



Resilient Urban Centres and Surrounds (RUCaS)

MISSION SUMMARY REPORT – CAMBODIA (4–9 JUNE 2023)

Background

RUCaS aims to improve the value generated by investment in urban infrastructure by better integrating conventional large ‘grey’ infrastructure (e.g., levee banks, pipelines, treatment plants, roads, railways) with nature-based solutions (e.g., wetlands, mangroves, catchment protection, green walls, multifunctional parks and transport corridors). RUCaS program outputs will include case studies demonstrating application in different urban contexts and scales, as well as training in the tools and principles applied, and strategies to upscale NbS.

RUCaS mission 4 was undertaken to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam to advance collaboration arrangements with government, civil society and multilateral agencies. Ground truthing case study sites with local stakeholders was a core focus.

Purpose

This Cambodian mission had 4 objectives:

- Confirm case study sites in Phnom Penh and Battambang, and meet with stakeholders
- Define the RUCaS activities for each case study
- Advance relationships with Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) stakeholders, MAP-WEC partners and further develop overall analysis for RUCaS and each case study
- Advance arrangements with the Cambodian Focal Point Ministry – Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC).

Activities

The mission included meetings with government agencies, development partners and GEDSI stakeholders. Meetings were opportunities to explore the current issues and pressure points affecting urban development in Cambodian cities, especially increased vulnerabilities created by extreme weather events (exacerbated by climate change) and wider catchment level developments. Site visits informed our understanding of case studies and allowed us to gather perspectives from local stakeholders. Meetings and site visits in Phnom Penh were coordinated with the support of the Australian embassy in Cambodia, and attended by Senior Program Manager Mr. Kang Sin.

- Meeting with MLMUPC – We met with HE Dr Pen Sophal (Secretary of State) and his team, to advance MLMUPC becoming our Focal Point Ministry for Cambodia. The Ministry will provide leadership for RUCaS with a wider Technical Advisory Group (TAG).
- Meeting and site visit with Areiy Ksotr master planning team – With representatives from the Areiy Ksotr Municipal team, we toured the site for a new municipality for Phnom Penh. Currently, the site contains extensive floodplains, lotus filled wetlands and expansive crop and paddy areas, with new urban developments also being initiated. We discussed the masterplan process currently underway for the site and how we can incorporate water sensitive urban

design principles and economic analysis of NbS into government processes, while protecting the area's environmental values.

- Meeting with Oxfam Water Governance and Inclusion Project leads, and the Australian Water Partnership – We shared updates on the program, including considering possible alignment of workshops later in 2023, and engagements with GEDSI, water and climate partners, and alignment opportunities in Cambodia and regionally.
- Meeting with Cambodia Empowerment and Development Team (CEDT) and Cambodia Children Trust (CCT) – We learned about their work in Battambang with local communities and marginalized peoples, and discussed incorporation of inclusion principles into conceptual plans for local case studies.
- Meeting with Battambang Governor's Office – We met with HE Sok Lou (Battambang Provincial Governor) and his team. We discussed challenges the city faces trying to juggle the effects of climate change – changes to water security, flooding and heat – along with preserving the city's French–Cambodian heritage.
- Site visit in Battambang – Walking with Battambang's Smart Cities team, we explored projects underway to establish a new riverfront park, to stabilise the riverbank affected by subsidence and peak flow erosion, and a first phase of city-wide drainage works. We visited the productive Boeung Ra wetland – home to many houses, part of a vibrant informal settlement - that takes significant pluvial flows from the surrounding urban area and sits alongside the historical railway. We also explored the old city, and government works to reconnect the riverfront to a downtown heritage precinct, the new night market and other tourist attractions in the old city.



Areiy Ksatr site visit



Beoung Ra Lake, Battambang



Meeting with HE. Dr Pen Sopal and the MLMUPC team



Meeting with HE Sok Lou (Battambang Provincial Governor) and his team

Next steps in Cambodia

The mission consolidated valuable relationships with stakeholders and deepened our knowledge and understanding of case study sites. The immediate next steps are summarised below:

Action	Timing
MLMUPC and RUCaS to confirm approach in developing and convening a technical working group for RUCaS program delivery	End of July 2023
RUCaS and MLMUPC to agree approach and focus for the Masterplanning and Cambodia specific training	July 2023
RUCaS team to prepare agreement with Battambang Governor's Office	August 2023
RUCaS team to prepare Battambang case study preliminary document for Regional Conference	End of August 2023
Regional Conference (online)	14–15 November 2023
Regional training and capacity building	November 2023

