



Rural Water Supply Services in Cambodia

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The Rural Water Supply Sector in Cambodia recognizes that the access to improved water is a basic human need, and better access to safe water not only leads to improvements in health, but also saves time and energy, enhances livelihood opportunities, and particular benefits for women and girls. The Rural Water Supply Sector has shifted from “emergency relief responses” to “community-based development approaches with long-term perspective” in late 1990s in line with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP).

The Department of Rural Water Supply (DRWS) under the Ministry of Rural Development is responsible government institution to manage and coordinate the rural water supply programs in Cambodia. The Government had adopted the National Policy on Water Supply and Sanitation with development objective for every person in rural communities has sustainable access to safe water supply services by 2025. At present, it focuses on the Cambodia MDG (CMDG) targets to provide safe water for 50% of rural population by 2015.

In order to realize the RWSS Sector vision, while the DRWS has been coordinating and collaborating with development partners for rural water supply improvements, the DRWS also manage the Government-initiated rural water supply programs in line with the NSDP frameworks. As a part of its development plan, the DRWS had implemented the Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project in 2006-2010, financed by the ADB Grant, and continued the Second Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project (RWSSP-2) through the ADB Grant-0156-CAM financial supports from 2010 to 2015.

The RWSSP-2 aims to contribute to achieving the CMDG targets through the expansion of rural water supply and sanitation improvements for 445 villages of 40 communes in six target provinces in the Tonle Sap basin, in order to provide 100% coverage of safe water supply and about 75% of physical sanitation coverage in all target villages.

Since the project implementation approach provides community-based solutions for ensuring safe water use and better sanitation and hygiene practices, community participation starts from the beginning of the planning process for identification and preparation of subproject activities, including technical choices, verification of water and sanitation needs, establishment of community-based management institutions, cost sharing and community contribution to the village level water supply and sanitation physical improvements, and community mobilization for safe water use, sanitation improvements and better hygiene practices.

The Project’s key activities includes physical improvements of water supply facilities in target villages, program for village level and household level water safety plans, sanitation facility improvements through sanitation grants for poor households and sanitation marketing for higher-income households, institutional development and capacity building of community leaderships and village level management teams, community mobilization and peer-to-peer education for better community health and hygiene practices, and gender actions to encourage participation of both men and women in the project activities.

The project will benefit hard-infrastructure improvements of water supply and sanitation facilities for 377,000 residents and create a knowledgeable society which appreciates the value of safe water use, sanitation improvements and better hygiene practices to improve livelihoods of rural communities in Cambodia.

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