



FACT SHEET

Sustainable Aquaculture and Community Fish Refuge project: CFR component



Introduction

Cambodia's rainfed and flooded rice fields are important and productive sources of inland fish and other aquatic animals, including frogs and snails. These aquatic resources are crucial to millions of Cambodians, especially those in rural areas. They make significant contributions to rural livelihoods, food security, nutrition and income generation, particularly since rice field fisheries (RFFs) are an open-access resource in Cambodia. RFFs act as a safety net for many poor rural families that are vulnerable to such factors as the effects of climate change, agricultural failures and income insecurity.

The Sustainable Aquaculture and Community Fish Refuge (SAFR) project, which falls under the BMZ Special Initiative "Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems," aims to reduce poverty and hunger. Under the BMZ initiative, the Global Programme Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture was launched to improve the availability of fish products for food insecure people and increase employment and incomes. Thanks to contributions from the SAFR, the Cambodia Fisheries Administration was able to meet its goal of establishing 1200 community fish refuges (CFRs) to increase fish production, create jobs and generate income from environmentally friendly rice fields for food insecure people. To achieve this, WorldFish implemented the project CFR component (SAFR-CFR) to establish and improve the 21 CFRs in Kampong Thom. The project lasted from December 2020 to March 2024.

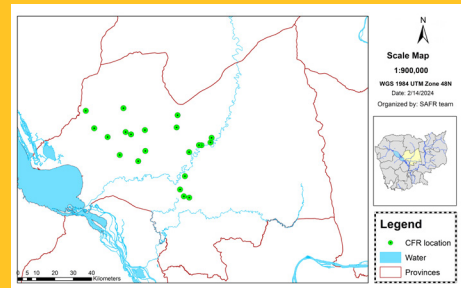
Goal

The goal of the SAFR project was to improve access to more fish and fish products for Cambodia's food insecure population and to increase their incomes from resource-friendly RFF systems.

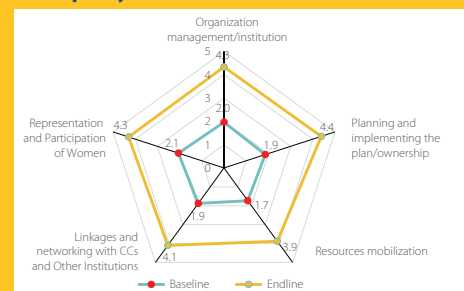
Target group

The primary target was to establish and improve the 21 CFR committees that manage the project's 21 CFRs. This would benefit (i) poor small-scale fisheries households that are vulnerable to factors such as the effects of climate change and agricultural failures, as well as (ii) associated value chain actors.

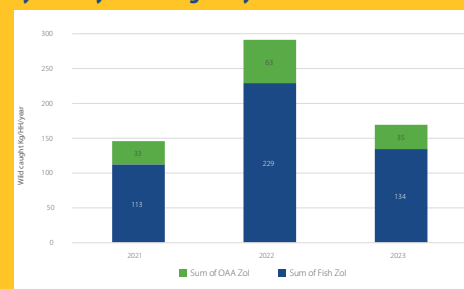
Sustainable Aquaculture and Community Fish Refuge SAFR-CFR project



CFR capacity assessment 21 CFRs



Average of Fish and OAA caught in ricefield system by fishers Kg/HH/year



Intervention pathways

For the project, WorldFish partnered with the Akphivath Neary Khmer Organization (ANKO), a local nongovernmental organization. Together, they implemented the SAFR-CFR using three approaches: (1) improve the physical conditions of the CFRs and their environment, (2) scale out best practices for CFR management and nutrition, and (3) build capacity and raise awareness among communities and local authorities.

The project approached the following four dimensions through various intervention pathways:

1. Support and follow-up on the site selection, need assessment and action planning processes as well as the status assessment of the existing CFRs in the country.
2. Help scale out sustainable CFR management approaches to suitable RFF environments.
3. Improve knowledge and awareness of CFR systems and other management mechanisms for community-based fisheries through capacity building, learning exchanges and networking, such as crosscutting as well as both legal and institutional capacity building.
4. Conduct a review on regional rice-fish innovations and a brief on rice-fish investment and policy in Cambodia.

Project achievements

The SAFR project had eight achievements:

1. Using a transparent procedure, the project created 21 CFR bylaws that were involved in the process of clarifying benefit-sharing and decisions with regard to regulating rice field fishing. CFRs were formed and registered with the Fishery Administration Cantons and other relevant departments.
2. The project increased the knowledge of the 21 committees so that they could sustainably manage their respective CFRs: A total of 4964 participants received training and awareness raising on the importance of CFRs and RFFs, principles of good governance and CFRs, and the country's fisheries laws.
 - The 21 CFR committees, with a combined 183 people, applied the organizational and fisheries management practices they developed or learned.
 - The committees raised \$19,832.00 from individual donations, memberships, the private sector, and fundraising events to support their activities.
 - The committees implemented 203 main management plan activities, while department lines and local authorities implemented 12.
3. The project used technology management to improve the conditions of 138 ha of waterbody environments and 27,676 ha of rice field environments. A total of 71,152 people benefitted from sustainable natural resource management and/or biodiversity.
4. The amount of fish and other aquatic animals from sustainable rice field fishing that were available to Cambodia's food insecure population increased 2095 t.
5. The combined annual incomes of men and women from sustainable rice field fish value chains rose to USD 6 million.
6. The proportion of transparently regulated and reported wild fish that artisanal fishers caught from rice fields in the zones of influence surrounding the project's 21 community fish refuges (CFRs) rose 3748 t.
7. A total of 3717 full-time equivalent jobs in the fish value chain were created.
8. The project fed two separate guidelines into agreed-upon targets set by Cambodian government institutions for managing sustainable and resource-friendly fisheries, stocking and patrolling guidelines.

Acknowledgments

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