

4. Cambodia

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INTRODUCTION

Cambodia is one of the three countries of former French Indochina and a member country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The population of Cambodia in 2005 was 14.8 million, 20% of whom lived in urban areas. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the country was ravaged by civil war under the Khmer Rouge, whose policies resulted in the near total depopulation of urban centers and the genocide of more than 3 million people. Cambodia is now on the road to recovery, but the destruction of its urban infrastructure, institutions, and human capital has severely constrained the capacity of the country to develop. Table 4.1 shows relevant national statistics.

This chapter examines the re-urbanization of Cambodia and the many challenges this has created for the country. Three case studies are presented: Phnom Penh Municipality Planning for All, Battambang Town Decentralization Program, and Kratie Growth Pole Study. Lessons from the case studies are then presented followed by suggested strategies Cambodia could pursue to ensure more sustainable urban development outcomes in the future.

COUNTRY CONTEXT¹

Cambodia has an area of 181,035 square kilometers (km²) and borders Viet Nam, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), and Thailand. The longest river in Asia, the Mekong River, runs through the country from north to south, breaking to the west to form the famous Tonle Sap Lake. The country is divided into 24 provinces and municipalities. Geographically, Cambodia is surrounded by mountains in the north and west along the border with Thailand and Lao PDR, and in the east with Viet Nam. In the south, Cambodia borders the Gulf of Thailand. The middle of the country is flat and mainly used for rice production. Phnom Penh is the capital city.

Cambodia is a signatory member country to most United Nations treaties and accords, and has adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Table 4.1: Country Development Profile, Cambodia

Human Development Index rank of 177 countries (2003) [^]	130
GDP growth (annual %, 2004)	6.00
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current \$, 2004)	320
GNI, Atlas method (current \$ billion, 2004)	4.4
GDP per capita PPP (\$, 2003) [^]	2,078
GDP PPP (\$ billion, 2003) [^]	27.9
Population growth (annual 2005–2010 %) #	2.28
Population, total (million, 2005)#	14.83
Urban population, total (million, 2005)#	2.93
Urban population, % of total population (2005)#	20
Population largest city: Phnom Penh (2005, million)	1.17
Population growth: 2 capital cities or agglomerations > 750,000 inhabitants 2000#	
- Est. average growth of capital cities or urban agglomerations 2005–2015 (%)	41
- Number of capital cities or urban agglomerations with growth > 50%, 2005–2015	1
- Number of capital cities or urban agglomerations with growth > 30%, 2005–2015	1
Sanitation, % of urban population with access to improved sanitation (2002)**	53
Water, % of urban population with access to improved water sources (2002)**	58
Slum population, % of urban population (2001)**	72
Slum population in urban areas (2001, million)**	1.70
Poverty, % of urban population below national poverty line (1997)**	21.1
Aid (Net ODA received, \$ million, 2003) [^]	508.0
Aid as a share of country income (Net ODA/GNI, 2003 %)*	12.5
Aid per capita (current \$, 2003) [^]	37.9

GDP = gross domestic product, GNI = gross national income, ODA = official development assistance, PPP = purchasing power parity.

Sources: See Footnote Table 3.1, World Bank (2005); OECD (2003); United Nations (2004, 2005).

the first and most important of which is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. In terms of the Human Development Index (HDI), Cambodia is a poor developing country that ranked 130 among 177 countries in 2003.

Since the early 1990s, the Cambodian economy has achieved growth of about 7% per annum, albeit from a low base. Over this period, the country has slowly transited from civil war to peace, toward democracy and multiparty elections and to a more liberalized market-based economy. Economic growth has been associated with significant structural changes in the economy. Agriculture declined from 46% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1993 to 31% in 2003 while industry's share increased from 13% to 29%, led by the growth of the garment industry and tourism. The share of services remained at about one third of GDP. Development has seen a significant fall in poverty but to still high levels. Thirty-five percent of Cambodians lived below the national poverty line in 2004 compared to an estimated 47% in 1994. While these trends are encouraging, Cambodia remains at the early stages of urbanization and economic development. Cambodia and the Lao PDR are the poorest countries in Southeast Asia.

Cambodia relies heavily on agriculture. Poverty in Cambodia is predominantly a rural phenomenon, with some 90% of poor Cambodians living in rural areas. Agriculture employs 70% of the labor force while industry employs only 8%. As the main drivers of economic growth have been urban-focused industries with limited urban-rural linkages—export-oriented garment manufacturing and tourism—the benefits of growth have flowed disproportionately to urban areas. Between 1994 and 2004, poverty in Phnom Penh fell by more than half to 20% of the city's population and by 44% in other urban areas to about 25% of their population. Poverty in rural areas also declined but not to the same extent—it declined by more than 20% to 39% but is markedly higher in remote rural areas with limited access to roads, markets, and basic services.

Cambodia has a relatively low rural population density and rural productivity, which suggests that it still has the opportunity of improving the living condition of its rural population through agricultural upgrading and land reform. However, landlessness is rising—exacerbated by unclear property rights and rising prices of land. These problems will not be easily overcome. A study carried out by Oxfam in 2000 found that about 12% of rural Cambodia's population is landless. Data from the second 5-year socioeconomic plan similarly showed that 14.4% of rural households are landless. Rural land prices are lower than those in urban areas, but they are still often beyond the financial ability of the rural population.

Rural populations urgently need convenient access to urban settlements for supplies, services, information, and technologies that will help them increase their productivity and improve their living conditions. Most importantly, rural people need access to urban markets to sell their produce and increase their incomes. Therefore, transportation, communications, and energy systems have to be planned and installed to bring rural populations within affordable reach of towns and into the orbit of social and economic development. Small and medium-sized towns, such as the provincial capitals of Cambodia, are the first and vital point of contact for rural populations. They also form the most viable network through which a variety of key inputs for rural development can be channeled to the villages.

Cambodia has a relatively low level of urbanization and is still in the early stages of the urbanization process. Even with agricultural reform, improved agricultural productivity and profitability, and focused efforts to reduce rural poverty, urban areas can be expected to grow rapidly in the future with rural-urban migration, as Cambodia develops a more broadly based economy and investment and economic opportunities increase in urban areas. Cambodia faces a major policy and resource allocation dilemma: the existing population and poverty are concentrated in rural areas but development will inevitably

see rapid urban expansion, and planning and infrastructure provision for this growth needs to commence now.

URBANIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Urbanization and Population Change

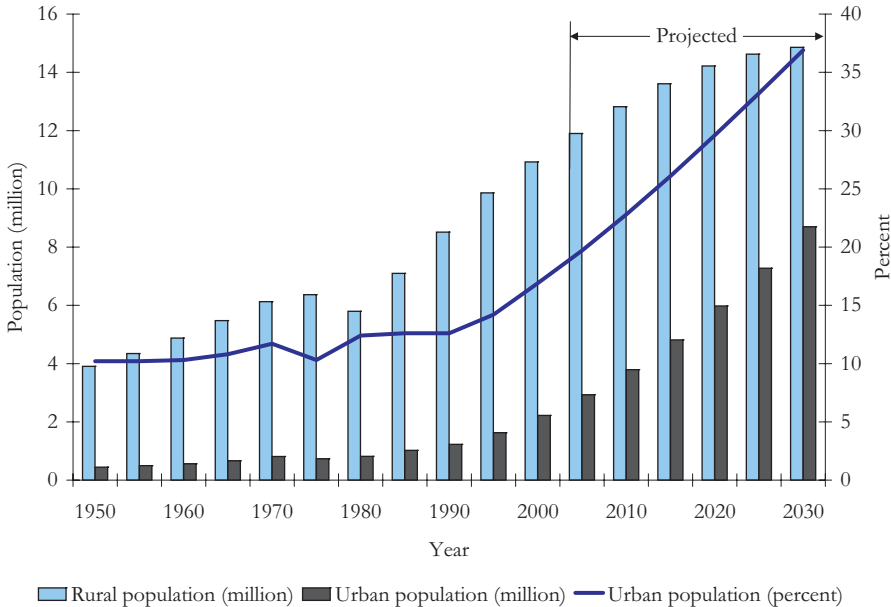
The pace and direction of urbanization in Cambodia have varied, depending on the political regime. During the period after independence from France (1954–1969) and in recent years (since 1990), the country has experienced fast urbanization. During the Khmer Rouge regime (1975–1979) urbanization in Cambodia totally stopped. Instead, an agrarian state was introduced in which the urban populations were forcefully evicted to rural areas. Urban areas were left to die and be destroyed by nature and neglect. Cities were considered by the Khmer Rouge regime as the symbol of capitalism, which was against the so-called revolution.

After decades of civil war and destruction, Cambodia is currently at a relatively early phase of redevelopment. This redevelopment has not been evenly distributed; urbanization is largely a result of rural-urban migration. While the current level of urbanization stands at about 20% (in 2005), in the future the country is likely to have one of the highest rates of urban increases in Asia at about 3.5% per annum. A comparison of population changes in the urban centers over the last 4 decades shows two patterns:

(i) The old, established precolonial and then colonial centers, such as Kampong Cham, Pousat, and Kampong Chhnang or Kampot, and all other old market towns have decreased in relative size.

(ii) The fast-growing “newcomers” are all linked with foreign economic influences, or have global-local linkages: above all, Siem Reap, the prime tourist destination of the country, has exploded in size due to tourism-related investments; Sihanoukville, the port city, has grown because of foreign trade; and formerly unknown urban centers, such as Mongkol Borei, Poipet, and Suong—for this reason selected as one of the case study centers—have grown rapidly because of the border trade (Asian Development Bank [ADB], Final Report 2005).

Figure 4.1 shows that the urban population is expected to rise from 20% of the population of Cambodia in 2005 to 35% in 2030, causing urban populations to rise from 2.9 million in 2005 to 8.0 million in 2030, more than doubling the current urban population. There is much pressure for urban development, especially on the outskirts of Phnom Penh and increasingly in several border towns.

Figure 4.1: Trends in Urban and Rural Population, Cambodia

All cities in Cambodia are expanding rapidly, often before infrastructure and services can be put in place. Consequently, the number of squatter settlements has increased. In addition, most town districts are growing very rapidly. For example, in 1994, Phnom Penh recorded 10.3% annual growth; Battambang, 11.0%; and Takhmau (virtually a satellite of Phnom Penh), 13.9%. This high rate is partially explained by the rapid return of many people to urban centers after the fall of the Khmer Rouge.

To accommodate urbanization of this magnitude, the country requires key policies and management structures to be put in place in the very near future. Although urbanization in Cambodia has brought development, the Government has been unable to minimize negative impacts of expansion because of limited human, technical, and financial resources, leading to growing incidences of urban deficiencies and problems. These include disputes regarding land tenure, lack of urban infrastructure and services, degraded living environments—including contaminated water—as a consequence of solid waste, air pollution, congestion, and urban sprawl development, and the creation of slum and squatter settlements. These negative impacts of urbanization, coupled with increases in land prices and limited financial resources for investment, present alarming difficulties for managing urban development and growth.

Understanding these challenges, the Government has introduced and pilot-tested decentralization and deconcentration policies. These policies

give local authorities increased responsibility for managing urban growth and accommodating the growing demand for urban infrastructure and services from the population. Assistance and intervention from the central Government is minimal, with local authorities receiving only technical assistance to help formulate and implement their plans in an efficient and effective manner.

Good Governance

Governance and public institutions in Cambodia had to be reestablished at the end of the Khmer Rouge period with very limited human and financial resources. This has proven difficult, and problems of government effectiveness and responsiveness are still inhibiting development and the provision of infrastructure and services. Governance problems are widespread in such areas as appropriate laws and regulations and their consistent implementation, public participation, and economic and financial management. There is a limited and poorly exploited revenue base and poorly functioning expenditure controls, and weak transparency and accountability. Development and investment in Cambodia are being constrained by insecure property rights, time-consuming and unproductive regulations, and widespread corruption in contracting processes. These problems are compounded by inadequate infrastructure and services. The Government's National Strategic Development Plan 2006–2010 will attempt to address these problems and has a focus on strengthening governance at all levels, economic management, the provision of necessary infrastructure, development of the agriculture sector, private sector growth, and national capacity building through improved education and health.

The Government has begun implementing a program of reforms in an effort to promote and improve governance in all government agencies. Decentralization and deconcentration programs are two ambitious policies toward good governance emanating from the central to the local governments. As a result, nationwide commune elections were conducted in 2002—for the first time in the history of Cambodia—to elect representatives of the local population. Moreover, in an attempt to spread development at the grassroots levels, two key development reforms have also been introduced: the Social Fund program and the SEILA² program. The aims of these programs include coordinating all overseas assistance and aid to support the decentralization and deconcentration policies.

In the 2005 SEILA program, 25% of the total budget of about \$10.5 million was used for strengthening local governance (SEILA 2005). Key activities included strengthening the legal framework and regulations; working out

systems and principles; capacity building; integration of management data; monitoring and auditing; and strengthening partnerships among national, provincial, municipal, and communal levels (SEILA 2005). To further delegate decision-making power to the local level, the Prime Minister has in recent years proposed that responsibility for making decisions concerning financial investments below \$2 million will be decided at the provincial and municipal levels. Such decentralized decision making, although not yet fully implemented, will undoubtedly provide local government with further power to manage its own businesses.

Urban Management

Since the Government implemented its administrative reforms, greater responsibility and decision-making powers have been delegated to the provincial and municipal governments. The first commune council elections in 2002 fully began the decentralization and deconcentration policies, while the recent declaration by the Prime Minister to delegate decision-making powers on investments valued below \$2 million to provincial and municipal governments put the decentralization process into full swing. The Government has pilot-tested a new “one-window service” policy, which has also contributed to the implementation of the decentralization policy.

Urban development planning and management have been delegated step-by-step to local authorities as a result of the reform policies above. Participatory planning has been introduced at the grassroots level—the village level. People are making plans themselves, with professionals and government staff acting only as trainers, facilitators, or coordinators. Provincial and municipal line departments, although under direct command from national line ministries, have carried out work in close cooperation with local authorities. Further reform is expected to include incorporation of line department payroll and budget in that of the provincial and municipal authorities. If this is implemented, local governments will plan and manage all budgets for urban development projects.

Decentralization and increased levels of public participation culminated in recent commune-level elections. Under this framework, commune authorities are responsible for preparing and implementing commune development plans along with the transfer of limited resources from the central Government. Therefore, local planning efforts should now reflect the aspirations and main concerns of the local population. As a result, a new way of planning with direct participation of the local population has been introduced to provide an effective response to a rapidly changing urban situation.

Effective and Efficient Infrastructure and Service Provision

Infrastructure, especially roads and bridges, is the responsibility of three institutions: the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the Ministry of Rural Development, and the Engineering Corps of the Ministry of Defense. In rural areas, infrastructure projects and programs funded with financial support from overseas have been carried out by the Government, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and international organizations. Such projects are often small and work with village committees and/or commune councils. The International Labour Organization, for example, has been working with the Ministry of Rural Development on integrated rural accessibility planning. Many NGOs, such as World Vision, have also been involved in infrastructure and service provision.

Social and Environmental Sustainability

New measures have been introduced in social and environmental management by the Government as part of its overall reforms. Four explicit programs have been implemented—the Commune and Communal Base-Natural Resource and Environmental Management, Social Fund, SEILA Program, and Natural Resource Management in the Coastal Zone Plan. Besides these major programs are many projects carried out by both the Government and international organizations in different parts of the country. Each program has been designed to provide local authorities with sound sustainable land use and natural resource management planning.

The Land for Social Concession subdecree was enacted in 2003 in an attempt to provide land for the landless poor. At the same time, it aimed to uphold sustainable natural resource management where only appropriate vacant land was used to ensure maximum benefit to the public. It also helped reduce land grabbing by providing land to members of the population in need. Two other important subdecrees are underway—the Sub-decree on Land for Economic Concession and the Sub-decree on State Land Management. Both are expected to be approved in 2006. These two subdecrees, coupled with the earlier subdecree, will provide a complete set of legal instruments for sustainable land and natural resource management.

Innovation and Change

Participatory land-use planning (PLUP) is one of the new techniques introduced to guide land-use planning in Cambodia. Full grassroot involvement is now the main driver for its planning process. PLUP is a planning process initiated at the village level in which villagers, commune councilors, and other

stakeholders jointly decide on the future use and land tenure regime of all land units under their jurisdiction, and on sustainable management schemes as well as protective measures for important natural resources in their village or commune area (PLUP Manual 2004).

Commune and community-based natural resources management (CCB-NRM) focuses on strengthening communities in the management of natural resources in their localities, especially those resources used as common property assets by a large number of villagers (e.g., forest areas, fishery areas, and grazing areas). The CCB-NRM approach includes capacity building of communities and their representatives to strengthen their capacities to manage designated community forestry or community fishery areas.

District strategic development planning (DSDP) is another new change for the country. For the first time in its history of physical design, a planning manual was published in a local language. DSDP aims to delegate responsibility for local land-use planning to the district level in accordance with the Government's overall decentralization and deconcentration policies. So far, five districts have received the services of DSDP and five more are at the investigation stage.

Leveraging International Development Assistance

Cambodia is still in the process of recovering financially from the previous upheavals; therefore, it relies heavily on international development assistance. All international development assistance to Cambodia is required to go through the country's Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). CDC was set up by the Government to coordinate effectively all foreign development assistance in a transparent and evenly distributed manner. CDC works with line ministries to channel the appropriate development assistance to relevant areas of concern. In some cases, especially development assistance channeled through NGOs, funding has come directly from donors without going through CDC, although most of this assistance has been for relatively small development projects. The development assistance, after approval by CDC, is channeled to relevant development agencies at the national and local levels for implementation.

The process of leveraging international development assistance is performed through the government priorities set in its national development plans, such as the Socio-Economic Development Plan, Cambodian MDG, and National Poverty Reduction Strategy. At present, the priorities are education, health, and agriculture. Since most of the Cambodian population is in the rural areas where poverty is a problem, the Government accordingly channels majority of development assistance to these areas. Improvement and construction of agricultural irrigation are the main priorities in the agriculture sector.

Relevant line ministries at the national level, line departments at the provincial and municipal levels, and relevant line offices at the district level take up allocated development assistance for coordination, implementation, and monitoring. At the national level, development assistance takes the form of policy creation, strategic planning, and project and program designs undertaken by line ministries. At the provincial and district levels, development assistance manifests itself through the implementation of development projects and programs.

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

The following case studies consider urbanization and sustainability in three different regions, which have been classified for this study based on the level and distribution of development and geographical location. These are Phnom Penh in the central region, Battambang town in the western region, and Kratie in the northeastern region. The case studies selected demonstrate important elements of good practice thinking emerging in Cambodia.

Phnom Penh City: Planning for All

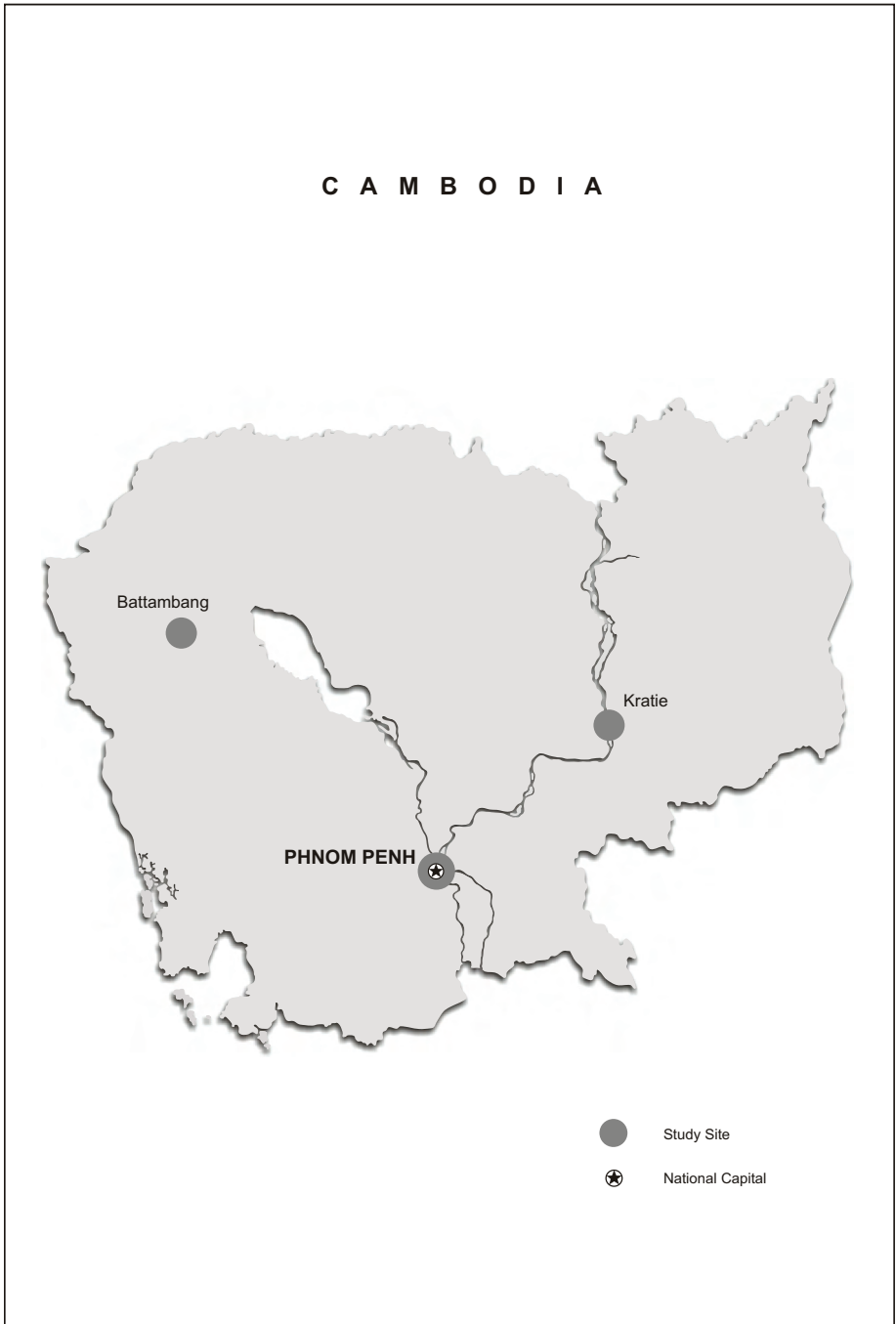
Phnom Penh, the capital, had a population of about 1.3 million people in 2003,³ almost 10 times bigger than the rest of the cities in the country put together. The second largest town is Poi Pet, which, with a population of about 150,000, is larger than the formally classified second town, Battambang (population of about 130,000). Administratively, however, Battambang is a more important center than Poi Pet.

GOOD PRACTICE	
Good Governance	✓
Urban Management	✓
Infrastructure/Service Provision	✓
Financing and Cost Recovery	✓
Sustainability	✓
Innovation and Change	✓
Leveraging ODA	

An estimated 20% of the Phnom Penh City population is considered poor.⁴ About 569 squatter and slum communities are established in Phnom Penh,⁵ many of which are in poor living environments. The average population density for the whole area of Phnom Penh is 2,986 people/km². The population density for the four central districts is 23,168 people/km². For rural Phnom Penh—composed of three districts with an area of 346.65 km²—the average population density is 1,385 people/km².

Historically, Phnom Penh emerged from a village to a city over a 100-year period. Population explosions occurred in three stages: 1900–1940, 1950–1970, and post-1990s. Initially, this growth developed without an

Figure 4.2: Map Showing Location of the Case Studies



industrial base, relying on agriculture, then forming a “service” economy. Since the mid-1990s, the city has moved toward an industrial market. From 1900 to the 1930s, the population doubled every 10 years. After each growth period, informal or unplanned housing emerged on the periphery of the city.

The population in Phnom Penh shows erratic changes since 1960. In 1976, the population of Phnom Penh fell from nearly 2 million to about 4,000 as the Khmer Rouge ruthlessly imposed its de-urbanization policy. In 1979, the population of Phnom Penh began to grow following the defeat of the Khmer Rouge. The 1990s saw a second wave of growth, taking the population to more than a million for the first time since the 1970s. The only period of population decline during the 1990s coincided with the national elections.

The average population growth rate per annum is currently 3.5%. Since the 1990s, Phnom Penh has witnessed its third phase of growth, reconstructing itself and building beyond the parameters set in the 1970s. Infill is occurring in the city center. Higher-quality housing is replacing the old structures; however, height restrictions limit the size of new developments and, therefore, only marginally alter the city center density. What remains of open space in the city center is being built on. Underutilized space such as school playgrounds or inefficient housing configurations have been transformed into apartment blocks with predominately retail units at the bottom.

Good Governance

The principles of good governance overarch the districts, communes, neighborhoods, and villages comprising the larger agglomeration of Phnom Penh, enabling it to function and grow. The existing territory of 375 km² is divided into 76 communes, with 637 neighborhoods and villages requiring coordination and management. The municipality of Phnom Penh has about 15,000 employees (World Leadership Awards 2005) and must also coordinate its work with 28 government line ministries in its day-to-day operations. Armed only with good governance, the city has been able to respond to the enormous demand for public services with very limited resources.

According to interviews conducted in 2005, the municipal government of Phnom Penh has a regimen of meeting every week to listen to and discuss general issues arising in all administrative districts and communes of the city. During the weekly meetings, the governors for each of the city’s districts have the opportunity to raise issues of concern to the board of governors of the municipality for appropriate action and solutions. The meetings have also been used as a public open forum since not only are local authorities in Phnom Penh invited to the meeting but also all other relevant stakeholders according to the proposed agenda of the meetings. Despite the regular

weekly meeting regimen, extraordinary meetings have been held for urgent cases, such as issues related to security and disaster responses.

Development and strategic planning for the city has been conducted through public participation and the organization of workshops or forums. For example, in the case of squatter and slum settlements, solutions were sought through a series of discussions and workshops before appropriate and acceptable solutions were finalized.

Improved Urban Management

Like many urban centers in Cambodia, Phnom Penh is implementing the Government's administrative reform policies of decentralization and deconcentration. However, the pace of implementation is slower than in the pilot-tested secondary cities of Battambang and Siem Reap. Adoption of the decentralization policy has been channeled through the SEILA program, where local development plans are prepared by local communities and authorities at the district, commune, and neighborhood levels. Such a bottom-up approach to planning better represents local needs; therefore, the municipal and national governments are better able to respond.

To improve city management further, the municipal government has also established other operational mechanisms, such as the Municipal Development Committee to oversee city development more transparently. In addition, the city Poverty Reduction and Community Improvement Committee has been set up to work closely and effectively with urban poor. A more decentralized body, the Urban Poverty Reduction Unit, was set up under the committee above and is responsible for implementing municipal government programs and projects relevant to the urban poor, such as land sharing and slum upgrading.

At the district level, a Community Development Management Committee was set up to coordinate all work related to local communities with the district and municipal governments in an efficient manner. This committee is composed of members from the district authority, line development agencies, and representatives of the local community themselves. At the commune level, a communications office coordinates issues related to the public with the local authority. So far, the office has provided support in organizing about 600 poor communities, consisting of more than 46,000 underprivileged families living in the city of Phnom Penh. It also has mobilized poor inhabitants to save money for their communities' development. Through this grassroots initiative, communications between office staff of the municipal government and poor communities have improved, transforming the relationship from one characterized by suspicion and hostility to one of

“no violence but negotiation.” The success of many slum and squatter settlement projects has been attributed to the transformation in trust and increased participation by local communities.

Effective and Efficient Infrastructure and Service Provision

Since 1993, the city has been characterized predominantly by the renewal of urban facilities, reconstructing what was destroyed after almost 20 years of civil war. Rehabilitation of electricity, water supply, and sewage and drainage facilities has been financed by development partners, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The privatization policy mentioned earlier as part of the municipal government’s attempt to improve its management and service provision has contributed to the increased coverage in waste services across the city, especially to suburban areas. As a result, about 95% of the urban city area and 50% of the rural city area are covered by waste collection services.

The success is even more pronounced for water supply service provision. For example, in 2005, it was reported that 80% of the city’s population was connected to the water supply system, which provides residents with good quality water (World Leadership Awards 2005). As a result, the public municipal enterprise, Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, was recognized as the best water supply company in Asia, and received the “Water Prize-Water For All” award by ADB in 2004. In addition to reconstruction, Phnom Penh allowed private developers during the 1990s to expand the city beyond the boundaries established in the 1950s–1970s.

Financing and Cost Recovery

Phnom Penh is the first city in Cambodia to receive and implement the 50-50 shared cost policy of the Government. This formula has been very successful in motivating the public to share the responsibility for public service and infrastructure provision. Between September 2004 and September 2005, the 50-50 formula was employed to improve about 17,040 meters of city road, with a total contribution from the community of about \$420,500 (SEILA 2005).

Private and public partnership in development has been one of the sources of financing and cost recovery for most local development projects. A noticeable example is the city waste collection and disposal service, where a private company (CINTRI, Canada) was awarded the contract to manage the city waste service after negotiations over the price charged to the city population. The service management in the Phnom Penh International Airport has also been awarded to a private company (SCA France and Malaysia).

The city has set up a microfinance scheme to help poor urban communities improve their living conditions through a community savings system. The microcredit scheme set up by the municipal government (Urban Poverty Development Fund) covers five important areas: housing, land, fish paste (food reserves), job creation, water supply, and urban agriculture. So far, more than \$1.4 million of microcredit has benefited 12,000 families in 300 communities. The repayment rate for the scheme has been impressive at 100%. For the urban poor housing sector alone, the municipality has disbursed more than \$600,000 as housing loans to more than 1,500 poor families (SEILA 2005).

Social and Environmental Sustainability

The draft master plan of Phnom Penh, which has a planning horizon extending until 2020, should, when approved and enforced, contribute to ensuring the city's social and environmental sustainability through proper land-use planning. The city's green and open spaces are protected and preserved in the draft master plan. The master plan identifies the establishment of four small satellite towns in order to cope with urban sprawl as the result of the city's economic growth. If the four small towns are built successfully, the core historical inner center of the city will be preserved. The small towns would also reduce the pressure on the city's remaining open spaces by distributing new development therein. The draft master plan also provides adequate public social facilities such as schools, hospital, markets, and other services for future population growth.

Innovation and Change

One of the most noticeable innovations and changes is in the management of poor settlements. In recent years, the municipality of Phnom Penh has moved away from the policy of forceful eviction and resettlement to upgrading and voluntarily resettlement, which has garnered international recognition. In 2003, the Prime Minister declared that the Government would no longer force squatter and slum settlers to move from their existing locations. Instead they will be reorganized and upgraded on existing sites. This concession excluded those settlements located in areas classified as public state land, such as public parks and road pavements.

The newly introduced 50-50 method for financing infrastructure development projects in Phnom Penh has been hailed as a huge success for city authorities. The success of this approach is such that the people themselves now request to be included in the program and no longer need convincing by the municipal government to take part in the program as was the case during the introductory phase. The Cambodian population as a whole is untrusting of

government authorities as a consequence of past horrific government regimes, especially the Khmer Rouge genocidal regime (1975–1979); therefore, it is notable that the local population is eager to engage with the Government.

Battambang Town⁶

Battambang is a province situated in the west of the country bordering Thailand. It has one international and a number of regional border check points with Thailand. The province is considered as having the most fertile soil in Cambodia, and is the largest rice-producing area. Battambang is also the name of its urban district, the capital town of the province.

GOOD PRACTICE	
Good Governance	✓
Urban Management	✓
Infrastructure/Service Provision	✓
Financing and Cost Recovery	✓
Sustainability	✓
Innovation and Change	✓
Leveraging ODA	

In 2004, the city had a population of about 130,000 people. As with many other cities in Cambodia, the city straddles a river—in this case, the province’s main river. It has its own airport and is connected to Phnom Penh and Thailand by railway as well as by national road. It is also connected to Cambodia’s famous Angkor Wat complex, about 100 km away, by boat, air, and land.

Good Governance

Battambang was chosen along with Siem Reap to be one of the provinces in which the Government’s “one-window service” was piloted. This service is part of the overall administrative reforms guided by decentralization and deconcentration policies. Decision-making power and responsibility have incrementally been delegated to the local authority in all fields. The one-window service aims to bring all public services closer to the local population. According to its terms of reference, all services are to be provided in the district office. As such, representatives of all line offices in the district will sit and work together in the district office. Therefore, local people no longer need to go to different offices to obtain required services.

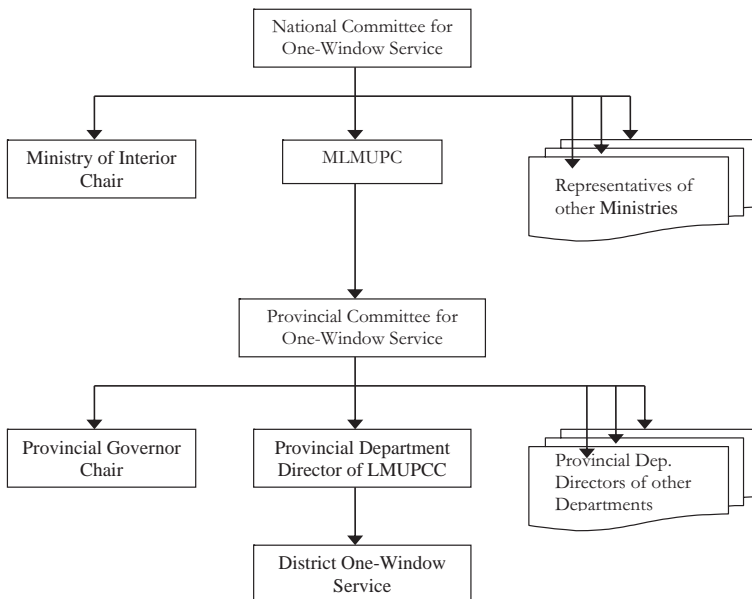
For example, obtaining permission for motor vehicle number plates can now be acquired at the district office whereas in the past, property owners had to go to the office of transportation, the police, and local authority, then to the provincial department of transportation, and the provincial authority. The one-window service has not only greatly cut down on administrative red tape but also on time consumption and many formal and informal costs. The reforms also aim to provide the district with its own semiautonomous income and budget.

To make sure that the one-window service policy was moving in the right direction, the central Government established committees at the national and provincial levels. The national and provincial committees assist and support the district team in implementing the one-window service. The two committees comprise representatives from relevant government line agencies in a manner similar to the district one-window service team as summarized in Figure 4.3. The national committee is chaired by the Ministry of Interior, while the provincial committee is chaired by the provincial governor. The committee holds regular monthly meetings to view the performance of the pilot project and to receive complaints or proposals from the one-window service regarding delegation of decision-making power.

Improved Urban Management

As part of the pilot project on the government decentralization and deconcentration policies, Battambang has simultaneously prepared two different master plans. These are the Battambang provincial master plan and the Battambang town master plan. Although the two plans differ in scale, they are

Figure 4.3: Structure of the One-window Service Chain of Procedures



Source: Interviews with relevant stakeholders, 2005.

LMUPCC = Land Management, Urban Planning, Construction and Cadastral; MLMUPC = Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction.

similar in the sense that the provincial master plan is based on the Battambang town master plan because of its significance as the provincial capital and also because it is many times larger than any other town in the province.

The participatory, consultative, and democratic approach adopted during the planning process is a notable example of good practice. From the start of the projects, all relevant stakeholders in the Battambang District and the province were consulted by the project teams, including government line departments, district line offices, NGOs and international organizations, the private sector, local authorities, and local communities.

Effective and Efficient Infrastructure and Service Provision

Since its introduction, the one-window service has been successful in reducing the gap between the public and public infrastructure and service provision. Similarly, the administrative shortcut from the central Government and provincial authorities to the district authority and its line agencies allows more effective service provision than before.⁷ The positive effects of effective service provision are extensive. In the case of motor vehicle number plates, the local population has requested that the company which won the contract with the central Government to produce number plates should open a production branch in Battambang town so that it could produce locally and more effectively meet demand through the Battambang one-window service (One Window Service Report 2005).

To bring service closer to the people, the Office for the Population was established in Battambang District to create a new mechanism to receive all complaints directly from the population. The office then acts on behalf of the local population in bringing complaints to the appropriate government agency or agencies involved. The office works as the legal representative of the local people who are unhappy with the work of government agencies, and negotiates with government agencies to find appropriate and acceptable solutions to complaints. The service provided to the population by this office is free of charge.

Financing and Cost Recovery

The one-window service team has already been in discussion with the national and provincial authorities and line agencies regarding proposed financial incentives for good performance. If approved, the incentives would facilitate better tax collection and revenue-raising from businesses in the town. According to the interviews, the proposed approach is to take a small percentage of the revenues collected through businesses taxation and reinvest this in the team as an incentive for further improved performance.

In the future, all staff working for the one-window service will be paid in line with the new government payroll system called the Priority Cluster. This is another component of the Government's overall reform program that aims to improve the performance of government staff by introducing salary based on commitment, performance, and work results. In this regard, the team of cross-sectoral staff working for the one-window service should be included in the Priority Cluster group.

Social and Environmental Sustainability

The preparation of the Battambang master plan, with cooperation and funding from the European Union, along with a United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)-assisted project for improving urban poor settlements in Battambang town should, if successfully implemented, provide long-term sustainable approaches for all relevant government agencies and authorities. A preliminary land-use zoning was proposed by the Provincial Department of Land Management, Urban Planning, Construction and Cadastral. This was the first example of urban planning in Battambang to contribute to social and environmental sustainability in the sense that it provided decision makers with the appropriate base on which to decide what type of investment should be built and where to ensure sustainable and long-term benefits.

The ongoing UNESCAP project on Housing the Urban Poor in Battambang town should also support further efforts aimed at having sound development policy encompassing social and environmental sustainability. The project has the advantage of allowing the eventual transfer of project ownership to the master plan task force of Battambang District. This is important for ensuring the project's success because all the master plan task force personnel already have experience in collecting data and information, data analysis, and other skills developed in the course of the master plan project.

Innovation and Change

The one-window service is one of the Government's innovations as part of its decentralization and deconcentration policies, delegating decision-making power to local authorities and government line agencies. Improvements in local capacity will enable more government line agencies to delegate all local decision-making power to local authorities and line agencies.

The Office for the Population is another innovation, which has changed the relationship between government and society by making services more accessible. Never before has the local population had a government representative

working for them as their true representative. This office is innovative in that the local population already has local representatives in the form of commune councils, all of whom were elected by the local population. However, employees working for the Office for the Population are not elected representatives but are personnel employed by the Government working for the population in negotiating and finding solutions for complaints and disputes between government line agencies, local authorities, and civil society.

Growth Pole Strategy for Kratie

Kratie is located in the northeast of Cambodia and has been the region's economic and political center for many years because of its geographical location and good access to Phnom Penh as well as the provinces of Steung Treng, Ratanak Kiri, and Mondulakiri. The three provinces, however, are not as well connected to Phnom Penh as Kratie because

GOOD PRACTICE	
Good Governance	✓
Urban Management	✓
Infrastructure/Service Provision	✓
Financing and Cost Recovery	✓
Sustainability	✓
Innovation and Change	✓
Leveraging ODA	✓

of longer traveling distances and poor road systems. Kratie, therefore, has an important role to play in the development in the northeast. Continual improvement of the road infrastructure from Phnom Penh to Kratie Province will further elevate its role, especially with respect to the economic development of the other three provinces mentioned.

Kratie is the capital town and district of the Kratie Province. Its main economic activities are trade, tourism, and agriculture. In 2003, Kratie District had a population of 84,642. The total population of the four provinces in the northern region—Kratie, Steung Treng, Ratanak Kiri, and Mondulakiri—was about 500,000 in 2004. The region shares similar characteristics. Population density is low. A variety of ethnic communities inhabit the region, predominantly in highland areas. Physical characteristics are also similar, with mountainous areas, forested land cover, red fertile soil, and the potential for agro-industrial development; however, at this time, the region remains underdeveloped.

Good Governance

Like other urban centers in Cambodia, Kratie first implemented the policy of decentralization through the 2002 election of commune councils. However, decentralization in Kratie has progressed in a different manner to Battambang, with Kratie implementing other forms of decentralization through planning at the local level. PLUP has been conducted in villages where the prospect of

new development is likely to affect the interest and natural resources of the local communities.

In its effort to take full advantage of the Government's decentralization policy, Kratie, with its limited resources, has sought to begin designing its own town master plan to make it attractive to investors while at the same time preserving its unique resources and identity. A draft master plan for the town, which has been under discussion and consultation with stakeholders, seeks to provide a framework to develop Kratie as a growth pole to support the development of the northeastern area of Cambodia.

Good governance was at the forefront of the study, whereby all stakeholders were consulted and engaged through public open discussions and workshops. Local authorities, local communities, line department and offices, NGOs, and international organizations as well as the private sector were involved during the planning process. In design preparation of the town master plan, the master plan team also considered all local plans, such as village action plans, the communal integrated plan, and the district plan.

Improved Urban Management

PLUP and the draft master plan of Kratie have contributed greatly to the management of the town, despite not being legally implemented at this time. Since the 1979 collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, Kratie town, like other towns and cities in Cambodia, lacked planning documents and up-to-date maps. All development approval given to both public and private investors for economic, social, or physical development projects was based on the personal judgment of decision makers.

The town economy has converted from forestry dependency into tourism and trade. This would not have been possible without better natural resource management and planning facilitated by the central Government's decentralization policy. Part of the responsibilities of the elected commune councils is to formulate commune development plans that define a longer-term development vision and goals in a policy framework. This represents a significant step toward greater local autonomy to address basic local development needs. Delegation of planning and management ownership to local communities encourages full participation of the local population, which is the key requirement for success.

Effective and Efficient Infrastructure and Service Provision

The Government's policy of privatization in public service provision has increased the involvement of private businesses in areas once solely public

responsibility. Kratie town has experienced an increase in private services, including private schools that range from kindergarten to faculties and technical institutes. Many such services would probably not have been provided without involvement from the private sector due to the Government's budgetary constraints.

The entire infrastructure and services provided through both public and private finance have had rapid appraisals conducted as part of the local planning process. The Village Development Plan is the annual assessment plan conducted by the local community in order to prioritize their demands and needs which are to be met by the local authority, NGOs or international organizations, and government. The plan is also conducted at the commune and district levels.

Financing and Cost Recovery

Aside from government finance for public service and infrastructure provision mentioned above, other forms of financing are also practiced in Kratie. For example, the World Bank has financed an infrastructure project in the northwestern region, which covers Kratie. To take part in the World Bank's project, local communities are required to make partner contributions in-kind and in cash. The total contribution from the community is 12%, of which 9% is in-kind and the remaining 3% is paid in cash (NVDP and World Bank 2003). The project includes such activities as land clearance, grass planting, digging holes, transporting materials, and guarding construction sites (Table 4.2). In some projects, the local communities are required to contribute cash, but in the long term and in an affordable manner. The money obtained is used for maintenance.

Table 4.2: In-kind Community Contributions to Projects

Type of Subproject	Type of Contribution				
	Land Clearance	Grass Planting	Digging Holes	Transporting Materials	Guarding Construction Sites
Bridge	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Roads	Y	Y	N	N	Y/N
Irrigation	Y	Y	N	N	Y/N
Water supply	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sanitation (latrines)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y = yes, N = no.

Source: Abstracted from author's own field survey for the World Bank project in 2003, Northwestern Village Development Project.

Social and Environmental Sustainability

The concept of the community contribution to the project was aimed at increasing community commitment and responsibility for the life of projects as well as the maintenance period after project completion. Without local community commitment, ownership, and responsibility, projects risk failure, especially after project completion. By making local communities contribute financially and technically to their local development projects and assisting them in understanding who the project beneficiaries are, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership. As a result, some infrastructure projects in Kratie prohibit or restrict overloaded vehicles from using bridges or roads. On occasion, local communities have created wooden or cement barriers along the edges of the roads or on bridges to protect the infrastructure from unwanted vehicles.

The town draft master plan study is still in the consultation phase and discussions are ongoing. The aims are to protect the social and environmental character of the town, and to attract investments while at the same time protecting the town's natural resources through appropriate land-use planning. Green and other public spaces are allocated to provide enough places for social activities. The plan is the result of many long discussions and consultations (through meetings and interviews) with local communities and all relevant stakeholders.

Innovation and Change

Participatory planning processes, such as those being practiced in preparing the town master plan and village plans, are innovative changes in the provincial as well as local government work procedures. It has opened up government to wider public participation. Kratie Province was one of Cambodia's remote provinces in past decades because of accessibility difficulties, which hindered reform. Most plans were top-down in their approach, not because the Government adopted a central command policy but because of Kratie's remoteness and lack of human resources to design and prepare plans. It was not until the Government initiated the mass infrastructure improvement program, especially to remote provinces such as Kratie, that the flow of information, resources, technology, and skills between large cities and small cities made it possible for administrative reforms in small urban agglomerations to be introduced.

Innovations and changes in government working and planning procedures in these small or secondary towns have been possible because human resources there have also been improved. More and more well-trained personnel have emerged as a consequence of better education, and are willing to work in

secondary urban areas with better connection to the rest of the country. More well-educated people are entering the labor market; however, only a small proportion of new graduates are able to find work in the capital city. This lack of employment opportunities has led many to accept work in secondary and small urban areas, such as in Kratie town. These newly recruited personnel have helped contribute to the overall government administrative reform.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CASE STUDIES

For Cambodia as a whole, the key to success has been the delegation of decision-making power from the central Government to the local government, as witnessed in the Government's overall administrative reform. These reforms have been tested and implemented through many programs, with the Social Fund and SEILA programs as obvious examples in which project design and planning are locally undertaken with local participation and involvement. Explicit bodies for tackling specific issues set up by the Government, such as the Council for Land Policy, Provincial Land Use and Allocation Committee, and National Cadastral Commission, have also been effective in dealing with their respective problems. In summary, local ownership is the key to success for all policy and program implementation.

The commitment made by the Prime Minister in 2003 to change the attitude of the Government toward squatter and slum settlements, from forceful eviction to upgrading and voluntary resettlement, is unique to Phnom Penh. NGOs and international organizations in and outside the country have welcomed this change in policy. Community participation in and ownership of projects are undoubtedly important and necessary ingredients for project success. They also help minimize unwanted opportunism from external groups wanting to skew the target of the housing projects from the urban poor to higher-income groups.

The 50-50 road infrastructure improvement and upgrading formula initiated by the city government and strongly supported by the Prime Minister is also successful, although it has been acknowledged by the municipal government that more effort is needed to make the policy more effective and sustainable. The main challenge for the policy is the quality of the road improvement as the result of inconsistent quality of contractors' work. According to an interview with Phnom Penh governor on local TV station CTN in December 2005, another challenge is the time needed at the Ministry of Economy and Finance for funds to be released because of administrative processes. Lack of independence in the project monitoring team was also raised by the governor as contributing to the challenges of the project.

Regular meetings, established by the municipal government and aimed to promote dialogue with its local authorities and communities, produced fruitful results in effectively dealing with issues. Local bodies, such as the District Community Development Management Committee, Urban Poverty Development Fund, and Solidarity for the Urban Poor Federation, were set up and supported by the municipal government, NGOs, international organizations, and development partners, and are good platforms to connect and communicate between government and civil society in working for the same goal of reducing urban poverty. These bodies bring stakeholders together in a consultative manner and provide an opportunity for dialogue, compromise, and negotiation in determining solutions to issues of concern.

The pilot-testing of decentralization and deconcentration policies in the western region towns and cities, although still in its early stage, has so far been welcomed by the local population. The key factor contributing to the success of this is the delegation of decision-making power and ownership to local authorities and communities. By doing this, local authorities as well as communities feel and see the benefits of commitment and hard work for the development of their local areas.

The capacity of current staff in local authorities could lead to ineffectiveness and mismanagement without strong support from the provincial and central governments. The one-window service program and the full decentralization and deconcentration policies might not be the appropriate approaches for other small and remote secondary towns and cities in Cambodia because the implementation of the program and the policies requires skilled employees, who may not be available. Another constraint to the success of the policy is the reported lack of incentive for the one-window service working team.

The eagerness and determination of the local government in Kratie town as well as for the province to implement the government decentralization policy and not to wait until everything is provided, especially skilled human resources, is an encouraging and good example of goodwill. This good practice has been illustrated through its willingness to allow PLUP and the draft master plan with a participatory and consultative approach for the town and the province as a whole. The concepts of participatory and consultative planning are rather new in the history of the country, which has been governed by more or less top-down systems from the glorious ancient civilization dating back a thousand years—from feudalism, to French protectorate (colonization), to capitalism, to communism (Khmer Rouge), to a central command economy and, in recent years, striving to stand as a democratic and free market economy.

Community participation in the World Bank-sponsored project in the region (the Northeastern Village Development Project, NVDP) is another

good example and provides lessons about community participation from which other regions can learn valuable lessons. The introduction of different kinds of involvement and contribution, such as in-kind and in cash, according to the assessment of the community capacity to commit, encourages and enforces local ownership and responsibility, and is well taken and welcomed by the communities. Simple reasons for the communities' appreciation are that contributions required by the project were affordable in terms of time, labor, and money. However,⁸ according to the assessment from the NVDP project external audit, the community participation and contribution were highest in areas where the community organization (Village Development Committee, VDC) was most competent.

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE URBAN REGION DEVELOPMENT

Experience shows that willingness and political will to carry out reform programs or policies are not enough for the reform to take place. It also needs to be accompanied by adequate resources and competent implementers and, to some extent, the wider public need to be able to understand the benefits so that they will be more accepting of the reform. As summarized in Table 4.3, from the author's own observation of the current situation and assessment about the future, a lot of work has to be done to ensure sustainable urban development.

There is no guarantee, of course, of achieving the requirements indicated in Table 4.3. Additionally, it is unlikely that improvements can be achieved overnight, but continuous political stability coupled with determination and capacity building of implementers and facilitators will steadily contribute to sustainable urban development. Exchange of experiences through regular meetings and study tours in cities and municipalities on all issues will also strengthen the capacity of decision makers and implementers of cities that lack experience and resources. For example, a drug rehabilitation program for youth has been working well in those places where the program was started and initiated by the local authority, such as Banteay Meanchey. The success of the program has led authorities in other provinces and municipalities to learn how to establish their own rehabilitation centers in order to tackle the growing issue of drug addiction.

Public information dissemination and accessibility are also necessary for successful sustainable urban development. The flow and exchange of information and data among cities and municipalities should be promoted, especially on good practice in governance, better urban management, and accountability. Public education on urban issues should also be considered

Table 4.3: Requirements for Enhancing Sustainable Urban Development

Factors required to enhance sustainable urban development	Contribution from Stakeholders for Sustainable Urban Development									
	Central Government		Local Government		Community		Civil Society		Development Partners	
	Now	Fut.	Now	Fut.	Now	Fut.	Now	Fut.	Now	Fut.
Political will and commitment	Yes	Re.	Yes	Re.	Re.	Re.	Yes	Re.	Yes	Re.
Resources (technical, financial, and human)	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Yes	Re.	Yes	Yes
Ownership and responsibility	Yes	Yes	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Yes	Re.	Yes	Yes
Participation	Yes	Yes	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Yes	Re.	Yes	Yes
Consultation	Yes	Yes	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Yes	Re.	Yes	Yes
Transparency	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Yes	Re.	Yes	yes
Capacity (competency)	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Re.	Yes	Re.	Yes	Yes

Note: Yes implies that the factor is currently in place. Re. means "requirements" and implies that, in the future, this factor will be required and needs to be provided, or requires continued improvement. Fut. = future.

Source: Author's own observation and assessment.

because urban poverty is often considered secondary to rural poverty, which leads unintentionally to negligence or poor investments, especially in secondary cities and towns.

Rural-urban linkages are gaining renewed interest from ADB and UNESCAP.⁹ The exploitation of such linkages has the potential to spread the development benefits of large cities or towns to surrounding smaller ones. The role that smaller towns should aim to play is to complement nearby large cities and not waste investment by competing for the same role.

CONCLUSION

The Government acknowledges that it is only through reform in all areas that the country and its population will overcome poverty and insecurity, especially in light of the country's increasing population growth rate. Many reforms and innovations implemented that the Government implemented have been achieved with outstanding success and applauded by both the international community and its own people. These include the SEILA program, the 50-50 formula (one of the key components contributing to

Phnom Penh receiving the World Leadership Awards for 2005), the one-window service pilot program, and the PLUP approach.

All these reform programs and policies have the shared objective of bringing public services closer to the local population and motivating the public to fully participate in designing, planning, implementing, and monitoring programs and projects. As a result, the society feels that it is part of the program and, thus, has full responsibility and commitment to work for its success and sustainability. Never before in the recent history of Cambodia has the provision of public services received contributions in-kind and in cash—equivalent to 50% of total contributions—from the local communities, especially after the Khmer Rouge regime when the state was popularly perceived with suspicion and mistrust.

The reforms should be accompanied by three important factors: true commitment, affordability, and the capacity to implement the reforms. Good and sufficient laws and regulations alone, as mentioned earlier, will not be enough to overcome the problems challenging Cambodia. There is also the need for strong and constant political commitment from all leaders. The commitment made by the Prime Minister and implemented by the government line ministries and authorities to continue to eradicate corruption, nepotism, and anarchic activities, such as state land grabbing, logging, and antisocial activities, is vital for Cambodia to overcome its historic problems. However, commitment alone is not sufficient to deal with the enormous problems facing Cambodia.

To mobilize the Government's large labor force and thereby act on its commitment, stable and secure financial inputs are required. At present, majority of the Government's employees are significantly underpaid, which, if allowed to continue, will hinder efforts to meet the commitments that the Government made. Moreover, capacity of the implementers, along with commitment and affordability, is needed to transform policies and programs into practice with fruitful results. As it stands today, most government personnel need further capacity upgrading to better understand and implement these policies and programs. This is even more crucial for the staff at the local level, where many are given the responsibility to implement tasks for which they are not qualified.

It seems inevitable that Cambodia will continue to face challenges as a result of continued urban population growth. Urban challenges will be effectively and efficiently dealt with not only through reforms, but also with appropriate and comprehensive strategies and policies. Efforts made by the Government in close cooperation with international donors, such as in creating economic corridors rather than economic growth poles, along with the newly initiated ADB and UNESCAP project on Rural-Urban Linkages,

should be replicated in other regions of the country. These will promote the growth of more small and secondary towns and cities in Cambodia.

Promoting the growth of small and medium-sized towns and cities through an economic corridors policy has the potential to transform past patterns of rural-to-urban migration, in which migrants from rural areas were drawn to only a few economic poles, such as Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville. Instead, through steady development in small and medium-sized towns and cities located along economic corridors, the rural population will find places to work closer to home.

The challenge in rebuilding a country so devastated by war is enormous. Despite limited resources and the destruction of much of the country's urban system, Cambodia has made significant progress toward rebuilding and planning for the future development and management of its cities. The rapid increase in urbanization is placing enormous pressure on the capabilities of national and local governments to provide infrastructure, housing, and other essential services. The case studies presented in this chapter demonstrate, in a small way, important initiatives being undertaken to improve the sustainability of urban development in one of Asia's poorest countries.

Notes

¹The information and data in this section draws heavily on the World Bank Report, February 2006, *Cambodia Halving Poverty by 2015, Poverty Assessment 2006*. Washington, DC.

²SEILA is a Khmer word meaning "stone," which implies "sustainable."

³Statistical Year Book 2003.

⁴According to the survey carried out by Solidarity for Urban Poor Federation (SUPF), this figure differs considerably from the national poverty line data noted earlier. Such inconsistencies are very common in urban data, which usually arise from different definitions of urban terms.

⁵SUPF survey for urban poor communities in 2004.

⁶Almost all of the account provided here is based on the author's own experience as one of the participants in Battambang's urban and infrastructure planning, and conservation of the town's historical buildings, 2002–2004, as team leader and supervisor. At present, the author continues to be involved with the UNESCAP project on Housing the Urban Poor in Battambang as Team Leader for the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction's Task Force for the Draft National Housing Policy.

⁷Much of the information presented here arises from interviews with personnel from Battambang district authorities and provincial line departments who have worked with the author on various projects until the present. The author is indebted to all for their insights and contributions.

⁸The author worked as a national consultant with international consultants to conduct project implementation assessment in 2003; all accounts mentioned here were derived from the author's own work experience.

⁹In recent years, two similar projects of different scales have been conducted in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, and Viet Nam, and perhaps in a few other countries in the region. The author is closely associated with are the ADB-sponsored study project on Regional Study on Rural, Urban and Subregional Linkages in the Greater Mekong Subregion (Viet Nam, Lao PDR, and Cambodia) 2004–2006, and the UNESCAP-sponsored project on Poverty Reduction through Rural-urban Linkages of Secondary Towns in Least Developed Countries.