

## Optimising Climate Adaptation through Enhanced Community Resilience

### 1. Description of relevant activities and collaborating institutions

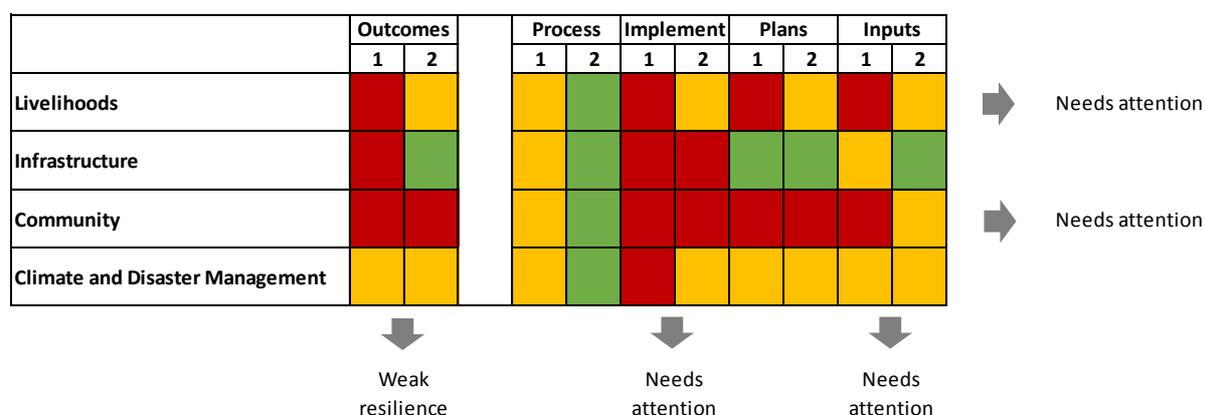
This project was a one-year collaborative research project of the University of Sunshine Coast, Australia; University of Battambang, Cambodia; Ministry of Environment Cambodia; Institute for Social and Environmental Transitions, Vietnam; Hue University of Economics, Vietnam.

Assessments of community resilience can identify communities that have sufficient resources (assets, knowledge, skills, resources, plans and governance) for adaptation and development, and communities that require assistance to develop them. The project developed and piloted a community resilience tool to be used to support climate change adaptation within existing development planning pathways. The framework included 39 key questions based around the outcomes related to (i) livelihoods and environment, (ii) infrastructure, (iii) community, and (iv) climate change and disaster management. This tool was developed through review of more than 10 existing community resilience assessment toolkits, and refined through policy workshops in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The toolkit developed focuses at the commune and provincial scales to support consideration of climate impacts and management options in policy and planning across all aspects of development, and simple but informative and cost efficient for use by provincial and commune governments and NGOs as part of regular planning processes. The tool was developed based on the assumption that providing simple structured dialogue can be effective in supporting decisions in the absence of technical information. The policy dialogue processes engage community, community, government and other stakeholders in: (i) understanding community issues, (ii) promoting shared understanding of problems, (iii) identifying existing programs that could benefit communities, (iv) increasing co-operation, and (v) developing novel and transformative solutions to issues communities face. For a community of around 600 households, the assessment and dialogue process involves 7-10 days active engagement with communities, plus time for engagement planning, analysis and reporting.

### 2. Key results

The tool was piloted in four communes in Vietnam and Cambodia. The following provides the overall picture of the assessment result.



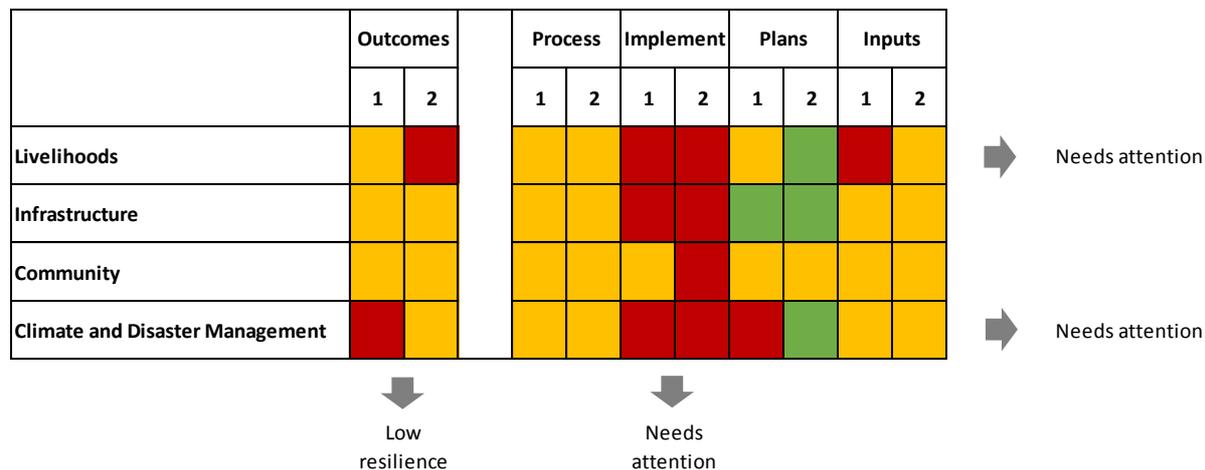
1: Lvea Krang Commune, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia

2: Chamkar Samrong Commune, Battambang Province, Cambodia

Figure 1. Cambodian Assessment

Suggestions related to adaptation based on the result:

- Promote agricultural groups, for knowledge sharing, planting and irrigation coordination
- Establish community gardens, to increase food security and supporting micro-enterprise
- Initiate study club for migrants' children who work during the day
- Promote water and food storage
- Provide resources to implement climate adaptation



1: Thuy Thanh Commune, Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam  
 2: Vinh Hai Commune, Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam  
 Figure 1. Vietnam Assessment

Suggestions related to adaptation based on the result:

- Identify opportunities for livelihood diversification
- Improve disaster preparedness, especially for vulnerable and marginalised groups
- Improve understanding about climate change
- Improve funding for plan implementation

**3. Description of lessons learned and good practices**

Several lessons learned from the implementation of the tool:

- The rating system of the tool may seem subjective, but it can force participants to discuss issues, what would enhance their ratings and what would reduce them; it therefore supports a social-learning based approach to climate adaptation planning.
- The assessment tool is not to be considered as a rigid tool and utilizing the tool should consider the local context. Questions can be added to the set or removed from it.
- Existing information can be used to make a preliminary assessment using the tool. This will help in introducing relevant issues for consideration during commune self-assessment.

**4. Description of key challenge**

While the tool is designed to be simple and easily understood by community and local government in order for self-assessment can take place, implementing the tool will require a strong facilitator to have an effective assessment and dialogue. Capacity building and facilitator training may be needed for expansion of tool implementation.

**5. Future potential work**

The assessment toolkit developed as part of this project can be readily used by Commune Councils as part of annual community (Commune) planning exercises and to mainstream

climate change adaptation into development initiatives. Further work could be undertaken to develop aligned quantitative proxy indicators where sufficient financial resources exist to measure them (e.g. water quality as a measure of the quality of the natural environment, food security index as a measure of access to resources in times of crisis/stress). The sensitivity of the tool to detect changes in resilience on the basis of adaptation activities should be examined. The work done in conjunction with FAO-initiated surveys on food insecurity has also highlighted the need to consider how best to engage marginalised groups in resilience and vulnerability assessments, given that this indicator consistently scored poorly.

**References:**

- Optimizing Climate Change Adaptation through Enhanced Community Resilience,” APN E-Lib, accessed January 31, 2017, <http://www.apn-gcr.org/resources/items/show/2028>
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- Jacobson, C. and Ngoun, C. (2016) Community resilience assessment and climate change adaptation planning, a guidebook. University of the Sunshine Coast, University of Battambang (in English and Khmer). ISBN 10: 1-925476-04-9, ISBN-13: 978-1-925476-04-0. 96pages