because they yield significant outcomes and impact for the village level target groups.

2. that future FSPs have clear entry and exit strategies to clarify the ownership, ongoing maintenance and management of structures and interventions, in order to avoid confusion between stakeholders.

Objective 2 Recommendations (see 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 pg 13)
3. that FSP partners discuss alternative ways of compensating leadership efforts of village and higher level DBs and put in place strategies to enable their continued effective management of community, commune, district and provincial DB structures.

4. that partners include the local community group formation and empowerment approach models which encompass a balance of self-help, networking with others outside of the government, and advocating for improved DB accountability, in future FSP design and implementation because of its very positive impact on target groups, especially the most vulnerable.

Objective 3 Recommendations (see 5.3.1 pg 15)
5. that DCA/CA maintains FSP efforts to strengthen accountability and transparency of Government structures, but broadens its focus from land title issues to other priority causes of food insecurity as determined by an up-to-date contextual analysis.

Objective 4 Recommendations

Recommendations specific to Objective 4 Interventions:

Partner Platform (see 5.4.1 pg 19)
6. that the Partner Platform process be reviewed by all relevant stakeholders to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

Capacity Building (see 5.4.2 pg 20)
7. that DCA/CA reviews its capacity building process to ensure the selection of trainers with appropriate skills and knowledge, and undertakes Training Needs Analyses so that the training delivered meets the specific needs of target groups.

Cross-Cutting Issues (see 5.4.3 pg 20)
8. that DCA/CA considers prioritizing the relevance of cross-cutting issues to FSP Objectives, according to target group priority needs in future FSPs to enhance outcomes.

Adding Value (see 5.4.4. pg 21)
9. that DCA/CA and partners consider setting up in the next FSP, a separate, well resourced gender component that clearly develops a conducive environment to achieving gender equality through capacity building of partners to have a similar vision and plan, formulating appropriate gender indicators, and earmarking funds specifically for gender mainstreaming.
Land Issue Research and Dissemination (see 5.4.5 pg 22)
10. that DCA/CA reviews its research support and dissemination process to make it more effective and efficient and includes a wider range of research topics in line with stakeholder needs.

Facilitating linkages (see 5.4.6 pg 22)
11. that DCA/CA considers incorporating a separate component within the new FSP focusing on implementing effective linkages, with appropriate indicators which clearly identify direct and indirect partners and measure meaningful engagement with them; and training on this as a crosscutting activity.

Recommendations concerning General Programmatic Matters
Programme Design and Implementation (see 5.4.7 pg 24)
12. that partners review what makes up the RBA they wish to employ in the next FSP phase, agree upon a common definition at both a conceptual and practical implementation level, and attempt to make this understood by all stakeholders through initial and refresher trainings.

13. that before formulating any future FSPs, DCA/CA holds a participative planning workshop with all relevant stakeholders to brainstorm the contents and wording of a new FSP logical framework. A new context analysis should be undertaken by the design team and selected interventions should address the identified constraints as well as the specific needs of target groups. Any interventions should also be in line with DCA/CA’s priorities, partner mandates, and the government’s Food Security Plans.

Monitoring (see 5.4.8 pg 27)
14. that a review of the FSP monitoring system, including DCA/CA staff roles, be undertaken during the new FSP design phase to improve the relevance and efficiency of information gathering as well as the effectiveness and impact of management response.

Programme verses Project Approach (see 5.4.9 pg 27)
15. that the FSP continues to take a Programme Approach. In doing so, DCA/CA should develop a clear strategy as a result of discussing whether it is more effective and efficient to: 1) support a small number of large and relatively self-sufficient partners running complementary (parallel) projects; or 2) support a larger number of smaller NGOs working in synergy together; or 3) have a combination of both.

Efficiency of Programme Delivery (see 5.4.13 pg 30)
16. that DCA/CA reviews its Programme delivery process to improve its effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in funding delivery, for example by considering the carry over of funds for activities from one year to the next, if these funds have not been used in the allotted time period due to external controlling factors.

Other actors’ efforts outside of the FSP to improve food security (see 5.4.15 pg 33)
17. that the results of a new contextual analysis be used to guide DCA/CA and relevant stakeholders in determining what combination of RBA and service delivery interventions might be appropriate in the next FSP phase.