

# Swedish Support to the Development of Policy Research in Cambodia

**the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)**

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**Department for Democracy  
and Social Development**



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**Sida Evaluation 00/17**

**Department for Democracy  
and Social Development**

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# Innehåll

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction – the Programme Context .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 CDRI at Present .....	3
1.2 Previous Evaluations .....	4
1.3 Report Structure .....	4
<b>2. The Evaluation – Methodology and Approach .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation .....	5
2.2 Approach and Work Conducted .....	6
<b>3. Observations and Findings .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 The Policy Research Framework and Agenda .....	7
3.1.1 <i>Relevance – Doing the Right Things</i> .....	7
3.1.2 <i>Quality of Research – Academic Excellence</i> .....	10
3.1.3 <i>Effectiveness</i> .....	12
3.1.4 <i>Efficiency – the Internal Production</i> .....	12
3.1.5 <i>Impact Assessment</i> .....	13
3.2 Training Activities .....	14
3.3 Information Services .....	16
3.3.1 <i>Statistics Collection and Database Facilitation</i> .....	16
3.3.2 <i>Library Function</i> .....	16
3.3.3 <i>Publication Activities</i> .....	17
3.4 Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution .....	19
3.4.1 <i>CCCR Today</i> .....	19
3.4.2 <i>Relevance and Impact</i> .....	20
3.4.3 <i>CCCR Under the Auspices of CDRI</i> .....	21
<b>4. Institution Building and Management .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1 The Internal Structure .....	23
4.2 Gender Aspects .....	24
4.3 The (Role of the) Board of Directors .....	25
4.4 IT and Other Support Functions .....	25
<b>5. Assessment of the Situation .....</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1 Overall Assessment of CDRI in Cambodian Society .....	26
5.2 Benchmarking – Learning from Comparisons .....	28
5.3 Structure, Co-operation and Partnerships .....	29
5.3.1 <i>Managerial Aspects and Organisation</i> .....	29
5.3.2 <i>Quality, Effectiveness and Efficiency</i> .....	30
5.3.3 <i>External Networks and Partnerships</i> .....	32
5.4 Sustainability – the Legal, Financial and Human Resource Foundation .....	33
5.4.1 <i>The Legal Foundation</i> .....	33
5.4.2 <i>The Financial Platform</i> .....	34
5.4.3 <i>The Human Resource Base</i> .....	35
5.5 Proximity to Government .....	35

<b>6. Conclusions and Proposals .....</b>	<b>36</b>
6.1 The Research Programme .....	37
6.2 Training Activities .....	37
6.3 Information Clearing-house functions .....	37
6.4 CCCR .....	38
6.5 Institutional Development .....	38
<b>7. Lessons Learned .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>List of documents consulted .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Annex 1 .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Annex 2 .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Annex 3 .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Annex 4 .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Annex 5 .....</b>	<b>54</b>

## List of Abbreviations Used

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
CARERE	Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project
CCCR	Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CICP	Cambodian Institute for Co-operation and Peace
CLO	Cambodian Labour Organisation
CPP	Cambodian People Party
CRD	Cambodian Researchers for Development
CSD	Centre for Social Development
DAN	Development Analysis Network
EC	European Community
FUNCINPEC	United Front for an Independent, Prosperous and Co-operative Cambodia
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction (the World Bank)
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LICHADO	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
UNHCR	United Nations Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund





## Executive Summary

The Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) is unique in Cambodian society. It was established 10 years ago to help train government officials and others and build the foundation for economic policy analysis. Now CDRI does policy research on socio-economic development, provides information to various users, and hosts a center for conflict resolution.

The movement away from more general purpose training towards a concentration on policy research has been clear since the mid-1990s. The establishment of a centre for conflict resolution (CCCR) is a more recent and distinctive strategic decision. Information services and active dissemination have remained an important part of CDRI's activities from the beginning.

Our finding is that CDRI makes a special and important contribution to Cambodian development. The institute plays a crucial role in the restructuring of the economy and in further stabilising the nation. The value of the CDRI work is well documented. Specific impacts of CDRI initiatives are harder to validate clearly, though it has though been possible to do so in a few instances. This overall conclusion is based on interviews with the majority of management and programme staff at CDRI as well as meetings with about 30 external interested parties. The appreciation of work done by CDRI is clear. At the same time, external stakeholders often expressed a wish to work more closely with CDRI in partnerships and other associations. CDRI appears to work enthusiastically to co-operate with various government agencies and some international NGOs. The enthusiasm seems less prevalent when it comes to local NGOs and other national agencies.

The quality of CDRI's policy research is impressive, though uneven due to the limited human resource base. The mix of Cambodian and international research staff is sensible, positive, and workable. The number and quality of Cambodian researchers is increasing. But our view is that a minimum in-house threshold for consistently high quality policy analysis has not yet been reached. One way to help reach this goal would be aggressively to pursue some partnerships with policy research centers or institutes outside of Cambodia.

The changing emphasis away from offering training for developing the national human resource base, towards more specific policy research is understandable and CDRI needs to set priorities. But the need for training remains, particularly for focused training of staff from government and other agencies. This need is evident in any analysis of the current and expected future situation in Cambodian society. We propose that while keeping the priority on research that CDRI could use more aggressive dissemination and periodic seminars of the kind run for the provincial governors to help address this need. International partnerships could help here as well

The successive strengthening and improvement of human resources in government and other Cambodian agencies should constitute an important part of the CDRI agenda. We have found a large number of cases where training and research networking activities have had profound effects. However, due to the very small volume of technical and managerial competence in Cambodian society, and the structural lack of recurrent financial resources, the establishment of institutional capacity is severely hampered. In spite of this problem, CDRI should encourage sector-responsible institutions to take active responsibility for, inter alia, regular data gathering (one example is to produce monthly CPI statistics covering the nation) and monitoring. At the same time, CDRI is expected to, and should in our opinion, maintain its highly valued information clearing-house activities.

The establishment of CCCR constituted an important step in the development of CDRI. CCCR clearly fills a need in Cambodian society, both in terms of offering training in conflict resolution, and as a meeting place for different interested parties (for example, the initiative to pre-plan the forthcoming “communal – local” election). The current thinking is that CCCR should become independent in about three years. We recommend that a possible permanent location of CCCR inside CDRI should be tested. If the prospective synergies prove to be strong and the negative effects small then there could be real value and economies of scale in the joint research and shared administration.

We recommend continued and increased re-structuring of the management and organisation of CDRI. The successive modifications which have taken place during the first 10 years have, for the most part, been in the right direction. Today, the ambition should be to provide further autonomy and empowerment to the staff. CDRI’s management should focus on supplying a consistent platform for operating the prevailing programmes. The support functions (i.a. personnel, finance and IT) should be further developed in such a way as to achieve an adequate balance between delegation and consistency in process. The Board of Directors should become and be seen as the highest decision-making body of CDRI, actively supporting the strategic development of the institution (and not merely functioning as a de facto advisory body).

The legal status of CDRI is still not clear. We are aware that steps are being taken to clarify the status and urge that it be resolved soon – specified, documented and established.

While no research institute is “sustainable” unless fully endowed, it is clearly essential that CDRI systematically explore and exploit the possibilities of broadening its financial base. This should be done in the form of securing long-term core financing (at least 25 percent of the turnover for at least the next 5 years); funding of special activities and partnership arrangements (including major research projects together with foreign and international institutions); and also funding of commissioned research. In addition, the development of an endowment fund would offer extra stability (with a goal of capital income amounting to at least 25 percent of the turnover in the longer run.) The possibilities for exploiting both international networks and conducting research on commission are realistic and good.

# 1. Introduction – the Programme Context

The Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) was established in July 1990 as Cambodia began to take steps towards economic liberalisation and re-integration into the international community. It was formally endorsed by the government in March 1991 as an independent not-for-profit training and research institute. The mission of CDRI is to<sup>1</sup>:

*Enhance human resource capacity in Cambodia, and to undertake research and analysis contributing to the formation of sustainable development policies and strategies.*

From this mission statement a number of goals have been specified for the institution. These include:

- ◆ Enhance the capacity in development planning and management;
- ◆ Empower Cambodians to participate in formation of development goals and priorities;
- ◆ Articulate a sustainable development vision;
- ◆ Provide a forum for dialogue and discussion on development issues; and
- ◆ Promote understanding of Cambodian realities among international communities.

In the year 2000, CDRI will celebrate its tenth anniversary. During its existence, the institute has undergone a number of transformations. The initial phase (until about 1994) focused on delivering training programmes, workshops and seminars for government officials and the staff of civil institutions. During a second phase (about 1995–1997), emphasis was on establishment of a research programme devoted to socio-economic policy issues relating to Cambodia's development and economic experience. Additional, more comprehensive (long-term) training was initiated, and the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCCR) was created.

## 1.1 CDRI at Present

Currently, we see three main activities shouldered by CDRI<sup>2</sup>, namely:

- ◆ Policy research on socio-economic issues;
- ◆ Collection, hosting and dissemination of information on (socio)-economic issues; and
- ◆ Hosting the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution.

In addition, CDRI provides specialised English language training and testing/selection of candidates for (training)programmes; and provides a number of support functions to assist the internal work and also to help build capacity within Cambodian society.

The total number of fixed (permanent) appointment employees at CDRI amounts to about 45. Of these, about 11 directly work within the research programme, about 5 in CCCR, and 6 with library and publication functions. In addition to this, a rather large (in relative terms) number of local and international consultants are hired/commissioned for specific assignments.

The total budget for CDRI is about mUSD 1.1 (1998). The work is financed to about 89<sup>3</sup> percent by donations from bilateral donors and international organisations. Sida has been the dominant

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Constitution taken by the Board of Directors in 1997.

<sup>2</sup> This structuring is not exactly in accordance with the administrative organisation of CDRI.

<sup>3</sup> Based on a compilation of the financial accounts for the last 5 years (1994–1998)

contributor during the studied period (about 81 percent of the overall donations and 73 percent of all gross total incomes). These amounts include core funding as well as ear-marked submissions. Additional funds are obtained through training fees, commissioned research, sale of reports etc, and from capital (interest)<sup>4</sup>.

## 1.2 Previous Evaluations

An institutional evaluation of CDRI was conducted in 1994 (Charny, Ronnås, 1994). Generally speaking, this evaluation was highly appreciative towards the achievements of CDRI during the first few years. A number of recommendations and proposals were put forward, including: (i) creation of an in-house research capacity (with a detailed proposed seven point action plan including appointment of a research co-ordinator, attracting expatriate scholars, further development of short-term specialised training both in-house and to external people, seminar series to top decision-makers as well as the development of a research working papers' series and related documentation facilities); (ii) strengthening of the management structure involving more local personnel; and (iii) more emphasise on focused fundraising.

In addition, a number of programme evaluations have been conducted during the last five years. These include: English language training (Ahrens and Peppin, 1996); Management and Planning (Andersson, 1996); Computer training (nn, 1997); and a Program review (Oversen, 1998). The most recent evaluation (by Oversen) concluded that CDRI had successfully made the transition from a training centre towards a policy research institute. The report assessed options for more specific fundraising (in addition to the needed core financing) and found the prospects for additional funding to be good. Finally, the study included a brief comparison between CDRI and CICP (the Cambodian Institute for Co-operation and Peace).

In our study, we focus on the activities from 1994/95 onwards, giving particular attention to activities in 1998–1999.

## 1.3 Report Structure

Our report consists of seven chapters. In the next, we specify the basic foundations for the study. Our analysis and findings on CDRI's current activities are presented in Chapter 3. Institution-building and management issues are covered in Chapter 4. Our assessment of CDRI is presented in Chapter 5, including a special section on sustainability.

Our recommendations are presented in Chapter 6, and “lessons learned” in Chapter 7. Detailed documentation on the evaluation process is attached in the annexes. In this definitive version of the report comments obtained from the final draft version submitted to CDRI and Sida on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000 have been taken account of.

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<sup>4</sup> The financial analysis may be done also in other categories, i.a. focusing on core vs. project specific funding (see section 4.3.2)

## 2. The Evaluation – Methodology and Approach

### 2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

In principle, an external evaluation could either focus on learning or accountability<sup>5</sup>. The main objective of this evaluation is Learning (promotion), while only limited concern has been given to the aspect of Accountability (control).

The foundation for the current evaluation is specified in the terms of reference document (ToR) dated September 17, 1999 (included here as Annex 1). It is noted that both an internal assessment focusing on the “production” of deliveries, and an external evaluation focusing on the impact of CDRI in Cambodian society is requested. The entire institution, and not merely individual programmes or activities, is to be reviewed.

Our evaluation is based on review and analysis of documents, interviews with the CDRI management and staff, as well as a number of external stakeholders (current and potential users, donors, etc). In total, about 30 external meetings were held during the field work in Cambodia. A list of contacted persons and institutions is attached in Annex 2.

In our view, the main evaluation questions in the ToR are the following issues:

- ◆ Do CDRI’s vision and mission address key needs of Cambodian society?
- ◆ Are the goals – which shape the direction of work – relevant, attainable and in line with the mission?
- ◆ What impact does CDRI have on Cambodian society?
- ◆ Are external stakeholders willing to co-operate further and develop relationships with CDRI?
- ◆ Is the (future) financial platform sound and realistic for sustainability (what self-financing and other financial options are potentially available)?
- ◆ Is the personnel base (in terms of competence, recognition, strength, etc.) at or above a minimum threshold level?
- ◆ Is the CDRI’s work conducted in cost-effective ways? and
- ◆ Does the CDRI’s organisation and infrastructure efficiently support the work?

From an assessment of these and related issues, we infer options for the future development of CDRI, and discuss (propose) a number of possible measures which may be taken. The review and reasoning is thus based on a scrutiny of CDRI as concerns:

- ◆ *Relevance* – in relation to the needs and priorities of Cambodia (including target groups and the societal problems identified); and to Sida goals;
- ◆ *Effectiveness* – Are outputs produced as planned. Have project and programme objectives been fulfilled;
- ◆ *Impact* – Intended and unintended effects of the activities relating to different beneficiaries. Positive and negative effects in the short and long term;

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<sup>5</sup> In accordance with the classification of evaluation purposes: Sida Evaluation Policy (1999)

- ◆ *Efficiency* – Would there be more cost-effective ways to achieve the same results? Could the same output have been generated with lower resource utilisation? and
- ◆ *Sustainability* – Can ways be found to assist CDRI to maintain its activities for extended periods as core support is reduced, to sustain the return on Sida’s investment in CDRI?

In the assessment, we have tried to consider a number of crucial institutional aspects and their interrelations. These include:

- ◆ Policy and strategy;
- ◆ Leadership;
- ◆ People (employees);
- ◆ Partnerships and resources;
- ◆ Processes; and
- ◆ Results viewed by external and internal stakeholders as well as the society in general.

We have also tried to identify and quantify key performance indicators to use in the analysis (including trend development of CDRI), and for benchmarking.

## **2.2 Approach and Work Conducted**

For the purpose of addressing the critical issues spelled out above, a joint evaluation team was selected and hired by CDRI and Sida. This comprised Dr. Jan Eklöf, Mrs. Mona Lilja and Dr. Charles Myers. During the period October 28–November 4, the team worked together in Cambodia. Subsequent drafts of the report have been developed and exchanged via E-mail, and in response to comments from the leadership of CDRI and staff of Sida.

Interview guides were developed for internal CDRI staff and external stakeholders. They are attached in Annex 4. Meetings with external institutions and individuals were set up by CDRI. The team members proposed a prioritised list of contacts prior to the field mission.

Meetings with CDRI staff members were booked and conducted directly by the team members. We would like to thank all people at CDRI and associated institutions who assisted in making the evaluation feasible and worthwhile.

### 3. Observations and Findings

The activities currently performed by CDRI are generally found to be well in line with the needs of Cambodian society. Policy research as well as information clearing-house work and pro-active tasks relating to conflict resolution are all high on the priority list among the great majority of consulted interested parties.

In the following, we present and discuss our findings concerning the choice of working priorities, execution of tasks as well as management and organisation of support functions. The reasoning is done separately for the Policy Research (section 3.1); Training Activities (3.2); Information and Documentation Work (3.3); CCCR (3.4) and aspects relating generally to Organisation and Institution Building (section 3.5). This chapter shall be seen as the basis for the subsequent assessment and proposals part.

#### 3.1 The Policy Research Framework and Agenda

In the evaluation carried out in 1994 (Charny and Ronnås), a proposed agenda for developing a research institute was spelled out. Now, five years later, it may be concluded that a number of the ideas brought forward have materialised, at least in part. CDRI is on its way to developing an independent policy research institute.

##### 3.1.1 Relevance – Doing the Right Things

The current research framework was taken in 1998. It was developed in close consultation with external interested parties in conjunction with the start of assignment of the present research co-ordinator (Dr. Martin Godfrey). It is based on clear priorities spelled out for the (economic) development of Cambodian society, as well as on a realistic assessment on what is feasible to undertake. Also in relation to the Sida development agenda it may be seen as highly relevant (with a focus on poverty alleviation and related basic needs issues).

Most of the CDRI's work can be clustered as proposed in the Framework:

##### *Rural Development:*

- "Learning from Rural Development" (Working Paper 4, and six detailed case studies.)
- "Food Security in an Asian Transitional Economy: The Cambodian Experience" (Working Paper 6)
- "Interdependence in Household Strategies in Two Cambodian Villages" (Working Paper 7)
- "The UNICEF/Community Action for Social Development Experience" (Working Paper 9)

##### *Macro-Economic Policy:*

- "Economy Watch" (in the CDR: macro-economic trends, and market surveys and analyses)
- "Construction of (a) Consumer Price Index for Cambodia" (Working Paper 1)
- "Data Problems Hold Back Policy-Makers" (CDR June 1999)
- "Seasonal Adjustment of the Consumer Price Index" (Working Paper 13, forthcoming)
- "Economic Reform, Structural Adjustment and Development in Cambodia (Working Paper 3)
- "Cambodia: Strengthening the Foundation for Trade and Development" (Workshop paper, 1997)
- "Coping with the Current Crisis" (CDRI Special Report, 1997)
- "Impact of the Regional Economic Crisis (CDR June 1998)
- "De-Dollarising Cambodia (CDR June 1998)
- "Learning from the Asian Economic Crisis (CDR June 1998)
- "The Economy After the Election" (CDR September 1998)

- "Regional Economic Integration for Sustainable Development in Cambodia (Working Paper 5)
- "Cambodia in the Regional Economy: A Cross Country Study" (Conference paper, 1998)
- "Cambodia: The Challenge of Productive Employment Creation (Working Paper 8)
- "Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis on the SEATEs: The Cambodian Perspective (Working Paper 12)
- "Aid Infusions, Aid Illusions" (Working Paper 2)
- "Donors in Disarray: Prospects for External Assistance to Cambodia" (Special Report 1998)
- "The macro-economic consequences of technical assistance" (new research underway)

#### *Human Resource Development:*

- "Reforming Health Sector Funding" (CDR, December 1998)
- "Gender and Development in Cambodia: an Overview" (Working Paper 10)
- "Cambodian Labour Migration to Thailand: A Preliminary Assessment" (Working Paper 11)
- "The capacity building consequences of technical assistance" (new research underway)

#### *Governance and Conflict Resolution (not part of the research framework):*

- "Building Anew: Rebuilding War-torn Societies" (CDR August 1997)
- "Transition and Reconciliation" (CDR June 1999)
- "Nature and Causes of Conflict Escalation in the Cambodian Election" (CCCR draft study)

Clearly, these clusters are not discrete. There are inevitable and obvious overlaps. For example, the work on migration of labour to Thailand (Working Paper 11) can be placed in under "Human Resources, "Economic Integration" and "Rural Development" – or the lack of it. The same could be said about the work on gender (Working Paper 10). In addition, the relationships between governance and economic policy are multiple.

Almost all of this work has been undertaken since 1997, reflecting CDRI's commitment to shift priority from training to policy analysis.

The best features of the work – in our view – are the importance of the topics selected, the cumulative nature of the work, the focus on learning from field experience including the gathering of primary data, and the building of external research partnerships.

#### *The Topics Selected*

The clusters of topics are obviously important for the future development of the country and quality of life of the people. Eighty percent of the population and most of the poor live in rural areas. Factor endowments suggest that Cambodian agriculture and food processing should have strong potential comparative advantage. This advantage has not yet developed but if it can, rapid growth with equity and poverty reduction will occur. Understanding the constraints on rural development, the options for reducing them, and making the best use of external assistance are critical for this most important sector of the economy and segment of the population.

Cambodia is a small economy with big neighbours, and is committed politically to a process of economic integration under ASEAN/AFTA. Small economies – in theory – stand to benefit most from regional economic integration. But how the benefits (and negative contagions) are distributed depends, in turn, on how integrated the internal economy is and whether the right policy choices are made. Here the concerns for rural development and good macro-economic and trade policy come completely together.

For historical reasons, human resource development is appallingly low, particularly for females. Levels are below critical thresholds for agricultural productivity, fertility decline, and infant and child health, to say nothing of expanded choice and options in the labour market. The needed



investments are low and lagging. CDRI research found that poor health and high cost of access to health care are leading causes of rural landlessness. Here also, there is a need to improve understanding, identify policy options, and make the best use of external assistance.

Governance improvements are obviously essential for successful development. The needed improvements include administrative reform, demobilisation, transparency, reduced corruption, conflict resolution, institution building. The list is long and applied research and recommendations are badly needed.

Since the current research framework was taken, a few special projects, not initially included, have been initiated and undertaken (as indicated above). Each of these is well motivated and relevant in its own right. Still, the research framework is found to reflect prevailing priorities to an adequate extent.

All external interested parties interviewed have commented on the relevance of conducted research. It is noted that very few users are interested in the totality of covered issues, while at least a number of active users have been identified for each topic addressed so far. This means that we have found no irrelevant studies. In terms of frequency of reference, it may be noted that the following studies rank especially high:

- ◆ *Learning from Rural Development Programmes in Cambodia;*
- ◆ *Land Ownership and Transactions in Cambodia;* and
- ◆ *Economic Reform, Structural Adjustment and Development in Cambodia.*

There are, of course other important topics not in the current framework. Education and health (mentioned by many people we spoke to) were excluded so as not to duplicate work planned by others. Analysis of the modern sector was not included either except as part of the regional integration work.

It seems possible that some of these topics will be included in a new framework to be planned in 2000. It also seems likely that work on the social sectors, in particular, could be designed to complement rather than “compete” with work done or planned by others.

### *Cumulative*

In addition to selection of important topics, policy research should “add up,” not consist of a series of isolated and unrelated studies. It should be cumulative in the sense that it builds understanding of development problems and options and that each study provides inputs to future work and helps to define future work.

In our view, most of the CDRI work does “add up” and is cumulative. The best evidence of this is three synthesis papers which draw together the several clusters of work. Working Paper 5, (1998) Kato et al. “Regional Integration for Sustainable Development in Cambodia,” and Working Paper 8, (1999) Chan et al. “Cambodia: The Challenge of Productive Employment Creation,” draw together work on economic transition, regional economic integration, and poverty and rural development. The third, Mysliwiec (CDR, Vol. 2, 4, 1998) “Looking Towards the Millennium,” draws together most of CDRI’s research findings to analyse the challenges facing the new administration.

In addition, the existing work has helped to identify high-priority topics for follow-on work. For example, CDRI’s work on food security found large disparities in the size of rural land holdings and growing landlessness. A data and literature review paper is now in draft form and a detailed analysis of land issues is being planned. The CDR (Vol.3, 4 September 1999) published a summary of an outside researcher’s analysis of the land tenure problem.

CDRI's work on labour migration to Thailand, and its work on food security found that labour markets are quite dynamic and workers spatially mobile. A detailed analysis of labour markets and employment is to begin this year.

### **3.1.2 Quality of Research – Academic Excellence**

The overall quality of conducted research is impressive when reviewed on a relative scale. In the area of policy-oriented economic research, CDRI stands out in Cambodia. The level of quality in not least the empirical part of the research process is competitive when neighbouring country experiences are also considered. At the same time, it must be emphasised that in the majority of cases the research is merely descriptive in character, lacking a broader theoretical foundation. Examples are found of cases where this has led to less than analytical reasoning. This situation is easy to understand and explain, but must be addressed step by step in systematic ways provided a long-term impact and acceptance of the CDRI-work is aimed at.

We have gone through the dominant part of the published research papers and found them on the whole to be of reasonable quality. However, the volume of research is still too uneven to be considered as actually pass standard academic criteria. It may never the less be possibilities to develop a few of these papers further and publish in international academic fora. As was already stressed in the evaluation from 1994 (Charny and Ronnås) “it is a long way to develop a capacity for excellent research, but just too easy to lose the quality label”. We have not found any individual cases where CDRI has passed below the minimal quality level necessary to maintain, but one or two that come close to this risky point.

#### *Field Work and Primary Data*

Another characteristic of CDRI's analytic work is that a good proportion of it is based on field work and the gathering of primary data. This is unusual. It is more typical in policy analysis institutes to see researchers huddled over their computers doing cross-sectional multivariate analysis of secondary data-sets of dubious quality. Rarely, if ever, do they see and talk to the people behind the numbers or get close to the ground, the firms, the employees, that their data-sets describe.

CDRI, in contrast, gets close to the ground, the markets, and the people. This pattern includes the “Economy Watch,” a component of which is a regular survey of markets and vulnerable workers in Phnom Penh and 11 other cities and towns. Results are published in the CDR (they were published alone initially) and are highly valued by readers.

CDRI's work on “Learning from Rural Development” and “Food Security” involved detailed interviews, data-gathering and case studies in rural communities and households.

The “Learning from Rural Development” study is unusual. Most NGO and donor work is not analysed; all that is typically available about a project is a self-authored report or commissioned evaluation with a positive bias and no hard data. Little is really learned from all the experimentation and different approaches. The LFRD study found that a few initiatives did made a real difference to rural development. Many did not. Given how critical rural development is for the future of the country, this is very valuable work indeed. After the initial case studies and analysis, CDRI was asked by MRD to analyse UNICEF's “Community Action for Social Development” experience. Results were published in Working Paper 9. CDRI is now being asked by the Ministry for Rural Development to conduct longitudinal monitoring and evaluation of the WB/MRD rural development project in the northeast.

More generally, CDRI's field work and gathering of primary data and “state-of-the- art” papers on gender and on rural land tenure help to improve dialog and debate about development policy. As

the database builds, there can be more consensus about the facts (about the real extent of food security, or what really promotes rural development for example) and thus more time and effort devoted to finding and refining policy options.

### *Design and Methodology*

CDRI's early papers on macro-economic policy were mainly essays on development issues based on limited descriptive data, for example, Working Papers 2 and 3. But an initial paper (Working Paper 1) analysed the construction and components of various CPIs and proposed improvements based in part on what was learned from the primary data gathering for the "Economy Watch."

Some of the more recent work on macro economic policy has used more analytic methods, for example, revealed comparative advantage techniques in Working Paper 5, Kato, et al. "Regional Integration for Sustainable Development in Cambodia," and four-digit analysis of import and export flows in: Robertson and Pohoresky, (1997) "Cambodia: Strengthening the Foundation for Trade and Industrial Development." A CDRI working group is looking at methodological options (econometric or use of a simple CGE model) for adding short-term forecasts to the "Economy Watch." This trend toward improved analytic methods in the economic policy work should be encouraged.

The most common methodology of CDRI's work to date has been case studies. The case studies have used qualitative interviews and observation techniques from anthropology supplemented by quantitative information based on anthropometry (in the food security work) and on micro-economics. The case studies have been used to analyse food security, rural development, labour migration, and external assistance projects.

Most of the studies based on case studies could have been designed more carefully, based on theory, on testing of hypotheses, on review of literature, methodology and findings from similar studies in other countries.

Even though the quality of empirical work is impressive, we find a few examples of not-so-well surveyed conclusions (possibly drawn from too small or generally not adequately representative samples – in relation to the specified target populations). At the same time, there appears to be instances where the empirical data could very well have been further explored to generate additional hypotheses, or even for explicit hypothesis testing purposes<sup>6</sup>.

During our meetings with users in Cambodia, we have still not come across one single instance where the quality of research performed by CDRI has been explicitly questioned. However a few interested parties have emphasised that they find the studies uneven in quality.

A system of peer review of all research prior to publication has been established. This is very important to maintain, and should be seen as both a way of maximising the quality of research and to train more junior researchers. The use of external reviewers as well for such purposes has not yet been systematically explored as far as our review has detected.

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<sup>6</sup> In such case studies, even when the "n" is small and not a statistically representative sample, there is room for more analysis than has been done so far. The analysis could be based more explicitly on the "New Household Economics." The analysis could include estimation of simple production functions, determinants of poverty, determinants of malnutrition of children, earnings functions, determinants of migration, etc. Even in the qualitative aspects of the case studies, explicit identification and analysis of "positive deviants" would have improved the work and suggested important, low-cost and cost-effective policy options. The longitudinal analysis of the World Bank/MRD rural development project and the labour market study provide opportunities to improve design and use additional methods.

### 3.1.3 Effectiveness

By and large, the work lives up to high requirements in terms of effectiveness – thus delivering what is promised and expected. We have, however, come across comments from users on a few occasions that the expected output was delayed for one reason or another.

We have also found a few situations in which CDRI was perceived as less positive to conduct a specific research proposal due to resource constraints. All this is well understood and appreciated as a short- and medium-term strategy. In the longer-term perspective, a more proactive attitude might be considered, though.

In terms of active presentation and dissemination of research findings, a lot is being done. The principle of organising workshops and seminars in conjunction with launching a research report is appreciated. The more involvement of central decision-makers, the better; in terms of chances for the results to have real impact in society. However, for adequate implementation of any policy, broader groups of stakeholders must also be involved. Furthermore it is crucial that all CDRI (research) staff is well trained in lecturing and presentation techniques.

CDRI has become a “safe” or neutral venue, a place for candour and discussion, where officials such as the provincial governors (in October 1999) can gather, interact and share information and discuss policy issues. The “safe venue” facilitates dissemination. Other methods of dissemination of research results have been more formal, such as publications, conferences and workshops. Others are informal, such as briefings by the Director of high-level government people. We cannot assess the relative effectiveness of these methods. It was said that one can be much more frank about policy implications in the informal sessions and thus create impact that way. True enough, but that means the rest of the community and stake-holders may not get the (full) message. Certainly, most of the published papers say relatively little about detailed policy implications and options. The most influential study so far has been the LRFD study, which does have detailed policy implications and options. In addition, the results of the LRFD study were reviewed, discussed and made widely available – and accessible to broader groups in society including local NGOs and the villagers – where the case studies were conducted. Partly as the result of the multiple consultations and aggressive dissemination, the study has changed the design of rural development projects in Cambodia.

Some interested parties express their views that CDRI takes too few proactive initiatives in the Cambodian environment. There are comments suggesting that CDRI is expected to, or should, for example take own initiatives to:

- (i) Make research findings more popular for broader groups in society (maybe by using media in more systematic ways);
- (ii) Have closer and more intensive contacts throughout the research process with representatives of the political sphere (for example explore networking with the committees in the National Assembly); and
- (iii) Intensify the contacts with especially local NGOs.

This kind of comments and proposals have been raised by a number of (potential) users and intermediaries of CDRI and should be seen as clear indications that there is a un-exploited interest in the work of CDRI. Penetrating this further should result in increased effectiveness as well as better relevance.

### 3.1.4 Efficiency – the Internal Production

CDRI shows an impressive production of research papers and related output (special seminar volumes, conference arrangements, etc), see Annex 3. Compared to other more or less similar

institutions in the region, CDRI exhibits a reasonable level of efficiency. The combination of local fixed appointment staff, use of consultants available in the country, and international staff offers flexibility, a possibility to develop internal competence and a certain amount of stability in parallel.

At the same time, we doubt that a minimal critical mass of local research staff has been arrived at in the present situation. Thus, we see the intention to increase the number of researchers during the next 3–4 years by at least 50 percent as an important goal to strive for. Efficiency might also be improved if the international institutional links were further developed (and not merely with institutes in the region).

The cost of research staff differs very much between locals, expatriate Cambodians and international staff. We find that it should be quite possible to increase the number of local staff with at least a first academic degree (bachelor). Even though the number of locally available staff is extremely limited, we have, during the discussions on site, been convinced that there may be possibilities to find prospective candidates with an academic degree (and also some with basic training in research methods among graduates from the former CIS countries).

According to financial data presented to the evaluation team, the total cost of an internationally recruited staff member is about 5–7 times higher than for a local researcher (assistant) with merely a first academic degree. The cost of an “expatriate Khmer” differs within wide margins (from almost the same as for an international staff member to about 2–3 times that of a local associate).

CDRI is a founding member of the Development Analysis Network (DAN) which consists of policy research institutes in Cambodia (CICP as well as CDRI), Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. CDRI participated in an initial planning meeting and subsequently helped author a detailed work plan. The work plan was approved and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed at the end of 1997. When the expected funding from UNDP was not forthcoming in 1998, CDRI took the initiative to keep the DAN alive and found alternative support from IDRC, Canada. That funding supported conference papers and a regional conference on the “Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis on the Southeast Asian Transitional Economies” held in Phnom Penh 21–22 January 1999. The conference volume, including a synthesis paper written by CDRI, was published later in the year.

As a result of this first work of the DAN, IDRC has agreed to support a second study, one initially proposed in the DAN work plan, on labour markets. CDRI again took the lead in this initiative. A revised and elaborated study design will be reviewed in Phnom Penh by researchers from the DAN member institutes in November 1999. The study will begin soon thereafter and will be completed in early 2001. The DAN collaboration on research would not have happened without CDRI initiatives. This is particularly impressive and valuable. It has never happened before.

In addition, CDRI has undertaken research jointly with researchers from the Stockholm School of Economics and with researchers affiliated with the UNDP and the ADB. Institutional relationships with overseas partners should be given high priority in the future.

### **3.1.5 Impact Assessment**

Another important area for improvement of CDRI’s policy analysis work is to spell out (in writing and/or in formal and informal meetings) more detail on the policy implications of a study and the policy options available to policymakers.

This is not an easy task. It is not taught in graduate schools anywhere. It has to be learned, and can be best learned in policy analysis work that involves policymakers and technocrats from the beginning.

How detailed the policy options should be in the written documents and in meetings is also a somewhat contentious issue among policy research institutes. One view is that an institute should just do first-rate analytic work and let the policy implications be worked out by policymakers, or be hammered out in formal meetings or in informal networks. But this view presupposes that policy makers have ample experience in the use of policy research, ability to assess quality and relevance and to infer the detailed implications for their decisions.

The more common view is that policy implications should be spelled out in detail. Almost all agree that advocacy of a particular option should not occur. It poses too big a risk of loss of (perceived) objectivity and risk of being seen as allied with one faction or interest group against others. The most a study should do is to estimate costs and benefits of the available options to deal with a policy problem.

We would recommend that future CDRI written documents and future formal and informal meetings about research results present the policy implications and options in more detail.

We have identified a few (limited number of) examples of CDRI research having had direct impact on policymaking and capacity-building. As one such example, the study on “Learning from Rural Development Programmes in Cambodia (CDRI, 1998)” has been mentioned a number of times (where future priorities have been shifted due to the results presented by CDRI).

There are also concrete examples of research resulting in citations in various proposals (by international organisations and NGOs). However, the potential for this kind of use of CDRI research findings is far from exhausted. We suggest that much more systematic positioning should take place in order for the CDRI research to have effects on different levels in society.

The indirect effects from CDRI research activities are likely to be more profound than the direct ones, even though they are not so easy to pinpoint. We have, however, received confirming evidence on the operational use of research reports from all visited ministries. Similarly, a few of the international organisations validated that they have been benefiting from CDRI research in their strategic planning.

### 3.2 Training Activities

We have come across two (interwoven) training needs during our discussions in Phnom Penh. The first relates to gradual and systematic upgrading in-house of research personnel (including staff members within the CCCR section). The second relates to external training activities in order to further develop and strengthen the human resource base in economics and related areas. Both these needs have also been addressed by previous evaluations to CDRI. In particular, the study in 1994 (by Charny and Ronnås) emphasised the importance of extensive in-house as well as more broadly based training over a number of years to come. A similar reasoning was presented in the 1998 evaluation (by Oversen).

In Cambodia, the education sector was effectively wiped out during 1975–1979 when the Khmer Rouge destroyed schools, equipment and books. A full generation of educated Cambodians were killed or fled during the Pol Pot period, leaving no teachers to educate the coming generation. In the post-Khmer Rouge period, attempts were made to re-build the education sector. However, this undertaking was carried out under very tight budgetary constraints. Also a sufficient cadre of teaching staff was lacking. Today, Cambodia has a much smaller stock of schools and schoolteachers than most other countries in the region and is in great need of more quality education.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of planning, 1999: *Cambodia Human Development Report – Village economy and Development*.

External users (current as well as future potential) of CDRI activities have appealed for more training programmes, in terms of extensive specialised courses in economic subjects (from short-term highly focused sessions to part-time training for a year or even longer). Also training in i.a. conflict resolution has been mentioned a number of times. The majority of respondents repeatedly argued that capacity-building of local competence ought to remain to be one of CDRI's main objectives.

CDRI has a long history of developing the local human resource capacity. In addition, training goes in line with one of CDRI's main aims: to contribute to Cambodian development. As one special module CDRI hosted one round of the Master programme in International Finance (offered by SOAS and mostly financed by Sida). This programme is now being evaluated by another team, and is not included in our assessment.

More skills-oriented training has previously been playing a significant role in the CDRI offering. Such programmes (language and use of IT-support) are now widely provided by private market players. The current needs, in terms of education, are rather in the area of specialised education as expressed during our interviews.

According to external interested parties, the training offerings should be geared towards the field of (socio-)economic analysis. Specific subjects mentioned include: (i) qualitative and quantitative research methods; (ii) design of field research/experiments; (iii) methods of data/information collection; (iv) econometric analysis (various topics including also micro-econometrics of cross-sectional data-sets); (v) statistical inference; and (vi) analytical report writing. There are also a number of more specific subjects in (development) economics, as well as concerning conflict resolution, which have been mentioned (not least during discussions with staff-members at the research unit of CDRI).

All these needs are motivated from the fact that the ordinary academic institutions in Phnom Penh offer only limited possibilities for university level training in economics and business. This means that for the years to come, any specialised training given by CDRI in-house or for university students should be seen as most important.

We recognise that CDRI cannot resume extensive external training. Hard prioritization of available human (as well as financial) resources has to be exercised at any time. However, (in Chapter 6, below) we propose that CDRI keeps up the fruitful combination of different interrelated components i.e. research, collection of data and data services, and aggressive dissemination which could help meet some specialised training needs.

To be effective, training programmes should also include a systematic training of trainers' component. In addition, it has been proposed that CDRI should offer training of managerial staff in government. The institute's high status and closeness to the government provide the opportunity to strengthen the Cambodian administration "from within". Training of the two target groups (internal and external focus) will definitively contribute to the future development of the Cambodian human resource base.

Training packages, as indicated above may also be carried out with expertise from abroad. The invitation of academics and researchers to give lectures would contribute to the training quality. It also relates to another highlighted point: the need of increased co-operation with other research institutes, in order to further improve the research quality. The synergetic effects of combining (policy) research and focused training for addressing the CDRI mission have consistently been stressed in a large number of our discussions.

### 3.3 Information Services

CDRI undertakes a number of important functions relating to the supply of information on socio-economic issues in Cambodia. Among such functions, special reference must be given to:

- (i) regular collection of some economic statistics (primarily price statistics outside Phnom Penh for compilation of a consumer price index – CPI);
- (ii) compilation of a macro-economic database with historical time series (and trend forecasts); and
- (iii) hosting a library with written documents and database access;
- (iv) publications activities.

The work is directed towards internal as well as external users. The general value of these functions has been spelled out over and over again. Their total annual costs amount to about USD 160,000, or 15 percent of the total expenditure. This figure refers to 1998, the comparable figure for the previous year was USD 126,000.

There are a number of issues worth special attention in this respect. In the following sections we consider the data collection and retrieval work, library and publications separately.

#### 3.3.1 Statistics Collection and Database Facilitation

The capacity of government institutions in terms of nationwide regular data collection and compilation for harmonised dissemination and use is extremely limited in Cambodia. Even compared to the majority of developing countries in other regions, the situation is far from acceptable here. This is one of the reasons why CDRI has felt an obligation to develop capacity and allocate regular resources for such tasks, even though it is generally accepted that it should be the responsibility of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) and directly concerned line ministries.

All interested parties considered share the view that it is important to maintain a national database on harmonised economic statistical time-series. For the time being, it is not easy to see any alternative to proceeding with this effort. The same is true for the collection and compilation of (national) CPI series. However, step by step, and in line with the availability of resources, CDRI should assist in developing the competence at those government agencies to which such responsibilities have been directly assigned.

Meanwhile, CDRI could contribute significantly to the informational infrastructure and to the promotion of research in the country by setting up a computerised database with the said series and making this available to the entire (research) society.

#### 3.3.2 Library Function

The library at CDRI is worth all acknowledgements, especially when compared to Cambodian standard (“CDRI has the best socio-economics library in the country”). It receives more than 100 periodicals on a regular basis and its holdings contain approximately 5,500 titles. Many of these are about Cambodian society, but there is also a substantial number of titles what relate to social, political and economical development issues in general.

Moreover, the library is steadily expanding its acquisitions. The collection is built up by donations, publications exchange agreements with local and overseas institutions and by way of purchase. For example, in 1998, 138 new titles were acquired at a cost of about USD 7,000 and added to the collection. A Library Acquisitions Committee was set up in 1995. It comprises members representing CDRI’s different sections. The committee meets regularly to review new titles requested by staff from various sections and to submit them to the Director for final approval. The continuous updat-



ing of the library is probably the main reason why it is such a relatively successful player, compared with other Cambodian libraries, for example, the National Library or the “Hun Sen” library (formally Royal University of Phnom Penh). The total cost of running the library amounts to about USD 45,000 per annum.

The library holdings are indexed in the catalogue of CDRI library holdings, as well as registered in a database in order to facilitate searching for relevant titles or specific authors. During 1999, the Dewey Decimal Classification System was introduced to classify the holdings of the library. Thus, CDRI now has a classification system of international standard and the library can easily establish exchange relationships with resource centres abroad. Furthermore, in order to ease the visitor’s way through the library, CDRI also organised a library orientation session in 1998 to assure that the users (mainly governmental and educational institutions) could find their way around the collections. This was found to be a good initiative.

In addition to printed material, the amount of computerised reference material is steadily increasing. The CDRI library subscribes to a number of numerical databases (including IFS – International Financial Statistics). Currently, some databases (on CD-ROM), for example the annual statistics publication of Cambodia, are kept by the IT-staff instead of being made available directly through the library. There is also access to the Internet in the library. However, this function is only available for the CDRI staff at the present time.

Prior to 1998, the library was relatively sparsely visited, but the number of (especially external) visitors has increased and today there are approximately 20 (external) visitors per day. Most of these are university students. Every person is free to borrow up to three books each, after showing only an ID card. Amazingly enough, only a few books have not been returned over the last few years, in spite of this relatively relaxed lending policy.

The staff members include one library manager and two librarian assistants, all of them were found to be very ambitious in their efforts to be helpful and make a difference. Both internal and external users have validated this.

In summary, CDRI has the best in-house library in Cambodia today regarding topical socio-economic literature. The extensive collections and holding of data are of course admirable. Still, CDRI is not the only library for socio-economics literature in Phnom Penh. What may be less cost-effective is that many different organizations in Cambodia tend to create their own libraries. Rather than establishing one or two functioning libraries in this field in Cambodia, a whole range of small library units seems to be emerging. For example, CCC and CICP both have collections of books and journals. At the same time, the research unit at the National Bank plans to develop a small library (as does the Cabinet Office). In the future, ways of sharing and/or consolidating such resources will need to be found. Meanwhile, CDRI holding the most comprehensive collection must continue as planned and expand the external use of its collection.

### **3.3.3 Publication Activities**

CDRI is allocating considerable resources (both human and financial) promoting the dissemination of its results and findings in the form of reports, flyers, a web-site, etc. All printed material is in principle published in both English and Khmer. The cost of being fully bilingual is substantial. At the same time the great majority of all users interviewed consider the benefits of being bilingual to be substantial (even though the dominant part of the Khmer users seem to also read the English version of released publications).

The publication sector was established as a separate section in 1997 and it includes three staff members, one co-ordinator, one publication production officer and one editorial assistant. CDRI's publication material consists of the Cambodia Development review, a series of conference papers, policy briefs, training manuals for other sections (English Language Training and the Centre for Conflict Resolution), the institute's annual report and a working paper series. In addition, the publication sector is responsible for maintaining the CDRI web-site.

The Cambodia Development Review (CDR) is a quarterly journal that brings up development issues of immediate importance and provides monitoring of the economic performances of Cambodia. Of the total volume (800 copies for the English edition, 1,000 for the Khmer), more than 200 copies are sold via subscriptions or by single copy while a larger number are given away to key persons within, for example, the government. Among the respondents talked to, a large number seem to read and enjoy the newsletter. The special section on statistical indicators was mentioned a number of times as especially valuable (constituting an internally consistent database).

There was a reader survey of the Cambodian Development Review in 1999. Most of the survey questionnaires were mailed. The overall response rate was 8.9 percent. There is, at best, an upward bias in such surveys. In 1999, 85 percent of readership was in Phnom Penh. Most reported reading either the English version alone or both versions. Most readers worked in NGOs and government. Ninety percent said the content was interesting. And the total readership (including multiple readers of single copies) was estimated to be as high as 4,500 for the March 1999 issue.

Another pattern was revealed when discussing the working paper series. The readers seem to be mainly westerners, picking up only the papers of great interest to them. Presumably very few Khmers read the research papers. The ones we talked to argued that they were too busy to read long reports. In addition, many stated that Cambodians are not a "reading people" but prefer to collect information through workshops, seminars and conferences. Therefore, these additional and more integrated methods of dissemination may be favoured.

All reviews and major research works are published in separate English and Khmer editions. The question is then if full translation into Khmer is worth its price. The cost of being fully bilingual is substantial. It also seems like many of the (few) Cambodians who read the CDRI material in general choose the English version. According to most of the people spoken to, the Khmer version is employed only as a dictionary in order to understand the translation. The publication department agreed that this pattern may be true in some instances, but argued that complimentary copies are sent to quite different groups of people, and sales and subscriptions data gathered during 1998 and 1999 suggest that the separate editions often reach different audiences.

However, it appears that having all material bilingual does contribute to a better understanding of the English text as well as to language proficiency in general. Therefore, the benefits may motivate the expense for the time being, even if the translation into Khmer is costly and the sales relatively low.

In summary, CDRI is allocating considerable resources (both human and financial) towards promoting the dissemination of its activities in the form of, for example, reports and workshops. Overall cost-recovery of the publications programme has been low but is now increasing. In 1998, sales of all publications totalled USD 3,548 – equal to 3 percent of the Sections' budget. Cost-recovery in 1999 had exceeded USD 10,000 by the end of November.

The CDRI web-site, though relatively new, is apparently used both by people locally and overseas. Monitoring of the traffic on the web-site has been undertaken since August 1999, and the site currently receives about 400 unique visitors (IP-addresses) per month. Almost 50 percent of the

accesses to the web-site come from unknown locations, but of the remainder, 20 percent are from Asia, and 10 percent each from North America, Australia and Europe.

Finally, the institute's close relationship to many high-rank officials is used to spreading results and findings in focused ways. This was especially true in the case of the project "Learning from Rural Development Programmes in Cambodia", when individual briefings were given for presenting the research results.

### **3.4 Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution**

In 1997, CDRI established a new programme, the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCCR). This establishment was the result of a CDRI conference in conflict resolution, where the participants drew the conclusion that an independent centre ought to be created. The centre would aim to enhance the capacity of local institutions to effectively prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

#### **3.4.1 CCCR Today**

Today CCCR has a semi-independent status under the auspices of CDRI and the intention is for it to become an independent centre within a couple of years' time. By many it is seen as the only "real" centre for conflict resolution in Cambodia at present. The staff of CCCR, in total five persons, includes one co-ordinator, three programme officers and one administrative officer. The staff members represent various backgrounds including expertise in development studies, law-making and governmental work. They are, however, relatively inexperienced in matters of direct conflict resolution. For that reason CDRI has sent some of them abroad to acquire relevant additional education. According to the co-ordinator, the staff will have to increase in number in order to meet the requirements of currently on-going projects. At the moment, the number of employees is seen as inadequate.

During start-up, CCCR depended upon the core-funding of CDRI. However, the institute has generated earmarked funds from, for example, the World Bank, that now cover its personnel costs and programme activities. The cost of running the CCCR during 1998 amounted to about USD 240,000.

CCCR is guided in its activities by a steering committee. This 15 member committee, composed by high-rank officials as well as representatives from the NGO community, has outlined a programme that is meant to meet five inter-related needs: (1) provide assistance to people working in conflict resolution; (2) education and awareness raising to develop local expertise; (3) research into traditional methods of conflict resolution and case studies and policy analysis; (4) outreach and networking with other peace-building organisations in the region; and (5) the creation of a series of support networks in Cambodia's provinces.

CCCR has been assisted along the way, both practically and intellectually by western institutes such as: the Leverhulme Trust, UK, Responding to Conflict, Birmingham and the University of Victoria, Canada. However, regarding extensive networking with other peace-building organisations in the region, little has been done. Similarly, within the field of research, CCCR's program is still in its initial phase. The main work that has been done in this area is research on "Conflict Prevention for the Commune election", a report that mirrors the normative research approach adopted by CCCR. It was made by CCCR staff, in collaboration with Dr. Caroline Hughes, Leverhulme Trust, UK, and it aims at identifying potential areas of conflicts that might occur during the upcoming commune election. This analysis will be the base for CCCRs work to prevent conflict escalation in the upcoming election.

CCCR has regular meetings with key stakeholder groups (the police, military, party-members, NGO representatives, etc.) to ease the tension surrounding the upcoming election. Also before the 1998 national election, CCCR held training workshops in conflict management for provincial electoral commissioners, as well as, senior government officials at the level of secretary/or under secretary of state and provincial governors/or deputy governors.

CCCR's vision to become a resource centre to provide assistance to people working in conflict resolution will be partly fulfilled by the publication of documents dealing with the issue of conflict resolution. For example, CCCR is going to publish a four-volume conflict resolution manual based on Dr. John McConnell's book *Mindful Meditation: A Handbook for Buddhist Peacemakers*. The edited and translated volumes will be finalised during the end of 1999. In addition, a Khmer Lexicon of conflict resolution terms is under production. In a number of external meetings, it was validated that this material has proven valuable and highly useful for practical (on the ground) work.

The programme area where most work has been done by CCCR is education and awareness raising to develop local expertise. During 1997–1998, a year-long training course on conflict resolution skills was held for 36 Cambodians from the government as well as from the civil society. The programme consisted of four training modules of two weeks each, with three to four months between each module to allow time for the participants to reflect over and use their new skills in actual situations. One important aim at the course was to establish a network of local conflict resolution practitioners.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it also relates to the fifth, and last, programme area of CCCR, namely to create a series of support networks in Cambodia's provinces. An example of other efforts done in this area is the training with provincial governors during the autumn of 1999.

Even though CCCR has held on to their long-term vision of peace building, its work and methods to carry out this aim have changed during the years of existence. CCCR has moved from having an extensive training programme in 1997–1998 to a more government-oriented approach in 1999. This pattern is the result of a change of management. The first person to guide the centre was Kevin Malone, who put to use a grassroots-oriented approach in order to build up the local capacity to facilitate decision-making processes and deal effectively with conflicts. When Dr. Ok Serei Sopheak started as the co-ordinator and co-chairman of CCCR in 1998, in some respects, he changed the centre's direction. From having been a mainly grassroots-oriented organisation, CCCR has increasingly become concerned with creating positive social change by identifying and approaching key persons within the higher administration and the government.

### 3.4.2 Relevance and Impact

It should be emphasised that CCCR is still in an early phase of development. As it was established as late as 1997, and spent its first years, mainly building up its programmes, it is hard to make any judgement at this time regarding its relevance, efficiency and impact. Reviewing its programme, however, there are some productive components, worth acknowledging.

In summary, CCCR puts forward a fruitful mix of training, workshops and research, as its main activities. The extensive training of staff, along with CCCR's history of co-operation with visiting researchers, have provided a productive basis for local workshops and training programmes. The best example of this is the research on "Conflict Prevention for the Commune election". As stated above, the aim of this report was to identify potential areas of conflict that might occur during the upcoming commune election.

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<sup>8</sup> During our external visits, we found one instance where the efficiency and relevance of this training was strongly validated (at AFSC). During the discussions with two participants from the training programme at AFSC, we understood that also a few of the network activities had materialised.

Today CCCR has regular meetings with key-groups (the police, military, party-members, NGO representatives, etc) to facilitate the commune election. The purpose of these meetings is to gather and discuss issues related to the election and create good relations among various groups in Cambodian society. The goal is admirable and is in line with some of the core ideas in conflict resolution theory. If conflicting groups do not meet, enemy pictures of “the other” are easily created. However, this pattern can be avoided if the parts involved meet and communicate. The conflicting parts then get an insight into the other groups’ line of reasoning, something that counteracts potential conflicts. This is what CCCR strives to accomplish. And, contrary to other NGOs, CCCR has the contacts needed to bring together the key persons within Cambodian society. Many of our respondents were very appreciative about these ongoing efforts.

However, there are some problems with CCCR’s programme to be foreseen. Foremost, the weakest link in the CCCR chain of activities is the research connection. Talking to the different staff members, as well as external respondents, we got the impression that the centre seems to take more interest in extrovert networking than in research. An outgoing course of action is of course admirable, but it may become an obstacle in the future (in course of time) if it prevents the centre from keeping up, or increasing, its knowledge base. A lack of sufficient knowledge could lessen the quality of the teaching and workshop activities. Research projects along with the collecting, holding and analysing of research material are creating an important basis for teaching. Knowledge is gathered that can be used as a point of departure when lecturing. For example, a broad knowledge base is a good foundation for, what one may consider CCCR’s major focus, the training of trainers or other key persons. An aim that in itself is admirable. Therefore, one may elaborate on how to maintain CCCR’s proficiency and research sector. One solution for CCCR could be to keep up a close relationship to CDRI and continue, as well as, develop their research collaboration. Another option is to stay within CDRI research environment that is if CCCR is granted a wider autonomy. As we will argue in chapter 3.4.3, there may be several advantages with this second alternative. To keep a more autonomous CCCR in-house is, for example, in line with the internal remodelling of CDRI, which the evaluation team proposes below. The vision is a flatter organisation structure, where the different sectors have more freedom to operate.

### **3.4.3 CCCR Under the Auspices of CDRI**

The idea of having a conflict resolution centre attached to CDRI could have, in realisation, turned out to be highly productive. First of all, CCCR’s mission, to deal with the internal conflicts of Cambodia, is to be regarded as politically sensitive. The majority of persons interviewed repeatedly argued that CCCR, being under the “protection” of a firmly established research institute, obtains some space to act relatively unquestioned. Similarly, the understanding of CDRI as a non-political institution may be strengthened, by having CCCR in-house, as it is rather critical in its approach. For example, in June 1999 CDRI received a threat of legal action for “defamation of character and libel”<sup>9</sup>. This was a direct response to CCCR’s draft study on sources of conflict in the 1998 election. Moreover, a research co-operation between the CDRI and CCCR, could add a conflict perspective to the CDRI research profile, an honourable objective considering Cambodia violent past and insecure environment. Some respondents did emphasise this as a fruitful idea of research co-operation. To a limited extent, such a co-operation exists, for example, regarding the issue of reconstruction and reconciliation of former Khmer Rouge areas. In addition, being a part of CDRI’s research environment, hopefully the CCCR research programme could have had enhanced possibilities. And the research programme along with the collecting and holding of knowledge concerning conflict resolution are important activities.

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<sup>9</sup>1999 Mid-Year Report to CDRI Board of Directors, p. 3

Above we elaborate a number of arguments for the close co-operation or cohabiting of CCCR and CDRI. However, contrary to creating stronger bonds with the current mother institution, due to different reasons, there is a tendency for CCCR to distance itself from CDRI. Firstly, there is an inconsistency between CCCR's programme and CDRI's more traditional economic research approach. The agendas and research profiles of CCCR and CDRI are incompatible, the reasoning goes. This research perspective makes any meaningful co-operation between the different research programmes difficult, and minimises the value of CCCR's presence. The second reason for CCCR to distance themselves from CDRI is understood to be the limited autonomy of CCCR within the CDRI framework.

In brief, we believe that CCCR and CDRI, by working together could create a win-win situation, where both organisations gain from one another. This demands some willingness, of the parties involved, to collaborate. Especially the research co-operation ought to develop and grow more profound. In addition, the infrastructure of CDRI must change, permitting the different sectors more space. However, if these criteria are not fulfilled, the conclusion must be that CCCR, as planned, ought to remain under the CDRI umbrella only for a start-up period. Then, it should become an independent institution on its own. In that case, one may elaborate on other ways for achieving long-term (stable) arrangements for CCCR research. The steering committee has been put forward as one resource to take into account.

There are not only disadvantages with a possible CCCR withdrawal from the CDRI umbrella. Including this centre at the CDRI premises has noticeably reduced the much needed office space. Therefore, an exit of CCCR will facilitate improved working situation at CDRI. At the same time, one should also consider the sustainability of CCCR (outside CDRI). We doubt that CCCR could develop a minimal threshold level for cost-effective operation on its own (especially in the form of administrative infrastructure). Thus, this aspect (in our view) also speaks for reconsidering a "joint future" (some sort of cohabitation).

## 4. Institution Building and Management

CDRI was established almost 10 years ago. During its first years, it, was a rather small organisation with extensive open contacts (people being assigned for specific tasks and duties constituted a dominant part of all manpower). As noted in the evaluation of 1994 (by Charny and Ronnås) the founder and Director of CDRI is an extremely strong person with a clear vision and extensive contacts in Cambodian society. This constitutes both a strength and potential weakness for the organisation.

Any organisation has to be both goal- AND situation-oriented, responding to the prevailing needs. Thus, in this chapter we focus on the expected future needs of the CDRI organisation and its management in the light of the previous development.

Step by step, the organisational issues and challenges at CDRI have been attended to. The most recent initiative is that a deputy director (expected to concentrate on finance and operations) has been recruited. He will start his assignment on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000. In the following sections, we highlight a few points concerning the functioning, suitability and cost-efficiency of the CDRI organisational structure for supporting its programmes and related activities. We will consider these issues under the headings internal structure, gender aspects, the role of the Board of Directors and finally, IT- and related support functions.

### 4.1 The Internal Structure

Organisations and institutes can be established in a number of ways, depending on the organisational structure chosen. Gareth R. Jones is one researcher who elaborates on this topic. In his book *Organizational Theory: Text and Cases* he makes a distinction between mechanic- and organic organisational structures.<sup>10</sup> The first category refers to organisations with highly centralised decision-making and clearly-defined hierarchies. Within such organisations, employees must not deviate from, but act according to explicit working instructions. Being steered with a top-down approach, these organisations leave little space for individual creativity and local initiatives. The advantage of this hierarchical form of organisation is the ability to keep in line with already settled profiles and aims, as all staff are steered towards the same goal.

The latter organisational structure, the organic organisation, is characterized by the decentralisation of decision-making power. The numerous organisations, that are to be named organic, have assumed a flatter de-facto structure. In this kind of organisation, the individual responsibility is in focus and there is ample room for individual initiatives and creativity. Prevailing problems with such structures may include the lack of decisiveness and an insufficiency to deal with internal organisational problems.

Formally, the first alternative corresponds partly to the de facto structure of CDRI. With a strong leader, the institute tends to be organised in a top-down structure and the decision-making process is designed accordingly. There is a mechanism of monthly programme development committee meetings, in which all section directors take part. Before and after these meetings, the section directors are supposed to discuss with, and brief their staff concerning the latest news, as well as, collect opinions to forward during the next programme development meeting. However, almost all staff-members consulted stated that, at the end of the day, it is the Director herself that decides. For

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<sup>10</sup> Jones Gareth R., 1995: *Organizational Theory: Text and Case*, Amazon, Washington

example, when asking about the establishment of CCCR, people stated repeatedly that the decision was the Director's only.

In summary, many people feel that the management practices rely too much on dominance and control. It is possibly true that, without a strong leader, it is uncertain whether CDRI would exist today. However, the political and social situation in Cambodia has stabilised and we believe that the CDRI's leadership should allow for more creativity, delegate more decision-making power and thereby constitute an example for the future. However, when the evaluation team has brought up this issue, it was often given the answer that Khmer people largely lack the understanding of empowerment and delegation.

According to Gareth R. Jones, all organisations consist of both a formal and informal structure. The informal structures involve decision-making processes that are not formalised and written down on paper and organisational charts. In a hierarchical organisation, a top-heavy informal decision-making structure may be further reinforced. This may be explained by the fact that in a hierarchical organisation the structure clearly separates people and defines their position within the hierarchy. Due to this, people on high-positions also have more power informally than other employees.<sup>11</sup> Some of our respondents argued that the Director interfered, in decisions/matters which were not officially her duty. One interpretation of this pattern may be that the informal structure is highly centralised and top-down oriented.

However, although many respondents argued that the Director is too dominant, not all did. Some staff members argued that, lately they had distinguished a slight tendency towards a trickle-down of power. For example, more regular staff meetings, the section leaders increased responsibility for the spending, as well as, the personnel's increased involvement in the contracting of new staff, were a few indicators mentioned. Formally, a development towards decentralisation is thus underway. However, the same signs can not be seen, looking at the informal decision making structure of CDRI.

In addition to the above reasoning, it is to be noted that the organisation is also extremely vulnerable, since it largely depends upon just a few key persons. The overall personnel turnover is on average 10–15 percent calculated on an annual basis. This is not extreme as compared to similar institutions. However, as two of the senior international research staff members are due to leave CDRI (because they will leave Cambodia with their families)<sup>12</sup>, this constitutes a serious threat to the entire institution, and further emphasises the importance of institutional partnerships and networks<sup>13</sup>.

## 4.2 Gender Aspects

Another internal institutional question worth noting regards the proportion of female staff members. In 1998, CDRI wrote a report about gender, raising the question of equalising constraints and possibilities for men and women. The report illustrates the situation in Cambodia well and is in itself an admirable initiative. Unfortunately, very few women are to be seen in the organisational structure of CDRI itself, especially among the researchers. Moreover, in the master programme of 1997 only a small minority of the students were women. This is probably partly a result of the relatively low number of well-educated women in Cambodia today. In addition, the operation of tradition and customs often tends to make it difficult for women to enter, and participate, in public life.

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<sup>11</sup> Jones Gareth R., 1995: *Organizational Theory: Text and Case*, Amazon, Washington.

<sup>12</sup> A third international staff member (the head of the publications unit) is also due to leave soon.

<sup>13</sup> The recruitment process of a new research co-ordinator is underway. According to the management of CDRI, the number of competitive candidates has been rather disappointing so far.



Women who want to attain a position in public life must therefore not only confront their own gendered identity, but also gender stereotypes that in general fuel resistance to women in public positions. With this in mind, a special effort must be made if women are to be included in national development and the role of women at CDRI consequently requires more attention.

### **4.3 The (Role of the) Board of Directors**

The establishment of a Board of Directors in 1997 is appreciated. It is encouraging to find that it has been possible to attract such a qualified group of senior professionals for the duty. Further, we find the balance between local and international resource persons important to keep.

It is understood that the frequency of meetings has had to be reduced due to financial constraints. At the same time, it must be important to keep all the board members up-to-date concerning the strategic development of CDRI. We have found substantial differences in this respect between the consulted board members (referring to the actual information about CDRI matters).

The material supplied to the board is in general of appropriate quality for strategic discussions. At the same time, it is obvious from our contacts that many of the board members primarily see their de facto role as advisory or consultative, not so much focusing on strategic decision making.

### **4.4 IT and Other Support Functions**

CDRI started early to utilise IT-support in operational work, as well as embarking on computer training. This is commendable and impressive. The IT-functions have also been successively upgraded and integrated in the working environment. In our opinion, the staff shouldering this role fulfil their duties in appropriate ways. The organisation of e.g. virus safeguarding and related backup functions is on a par with what is required.

The available software, mainly MS Office, is standard in the kind of environments considered. However, it may be argued that the parallel running of a number of different versions is less cost-effective (from a training and flexibility point of view). At the same time, this is understood due to the varying capacity of current hardware. The use of SPSS as the standard statistical analysis package is well motivated.

However, considering the objectives of CDRI striving to become a state-of-the-art research institution, much improvement work is still needed<sup>14</sup>. There is general dis-satisfaction among (research) staff concerning the availability and capacity/power of the current IT support. There is a demand for full Internet capabilities (with E-mail, etc) at the individual work-stations.

The formal organisation of CDRI was discussed above. In our discussions with individual staff members and the personnel section, we have understood that the administrative aspects are generally well taken care of. Employees are assigned for fixed time periods, which regularly are prolonged. Employment contracts are prepared, signed and updated in standard ways. A code of conduct document has been devised and communicated to all staff. Annual evaluation and personnel development discussions are held in a highly formalised way.

We have not focused the evaluation on financial management issues. What we have seen (without checking any books) is comforting and on a par with what may be expected. External auditing is annually done in standard ways (by Ernst and Young).

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<sup>14</sup> During the process of E-mail communication between the evaluation team members and CDRI it has been evident that the in-house system is far from up-to-date in this respect.

## 5. Assessment of the Situation

In the following sections we briefly comment on and draw further conclusions from the observations in the proceeding chapter. In the first section, issues concerning the overall role of CDRI are addressed. In the next, we touch upon the special aspects of CDRI compared to other “similar” institutions in the region. In section 5.3, we discuss various aspects of the CDRI activities, and in the next, issues relating to sustainability are considered. The concluding section is focused on a reasoning about the proximity to government.

### 5.1 Overall Assessment of CDRI in Cambodian Society

Our overall assessment is that CDRI – created under circumstances which must have looked prohibitively difficult – a unique and valuable institute. It is evolving in the right direction – undertaking and building capacity to do and disseminate policy research.

A policy research institute addresses a critical need in development and governance. No development strategy and no governance reform, whatever the objective can be effective without good information, good analysis of problems and policy options to deal with them. This is true in all societies and particularly so in countries undergoing such fundamental change and with such critical needs as Cambodia. The right answers may not be obvious and the obvious answers may not be right. Cookbook recipes proffered by outside experts and institutions are only likely to make things worse.

Learning from other countries’ experience can help. International researchers can bring new technical skills and an international perspective, and more such input is needed at CDRI. But there are no substitutes for policy analysis by national researchers, for national dissemination and debate, and for the building of increased national capacity to undertake such work. More of CDRI’s work is now being authored by Cambodian researchers, a national forum for presentation and discussion of results has been established, and CDRI’s impact has already been significant and measurable.

Impact of a policy research institute can be measured in a number of ways, including: changes in development strategy, changes in the design of programmes and projects, changes in donor and NGO agendas and thinking, new problems foreseen and recognised, new ideas widely discussed and considered, databases built, debate about development based more on fact than opinion. Further, the institute may become a venue for discussion and compromise, the research findings are increasingly covered by the media, there is increased circulation and citation of publications, staff become recognised as experts and are sought out by other actors and decision-makers. Though many of these measures, CDRI’s impact has been extensive and unique in Cambodia. The most influential study so far has been the LRFD study. Partly as the result of multiple consultations and aggressive dissemination, the study has changed the design of rural development projects.

In the earlier sections of this report, we have described and analysed many of CDRI’s other strengths including its reputation, information services, and promotion of conflict resolution. Further, in a separate section in this chapter, we specifically focus on the relationship to government.

At the same time, we also find that CDRI may be stretched too thin. Research capacity, quality, design, and methodology need to be improved. Dissemination needs to be more aggressive and effective and carried out in ways that support training activities of high priority for Cambodian development. Research partnerships need to be built. Changes in the internal structure are needed. And, most importantly, sustainability, including diversification of funding sources, needs to be addressed.

Thus, we conclude that CDRI has contributed significantly to development efforts in the Cambodian context, and done so in line with what is specified in its mission statement. We see equally clearly a future role for the institution to serve the different stakeholders. However, it is far from self-evident what specific strategies should be employed. In order to offer maximal relevance and effectiveness for the users, the two questions of what and for whom have to be addressed. We start by discussing potential interested parties (stakeholders), and then consider their respective urgent needs, accepting the overall mission of CDRI.

It has been noted in previous evaluations (e.g. Oversen 1998) that “CDRI primarily would serve the Cambodian government”. Basically, this is also what we have observed as actual facts during the evaluation work (in addition, a number of international organisations feel that they are well served by CDRI). This focus on government is, however, not equally clear when reading the CDRI charter and other policy documents. The sentiment of CDRI having a broader role in the Cambodian society and operating as an independent “think-tank” is visible in many documents.

We share the opinion that CDRI should serve the entire community. This means that a large number of stakeholders may be identified. In our discussions in Phnom Penh, we have aimed at covering, directly or indirectly, at least the following categories:

- ◆ (Central) government;
- ◆ Regional and local authorities;
- ◆ The political sphere;
- ◆ The (national) business society;
- ◆ The media (as an intermediary);
- ◆ International and foreign organisations;
- ◆ Local NGOs; and
- ◆ Individual citizens.

These groups certainly have very different needs and expectations of CDRI. So far, it is found that the political sphere (represented by National Assembly Committees), the business society and local NGOs have been less adequately served than those mentioned above.

In order to offer value for the entire society, we find it important that CDRI proceeds with active work in the area of policy research, focused training, information and communication as well as on conflict resolution. In order to being able to do this with the available and future expected resources, strict prioritisation is essential. However, it is our conviction that the synergetic effects of operating in parallel within these areas are well worth pursuing.

With policy research (in the sphere of socio-economic issues), we mean that CDRI should conduct academically sound studies addressing crucial (urgent) development questions and present results in such ways that it will enable different interested parties to draw conclusions concerning expected effects of implementing alternative strategies. In order to develop a resource base both within CDRI and for the (potential) users of such studies, further training activities are crucial. In order to conduct empirically sound research, and for various users to assess its relevance, clear applicability and a reasoning of effect panorama supporting information activities are needed. Finally, the future work within the area of conflict resolution is motivated from the perspective of importance and relevance in Cambodian society as well as from the aspect of cross-fertilisation with the (other) policy-oriented research.

## 5.2 Benchmarking – Learning from Comparisons

In the overall model of analysis, presented by the team during the start-up period of the evaluation, benchmarking was proposed as one way of assessing the relative position of CDRI. With this in mind, we will introduce some institutes/organisations that, like CDRI, are concerned with research. With benchmarking we refer to a systematic comparison between relevant institutions. As stated above, CDRI is unique in Cambodian society. However, even though it is an outstanding institution, it is not alone in carrying out relevant research. There are some other research institutes worth mentioning. For example, the Center for Advanced Studies, Cambodian Researchers for Development (CRD), and Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) are organisations repeatedly mentioned by our respondents during our time in Cambodia. Of these, we will give just a short reflection of the latter two and their aims and missions in relation to CDRI.

CRD was created in April 1994. It is a social research institute with a strong field-orientation. The aim of the organisation is to increase the capacity of Cambodians to conduct development related social research as well as to contribute to the knowledge base of Cambodian society. CRD achieves these goals by providing methodological training and social research services as well as establishing social databases.<sup>15</sup> They also co-operate with other institutes in the region. Among other things, CRD is part of a research programme named *Discourses and Practices of Democracy in Southeast Asia*. This program involves research co-operation between four Southeast Asian research institutes and the Center for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Göteborg University, Sweden. Its main purpose is to investigate the discourses and practices of democracy in Southeast Asian countries, in relation to the effects of the ‘globalisation’ of politics, economics and governance. CRD has no core funding but sustains itself by conducting development-related social research commissioned by different organisations. It also arranges some training courses in field methodology.

Mr. Ly Sareoun, who is the Managing Director, heads CRD. It is a rather small institute and the staff consists of ten Cambodian researchers and five administrative staff, support personnel, plus one expatriate adviser. Half of the researchers have the equivalence of an advanced university education. In addition, two persons hold a PhD. Even though there are a few outstanding researchers at CRD, the weak side of the institute is in the field of analytical capability. In this sense, CRD does not compete with CDRI. CRD's strength is rather its extensive knowledge about field methodology. It has a great deal of experience in gathering empirical data.

CICP was established in 1994 by Dr. Kim Hourne, who is still running the institute. Like CDRI, it is a policy oriented-research institute but focuses in the main upon international and regional issues. CICP seems to be very well respected and has a good name in (well-informed) development circles. It produces an impressive amount of publications and strives towards bringing forth exciting as well as very readable material. In line with CRD, CICP takes on externally funded research projects. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is one of CICP's strongest supporters. Through the years they have contributed to CICP, not only with core-funding but also with support for specific research projects, for example the CICPs edited *Women's Political Voice in ASEAN: Sharing a Vision*. Among the other donors, Forum Syd is one who commissioned CICP to do research relating to grassroots democracy.

Similar to CRD, CICP does not compete with CDRI. Rather it is a complementary institute and today, there is no direct rivalry between the two. The institutions differ not only in terms of subject fields but also in organisational structure and research design. As stated above, CICP takes more an

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<sup>15</sup> GESEAS, 1998

interest in regional matters while CDRI does more research concerning the Cambodian context as such. CDRI focuses more on economics than CACP, which concentrates on political science and/or international relations. Moreover, CACP's organisational form contrasts with the CDRI institutional structure. CACP can be seen as a more outgoing institution. They have not only linked to an impressive number of research fellows to the institute but have also put a lot of effort in creating a broad network within the region. Today, CACP and CDRI have a certain degree of co-operation. For example, they have an exchange agreement of books and sometimes invite one another to seminars and workshops.

Among the institutions spoken to, all asked for extended research collaboration with CDRI. Wherever possible, co-operation with other local organisations is therefore recommended by the evaluation team. Research results ought to be exchanged, discussed and critically read within the research community. Through co-operation, research projects could also be co-ordinated more easily. In addition, as the institutions concerned have different competencies, they could contribute to each other's research. For example, CRD could easily gain from a co-operation with CDRI in analysis. Such collaboration could contribute to the improvement of CRD's analytical skills.

### **5.3 Structure, Co-operation and Partnerships**

In order to fulfil all the tasks highlighted in the CDRI mission, as discussed above, it is of utmost importance that all activities are prioritised, carried out in cost-effective ways and that the support functions are highly streamlined. In the following sections, we touch upon crucial areas on which development effort should be focused.

#### **5.3.1 Managerial Aspects and Organisation**

We find it crucial to further mobilise the competence, contact networks and capacities of the entire Board of Directors to promote CDRI both on the Cambodian arena, and internationally. The board members should be active in i.a. the recruitment of key personnel (the next research co-ordinator). It is also found that CDRI would gain from increasing the board's decision-making power.

As a result of the reasoning in section 3.5, we find it important that the management and leadership of CDRI must be alert to the changing needs of supporting the organisation. This was already made a central issue in the 1994 evaluation (by Charny and Ronnås). A trend towards systematic delegation of authority and power is urgently needed. The employment of an (administrative) deputy director is seen as a positive sign in this direction. Other steps that should be taken are, for example, the delegation of more authority and control to each section concerning their own finances, as well as, programming issues.

Traditional handling of personnel and related matters are found adequate and in line with what may be expected in an institution of this character. However, the amount of actual flexibility could very well be increased without disrupting procedures. We consider it, for example, worthwhile to accept more flexible working hours (along with the administrative and technical infra-structure to support this) as well as to encourage external networking contacts, and more generally give the personnel additional room for individual initiatives.

A flat organisation allowing for individual initiatives and flexibility is found especially crucial for a research-oriented agency such as CDRI. CDRI must thus become more "organic" in order to develop into a modern, creative, ingenious and enterprising organisation. During our deliberations it has been argued that a strong leadership approach is of special importance in Cambodian society, for example, to increase the efficiency of staff members. We have also heard the opinion that

CDRI's researchers, having more freedom, would fail to keep in line with already settled goals. In our view, this is to underestimate CDRI employees. Instead, we instead expect that further energy may be generated through allowing additional initiative and creativity.

IT-support can be made more useful for the entire organisation with additional interactivity employed (a fully-fledged Intranet to be implemented with Internet search capabilities and E-mail functionality at each workstation supported with a leased line to the web open long hours). We are aware of the financial implications of this, but consider it still as most cost-effective in the longer run.

IT support in the library should also fulfil the same requirements as on the personal workstations.

The experience communicated to us points to the possibility of obtaining reasonable output from Khmer research assistants with merely a first academic degree. The strategy to go further in this direction may thus improve efficiency. However, it has to be combined with the various measures for further international linkages discussed below.

### **5.3.2 Quality, Effectiveness and Efficiency**

By and large, CDRI has a strong reputation for delivering what is promised and expected. It refuses to undertake studies unless there is the time, resources and capacity to do them and they fit the institute's research agenda. (We will come back to the issue of "market responsiveness" later.)

In addition, since 1997, CDRI has produced an impressive number of research papers and related outputs, including: special seminar volumes, conference reports, etc). Compared to other more or less similar institutions in the region, CDRI exhibits a reasonable level of efficiency.

But we see some signs that, at the current levels of staffing and capacity, CDRI may be stretched too thin. In particular, the ADB work on governance (important as it is) has drawn people away from the analysis of the macro-economic effects of TA. Even when capacity is strong, as it was for the TA study, over-commitment and other time problems can lower quality and reputation.

#### *Research Capacity*

Research capacity is the sum of the number and quality of staff – their energy, enthusiasm, training and experience. CDRI has the strongest research capacity in Cambodia. That is the unanimous view. And CDRI – to its great credit – has made special efforts to recruit and upgrade local Cambodian research staff. They now design, undertake, and author research projects. The quality of their work has increased significantly with some special help from the current Research Director and Research Fellow.

But is the overall research capacity enough and is the average quality high enough for CDRI to do first-rate work on development strategy? The answer, we think, is no – not yet. New staff and new ways to up-grade staff need to be found.

In terms of numbers and efficiency, the combination of local fixed-appointment staff, use of consultants available in the country, and international staff has offered flexibility, the possibility to develop internal competence, and a certain amount of stability. But we doubt that there is a minimal critical mass of local research staff. We think that the plans to increase the number of researchers during the next 3–4 years by at least 50 percent are sensible and reachable. The cost of research staff varies widely between locals, expatriate Cambodians and international staff. We think it should be quite possible to increase the number of local staff that have at least a first academic degree (bachelor).

Internal training, upgrading, and strengthening of competence must be done at every opportunity and in all feasible ways, including: training in research methodology, institutional twinning, scholarships, research grants, etc. This is a challenging task, and may call for extended international contacts and more open communication with the global research community.

### *Research Quality*

CDRI's research to date is mixed. On the positive side: research output has increased substantially, the topics selected concern critical problems of Cambodian development; the work adds up, and some of the studies have gathered important primary data.

Improvements are still needed on design and methodology. The design of some of the studies is simply to gather information. That's fine but not enough. Every study should try to increase and improve understanding of underlying behaviour (as the labour market study will do.) What determines poverty? How do informal land markets work? What are the determinants of migration, etc.? Such work needs to have a theory base. It should review designs used in other countries as reported in journal articles. It should analyse secondary data sets if there are any. It should pre-test the survey or interview instruments. It should gather the needed information and variables from a large enough "n" so that there are degrees of freedom for quantitative analysis. If the work is to be representative of a particular population or area, there should be care in samples application. The list is long. So too, for methodology which should be planned in the design.

But there is almost always the opportunity to do more analysis than planned or foreseen. A big opportunity was missed in the food security study (and it may not be too late.) The draft land paper is a careful piece of work but has little analysis. For example, simple comparisons between reported landlessness and reported share-cropping and/or renting-in of land are not made. The residual households in such a comparison must sell labour and/or depend on the shrinking commons to survive. This residual is important for policy.

A system of peer-review of all research prior to publication has been established. This is important to maintain and enhance, and should be seen as both a way to improve the quality of research and to train more junior researchers. The use of external reviewers for such purposes should also be explored.

A final weakness of the research papers is that most do not spell out in detail the policy implications and policy options of the work. The one exception is the LRFD study which has detailed policy implication. And this is the study that so far seems to have had the most impact. Spelling out the policy implications and options is particularly important when so little about development strategy is understood and so little strategy is in place. It may be that CDRI leaves this to be hammered out in formal and informal meetings. If so, the rest of the stakeholders have to figure it out for themselves.

### *Dissemination*

Dissemination and implementation are easier when the implications of a study are clear and clearly described. In addition, CDRI could draw more upon its training heritage and proximity to government to enhance dissemination and the prospects for implementation. Most important, the more involvement of central decision-makers at every step in the research, the better the chances that the results will be accepted and implemented. Other initiatives could include: involvement of all important stake-holders including local NGOs; more systematic use of the media; closer and more intensive contacts throughout the research process with representatives of the political sphere (for example explore networking with the committees in the National Assembly); and intensive training of all CDRI (research) staff in lecturing and presentation techniques.

## *Training*

While we agree that CDRI cannot resume an extensive programme of external training as focal area, aggressive dissemination and other steps would enable CDRI to help address an important specialised training need, mentioned by many people with whom we spoke: the need for training in the field of socio-economic analysis.

To help address this need, we propose that CDRI (as part of its research programme) involves university faculty much more aggressively, that it provides data and a “home” for university faculty and students doing research and papers, that it appoints ad-hoc advisory groups for each research project to help officials and legislators become familiar with terminology, methods, and concepts in policy research and to build a constituency for use of the results, and that (as part of dissemination) it hold seminars for officials, legislators, and local NGOs along the lines of the week-long seminar held for the provincial governors in October 1999. We also recommend that CDRI researchers be encouraged to lecture in the universities. This will help the universities but it will also help the researchers. If you have to teach it, you really have to learn it. Presentation skills are improved; and it’s also a way of identifying talent for CDRI among both faculty and students. At the same time, all these activities have to be strongly prioritized, and only taken up whenever a clear link towards the core mission of CDRI is found.

### **5.3.3 External Networks and Partnerships**

We find it essential that CDRI exploits every possibility to develop institutional linkages with foreign and international research institutions and networks. A promising attempt of this kind is being attended to in the region (DAN).

The purposes of such activities are multiple, including:

- ◆ Offering a platform for joint research, including seeking funding;
- ◆ Improving the actual quality of research;
- ◆ Being a foundation for personnel exchange (in both directions); and
- ◆ Acting as a basis for recruitment.

It is essential that such arrangements are also done on an institutional basis (in addition to person – to – person contacts). We see possibilities to constitute such networks both with European, American, Australian and Japanese<sup>16</sup> institutions. We recommend strongly that CDRI with help from the Board (and the new Research Director when s/he arrives) aggressively pursues the establishment of such institutional partnerships.

The extensive research programme and CDRI’s history of co-operation with visiting researchers provide a constructive base for offering training programmes. Therefore, we would consider it unfortunate if training activities geared primarily towards external clients were to close down. Instead we encourage CDRI to keep up the fruitful combination of different interrelated components i.e. research, collection and hosting of data, and specialised training.

Early on, CDRI had some talks with the Harvard Institute for International Development about establishing an institutional relationship. Those talks did not succeed but the general idea was right.

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<sup>16</sup> As an example, it was mentioned during the meeting with the Japanese embassy that there might be possibilities to attract co-operation with one or two Japanese institutions also focusing on Cambodian development issues. Provided such a network can be established, financing from Japanese sources may be possible to exploit. However, any such arrangement has to be duly planned, and calls for a focused approach (also being able to explain the added value of co-operating with CDRI for a Japanese institute).



These partnerships should be long-term, engage the interest and commitment of senior professionals in both institutions, involve work on a series of policy research projects, and result in co-authored publications. Such partnerships are in the interest of both institutions and work best when a few researchers in the overseas institutions are committed to being in Cambodia regularly and to hosting CDRI staff at the home institution. Such staff from the overseas institution could take paid leave at CDRI or even be seconded to CDRI.

The partnerships typically involve exchanges of publications, sending of doctoral students to CDRI, joint research planning and joint fundraising to support the research. Partners could also help identify, assess and engage Khmers studying for advanced degrees in their countries – some of whom CDRI might “capture” as a result of the partnership. The overseas institution does play a training and mentoring role and helps with quality control (peer review) at the beginning, and this role may need to last longer in Cambodia because of its comparatively weak human resource base than has been the case in other countries. But the best partnerships are not hierarchical, and last long after any mentoring role has ended. The Korea Development institute has had a partnership with a US institute for 30 years, the Thailand Development Research Institute has had a relationship with a Canadian institute for 10 years.

Overall, internal training, upgrading and strengthening of competence must be explored at any instance. There are a number of ways in which this is currently executed. In our opinion, every possibility should be used to take advantage of offerings and develop alternatives (institutional twinning, scholarships, applying for research grants, etc). We consider it as a pre-requisite for manifest improvements that knowledge in research methodology is further instilled into the organisation. This is a challenging task, and may in its own right call for extended international contacts and more open communication with the global research society. Also this aspect was highlighted by the evaluation from 1994.

We have received a large number of suggestions concerning more pro-active presentations worth considering (taking the limited financial and human resource base into account). These include the preparation and circulation of briefing leaflets<sup>17</sup> and/or invitations to press seminars/conferences whenever a new research paper is launched in order to have additional chances of attracting the media.

## **5.4 Sustainability – the Legal, Financial and Human Resource Foundation**

### **5.4.1 The Legal Foundation**

The legal foundation of CDRI is far from clear. It was registered in 1991 as a not-for-profit organisation (initially international NGO but this is being re-negotiated into the status of a local NGO). The legislative structure in Cambodia is not yet well developed when it comes to NGOs. This means that there is an unclear ownership structure for CDRI. As CDRI currently possesses considerable resources both in terms of real estate and financial resources (about USD 400,000 in endowment), this is less appropriate.

We understand that the Cambodian legal foundation as concerning NGOs is now in the process of being revised. Pending this, we strongly suggest that the matter of the CDRI legal foundation be further clarified.

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<sup>17</sup> This has been tried on two occasions (with positive results according to the research co-ordinator).

The highest body is the Board of Directors. This was established in 1997. However, it is still unclear from our discussions with board members whether they see themselves mainly as advisory resources or are due also to shoulder a legal responsibility for CDRI. When directly asking board members about their view of the CDRI ownership, the majority said that they assumed that the Director was the (sole) owner<sup>18</sup>.

#### **5.4.2 The Financial Platform**

CDRI has been dependent on Sida for about 73 percent of all income-generation (during the last 5 years). This includes core-funding as well as support also to special projects during the period 1994–1998. For a few years, considerable amounts were allocated through Sida towards targeted projects run by CDRI (for example the SOAS-executed Master training programme). Thus, the percentage of “free funds” received from Sida is significantly lower than indicated by the above relative share. Never the less, domination in funding from one individual source always tends to create dependency on one main actor. This in turn will make the receiving institution vulnerable, not least in times of rapid change.

In order for CDRI to become a stable research institute with a long-term perspective, financial sustainability must be a priority and funding basis has to be diversified. One way of doing this is to increasingly undertake research requests from Cambodia-based donors and other external clients. This is in line with CDRI’s user oriented research approach. According to CDRI’s research co-ordinator, Martin Godfrey, CDRI shaped their research agenda partly to fit the actors who take advantage of the research. Research is done in order to be useful and directly put into use, the reasoning goes.

Realising this, it is not hard to recommend that CDRI should take on more externally funded research assignments. Diversity of funding may easily be accomplished, moving towards an (even) closer co-operation and dialogue with the users, for example INGOs. Many of these stakeholders expressed their willingness to increase the co-operation with CDRI to realise research projects on social issues such as poverty, land issues, aids, education and aid-programmes. Of these topics, many have already been looked into by CDRI. A number of specific examples and concrete ideas were presented to the evaluation team during discussions with various bodies (like the World Bank, UNDP and a few bilateral donors). All these options should be systematically explored by CDRI.

Finally, while it is appropriate that CDRI takes on significantly more externally funded research projects, it must not turn into a marionette in the hands of the market, but should negotiate with each funding agency to be responsible for (at least parts) of the research design. In addition, CDRI needs to keep up their integrity proceeding with, for the donors also directly less relevant research. Consequently, it is necessary for CDRI to continuously uphold some core-funding.

The income mix in future is suggested to be developed as follows:

- ◆ Core funding (about 25 percent of turnover);
- ◆ Partnership funding;
- ◆ Commissioned research, training, sale of products and services, etc;
- ◆ User charges on information; and
- ◆ Capital incomes (about 25 percent).

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<sup>18</sup> This is also clearly illustrated by the fact that during a number of interviews, the respondents used interchangeably the name CDRI and Eva when they discussed the institution under evaluation.

The relative percentages may very well be further discussed. This indicated change certainly has to be made in a step-by-step fashion. However, it is our conviction that a more broad funding package must and can be achieved.

### **5.4.3 The Human Resource Base**

To be able to take on more research projects, commissioned by external clients, CDRI might consider increasing its pool of researchers. In order to get a broad but still deep competence within this pool, some researchers may focus more on certain issues than others. One way to increase CDRI's researchers by number could be to link research fellows to the institute, either single individuals or by co-operating with other Cambodian research institutes. Moreover, the importance of good supervision will increasingly grow. Again, this points towards increased co-operation with other research institutes, regional and international.

Recruitment of core staff members is a most crucial issue in any organisation. In the case of CDRI, it is a matter of survival to find an appropriate replacement for the current research director (who is due to leave in March 2000). We share the view of the management that an internationally renowned researcher is required with strong personal networks, experience and interest in research in the region, and not least an ambition to devote a few years to developing a flourishing research environment at CDRI. We also note with mixed feelings that the number of suitable candidates from the initial round of advertisements was most limited. The replacement of the senior researcher (Dr. Kato from Japan), who is due to leave at the same time, is also a crucial issue. It would certainly be possible to find a replacement for him among the Cambodian researchers. At the same time, at least one additional researcher with international academic credentials is highly needed.

## **5.5 Proximity to Government**

CDRI has a close governmental relation. This is reflected by CDRI's research framework. It was set up in accordance with the government's interests and is in line with priorities suggested by government policy-makers. However, CDRI is not only known for its governmental proximity. Organisations and individual persons consulted have more or less unanimously spelled out that CDRI has the reputation of being an ally of CPP while being somewhat distanced from FUNCINPEC.

Closeness to a party in power can be seen both as a strength and a weakness. One of the risks involved with this kind of governmental proximity is the institute's reputation as an independent actor. If the institute does not provide relatively unbiased research results, it may be perceived as co-opted and the great majority will ignore its presentations and elaboration. The risk of research results being politically interpreted is particular great in Cambodia, being a highly politicised society and a country with a past of severe political turbulence. Finally, another risk with close party proximity concerns sustainability. In case of political changes in power, a policy institute may be rejected since it is associated with a political opponent.

Among the advantages of close proximity may be greater freedom in research. If an institute is trusted by the government, it can work on politically sensitive topics. Proximity may also provide the opportunity significantly to influence policy decisions. NGO representatives emphasised this benefit and yet most perceived CDRI's research and research findings to be unaffected by the closeness. A few NGOs and MPs we met felt that CDRI's work was compromised and/or its findings ignored because of proximity to the government and the CPP. But in our view, a slender but important distance has been established. Gradually, by doing training first, CDRI has built the legitimacy and space to work on important policy issues where some of the results are almost certain to offend. The evidence that there is such a distance includes a case study in the LFRD study

critical of CPP rural development projects, an analysis of the negative economic effects of the events of July 1997 – particularly on the poor, and the recently completed governance study.

In conclusion, one advantage of CDRI is its close relationship to the government. However, there are some actors that consider CDRI to be politically biased. Cambodian society is marked by a history of political turbulence. Therefore, it is of special importance that CDRI is perceived as a politically unbiased institute. With this in mind, CDRI should extend their co-operation to include all parties within the government. A broader political network would increase not only CDRI's credibility but also contribute to the sustainability of the institute, by guaranteeing its function as policy-makers on a long-term basis.

## 6. Conclusions and Proposals

There are many different options open for the future development of CDRI. It is not possible for us to here give any unconditional proposals about what specific avenue to follow. This strategic decision should primarily depend on what vision the main stakeholders formulate and spell out for the organisation. Never-the-less, it is quite possible to focus on a number of clear tendencies in the environment, which undoubtedly pose major challenges for CDRI.

The main evaluation questions spelled out at the outset of the study may now be answered in the following way.

- ◆ Do CDRI's vision and mission address key needs of Cambodian society;
  - *Yes.*
- ◆ Are the goals – which shape the direction of work – relevant, attainable and in line with the mission;
  - *Only partly. As indicated in the previous chapter, we propose that CDRI should help address critical training needs.*
- ◆ What impact does CDRI have on Cambodian society;
  - *Some direct effects are documented. There are substantial indirect impact effects documented as well.*
- ◆ Are external stakeholders willing further to co-operate and develop relationships with CDRI;
  - *Enough convincing documentation of this character has been found. Though for more extensive co-operation, CDRI has also to re-direct its focus.*
- ◆ Is the (future) financial platform sound and realistic for sustainability (what self-financing and other financial options are potentially available);
  - *The current situation is not at all sustainable. However, there is convincing evidence that the prospects for diversification of funding sources are good.*
- ◆ Is the personnel base (in terms of competence, recognition, strength, etc.) at or above a minimum threshold level;
  - *No not at present, but possibilities exist to reach and exceed the threshold.*
- ◆ Is the work conducted in cost – effective ways;
  - *A reasonable level of cost-efficiency is observed. It is though still possible to improve on this.*
- ◆ Do the CDRI organisation and infrastructure efficiently support the work?
  - *Much more in terms of delegation and supporting creativity should be aimed at.*

The following listing of specific proposals is based on observations made by the evaluation team from reading documents, discussing internally at CDRI, and not least through dialogues with external partners and other interested parties.

Basically CDRI can either proceed on the current road; it could focus even more on striving for academic excellence; or/and it could concentrate on maximal openness towards the opportunities offered in the society.

The current road may well be feasible for some time, but we do not consider it as sustainable in the longer-term perspective. Instead we propose an alternative where international excellence is combined with a more market oriented approach for CDRI. This is done in order to secure the financial platform for further developments (For a detailed scenario, see Annex 5).

In general, we propose the following steps (to be taken in logical order and with the utmost consideration for both quality and financial aspects)<sup>19</sup>:

## **6.1 The Research Programme**

- ◆ Prepare a new research framework by mid 2000 using the similar consultative principles as were used in 1998 (for the current framework programme). However, allow maximal flexibility to prevailing needs and competence/interest of available researchers.
- ◆ Work in devoted ways to arrange long-term institutional partnerships and twinning agreements with foreign and international research institutions in the area of policy research.
- ◆ Try to attract a small group of international class researchers on flexible conditions in terms of working arrangements.
- ◆ Review all working papers internally prior to circulation (to support internal quality as well as training needs) and further develop the peer review system for any publication issued by the institute. At the same time give researchers maximum freedom to be innovative and creative in the actual research process.
- ◆ Much of the specific projects take place in twinning between internal sources, local “consultants” and through the international networks.

## **6.2 Training Activities**

- ◆ All CDRI (research) staff shall be encouraged to improve lecturing/presentation skills and also to actively participate in training inside as well as outside the institute.
- ◆ Do not refrain from involving CDRI in external training activities as well, provided such are directly motivated from the purpose of developing Cambodian capacity in the area, and are integral to the core mission of CDRI being research and dissemination activities.

## **6.3 Information Clearing-house functions**

- ◆ Strive to let concerned government agencies gradually take full responsibility for national regular data collection within the national statistics system<sup>20</sup>. The maintenance of easily accessible databases (both numerical and bibliographic) in the area should be a long-term activity for CDRI.

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<sup>19</sup> It should also be stressed that these steps are, according to our assessment, possible to implement within the constitution and by-laws now taken for CDRI.

<sup>20</sup> This is a long-term undertaking

- ◆ More general library orientations should take place to inform the general public about the library function. This may also improve the usefulness of the overall information resource in Cambodia.

## 6.4 CCCR

- ◆ Test the idea of keeping CCCR in-house by developing systematic and logical collaborative projects between the research section and the CCCR.

## 6.5 Institutional Development

- ◆ The financial platform has to be significantly broadened. There are possibilities to achieve this for the longer-term perspective. This issue should be addressed in a number of ways in parallel (for some detailed suggestions, see Annex 5). A more business-oriented approach to strategic planning is proposed with preparation of a clear business plan.
- ◆ Be open for taking on research on commission (but make sure not to be entirely dependent on such arrangements). A specific policy for such arrangements should be spelled out.
- ◆ Do everything possible to keep and further develop the value of the CDRI brand name. This constitutes an asset in many parts of Cambodian society. However, in others it should be further strengthened by proactive measures to establish co-operation. Furthermore, it has to be significantly strengthened internationally.
- ◆ Reorganise the actual management structure of CDRI in order to gradually allow as much day-to-day independence for the various “areas/sections/programmes”. See the CDRI managerial and administrative resource as an overall support function to develop the core programmes.
- ◆ Improve the access to external IT-functions (E-mail, Internet search etc) by increased interactivity on each workstation. Also allow more flexibility to individual staff members, from the top management, in terms of day-to-day scheduling and operations.
- ◆ Let the Board of Directors take more de facto responsibility for the strategic development of CDRI.

In any case, a system of internal performance management shall be set in place including regular self assessment (a bottom-up procedure should be followed), setting up a small number of key performance indicators<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Standard examples include:

- Produced reports (documents)
- Published articles
- References in recognised journals
- Personnel strength
- Co-operation projects (national and international)
- Twinning arrangements
- Organised external events (seminars, conferences, workshops, etc)
- Information activities (library; acquisitions, loans, spread of newsletter, etc)
- Externally offered, more formal, training

## 7. Lessons Learned

We confine the reasoning here to just a few observations. These are:

- ♦ It is possible to develop a high standard research institute (even) in Cambodia under the prevailing conditions. CDRI offers living evidence for this statement.
- ♦ For sustainability, innovative measures to develop the financial platform must be exercised. This is a most urgent matter calling for the strategic re-orientation of CDRI.
- ♦ Different organisational and managerial structures are needed for different stages of an organisation's life-cycle. CDRI must now move into a system with much more of de facto delegation, empowerment and openness.
- ♦ External evaluation efforts may contribute to understanding and learning. However any such undertaking has to be well prepared, scheduled and briefed. It is also essential that the distinction is clearly kept between self assessment and external evaluative efforts in order to allow for maximal integrity and real feedback.

We propose that future evaluation teams are given more explicit directions, and also allocated adequate resource and calendar time in order to maximise the chances for learning and constructive proposals.

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# Annex 1

## CDRI Evaluation/Terms of reference<sup>22</sup>

### Background

The Cambodia Development Resource Institute was established in July 1990 as Cambodia began to take steps towards economic liberalisation and reintegration into the international community. It was formally endorsed by the government in March 1991 as an independent non-profit training and research institute.

In the year 2000 CDRI will celebrate its tenth anniversary. During its brief existence, the Institute has undergone a number of transitions on the road to becoming a policy research institute. The Institute's development can be divided into three phases in line with its original vision.

### *Phase I, 1991–1994*

In its first phase, the Institute's programmes were directed toward providing maximum, immediate exposure to issues of development planning and assistance and to the mechanisms of the market economy. This was accomplished through training programmes, workshops and seminars for government officials and the staff of civil institutions. Institute training offerings included project identification and proposal writing, project cycle management; orientation to international Aid and lending institutions, transition to the market economy, rural development and planning, English language and computer applications. Through its auspices CDRI facilitated advisory services to the Ministry of Planning and the National Bank of Cambodia. It instituted the first surveys of prices in Cambodian markets.

### *Phase II, 1995–1997*

The second cycle saw a re-focusing from short-term exposure and training activities to longer term initiatives designed to strengthen national capacity. CDRI instituted its research programme devoted to socio-economic policy issues relating to Cambodia's development and economic experience. It undertook its first projects: the impact of Structural Adjustment on Cambodia and Food Security. Research also expanded its surveys of local market prices to a review of the macro economy and thus instituted the publication of "Cambodia Economy Watch". A distance education programme leading to an MSc in financial economics from the University of London was launched with the purpose of strengthening economics capacity in the Ministries of Economy and Finance, Planning and Commerce, the National Bank and the CDC. In co-operation with the Ministry of Interior, a series of workshops introducing basic concepts of good governance was offered to central ministry and provincial officials. In 1997, CDRI also established the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCCCR), a long term commitment to strengthen national capacity towards peace building, essential to the nation's economic and social development.

### *Phase III, 1998–2000*

The third three-year cycle, begun in 1998 and continuing through 2000, initiated a restructuring of internal programmes to strengthen and consolidate the growing research programme which will, by the end of year 2000, form the crux of the Institute and its activities. The former Document and Information Resource Centre was split into a separate Publications Section and Library, with the

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<sup>22</sup> Dated 17 September 1999. There are more versions of the (final) ToR in existence.

dual goal of increasing the dissemination of research findings and of building a national library centre on economic and development issues. Commitment was made to strengthen CCCR's capacity to become an independent centre within the next five years.

In Phase III, English language was re-focused towards English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training with a strong in-house strengthening component in addition to external contracted services. The Computer Training Programme was phased out at the end of 1997 and new emphasis was placed on developing in-house information technology capacity to support the research and associated programmes.

Over the last five years especially, evaluations and programme reviews have played an important role in helping CDRI to stay on course in what has been a very fluid and uncertain environment in Cambodia. They have also helped CDRI to do some things better, and to look forward and plan the steps necessary to get to the next stage of development. The last overall Institutional evaluation of CDRI was conducted in 1999 at the end of the first phase of CDRI's programme however, six programme evaluations, reviews or surveys have been conducted since then for more specific purposes.

Sida has cooperated with CDRI since 1991. The cooperation has involved CDRI's core activities, plus a distance education programme for 23 officials from six ministries, leading to a Master's Programme in Financial Economics; counselling and training for Cambodia's Central Bank; and election counselling for the Minister of Interior, ahead of national elections in 1998. Other important donors to CDRI are the World Bank, NORAD and NOVIB.

In 1999, for the first time in decades Cambodia is at peace and there is a new sense of hope and optimism for building a future that is different from the past. It is therefore very timely that CDRI and Sida undertake a joint evaluation of the institution and its programmes, and its role in relation to Cambodia's development in order to reflect on where it is today; what lessons can be learned especially in terms of CDRI's contribution to policy-making in Cambodia, but also its own development; where it would like to be ten years from now and what will it take to get there.

The following terms reference have been drawn up as a guide for the evaluation.

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the socio-economic-political environment within which CDRI operates, and the role, relevance, impact and sustainability of CDRI's programmes in contributing to national development, in order to guide future institutional and programme development. Four main objectives have been identified:

- 1) To analyse the relevance of CDRI's aims and objectives in the present socio-economic-political context;
- 2) To analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of the CDRI programmes/activities in achieving objectives, and provide recommendations where relevant;
- 3) To analyse the impact of CDRI's programmes on various target groups, and especially policy-making regarding relevant development issues;
- 4) To assess the institutional and programmatic sustainability implications of future medium-term and long-term scenarios in Cambodia.

## II. Terms of reference

### A. CDRI AS AN INSTITUTION IN THE CAMBODIAN CONTEXT

*1. Objective: To analyse the relevance of CDRI's aims and objectives in the present socio-economic-political context.*

- (a) Assess the relevance of CDRI's aims and objectives in relation to major development challenges and priorities in Cambodia. Aspects to be included are e.g. long-term poverty alleviation in Cambodia; gender equality objectives; environmental sustainability; democratisation, peace and respect for human rights (economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights);
- (b) What plans and strategies are in place to ensure medium- to long-term relevance of CDRI programme initiatives? How can these be improved?
- (c) What are the comparative advantages of CDRI in its choice of activities and how can these be further enhanced?
- (d) How is CDRI perceived by its various constituencies, by other organisations and institutions? Do these perceptions match its own perception as reflected in its aims and activities?
- (e) What changes in the Cambodian social, cultural and political environment are especially important for CDRI's sustainability (continued relevance) as a policy institute (e.g. the changing employment market, the political situation, the expansion of civil society, etc)? How can CDRI remain relevant?

*2. Objective: To assess the institutional and programmatic sustainability implications of future (medium-term and long-term) scenarios in Cambodia*

- (a) How can CDRI move to decrease external financial dependence and develop broader resource mobilisation? What plans and strategies are being developed to ensure financial sustainability? What risks are implied if CDRI adopt a more 'market' or 'demand' oriented funding strategy? How does CDRI retain control over and integrity of its programmes while diversifying its funding base?
- (b) What linkages have been made with other institutions in Cambodia and abroad which may contribute to reaching CDRI's objectives?
- (c) Regarding organisational development, what challenges (in terms of e.g. management skills, personnel size, competence, gender, Cambodian/international management and staff etc) is CDRI likely to face as a result of its growth and expansion?

*3) Recommendations/actions for institutional change in terms of policies, aims, and objectives.*

### B. CDRI PROGRAMME/ACTIVITIES: EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFECTS AND IMPACT

*1. Objective: To analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of the CDRI programme/activities in achieving objectives, and provide recommendations where relevant.*

- (a) To what extent are CDRI's planned activities implemented? Are the programme outputs reasonable given the inputs (cost-efficiency)? Assess the adequacy of activities in relation to CDRI's mission and objectives.
- (b) Assess what outcomes/effects, over a 5-year period, may have resulted from CDRI's programme/outputs. Has the programme met its stated objectives (qualitatively? quantitatively?) towards:
  - developing its research programme and capacity of staff?
  - reaching policy-makers/advisors within the Government, National Assembly, civil service, donors or NGOs through research publications, seminars etc?

- strengthening the Centre for Conflict Resolution in terms of staff numbers and competence, quantity/quality of research on relevant topics, dissemination of results and policy advice, training etc?
- developing its library and publications?

What constraints, if any, have prevented objectives from being met?

Are the outcomes reasonable given the inputs (cost-effectiveness)?

- (c) How have institutional and programme objectives and activities changed since the establishment of CDRI? What has been gained and lost, in terms of achievement of objectives, in the transition? (concentration versus proliferation?) What alternatives exist?
- (d) What forms of monitoring and/or evaluation are incorporated into ongoing CDRI programmes? Are these adequate? Could they be enhanced?
- (e) How well does CDRI's institutional set up (management, staffing, information flow, personnel policies, etc.) respond to the attainment of aims and objectives? What changes might enhance its efficiency?
- (f) What training and/or professional development opportunities have been made available to staff? What gains have come from these? What else is required?
- (g) What forms of participation in programme policy, design and implementation do CDRI staff (international and local) engage in? Can this be improved/how?
- (h) How have the different constituencies CDRI works with been involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the overall programme or selected parts? Could their participation be enhanced, and how might this be best achieved?
- (i) How can CDRI better reach out to provincial level audiences who are still quite isolated from any type of development information and dialogue?
- (j) How can CDRI get feedback and develop constituencies in the absence of training activities (or with the reduction of training activities).
- (k) Assess the role of CDRI's Board in relation to stated functions. How can its role be enhanced? How can CDRI staff tap maximum benefit from the board?

*2. Objective: To analyse the effects and impact of the CDRI programme and provide recommendations where relevant.*

- (a) What evidence/indicators are there on the impact of CDRI's programme (research dissemination, policy advocacy, library, advisory services, training & seminars and conflict resolution activities) on policy-making and decision-making among the identified interest groups, in particular
  - decision-makers in the Government/Council of Ministers,
  - political parties,
  - members of the National Assembly and Senate,
  - policy and technical advisors/decisions-makers in ministries and provinces,
  - decision-makers in donor agencies,
  - leaders in Cambodia civil society

Which components of the programme have made the most impact? What is the evidence?

- (b) What, if any, unintended positive or negative effects of CDRI's activities can be found?
- (c) What, if any, effects and impact have CDRI activities had on gender equality?

- (d) Which positive or negative effects may CDRI's programme have had on sustainable development/the environment in Cambodia?
- (e) What effects, if any, has the programme had with regard to the democratisation process and respect for human (economic, social, cultural, political and civil) rights in Cambodia?
- (f) What indicators would be most useful in the future in measuring impact of various CDRI activities?
- (g) What should/could be done to improve the quality, impact and reach of the overall programme, or of individual elements?

### 3) *Recommendations/actions*

## **C. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Which conclusions and lessons learned can be drawn with regard to the above findings? Which deserve particular attention, in order for CDRI to move towards continued relevance and importance for decision-making in Cambodia?

## **D. METHODOLOGY:**

The Consultants shall carry out this task by reviewing relevant documentation and field interviews. The relevant documentation includes:

Programme plans and annual reports	
Previous evaluation reports:	
CDRI Evaluation	1994
ELT Programme Evaluation	May 1996
Assessment of MOI programme	Oct. 1996
Readership survey	Dec. 1996
Computer Training Evaluation	Feb. 1997
SIDA Programme Review	June 1998
Readership Survey	April 1999
Minutes of Board Meetings	
Case Study of CDRI: The Development of a Policy Research Institute (Draft)	

Field Interviews should include: Donors, Board of Directors, partner institutions or organisations, constituencies, representatives of Cambodian government, IOs, NGOs, multi-lateral organisations, other institutes and universities, staff and management. Some telephone interviews to Board members or partners in other countries may also be involved.

Consultants: Two-three independent consultants, with no ties to CDRI or its donors, and with background and experience in institutional development and knowledge of Cambodia and Cambodian development. CDRI and Sida will each identify one (or two) member of the consultancy team.

Timeframe: The evaluation should ideally take place in the latter part of October 1999 and be completed, including the report, no later than November 15, 1999 so that it can be presented at the next CDRI Board of Directors' meeting on December 3–4, 1999. The ideal consultancy period should be about three weeks including preparation and writing of report. This is possible if the in-country programme of meetings can be largely organised and coordinated by CDRI.

### *Reporting:*

The consultant shall, before leaving Cambodia, present the main findings and conclusions orally and if possible in a written summary, in a meeting with the concerned parties (CDRI and Sida).

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 40 pages, excluding annexes. Format and outline of the report shall follow the guidelines in Sida Evaluation Report – a Standardized Format. 5 copies each of the draft report shall be submitted to Sida and CDRI. FILLING “MONTH; DATE; YEAR” \d \\* MERGEFORMAT \_ Within 3 weeks after receiving Sida’s comments on the draft report, a final version in 5 copies each and on diskette shall be submitted to Sida and CDRI.

## Annex 2

### List of institutions and individuals consulted CDRI Evaluation, October – November 1999

#### CDRI

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
Ms Eva Mysliwec	Director
Mr. Be Kalyanna	Library Manager
Mr. Michael Wills	Publications Co-ordinator & Editor
Mr. Em Sorany	Publications Production Officer
Dr. Martin Godfrey	Research Co-ordinator
Mr. Toshiyasu Kato	Research Fellow
Mr. Sok Hach	Economic Adviser to the Research Programme
Mr. Sik Boreak	Researcher
Mr. Sophal Chan	Researcher
Mr. Ok Serei Sopheak	Co-ordinator /CCCR
Ms. Huy Romduol	Programme Officer
Ms. Real Sopheap	Programme Officer
Mr. Sen Sina	Administrative Officer
Ms Oeung Bunthyda	Administrative Director
Ms. Beauphara Thong	Financial Manager
Mr. Vanna Leng	Information Technology Specialist

#### Independent Researchers

Mr. Robin Biddulph	Researcher
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#### University and Educational system

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Dr. Ms. Luise Ahrens	Researcher	Royal University of Phnom Penh

#### Cambodian Government Personnel

H.E. Mr. LY Thuch	Secretary of State	Ministry of Rural Development
Dr. Ms. Nguon Sokha	Bureau Chief	National Bank of Cambodia
H.E. Dr. Mam Bun Heng	Secretary of State	Ministry of Health
Dr. Sam Ghanty	Training Co-ordinator	Ministry of Economy and Finance
H.E. Mr. San Sythan	Director General	National Institute of Statistics, MOP

H.E. Ms. Ky Lum Ang National	Chairman of Committee  Economy, Planning, Investment, Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment	3 <sup>rd</sup> Committee of the  Assembly
H.E. Mr. Sum Manit	Secretary of State	Cabinet, Council of Ministers
H.E. Mr. Son Chhay	Chairman of Committee Public Works, Transport, Telecom., Post Office, Industry Mines Energy, and Commerce	9 <sup>th</sup> Committee of the National Assembly
H.E. Mr. Sak Setha	Deputy Director General	Ministry of Interior
H.E. Mr. Sok Siphanna	Secretary of State	Ministry of Commerce

#### **Foreign Diplomatic Missions, Multilateral Agencies and International NGOs**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Mr. Mbida-Essama	Chief of Mission	The World Bank
Ms. Rosemary McCreery	Resident Representative	United Nations Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR)
Mr. Henrik Alffram	Human Right Officer	UNCHR
Mr. Joel Charny	Project leader	Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project (CARERE)
Mr. Biranchi Updhyaya Mr. Shaun Williams	Representative Cambodia Land Study Project Co-ordinator	OXFAM-GB
Mr. James Meiklejohn	CASD Project Officer	UNICEF
Mr. Bill Costello	Director, AUSAID	Australian Embassy
Mr. Jon Summers	Representative	Asia Foundation
Mr. Brett Ballard Ms. Judy Saumweber Ms. Van Tun?	Director LCN Project Development Co-ordinator	AFSC
Mr. Toshihiko Horiuchi Mr. Nomura Yutaka	First Secretary Second Secretary	Japan Embassy
Mr. Patrick Van de Velde	Resident Representative	EU Office
Mr. Jean Claude Rogivue	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP



**Cambodian NGOs**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Ms. Tiv Sarayeth	Director	Women's Media Office
Mr. Patrick J. Capuano	Advisor	Cambodian Labour
Mr. Seng Phally	Executive Director	organisation (CLO)
Ms. Chea Vannath	Director	Centre for Social Development (CSD)
Dr. Mr. Kao Kim Hourn	Executive Director	Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP)
Dr. Mrs Kek Galabru	Executive Director	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICHADE)
Mr. Ly Saroeun	Executive Director	Cambodian Researchers for Development (CRD)
Dr. Lao Mong Hay	Executive Director	Khmer Institute for Democracy

## Annex 3

### List of CDRI (Research) Publications

- Cambodian development Review, Vol, 3, Issue 3, September 1999.
- Cambodian development Review, Vol, 3, Issue 2, June 1999.
- Biddulph, Robin, Chim Charya, Dorina Pom, McAndrew John, Sokunthea Nguon, Sovannarith So, 1998: *Learning from Rural Development Programmes in Cambodia*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Borek, Sik, 1999: *Land Ownership and Transactions in Cambodia*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Chan, Sophal, Godfrey, Martin, Kato, Toshiyasu, Orlova, Nina, Piseth, Vou, Long, Rönnås, Per, Savora, Tia, 1999: *Cambodia: The Challenge of Productive Employment Creation*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Chan, Sophal, Kato, Toshiyasu, Jeffery, Kaplan, Piseth, Vou, Long, Kun, Nhem, Robertson, James & Pohoresky, Harold, 1998: *Cambodia: Challenges and Options of Regional Economic Integration*, Conference Papers, Phnom Penh.
- Chan, Sophal, Kalyanna, Be, Kato, Toshiyasu, & Piseth, Vo, Long, 1997: *Coping with the Current Crisis*, Phnom Penh.
- Chan, Sophal, Kato, Toshiyasu, Piseth, Vo, Long, 1998: *Regional Economic Integration for Sustainable Development in Cambodia*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Chan, Sophal, Hourn, Kao, Kim, Kato, Toshiyasu, Piseth, Vou, Long, Savora, Tia, Sovannarith, So, Vuthna, Chea & Sovannarith, So, 1999: *Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis on the SEATEs: The Cambodian Perspective*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Geseas, 1998: *Discourses and Practices of Democracy in Southeast Asia – Globalisation, National Governance and Local Responses* (An application to Sida/Sarec within the pProgramme for Research Co.operation on Democracy and Human Rights 1999–2001), Göteborg.
- Gorman, Siobhan, Dorina Pon, Kheng Sok, 1999: *Gender and Development in Cambodia: An Overview*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Grube, Douglas, 1998: *Donors in Disarray – Prospects for External Assistance to Cambodia*, Phnom Penh.
- Hughes, Caroline, 1998: *Nature and Causes of Conflict Escalation in the Cambodian Election*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Development Analysis Network, 1999: *Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis on the Southeast Asian Transitional Economies*, Conference Papers, Phnom Penh
- Kannan K. P., 1997: *Economic Reform, Structural Adjustment and Development in Cambodia*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Kannan K. P., 1995: *Construction of Consumer Price Index for Cambodia – A Review of Current Practices and Suggestions for Improvement*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- McAndrews, John, 1996: *Aid Infusions, Aid Illusions – Bilateral and Multilateral Emergency and Development Assistance in Cambodia 1992–1995*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- McAndrews, John, 1998: *Interdependence in Household Livelihood Strategies in Two Cambodian Villages*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.

- Ministry of planning, 1999: *Cambodia Human Development Report – Village economy and Development*, Phnom Penh.
- Morris Catherin, Mysliwiec, Eva (ed.), 1995: *Dispute Resolution in Cambodia: A Road to Peace and Reconciliation*, Phnom Penh.
- Murshid, K.A.S., 1998: *Food Security in an Asian Transitional Economy: The Cambodian Experience*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Programme Plan, Phase III 1999–2000, Programme Development Resource Institute, October 1998
- Robertson, James & Pohoresky, Harold, 1997: *Cambodia: Strengthening and Foundation for Trade & Industrial Development*, Phnom Penh.
- *Research Framework – Cambodia's Transformation in a Regional Context: Getting the Incentives Right, 1998–2000*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.
- Sophal, Chan, Sovannarith, 1999: *Cambodian Labour Migration to Thailand: A preliminary Assessment*, CDRI, Phnom Penh.

## Annex 4

**CDRI-evaluation team** 30/10/99

Background document 01 Draft 2

### Interview checklist – CDRI staff members

The following issues are to be covered in the interviews with CDRI staff members. A structured interview process is to be carried out as much as possible (with of course a final part for more informal information gathering). This does not, however, mean that the queries have to be spelled out exactly as listed below, and exactly in that order. This layout is more to be seen as checklist items for coverage/inclusion.

- ◆ Tell about your background prior to joining CDRI (academic, professional work, other experience, etc).
- ◆ When did you join CDRI
- ◆ Your main duties and tasks (today and how they have changed over time)
- ◆ What do you foresee you doing in the year 2004
- ◆ Please tell us about the CDRI mission
- ◆ Which are the main areas of work (activities) of CDRI
- ◆ I wonder how the discussions went while you formulated the research programs? How did you develop your research framework? Who did participate in the process? Could you elaborate a bit on that? If you would outline a research framework today, what issues would it involve?
- ◆ What other research institutes are there in Cambodia?
- ◆ How do your research approach complement other research institutes?
- ◆ What other research institutes do you collaborate with?
- ◆ In what way do CCCR and CDRI co-operate concerning research?
- ◆ What do you consider the weak and strong sides of CDRI?
- ◆ Are there any special areas in which you would like CDRI to further develop?
- ◆ How do you comprehend CDRI's relation to the government and the political parties?
- ◆ How do you foresee CDRI to "look like" in the year 2004?
- ◆ What does the decision-making structures of CDRI look like? (Do you have regular meetings at your department so that you can take part in the decision-making process, how is personnel reviewing conducted?)
- ◆ Does CDRI have any regular evaluation of its work?
- ◆ How do you think that people in general view CDRI?
- ◆ Where and what impact do you think CDRI's research has?

## **Interview checklist– external users**

The following issues are to be covered in the interviews with external (current and potential) users of CDRI and any other partners. A structured interview process is to be carried out as much as possible (with of course a final part for more informal information gathering). This does not, however, mean that the queries have to be spelled out exactly as listed below, and exactly in that order. This layout is more to be seen as checklist items for coverage/inclusion.

- Background on you/your institution
- What “offerings” by CDRI are you/your institution currently taking advantage of
- How long have you/your institution been using CDRI
- How has the intensity of co-operation been developing through time.
- Which are the financial arrangements with CDRI (possible payments for participation, commissioning studies, etc.)
- Please illustrate the impact CDRI results and co-operative arrangements have had on you and your institution (results used in policy making, specific decisions, as background reference material, services for developing internal competence and capacity, other infra-structural impacts, etc)
- How do you see the quality of work done by CDRI (break down by components whenever relevant; scientific quality, usefulness, packaging, service functions by the CDRI personnel, etc).
- Specify strong and weak sides of CDRI
- How do you more specifically see the competence of people at CDRI, and their co-operation abilities
- What alternatives to CDRI-cooperation do you see for the kind of issues you want to address (competitors and possible allies for CDRI today and in the future)
- Are there any special areas in which you would like CDRI to further develop
- How do you envisage future co-operation with CDRI from your side (areas, intensity, financial, etc)
- How do you foresee CDRI to “look like” in the year 2004?

## Annex 5

### One Scenario: ASPIRE TO HIGH QUALITY AND IMPACT

In this scenario, CDRI's goal for the next five years should be to become a first-rate policy research institute (comparable to the best in Southeast Asia) with significant impact on policy. It should have research programmes designed to help improve Cambodia's overall development strategy and development strategies for critical sectors. It should increasingly become a "counter-weight" to the World Bank and the ADB. The research programmes should focus on developing policy options including suggestions for implementation and should be complimented by aggressive dissemination based to some extent on CDRI's training heritage. It should seek diversified funding support for broad programmes of research with alternate sequences of projects.

For the future, high quality would be the basic goal and vision. Impact the second. Impact on policy not based on high-quality work is irresponsible. High quality work with no impact is a waste. Either, but particularly the first, can rapidly hurt reputation, reduce "market share" and funding. It is better to do fewer studies well (and well targeted) than more studies that are second-rate.

#### Short-term Initiatives

Improving quality takes time and CDRI and Cambodia really don't have the time to do this slowly. Some short-term decisions will determine how, and how fast improvement can be made. These include:

Most important is appointment of the next research director. The current Research Director has made a major impact on the quantity, quality and coherence of CDRI's research. That standard and impact will be needed all the more in the future.

Formalise a process of peer review of research designs, methodology, and paper drafts. This could include a sub-committee of the Board. The new publications director could also play a role depending on her/his background.

Make publication in SE Asia referred journals a criterion for the annual performance review.

Contract someone from the Philippines (UP), Thailand (Thammasat University) or Singapore (National University) to teach (two-weeks, twice) quantitative analytic methods including OLS and LOGIT. The food security data-set, other CDRI data-sets, or Cambodian secondary data-sets (Patricia Alexander has assembled them on disk) could be used for this teaching and may yield interesting policy results and even drafts of papers to be submitted for publication.

Invite all visiting academics and researchers to give (informal) lectures or workshops at CDRI, either on methodology or reviewing the state of the art on critical development issues.

Build a roster of the very best people in Cambodia, including holders of Eastern Europe/Russian Ph.Ds, people who are too expensive to hire full time, resident expats. etc. This would enable CDRI to take on more market-responsive work including evaluations. But very selectively because the usual rule of thumb is that a senior in-house researcher cannot effectively supervise more than two or three part-time consultants. This is also a way to test people who might in the future qualify for a full-time appointments.

Continue the "spouse search."

## **Partnerships**

Even with success on all these initiatives, the pace of improvement would, we think, still be too slow. Early on, CDRI had some talks with the Harvard Institute for International Development about establishing an institutional relationship. Those talks did not succeed but the general idea was good.

We recommend strongly that CDRI with help from the Board (and the new Research Director when s/he arrives) aggressively pursue the establishment of such institutional partnerships. Explorations could include institutions in Sweden and Denmark, UK, Australia, Japan, France, Canada, and the US. (Japan moves slowly on establishing these relationships in my experience. A first step might be to ask if they would sponsor one or two visiting scholars at CDRI. A partnership could evolve from that beginning.)

These partnerships should be long-term, engage the interest and commitment of senior professionals in both institutions, involve work on a series of policy research projects, and result in co-authored publications. Such partnerships are in the interest of both institutions and work best when a few researchers in the overseas institutions are committed to being in Cambodia regularly and to hosting CDRI staff at the home institution. Such staff from the overseas institution could take paid leaves at CDRI or even be seconded to CDRI. The partnerships typically involve exchanges of publications, sending of doctoral students to CDRI, joint research planning and joint fund-raising to support the research. Partners could also help identify, assess and engage Khmers studying for advanced degrees in their countries – some of whom CDRI might “capture” as a result of the partnership. The overseas institution does play a training and mentoring role and helps with quality control (peer review) at the beginning, and this role may need to last longer in Cambodia because of its comparatively weak human resource base than has been the case in other countries. But the best partnerships are not hierarchical, and last long after any mentoring role has ended. The Korea Development institute has had a partnership with a US institute for 30 years, the Thailand Development Research Institute has had a relationship with a Canadian institute for 10 years.

## **Research Planning: Shaping the Donor Agenda and Diversifying Funding Sources**

Next year, CDRI will begin planning for the next five years. This is the right time-horizon for research planning which could serve multiple goals including diversification of funding sources. The initial research planning should begin as soon as the new Research Director is in place, followed shortly thereafter (if possible) by at least one initial partnership with an overseas institute which could also begin to help. The planning will involve the same kind of consultative process among stake-holders (and potential funders) as was used to develop the current research framework. All the research staff, other institutes, all the key stake-holders, decision makers and donors were consulted, and will need to be again.

The research plans should be long-term (three to five years) and cumulative. They would be plans for research programmes. For the sake of illustration, one could imagine research programme plans for Macro Economic Policy (with a special focus on overall development strategy), Sectoral Economics (with a priority focus on agriculture, forestry and rural development) and Human Resources and Social Development (covering the basic demography, labour markets, education, health, gender and poverty.) There could also be a cross-cutting research programme on governance. Or governance issues could be included in each of the three programmes. A good example of such planning is the proposed three-year research project entitled “Global Integration and National Fragmentation: Risks and Opportunities for Cambodia and Laos in ASEAN.” The project was not accepted for funding where it was initially submitted. But the design could be a sequence within one of the new research programme plans (e.g.: Macro Policy.)

Each programme would define and include specific projects. The programmes should be designed to cover issues of immediate concern to government, to build understanding of underlying behavior, to develop and improve development strategies, and to anticipate issues not of concern to government now but likely to be in the future.

The plans would specify alternate sequences of projects which could be done over time and clear plans for intermediate products to be produced along the way regardless of the sequence. The intermediate products could include literature and data reviews, initial analyses of secondary data sets, analyses of pre-test data sets, analyses of a first survey data-set in a project with multiple surveys, etc.

Most important, all of the projects specified in a programme may not be undertaken, but each sequence should be designed to add-up vertically and horizontally, including particularly where there are overlaps across programmes. Such broader research programmes offer the opportunity to say “yes” more often to funder requests to do a piece of work. As long as it fits in a sequence, and there is capacity to do it, the work will contribute to CDRI’s longer-term agenda.

Better still, is to seek to influence the agenda of the funders, to seek support for a research programme, or at least one of its sequences, as was done with the TA study. It is clearly better to “wholesale” rather than “retail” in seeking research support. If CDRI’s reputation remains high and quality continues to improve, CDRI will be the “only game in town.” and should be very successful in getting programme-level support. The best approach in my experience is to involve interested donors in the design process. (The Asia foundation expressed a strong interest in doing just this with CDRI for a three-year programme of research.) A good approach is to use short concept papers which describe the programmes or sequences and then work collaboratively on the details.

### **Endowment and Other Sources of Core Support**

Success in funding research programmes will help a lot. But longer-term, an endowment fund and other sources of core income are needed. This is never easy and is particularly hard in Cambodia. Here we have three suggestions.

First, make much more aggressive use of the Board of Directors to developing a strategy, a plan, and help take the detailed steps that need to be taken.

Second, consider having a small local Board of Directors which meets two or three times a year to deal with fiduciary and internal issues, and a separate larger “Council of Trustees” (or some such title) which would include the local board. The Council would meet once a year and would be composed of “friends” of CDRI and Cambodia with special commitment to fund-raising and with the needed networks to succeed. The annual meeting would feature special events, presentations, and meetings with top-level officials.

Finally, CDRI’s campus and location are strong assets. There is land for more construction. A new facility could provide rental income to add to CDRI’s core support. In my experience, Japan and Korea are the most likely to be willing to help support such construction, with the usual highly visible plaques and dedication ceremonies.



### **Recent Sida Evaluations**

- 00/4 Land Management Programme in Tanzania. Kjell J Havnevik, Magdalena Rwegangira, Anders Tivell  
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 00/5 The National Environment Management Council in Tanzania. Grant Milne  
Department for Africa
- 00/6 The African Books Collective. Cecilia Magnusson Ljungman, Tejeshwar Singh  
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 00/7 Twinning Cooperation between Riga Water Company and Stockholm Water Company. Martti Lariola, Sven Öhlund, Bengt Håkansson, Indulis Emsis  
Department for Eastern and Central Europe
- 00/8 Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project. Hugh Evans, Lars Birgegaard, Peter Cox, Lim Siv Hong  
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
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- 00/10 Sida Support to the Asian Institute of Technology. Summary report. Jan Rudengren, Inga-Lill Andréhn, Guy Bradley, Richard Friend, Dan Vадnjal  
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