

9: DEVELOPMENT POLICIES & STRATEGIES OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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1.0 introduction

This lecture introduces key official development policies and strategies of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD). The objective of the lecture is to inform the students on RGC and MRD policies and strategies, especially rural roads policy and strategies. The expected outcomes at the end of the lectures will include:

- (i) the students will understand the broader development policies of the RGC;
- (ii) The students will be familiar with different features of the draft Road Law and MRD's rural roads related responsibilities.
- (iii) the students will be able to identify rural roads related main issues in Cambodia;
- (iv) the students will be familiar with the rural roads related policies and strategies; and
- (v) the students will be familiar with MRD policies and strategies that relate to the rural roads.

2.0 Development Policies of the Royal Government of Cambodia

- The document that contains the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC's) main priority goals and strategies is the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), 2006-2010.
- The NSDP succeeds the second Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP), covering the period 2001-2005.
- The RGC also adopted a three-year National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) in 2002.
- In 2004 the RGC launched a Rectangular Strategy that aims to enhance economic growth, employment, equity and social justice through the implementation of different plans.
- Cambodia has also adopted nine Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) following the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000.
- The NSDP gives the highest priority to the reduction of poverty and the achievement of the CMDGs.
- The NSDP identifies a number of overarching aspects including: factoring poverty and gender concerns into all activities; targeting the most needy and least served people and areas; relying on human labour for construction of infrastructure, particularly in rural areas; and institutional and capacity building

in all sectors.

- The NSDP emphasises the need for rural development, along with the pursuit of the decentralisation and deconcentration (D&D) strategy, by giving emphasis to the development of rural infrastructure including roads and markets. The plan also emphasises the role of the private sector, both domestic and foreign, to accelerate the pace of economic development.

3.0 Draft Road Law and MRD's rural roads related responsibilities

There is a draft Road Law in Cambodia, which is expected to be approved by the parliament by end-2007.

Objectives of the Road Law

The Road Law has several objectives including:

- To provide a legal framework to plan, maintain, improve and extend the road networks and to classify them.
- To provide a sustainable source of funds for road management and development.
- To define the responsibilities, obligations, rights and interests of the State, the communities, individuals and users of public roads.

MRD's responsibilities as mandated in the Road Law are:

- MRD is designated as a road authority in the draft law.
- As a road authority MRD is directly responsible for the planning, design, development, maintenance and management of rural roads. MRD may delegate its function as a road authority to commune councils but such delegation will not affect the full accountability of MRD as road authority.
- MRD is given powers in a number of areas including setting operational priorities with regard to the development and maintenance of rural roads, preparation of annual budgets for rural roads, ensuring compliance with all technical, labour, environmental and safety standards related to rural roads, and maintaining an inventory on rural roads and traffic conditions

4.0 Background of the development of rural road policy and strategic plan

MRD first produced a draft rural road policy in 1999, which was subsequently updated in 2002. The policy was never formally promulgated by MRD.

In 2005 MRD embarked on the development of a strategic plan for rural roads. The main purpose of the plan was to set out the long-term direction and framework for rural road development and management. An aim of the plan was to ensure a consistent and unified approach to the planning, improvement and maintenance of rural roads. The plan has identified seven priority issues to be addressed by MRD, the first of which is a "Detailed and clear policy for rural roads supported by a detailed action plan for pursuing the policy". Tasks of updating the rural roads policy started in early 2007 and completed by end 2007.

5.0 Rural roads policy vision and

Vision:

goals

Every Person living in rural Cambodia will have year-round access to basic needs, economic and social facilities, services and opportunities.

Goals:

To efficiently develop and manage sustainable rural transport infrastructure, modes and services. More specifically:

- a. *Rural access will be efficiently developed and managed to ensure optimal economic returns on investment; connectivity to higher order transport infrastructure; benefits to society; and the use of local resources.*
- b. *Rural access will be sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms.*
- c. *Land and water rural transport infrastructure will be complementary to improve mobility and access of rural women and men.*
- d. *Rural transport modes and services will be affordable, equitable, dependable and safe*

6.0 Issues relate to the rural roads

A total of 21 issues under four broad categories, programming and planning, financing, sustainability, institutional, that are relate to rural roads have been identified by MRD. They are:

Programming and planning

1. **Road inventory** – km of rural roads, their conditions, type etc.
2. **Investment prioritisation** – prioritisation of the improvement and maintenance investments.
3. **Rate of improvement of the network** – at what pace the roads should be developed?
4. **Inter-modal integration** - how the road transport should be integrated with other modes (especially with water transport modes)
5. **Rural road design standards** - to what standards the roads will be developed?
6. **Rural transport services** – what are the roles of transport services (buses, mini-buses etc.) in the rural mobility improvement?
7. **Gender** – gender issues in rural roads
8. **Environmental consideration** – environmental issues in the development and maintenance of rural roads
9. **Road safety** – safety issues in rural roads
10. **HIV/AIDS** – HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases issues.
11. **Stakeholder participation** – how stakeholders' participation can be ensured in the development and management of rural roads?

Financing

12. **Overall funding** – what levels of funding will be required for the development and maintenance of rural roads?
13. **Improvement versus maintenance funding** - how the funds

between improvement and maintenance be divided?

Sustainability

14. **Organising and implementing maintenance** - how the maintenance operations would be organised and implemented.
15. **Vehicle overloading control** – how overloading on roads will be controlled?
16. **Involvement of private sector in road development and maintenance** - What would be the roles of the private sector in the development and maintenance of roads?
17. **Use of local resource based technologies:** how the local resources best be used in the development and maintenance of rural roads?
18. **Monitoring and evaluation:** how to measure and assess the performance of rural roads projects and programmes?

Institutional

19. **Delegation of responsibilities to local government** - how local governments best be involved in the development and management of rural road?
20. **Institutional capacity development at the national and provincial levels** - what institutional capacities exists at the national and provincial levels and how best they can be developed?
21. **Communication and coordination** - what would be the best communication and coordination mechanism for the management of rural roads?

7.0 Policy Directions on Different Issues

Issue 1: Road Inventory

The policy direction

- a. It will be a top priority of MRD to complete the Cambodia-wide rural road and related infrastructure inventory.
- b. Efforts to capture the spatial and attribute data in an electronic database will continue. Each rural road will be categorised and assigned a unique identification number.
- c. IRAP/GIS units at MRD headquarters and PDRD offices will be expanded and strengthened for the effective management of the rural infrastructure database

Issue 2: Investment Prioritisation

The policy direction

- a. At the strategic level, MRD's geographical targeting for future rural road investment will give priority to provinces with a high density of rural poor to maximise the investment impact on the poor, and provinces with developmental (including tourism) potential, while having due regard to transport connectivity aspects.
- b. For project or programme level road investment assessments, MRD will establish a road development prioritisation methodology that will use multiple criteria connected to economic, social and environmental aspects.
- c. MRD will progressively expand the road management capacity in the rest of the country, and a standard accepted system will be used for prioritising road maintenance investment.

- d. MRD will strengthen the rural road maintenance office in the Department of Rural Roads and rural road maintenance sections under PDRD offices

Issue 3: Rate of Improvement of Network

The policy direction

- a. MRD will plan the future development of the network at a rate that is commensurate with the expected amount of funding available from different sources for development and maintenance.

Issue 4: Rate of Improvement of Network

The policy direction

- a. MRD will review and accept the relevant recommendations in the master plan for Waterborne Transport in Cambodia.
- b. MRD will liaise with MPWT to explore the possibility of transferring its RWT related responsibilities to MRD, and will take necessary steps to reach an agreement with MPWT

Issue 5: Rural Road Design Standard

The policy direction

- a. MRD will adopt the interim standards till the final standards are available.
- b. MRD will endeavour to complete and adopt the final standards within the shortest possible time.

Issue 6: Rural Transport Services

The policy direction

- a. MRD will continue the policy of non-intervention in the transport services sector, but will focus on removing physical obstacles through the provision of appropriate infrastructure.

Issue 7: Gender

The policy direction

- a. MRD will mainstream gender issues in all stages of the project cycle – identification, preparation and design, appraisal, implementation and supervision, and monitoring and evaluation.

Issue 8: Environmental Considerations

The policy direction

- a. MRD is committed to mitigate any negative environmental impacts at all stages of provision and production of the rural road infrastructure.
- b. MRD will develop comprehensive guidelines that will be followed by all involved in the planning and development of rural road infrastructure.
- c. MRD will mainstream environmental safeguards into the planning and development of rural road infrastructure.

Issue 9: Road Safety

The policy direction

- a. MRD will proactively pursue road safety related issues in the planning and development of rural roads so that appropriate geometrical design standards are followed, traffic signs are erected, and potentially hazardous sections are protected using traffic calming devices. If

necessary, MRD will seek assistance from MPWT or international experts on these issues.

- b. MRD will cooperate with relevant organisations to reduce traffic accidents and casualties on rural roads, including encouraging educational and awareness campaigns

Issue 10: HIV/AIDS

The policy direction

- a. MRD will take steps to mitigate the risks of the increased incidence of HIV/AIDS due to the improvement of rural transport infrastructure. Measures will include: use of local resource based technology that encourages the use of local labourers; and, clauses in contract documents that require the contractors to take specific action to mitigate the risks of increased incidence of the infection.

Issue 11: Stakeholder Participation

The policy direction

- a. MRD will integrate stakeholders' participation into all stages of the road development project cycle - from planning to monitoring and evaluation of the project.
- b. MRD will endeavour to develop comprehensive stakeholder participation guidelines for different stages of a road project.

Issue 12: Overall funding

The policy direction

- a. MRD will endeavour to mobilise additional resources from RGC and donors.

Issue 13: Improvement versus maintenance funding

The policy direction

- a. Preservation of existing road assets will be the top priority of MRD, and therefore maintenance funding will get priority over improvement funding.
- b. MRD will only fund the improvement of rural road infrastructure when there is assured adequate maintenance funding for the improved infrastructure.
- c. One of the criteria for investment decisions will be a comparison of the life cycle costs of different options.
- d. MRD will seek the appropriate institutional mechanisms such as the formation of an inter-ministerial committee to resolve maintenance funding issues with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF).

Issue 14: Organising and Implementing Maintenance

The policy direction

- a. MRD will delegate the responsibilities for organising and implementing the maintenance of rural roads to the PDRDs.

Issue 15: Vehicle Overloading Control

The policy direction

- a. MRD will identify rural roads with chronic overloading problems (e.g. roads connected to quarries) and will recommend to appropriate authorities the re-classification of the roads according to their function.

- b. MRD will endeavour to find a way to control the overloading on rural roads including consultation with stakeholders to find practical overloading control solutions

Issue 16: Involvement of Private Sector in Rural Road Development & Maintenance

The policy direction

- a. MRD will use the private sector to the maximum extent possible for the rural road works. The public sector role will mainly be linked to the management of rural roads

Issue 17: Use of Local Resource Based Technologies

The policy direction

- a. MRD will carefully examine different alternative surfacing/paving study results and evidence, and will adopt options that are suitable for Cambodia and have the lowest whole life-cycle costs.
- b. MRD will introduce the alternative surfaces/pavements progressively according to technical and economic justification.
- c. MRD will encourage the use of appropriate technologies for the development and maintenance of rural roads that favours the use of local labourers and materials but does not undermine quality and cost aspects.
- d. MRD will use a composite design and construction (e.g. spot-improvement) approach to ensure that resources are used most efficiently

Issue 18: Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy direction

- a. MRD will endeavour to undertake a comprehensive results-based M&E approach to increase the effectiveness of rural transport interventions and the approach will be mainstreamed gradually.
- b. MRD will make provision for technical audits in all major infrastructure projects.
- c. MRD will review the organisational arrangements for M&E within MRD to improve M&E capacities.
- d. MRD will introduce a comprehensive and streamlined reporting procedure between headquarters and field offices and between headquarters and project offices

Issue 19: Delegation of responsibilities to local government

The policy direction

- a. The primary role of MRD will be limited to policy and strategy formulation; setting standards; development of guidelines on different aspects of the development and management of rural roads; and securing an adequate and stable flow of resources.
- b. MRD will not generally be involved directly in the provision and production of rural road infrastructure works.
- c. MRD will delegate the day to day management, and the implementation of construction and maintenance works to PDRDs

Issue 20: Institutional Capacity Development at the National and

Provincial Levels

The policy direction

- a. MRD will undertake a review of the institutional capacity for the rural road sub-sector, and will streamline the institutional structure at all levels;
- b. MRD will take all steps necessary to develop the institutional capacity at different levels of the organisation, including working with educational and training institutions

Issue 21: Communication and Coordination

The policy direction

- a. MRD will develop more effective communication and coordination arrangements and mechanisms between MRD HQ and its field offices, MRD & other ministries, MRD & CCs, and MRD & donors.

8.0 Main Features of the Strategic Plan for Rural Roads

The strategic plan for rural roads was first developed in 2006. The plan was subsequently updated again in 2007 to ensure its compatibility with the updated rural roads policy, which was developed in 2007. The main features of the strategic plan for rural roads:

- (i) It identified the issues related to the rural roads in Cambodia and the priority issues.
- (ii) It set out the justification for investment in rural roads arguing its positive impact on the reduction of poverty;
- (iii) It carried out resource requirements analysis under different investment scenarios;
- (iv) It identified strategies against the issues after careful consideration of a number of options;
- (v) It developed an action plan for pursuing the strategies.

9.0 Some of the key strategies for rural roads

Road Inventory	Start of the development of a complete rural infrastructure inventory immediately, including that of roads, building on the experience gained during the implementation of the IRAP/GIS project
Geographic targeting of rural road investments	Geographically targeted capital investment in rural roads adopting the following three-pronged strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation of provinces based on three criteria: extent of poverty, agriculture development potential and the level of investment already made. • Targeting of districts within a province based on the level of poverty and quality of the rural road network; • Targeting of areas that maximise the synergy between main roads and rural roads
Road prioritisation and standard tool for road prioritisation	Use of the IRAP prioritised roads as a short-list of roads to be developed, and use of another suitable rural road prioritisation procedure in the final selection of roads that are to be developed. Use of a more simplified system for maintenance prioritisation.
Rural roads and rural	Acceptance of the recommendations in the master

water transport complementarity	plan for water-borne transport stud, and take actions to implement the recommendations
Rural road standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acceptance and dissemination of interim rural road standards, followed by - Development and dissemination of comprehensive rural road standards
Funding for development and maintenance	Actively seeking additional funding from government and international sources to improve all T, ST1, ST2 and ST3 roads within 7, 10, 15 and 20 years respectively
Division of responsibilities and the extent of improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While PDRD will be responsible for the management of T and ST1 roads, Commune Councils will be responsible for ST2 and ST3 roads if such an agreement is reached between PDRDs and CCs. • Spot improvement of ST3 roads to provide basic all weather access
Development of sustainable maintenance management system	Implementation of a basic maintenance system and gradual progression towards a more sophisticated system.
Application of LBAT in roadworks	Proactive interventions including positive discrimination in favour of LBAT.
Surfacing of rural roads	The progressive replacement of gravel as the main surfacing option by the introduction of the best options for different traffic, physical and climatic conditions, based on the results of trials of other surfacing options
Communication and coordination	Facilitating more effective communication and coordination within MRD, between MRD headquarters and its field offices, between MRD and CCs, between MRD and other ministries, and between MRD and donors

10. Further Reading

The student should refer to the following documents:

- 1 **Ministry of Rural Development**, (2007). *Rural Roads Policy*. MRD, Phnom Penh
- 2 **Ministry of Rural Development**, (2007). *Strategic Plan for Rural Roads*. MRD, Phnom Penh
- 3 **Royal Government of Cambodia**, (2006). *National Strategic Development Plan*. Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh.
- 4 **Royal Government of Cambodia**, (2002). *National Poverty Reduction Strategy: 2003-2005*. RGC, Phnom Penh
- 5 **Ministry of Planning**, (2005). *Achieving the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals 2005 Update*. Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh.

11.0 Questions for students:

- *What are the main development policies of the Royal Government of Cambodia?*
- *What roads related responsibilities does the draft Road Law assign to MRD?*
- *What are the main rural road related issues in Cambodia*
- *What is emphasised in the vision statement of the rural roads policy?*
- *What are the rural roads policies of MRD regarding the following issues: investment prioritisation, gender, environmental considerations, stakeholders participation, improvement versus maintenance funding, organising and implementing maintenance, involvement of private sector, use of local resource based technologies, delegation of responsibilities?*
- *What are the main elements of the strategic plan for rural roads?*
- *What are the rural road strategies of MRD in relation to the following issues: geographical targeting of rural road investment, application of LBAT in roadworks, funding for development and maintenance and road prioritisation,*

12.0 Glossary of Terms

Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs): A total of 191 United Nations Members States made a commitment in 2000 to achieve a set of eight goals, known as the MDGs, by 2015. They are: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability (8) Develop a global partnership for development. The Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) have a total of nine goals, due to the inclusion of an extra goal that relates to de-mining and unexploded ordnance (UXO).

Composite design and construction: A process where by a road is designed and constructed according to the environment (gradient, soil, hydrology, etc) and function (traffic) along its alignment. This will result in different sections of the road having different surfacing/paving, geometric dimensions, etc., to respond to the specific localized conditions. The result of this approach is a rational and efficient use of resources along the road length.

Labour-based Appropriate technology (LBAT): A technology type that maximises opportunities for the employment of labour (skilled and unskilled), while supported by light equipment, under strict conditions of cost competitiveness, acceptable engineering quality standards, and timely implementation.

Rural road/path: As per the draft Road Law rural road/path refers to a road that connects a National, Provincial or District Road to the commune or village in the rural area.

Rural water transport: It includes both inland and coastal water transport used by the rural residents for their mobility and transport needs.

Sub-tertiary Road Type 1 (ST1 road): Road that connects district capital to commune.

Sub-tertiary Road Type 2 (ST2 road): Road that connects commune to commune.

Sub-tertiary Road Type 3 (ST3 road): Road that connects commune to village or village to village.

Tertiary roads (T road): Road that connects district capital to another district capital.