



PARLIAMENTARY CENTRE OF ASIA
Strengthening Parliamentary Capacity

Full Report

Legal Analysis of Mangrove Forests in Cambodia

November 2024

Researcher: Mr. Pen Ratana

Notice of Disclaimer

The Parliamentary Center of Asia (PCAsia) is an independent parliamentary support institution for the client Parliaments which, upon request of the parliamentarians and the parliamentary commissions and their General Secretariats offers a wide range of trainings and research publications on current and emerging key issues, legislation and major public policy topics. The information in this research product is likely to be relevant to parliamentary and constituency work but does not purport to represent or reflect the views of the Parliamentary Center of Asia, their client Parliaments or any of its members.

The contents of this Summary Report, current at the date of publication, are for reference and information purposes only. This publication is not designed to provide legal or policy advice and does not necessarily deal with every important topic or aspect of the issues it considers.

The contents of this Summary Report are covered by applicable Cambodian laws and international copyright agreements. Permission to reproduce in whole or in part or otherwise use the content on this website may be sought from the appropriate source.

© 2024 Parliamentary Center of Asia (PCAsia)

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Objectives of the paper.....	5
3. Legal analysis of existing laws and policies.....	5
3.1. International Legal Framework Governing Mangrove Conservation and Its Relevance to Cambodia	5
3.2. Overview of Cambodian laws and policies	7
3.3. Mangrove Tenure	8
3.4. Coastal Management and Coastal-Related Law	9
3.5. Forestry laws	11
3.6. Fisheries laws.....	12
3.7. Protected area and natural resources laws	13
3.8. Land Law of 2001	13
3.9. Other laws related to mangrove	15
4. Evaluation of laws, policies and practices	18
4.1. Identification of gaps and of overlaps	18
4.2. Effectiveness in supporting sustainable mangrove and upholding Community Rights to Mangrove Forests, gender and social inclusion.	20
5. Lessons learned and suggestions.....	22
6. Reference	25

1. Introduction

Cambodia has faced notable mangrove forest reduction primarily due to human activities. The largest losses occurred in the regions of Koh Kong and Sihanoukville, driven by aquaculture and tourism development respectively. In response, Cambodia has implemented various legal frameworks aimed at mangrove protection. These include the Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management, the Law on Fisheries, and the Law on Natural Protected Areas. These laws collectively aim to protect mangrove ecosystems by regulating activities that could damage these critical habitats. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Environment share responsibilities for mangrove management, with specific provisions to prevent activities harmful to mangroves and promote their conservation.

Despite these efforts, governance challenges persist due to overlapping mandates between different ministries, unclear zoning of protected areas, and inadequate community engagement in mangrove management. The report highlights the need for better coordination among government bodies, clearer zoning regulations, and enhanced community participation to improve mangrove governance. This case underscores the complexity of environmental governance, where legal and institutional frameworks must continuously evolve to address emerging challenges and effectively conserve critical ecosystems like mangroves.

PC Asia has finished producing a background paper. The findings of this BP suggest that among other factors, the driver of mangrove conflicts and mangrove loss in Cambodia is mangrove tenure insecurity. Unclear mangrove tenure often revolved around having various claims of ownership by actors to own the same mangrove areas, leading to tensions and conflicts between actors, community displacement and low participation of community to protect and restore mangroves.

2. Objectives of the paper

In response to the complex issues surrounding land tenure security and community rights in mangrove forests and adjacent coastal areas, this legal analysis paper aims to conduct a comprehensive legal analysis to evaluate the existing laws and policies in Cambodia governing mangrove tenure, governance, land tenure, coastal management, forestry, fisheries, livelihoods, and climate change, in the framework of the forestry law, the fisheries law, the protected area law, coastal laws, natural resource law, land law, and/or other related laws.

This analysis also seeks to identify gaps and overlaps within these laws and policies to determine their effectiveness in supporting sustainable mangrove conservation and upholding community rights to mangrove forests.

The ultimate goal is to provide informed lessons learned and suggestions to enhance legal frameworks and ensure they align with the objectives of sustainable environmental management and community empowerment.

3. Legal analysis of existing laws and policies

3.1. International Legal Framework Governing Mangrove Conservation and Its Relevance to Cambodia

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, established in 1971, is a pivotal international treaty designed to promote the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, notably mangrove forests [1]. Mangroves play a crucial role in wetland ecosystems, offering various ecological benefits such as providing habitat for diverse wildlife, safeguarding coastlines, and purifying water. Cambodia, a signatory since 23 October 1999, is dedicated under this convention to safeguard and oversee its wetland areas, including mangroves, to ensure their long-term viability [2]. The nation's commitment to Ramsar underscores its contribution to global conservation endeavors and underscores the significance of preserving these vital ecosystems for future generations. There are five Ramsar sites located in Cambodia with a total of 85,235 ha.

The government is committed to designating more Ramsar Sites, as stated in the National Protected Area Strategic Management Plan 2017-2031. The Koh Kapik and Associated Islets in Koh Kong province covered 12,000 hectares and were designated a Ramsar site in 1999. This site provides a habitat for globally threatened bird and mammal species. It is recognized as Ramsar site no. 998 [3].

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The UNFCCC, established in 1992, addresses climate change through mitigation and adaptation strategies. The UNFCCC took effect on March 21, 1994, and has almost universal membership with 198 countries as Parties to the Convention. Its primary aim is to prevent "dangerous" human interference with the climate system [4]. UNFCCC does not specifically address mangrove conservation; however, its framework supports broader

climate action goals that indirectly benefit mangrove ecosystems. One critical area of focus under the UNFCCC is the conservation of mangrove forests. Mangroves are important coastal ecosystems. They absorb a lot of carbon dioxide, helping to reduce climate change. They also protect coastlines from erosion and support a wide variety of plant and animal life.

Cambodia is taking action to protect and restore its biodiversity, including mangrove forests, with the support of international partners. The focus is on sustainable agriculture, water resource management, and renewable energy development to address climate change impacts. In Cambodia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), there is a strong emphasis on protecting, restoring, and sustainably managing mangrove forests [5]. This is part of a broader initiative to increase climate resilience and reduce vulnerability. Specific actions outlined include reforestation projects, the adoption of sustainable land-use practices, and the enforcement of policies to prevent the deforestation and degradation of mangrove ecosystems.

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Cambodia ratified the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 10 May 1995, committing to the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources [6]. Mangroves in Cambodia are recognized for their critical role in supporting coastal ecosystems, protecting shorelines from erosion, and providing habitat for diverse marine and terrestrial species. Cambodia emphasizes its ongoing efforts to conserve and restore vital ecosystems, which are increasingly threatened by climate change, deforestation, and land conversion. With support from international partners, the Cambodian government is implementing various initiatives to ensure the sustainable management and protection of mangroves. The goal is to enhance their resilience and maintain their essential functions in climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encompass targets related to sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate action [4]. Cambodia's approach to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) includes a focus on the conservation and management of mangrove forests, particularly in relation to SDG 14 (Life Below Water). The SDG 14 goal is to Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The national framework for SDG implementation, including targets and indicators related to mangroves, is outlined in Cambodia's 2016-2030 SDG Framework.

Relevance to Cambodia

For Cambodia, these international frameworks collectively support the conservation and sustainable management of mangrove forests. The Ramsar Convention provides a foundation for protecting wetlands, while the UNFCCC and CBD offer broader environmental and biodiversity goals that intersect with mangrove conservation. The SDGs further align with national priorities, integrating global commitments into local strategies. By engaging with these international agreements, Cambodia demonstrates its

commitment to global environmental stewardship and the sustainable management of its valuable mangrove ecosystems.

3.2. Overview of Cambodian laws and policies

Cambodia has a comprehensive legislative and policy framework enforced by various ministries and government bodies to manage and conserve mangrove ecosystems. The framework covers aspects of environmental governance aimed at ensuring the sustainable use and protection of mangroves and related natural resources. Ministries such as Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Economy and Finance, Environment, Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, and Interior enforce the regulations. The policies form a robust framework that safeguards Cambodia's mangrove forests, crucial for maintaining biodiversity, preventing coastal erosion, and supporting local economies through sustainable fisheries and forestry practices.

Table 1: List of ministries, other legislations and policies relevant to mangroves

Ministries	Laws/Decrees and Sub-Decrees
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fisheries Law 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sub-decree No. 25 on Community Fisheries Management 2007 ▪ Forestry Law 2002 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sub-decree No. 79 on Community Forestry 2003
Ministry of Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management 1996 ▪ Law on Natural Protected Areas 2008 ▪ Sub-Decree on Environmental Impact Assessment 1999 ▪ Sub-decree on Water Pollution Control 1999 ▪ Sub-Decree on Solid Waste Management 1999 ▪ Cambodia's Shoreline Management Strategy (2006) ▪ Zoning guidelines for the protected areas in Cambodia 2017
Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land Law 2001 ▪ Investment law 2021 ▪ Law on the Amendment to the Law on Investment of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2003 (Revoked by Investment Law 2021)
Ministry of Economy and Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sub-decree No. 146 on Economic Land Concessions 2005 ▪ Sub-decree No.148 on the Establishment and Management of the Special Economic Zone 2005
Ministry of Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sub-decree No. 182 on the Functions and Structure of Municipal Administration 2019 ▪ Sub-decree No. 184 on the Functions and Structure of District Administrations 2019
Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law on Water Resources Management 2007

National Committee on Coastal Area Management and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Royal Decree No. 079 on the Law on the Establishment of the National Committee on Coastal Area Management and Development 2012 ▪ Sub-decree No. 171 on Organization and Functioning of General Secretariat of National Committee on Coastal Area Management and Development 2012
Royal Government of Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Circular No. 001 on Development of Cambodia Coastal Areas 2012 ▪ Circular No. 05 on Necessary Measures to Strengthen Natural Resource Management 2016 ▪ Cabinet Decision No. 45 on Regulations on Creation, Conservation and Supervision of Marine Resources (2013) ▪ Cabinet Decision No. 127 on the Establishment of the National Committee for the Prevention and Suppression of Natural Resource Crimes ▪ Cabinet Decision No. 64 on the Establishment of Committee to prepare an amendment and revise the legal framework related to the Management of Forest, Fisheries and Protected Areas 2014, ▪ Cabinet Sor Chor Nor No. 124 on the progress of preparing the draft law on forestry, the draft law on fisheries and the draft law on protected areas 2023

3.3. Mangrove Tenure

According to Article 58 of the Cambodian Constitution [8] and Article 12 of Land Law 2001 [9], the state owns all properties in Cambodian territory. Article 13 allows the public institutions and any legal persons or entities recognized as such by public law to be owners of immovable property within the conditions determined by this chapter. This allows the responsible ministries or entities/bodies to exercise their rights to manage the state public and state private property according to Article 8 of the Law on Management, Usage and Handling State Properties 2020. In the 2024 draft land law, Article 26 maintains that ownership of all immovable property, including mangrove forests, belongs to the state when designated for public service purposes or serving the public interest. All state immovable property shall be registered at the cadastral office (Article 25 of the draft land law, 2024).

Through the support of these legal frameworks, the ministries responsible for the management and conservation of mangrove forests can claim authority based on the laws. Under article 633 of the Code of Environment and Natural Resource (2023), activities such as construction, infrastructure, mine exploitation and investment projects severely affecting environment, natural resource and ecosystem are prohibited in mangrove forest area [10]. However, article 637 allows respective government bodies authorized by separate law relating to management of natural resources to exploit and grant rights to investment project within community zone and sustainable used zone of the protected

areas following prior consultation with Ministry in charge of environment and natural resources or sub-national government.

Based on Fisheries Law 2006 [11] and Natural Protected Area Law 2008 [12], there are two main ministries which have the right to fully manage the mangrove forests in Cambodia's coastal area: the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Ministry of Environment (MoE). According to the Fisheries Law 2006, MAFF has the right to manage the mangrove forests located in the Marine Fisheries Domain (Article 11) and extend the enforcement of fisheries offences over MoE's Protected Areas (Article 3).

According to the Fisheries Administration of MAFF Annual Report 2023 [13], coral reefs, seagrass, and mangroves in four provinces in Cambodia—Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, and Kep—cover 75,586 hectares (2023). The majority of mangroves are under the management of MoE as they are located in the protected area. However, there is currently no publicly available data specifying how many hectares of these mangroves have been registered in the MAFF or MoE Inventory list.

Under MAFF, the management and conservation of Mangrove Forests are categorized as Marine Fisheries Management Areas and Community Fisheries (CFis) (Articles 59 through 61o of Fisheries Law 2006), while under MoE, they are classified as Protected Areas (Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park) and Community Protected Areas (CPAs) (Articles 4 and 21 to 26 of Protected Area Law). There are 20 CPAs located along the three coastal provinces, most of them located in Koh Kong Province (with 15 CPAs), followed by Preah Sihanouk Province with 3 CPAs, and Kampot with 2 CPAs [14]. Currently, there are 516 CFis across the country, of which 475 are inland fishery communities and the remaining 41 are coastal [14].

Even though most coastal areas where the mangrove forests are located are classified under the management of MoE and MAFF, some areas have been converted to private land, state private land under the concession scheme. Due to the lack of information, land registration data (based on Land Law 2001), and coordination among MAFF, MoE and MLMUPC, many mangrove forest areas have not been properly demarcated and are under the threat of encroachment, clearance and reclamation.

Under the MoE's jurisdiction, some of mangrove forests have been granted or converted to state private land through a number of sub-decree(s) on the conversion of state public property to state private property as an ecotourism and Special Economic Zones [15].

3.4. Coastal Management and Coastal-Related Law

National Committee on Coastal Area Management and Development (NCCMD)

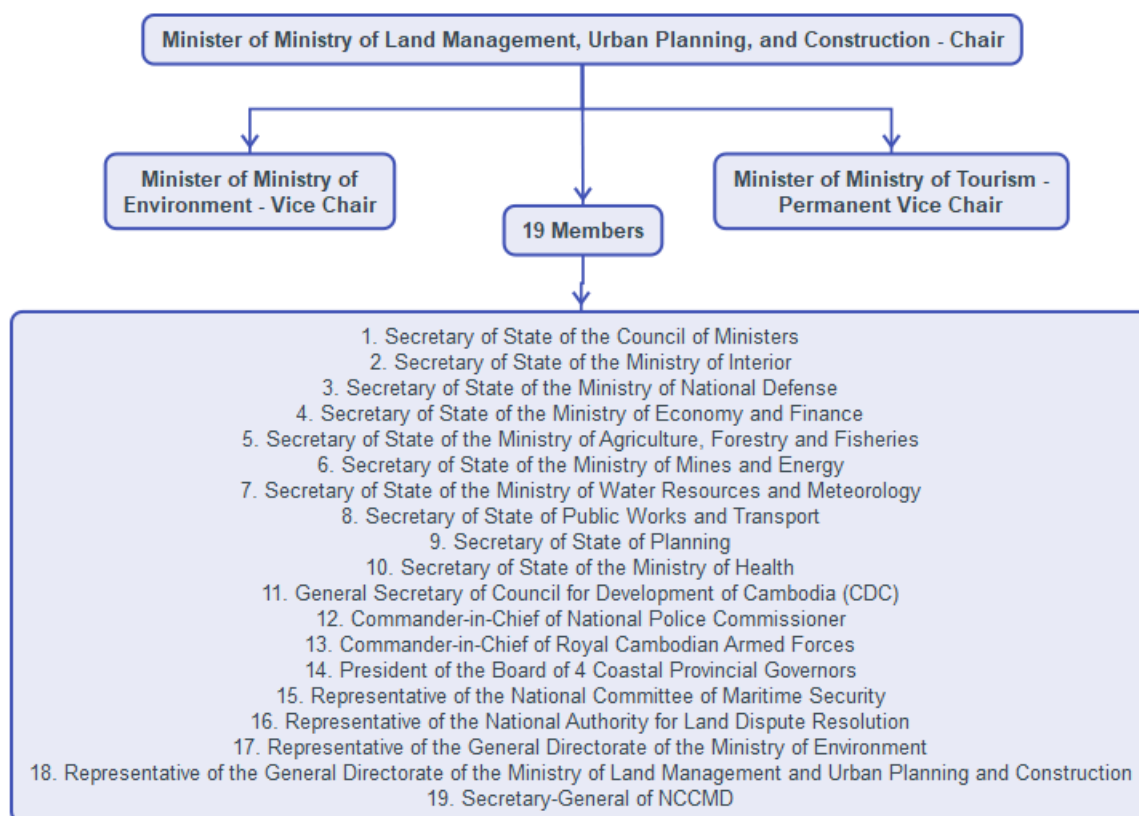
In 2012, the Royal Government of Cambodia established the National Committee on Coastal Area Management and Development (NCCMD) to steward the country's coastal resources effectively [16]. The creation of the NCCMD was aimed at streamlining the

efforts of six national and several provincial ministries with stakes in coastal management, enhancing inter-ministerial collaboration for the planning and development of these areas.

The NCCMD is tasked with the sustainable management and development of Cambodia's coastal regions. It is comprised of key government figures including the Prime Minister as the Honorable Chair, the Minister of MLMUPC as the Chair, and the Minister of Environment as the Vice-Chair, among others. The committee includes 19 other influential members from various sectors including planning, investment, and the military, ensuring comprehensive decision-making [16]. The primary aim of the NCCMD is to improve coordination, management, and developmental strategies of coastal areas, crucial for fostering sustainable environmental practices, conservation efforts, and improving local livelihoods.

Additionally, the NCCMD plays a vital role in policy formulation for coastal and marine resource conservation, particularly mangrove forests. It crafts and implements integrated coastal zone management plans crucial for the delicate balance between development and ecological protection. The committee's efforts to synchronize local and national policies with international environmental standards significantly enhance conservation efficacy. It also spearheads research and community engagement initiatives, which are vital for monitoring ecosystem health and promoting community-based conservation practices. By securing international partnerships and funding, particularly for projects aimed at climate resilience, the NCCMD integrates mangrove conservation into broader national disaster risk reduction strategies, thereby safeguarding biodiversity and reducing the vulnerability of coastal communities to natural disasters. These comprehensive strategies are key to ensuring the sustainable development and enduring vitality of Cambodia's coastal and mangrove ecosystems.

Figure 1: Organizational chart of the National Committee for Coastal Management and Development (NCCMD)



3.5. Forestry laws

The Law on Forestry of 2002 provides for the management, use, harvesting, conservation, and development of all forests (planted or natural) within the Kingdom of Cambodia, but it explicitly excludes mangrove forests from its jurisdiction, focusing instead on planted and natural terrestrial forests within the kingdom forest (Article 3) [17]. This segregation allows the Fisheries Law to focus comprehensively on all aspects of marine and brackish water ecosystems, including mangroves. This focused approach ensures that specific provisions relevant to mangrove conservation—such as prohibitions against harmful activities like cutting and burning—are adequately enforced.

The forestry administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries has certain responsibilities outlined in Article 7 of the law. Article 10 of the law clearly defines the different types of forests, permanent, and private, while Article 40 details the rights of individuals, legal entities, and traditional users. According to this article, local communities are granted specific traditional rights to use forest products and by-products for personal and traditional purposes without the need for permits. These purposes include collecting dead wood, harvesting wild fruits, and using timber for building. These rights are intended to be sustainable and non-transferable. According to Article 10 of the Forestry Law, permanent forest estates are classified into two categories: Permanent Forest Reserves and Private Forests. The Permanent Reserved Forests include both productive and protected forests.

3.6. Fisheries laws

The Fisheries Law of 2006 in Cambodia provides a comprehensive framework for the management and conservation of marine and brackish water ecosystems, including specific provisions for mangrove forests [11]. This legislation is critical for maintaining the ecological balance and protecting the biodiversity within these habitats. The Marine Fishery Domain and its subdivisions safeguard marine ecosystems, including mangrove forests.

According to Article 11, the Marine Fisheries Domain is categorized into distinct zones ranging from inshore to offshore areas. Notably, it includes "mangrove forest areas including mangrove and forests zone, which are important feeding and breeding habitats for aquatic animals and protected inundated areas" (Fisheries Law, 2006). This legal segmentation underscores mangroves' critical role in marine biodiversity and their protection under this law. The marine fisheries domain extends from the coastline at the highest high tide to the outer limits of the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cambodia (Article 11). This fisheries domain is further divided into several areas:

- **Inshore fishing area:** Extends from the coastline at higher high tide to the 20-meter isobath.
- **Offshore fishing area:** Extends from the 20-meter isobath to the outer limits of the Exclusive Economic Zone.
- **Fishery conservation area, sea-grass area, and coral reef area:** Designated as habitats for marine aquatic animals and plants.
- **Mangrove forest area:** This area includes the mangrove and forest zones, which are highlighted as "important feeding and breeding habitats for aquatic animals and protected inundated areas".

Article 18 designates mangrove forests as protected conservation areas within Fisheries Management Areas to sustain fisheries resources.

Chapter 6 of the Fisheries Law of 2006 focuses exclusively on the management and conservation of mangroves and inundated forests. Article 26 states, "Setting fires in the inundated forest and mangrove areas is prohibited," except when executed by the Fishery Administration for ecological management purposes such as silviculture or hygiene (Fisheries Law, 2006). This article establishes a framework for controlled fire management and mandates the formation of Inundated Forest and Mangrove Fire-Fighters Committees, emphasizing community and governmental involvement in the preservation of these vital ecosystems.

Further, the protective measures articulated in Article 28 prohibit a variety of harmful activities within mangrove and inundated forest areas. It explicitly bans "Expanding agriculture lands or using lands which are protected by the provision of this law for other purposes other than development of fisheries in the inundated areas" and "Cutting, reclaiming, digging out, clearing, burning or occupying flooded forests and mangroves" among other restrictions. These prohibitions are designed to prevent the degradation of these critical habitats, ensuring their ecological functions — such as providing breeding

grounds for marine life and acting as natural barriers against coastal erosion — are maintained.

As of July 2024, the draft of the new fisheries legislation stipulates that mangrove forests shall be conserved and safeguarded for the purposes of replantation or the facilitation of natural regeneration, with the aim of preserving the equilibrium of fishery ecosystems (Articles 25 and 26) [18]. The MAFF shall delineate fire prevention measures through the proclamation, and all citizens, community fisheries, military forces, and authorities at all levels are obligated to comply with these regulations.

3.7. Protected area and natural resources laws

The Law on Natural Protected Areas of 2008 (PA Law 2008) establishes a comprehensive legal framework for the establishment, modification, and zoning of protected areas in Cambodia aimed at conserving biodiversity, including mangrove forests [19]. Protected areas are designated as National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Protected Landscapes, Multiple Use Areas, Ramsar Sites, Biosphere Reserves, Natural Heritage Sites, and Marine Parks (*Marine Protected Areas*), each defined and governed by specific sub-decrees (Article 7). These areas are established or modified based on extensive research that includes biological, geological, and cultural valuations and involve clear, mapped boundaries along with defined management objectives (Article 8).

Under Chapter IV of the PA Law of 2008, Zoning within these protected areas is categorized into four distinct types: Core Zone, Conservation Zone, Sustainable Use Zone, and Community Zone, each with specific management objectives and allowed activities to balance conservation with local community needs (Article 11). The Core Zone is highly restricted, primarily for preservation purposes, while the Conservation Zone allows limited sustainable use. The Sustainable Use Zone permits more extensive economic activities, provided they align with conservation goals, and the Community Zone is focused on socio-economic development for local communities, allowing them to maintain their livelihood while ensuring sustainable practices.

Articles 12 to 14 outline the operational details for effective mangrove management: zoning criteria based on ecological capacity and management objectives ensure mangroves are utilized sustainably. Article 13 allows for adaptive zoning modifications in response to ecological changes or new scientific data, ensuring that mangrove protection measures remain effective and aligned with broader conservation strategies. Article 14 mandates formal mapping and collaborative boundary demarcation involving various stakeholders, which is crucial for clearly defining mangrove conservation areas and ensuring compliance with environmental standards. These combined efforts create a robust framework for mangrove conservation within Cambodia's protected area system, aligning local community involvement with national environmental objectives.

3.8. Land Law of 2001

The Land Law of 2001 does not explicitly address the management and conservation of mangroves within its text [9]. However, it does encompass governance related to land use and management, which could potentially include areas where mangroves are located. This inference is drawn from several articles within the law that detail aspects of public and

private land ownership, along with specific provisions that dictate different types of land use. These sections suggest that while direct mention of mangroves is absent, the broader regulatory framework could indirectly influence how mangrove areas are managed and conserved under the law.

Land Law 2001 does not appear to explicitly address mangrove management and conservation directly within the available text. However, governance related to land use and management, including potential areas where mangroves are located, can be inferred from several articles regarding public and private ownership and specific provisions for different types of land use.

The law establishes two types of land ownership: the Private Land and State Property. The state property is divided into two: State Public Land and State Private Land (Article 16 and 17).

- **State public land** State public land comprises all lands that have a public interest value. This includes land of natural origin (e.g. rivers, lakes and mountains), property that is specially developed for public use (e.g. ports, railways and airports), property that is made available for public use (e.g. roads, pathways and public parks), property allocated to provide a public service (e.g. schools, hospitals and administrative buildings), protected areas, archaeological and historical sites, and official properties of the Royal Family. State public land is inalienable, it cannot be allocated for ELCs as long as it has a public interest value.
- **State private land** is all property that belongs to the state but does not have a public interest value. Rights over state-private land are alienable and, as such, can be allocated for economic land concessions (ELCs), social land concessions (SLCs), and other concessions.

According to Article 3, the MLMUPC is responsible for managing the cadastral administration of state-owned immovable property and issuing titles related to immovable property in all regions of Cambodia.

In June 2024, the updated draft land law continues to define state-immovable property as governed by the MLMUPC [18]. Per Article 25, all state-immovable property must be registered with the cadastral administration. Article 26 identifies mangrove forests as state-immovable property, which are categorized as public land among forest areas, protected regions, heritage sites, and other designations established by different legal frameworks (Article 27). Article 29 allows the State to allocate up to two hectares of state land for seasonal use to citizens living near Tonle Sap Lake, enabling them to engage in farming or community-based agriculture. These rights are not transferable, cannot be sold or confiscated, but may be inherited with administrative approval. However, seasonal use is strictly forbidden in specified flooded forest zones around the lake. Yet, there is no dedicated article that outlines specific protections for mangrove forests analogous to those for inundated or flooded forests surrounding Tonle Sap.

While the law details land use around Tonle Sap Lake, prohibiting certain activities in flooded forests, it fails to provide similar protections for mangroves. This reveals a

legislative gap in safeguarding mangroves, despite their status as state-immovable property, emphasizing the need for clearer legal protections for these ecologically important areas.

3.9. Other laws related to mangrove

Law on management, usage and handling state properties of 2020 (LMUHSP)

Law on Management, Usage and Handling State Properties 2020 designates the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) to oversee the management, utilization, and allocation of these resources, ensuring that they are managed efficiently and sustainably (Article 15) [20]. This governance includes organizing legal frameworks, coordinating property inventories, and ensuring compliance with national development goals, all crucial for the protection and sustainable management of vital natural resources like mangroves and forests.

The Law on Management, Usage, and Handling State Properties was deployed and approved by the National Assembly on 6 October 2020. This law has been created with the objective of promoting accountability, transparency, and integrity in the management of state assets. It aims to align its management with the broader goals of the nation's economic, social, environmental, and cultural development. The law applies to all state properties and seeks to optimize their contribution to the national interest within the legal and regulatory framework.

The following sections of this law state how natural resources, such as mangroves, forests, and other ecological assets, are managed and categorized by the state. These resources, which include land, water bodies, air, islands, and marine resources, are divided into two categories: public and private state properties, as described in Articles 5 and 7.

Public state properties are those utilized for public interest or services, while private state properties include assets that do not serve public services directly but are managed through various means, such as investments, acquisitions, or legal transfers (Article 8).

Article 08 outlines the following as State Private Property into: 1) Previously State Public Property reclassified as assets under Article 27, 2) Property that has been acquired through purchase, exchange, gift, inheritance, ownerless property, or confiscated by the Economic Land Concession Court's final decision, and 3) other property designated as private property of the state according to relevant laws and regulations. Article 27 empowers the reclassification of State Public Property into State Private Property if the property is no longer required for public interest or direct use by the public. The consolidation of public property of state and public legal entities is possible only for those state public properties which is already listed in the State Property Inventory (article 28).

Under State Public Property Management, there are three more sub-decrees that were issued to make sure it can manage state property:

- Sub-Decree no. 129 on Rules and Procedures on Reclassification of State Public Properties and Public Entities issued in 2006,

- Sub-decree no. 118 on state land management issued in 2005 is replaced by Sub-decree no. 321 on the conditions and procedures for state land registration (2005) and
- Sub-decree no. 66 on conditions and procedures of state public property listed in the State Property Inventory issued in 2017.

This comprehensive legal framework aims to ensure that state properties are managed to maximize their utility while safeguarding the environment and promoting sustainable development. The key articles and supplementary sub-decrees provide guidelines for property inventories, reclassification, and sustainable management, ensuring optimal use of resources, including critical ecological assets like mangrove forests, in support of Cambodia's economic, environmental, and social development objectives. However, state-immovable property is not yet fully registered, titled, or publicly available. Mangrove forests are not different from other forests.

Water Resources Management Law of 2007

Under the Water Resources Management Law of 2007, Article 02 precisely defines the terms "banks" and "shore" as they relate to various bodies of water, including rivers, tributaries, streams, canals, lakes, reservoirs, and seas [20]. According to the law, "banks" encompass the land typically covered by water along with adjacent soil, rock, or other materials, excluding areas only occasionally inundated. Similarly, a "shore" is described as land usually covered by sand or soil that slopes towards a body of water and is sometimes flooded. Article 6 of the same law mandates that the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) develop and implement policies for the management, conservation, and development of water resources. These policies must consider the unique needs and demands of each region within Cambodia to ensure the sustainability of water resources and effective water utilization, thereby preventing disasters and resolving conflicts.

Although it does not specifically mention mangroves, this article underpins the necessity of tailored management strategies that would cover mangrove conservation to ensure the sustainability and effective utilization of water resources, thereby preventing ecological disasters and minimizing resource conflicts.

Government circulars, and relevant decisions related to Mangrove Forests

The Royal Government of Cambodia has issued a series of legislative and regulatory measures aimed at enhancing the sustainable management and conservation of its natural resources. These include the Circular No. 01 on Development of Cambodia Coastal Areas (2012), which provides guidelines for the use and conservation of coastal and marine resources [21], and the Cabinet Decision No. 45 on Regulations on Creation, Conservation, and Supervision of Marine Resources (2013), which establishes specific guidelines for protecting marine environments [22]. Furthermore, the Cabinet Decision No. 64 (2014) mandates the formation of a committee to revise the legal framework for managing forests, fisheries, and protected areas [23]. In 2016, the government issued Circular No. 05, emphasizing the need for stronger governance in natural resource management, and "Cabinet Decision No. 127 (2016), which created a specialized

committee to combat natural resource crimes [24]. Most recently, Cabinet Sor Chor Nor No. 124 (2023) has initiated the preparation of new draft laws on forestry, fisheries, and protected areas, outlining the responsibilities of Sub-National Administrations and enhancing the legal framework for sustainable resource management in Cambodia [25].

Summary of each Government circulars, decisions and announcement related to Mangrove Forest:

- 1. Circular No. 001 on the Development of Cambodia Coastal Areas (2012) [21]:**
The "Circular on Development of Cambodia Coastal Areas" issued by the Royal Government of Cambodia outlines a comprehensive plan for managing and developing the coastal regions of Cambodia. The document establishes guidelines for the use and conservation of coastal and marine resources, integrating socio-economic and ecological considerations. Key directives include defining public and reserved coastal lands, regulating construction activities to preserve natural landscapes, and managing waste to protect biodiversity. The circular emphasizes sustainable development practices, assigns specific roles to local administrations, and aims to enhance tourism and local economies while safeguarding environmental integrity.
- 2. Cabinet Decision No. 45 on Regulations on Creation, Conservation, and Supervision of Marine Resources (2013) [22]:** This cabinet decision establishes specific guidelines and regulations for the creation, conservation, and supervision of marine resources in Cambodia. It outlines measures to protect marine environments, including mangroves, coral reefs, and marine biodiversity. The decision mandates the implementation of conservation projects and the establishment of protected marine areas. It also provides for the monitoring and regulation of activities that impact marine ecosystems to prevent pollution, overfishing, and habitat destruction.
- 3. Cabinet Decision No. 64 on the Establishment of Committee to prepare an amendment and revise the legal framework related to the Management of Forest, Fisheries and Protected Areas (2014) [23]:** This decision reflects the government's recognition of the need for comprehensive reform in these sectors to ensure effective governance and sustainable resource management. The committee's mandate likely involves reviewing existing laws, identifying gaps or deficiencies, and proposing amendments or new legislation to address emerging challenges and align with international best practices.
- 4. Circular No. 05 on Necessary Measures to Strengthen Natural Resource Management (2016) [26]:** This directive emphasizes the need for stronger governance and management practices concerning natural resources across Cambodia. It calls for improved enforcement of laws and regulations, better coordination among government agencies, and increased community involvement in natural resource management. The circular seeks to address issues such as illegal logging, fishing, and wildlife trafficking by enhancing the capacity of relevant authorities and promoting sustainable practices among local communities.

- 5. Cabinet Decision No. 127 on the Establishment of the National Committee for the Prevention and Suppression of Natural Resource Crimes (2016)** [24]: This decision led to the creation of a specialized committee tasked with combating natural resource crimes across Cambodia. The committee's primary focus is to enhance law enforcement effectiveness in protecting natural resources from illegal exploitation and environmental crimes. It coordinates actions among various ministries and agencies, including those involved in forestry, fisheries, wildlife, and environmental protection, to tackle issues such as illegal logging, poaching, and the illicit trade in wildlife and timber.

- 6. Cabinet Sor Chor Nor No. 124 on the progress of preparing the draft law on forestry, the draft law on fisheries and the draft law on protected areas (2023)** [25]: Draft new laws on forestry, fisheries, and protected areas are to be prepared, outlining Sub-National Administrations' responsibilities for managing natural resources within their jurisdiction, with the government empowered to decide on transfers through sub-decrees. Following the Ministry of Justice review, these drafts will be submitted directly to the Council of Ministers. The Ministers of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and Environment will defend themselves in the Council of Ministers full session meeting and submit to the National Assembly with an overall report by the Deputy Prime Minister. A draft sub-decree on resource management transfer will follow post-promulgation for each ministry.

4. Evaluation of laws, policies and practices

4.1. Identification of gaps and of overlaps

Article 3 and 11 of the Fisheries Law (2006) vs. Article 2 and 7 of Natural Protected Areas Law 2008

MAFF is tasked with managing marine and brackish water ecosystems, which include mangrove forests, under the Fisheries Law 2006 (Articles 3 and 11). On the other hand, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) is responsible for managing natural protected areas, which may also encompass mangrove forests, under the PA Law 2008 (Articles 2 and 07). It is important to note that this overlap in jurisdiction can sometimes lead to confusion and conflicts between the two ministries. It must be carefully managed to ensure the effective protection and management of these important natural resources.

In 2016, the government issued Sub-Decree No. 34 on Arrangement of Duties and Responsibilities of the Ministry of Environment and of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in relation to Jurisdiction and Management of Economic Land Concession Areas, Management and Jurisdiction over the Protected Areas, and Conservation of Forestry and Fisheries (2016). Despite the jurisdictional shift that occurred in 2016 between the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and the Fisheries Administration (FiA) under MAFF, the Fisheries Law 2006 provisions that were applicable to fisheries management under the FiA's jurisdiction at MAFF remain in effect. These provisions will continue to apply until they are specifically repealed or overridden by alternative legislation. For instance, Fisheries Law 2006 still governs the law enforcement of illegal fishing in any

protected area (PA) that falls under MoE jurisdiction. This provision is widely considered to be applicable at present, and it retains the permitting power with the FiA, regardless of whether the illegal fishing activities that occurred are subject to FiA jurisdiction.

Land Law 2001, vs Article 7 of Natural Protected Areas Law 2008 vs. Article 11 of Fisheries Law 2006

MLMUPC is responsible for managing land use and policy, including areas that may contain mangroves. Under environmental protection laws, the Ministry of Environment is also mandated to govern land use, with a focus on the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources found in any designated Protected Areas (Article 7 of the PA Law 2008). Meanwhile, MAFF oversees areas classified as marine fisheries domains (Article 11 of Fisheries Law 2006).

Sub-decree No. 171 on NCCMD function vs. Natural Protected Areas Law 2008 vs. Fisheries Law 2006

NCCMD is designed to coordinate between various national and provincial ministries for the management of coastal areas, including mangroves. However, its role can sometimes overlap with direct actions taken by individual ministries, leading to potential duplication of efforts or contradictory policies. As seen in the NCCMD organogram, the chair of the NCCMD is the Minister of MLMUPC, the Minister of MoE is a vice chair, and the MoT is a permanent vice chair. There is no crucial role of the Minister of MAFF, which is responsible for governing another part of Mangrove Forest under MAFF's jurisdiction. Strategic initiatives or development plans from NCCMD may not always align perfectly with the specific conservation laws and policies enforced by MoE or the fisheries management strategies employed by MAFF, causing inconsistencies in policy implementation and management practices.

Article 2 of Water Resource Management Law 2007 vs. Fisheries Law 2006

MOWRAM's mandate under the Water Resources Management Law involves the management of all water bodies and adjacent areas, potentially including mangrove ecosystems, which are crucial for water quality and flood control (Article 2 of Water Resource Management Law 2007). Meanwhile, MAFF's management of fisheries directly impacts the health of mangrove forests, which are essential habitats for many fishery species. Water resource development projects, such as dam or irrigation systems planned by MOWRAM, could disrupt the natural water flow essential for mangrove ecosystems, thereby conflicting with the conservation efforts under MAFF's fisheries management.

Article 11 of Natural Protected Areas Law 2008 vs. Sub-Decree on Community Fisheries 2006

In areas where mangrove forests are both a critical marine habitat and part of a protected area, there is potential for conflict. For instance, mangrove conservation strategies under the MoE provide a different approach to fisheries management and conservation, especially in zones designated for both conservation and sustainable use. The Community Zone and Sustainable Use Zone may allow resource user groups, particularly the

Community Protected Areas (CPAs), to access and utilize the resources in these areas (Article 11 of Protected Area Law 2008).

CFi is under MAFF (Sub-Decree on Community 2006), aiming to support the community in alleviating poverty through accessing the fishery resources but not allowing engagement with the private sector in terms of leasing or renting. CFi could not do commercial fishing activities (medium scale). The draft new fisheries law still does not allow CFi to go into an agreement with the private sector.

4.2. Effectiveness in supporting sustainable mangrove and upholding Community Rights to Mangrove Forests, gender and social inclusion.

Article 44 of Cambodia's constitution and Article 4 of Land Law 2001

Cambodia's Constitution Article 44 recognizes the right of ownership of all immovable properties in the country (Article 4 of Land Law 2001). No one can be deprived of ownership except in the public interest (Article 5), and legal possession is necessary to achieve ownership (Article 6). The State may provide ownership of its immovable property to individuals or legal entities of Khmer nationality, but only within the limits specified by law. All transfers or changes of ownership rights must conform to the general rules for sales, succession, exchange, gift, or court decision as required by law. According to the National Report on Demographic and Socio-economic Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Cambodia 2019, only 255 people claimed to be indigenous people living in the four coastal provinces (15 villages) [4]. The titling of state property after being listed as state public property by responsible ministries or entities has not covered all state public or state private property. For instance, all the CFis and CPAs managed areas granted by Prakas of MAFF or MoE Ministers are yet to get the hard titles. So, the potential of transferring or converting the management right over the community area located in the mangrove forests might be insecure by converting public state property to state private property law (Article 16) in condition of losing their public interest use.

Article 59-63 of Fisheries Law 2006 vs. Sub-decree on Community Fisheries 2006

In the year 2000, the Community Fisheries (CFis) were instituted as a part of the fisheries reform that was taking place at the time. These CFis were established with the primary goal of ensuring sustainable management of fisheries resources while ensuring equitable distribution of benefits. Furthermore, the establishment of CFis aimed to increase awareness among local communities about the significance of fisheries resources and to improve the standard of living of local fishing communities by reducing poverty. The Fisheries Law of 2006 is a crucial legislation that supports the establishment of CFis. MAFF Minister issued a Prakas on Community Fisheries Establishment Guidelines 2007 to support the process of establishing CFis. Currently, there are a total of 516 CFis across the country, of which 475 are inland fishery communities and the remaining 41 are coastal [14].

Chapter 11 of the Fisheries Law 2006 provides a legal framework for community fisheries. Articles 59 through 61 detail the rights of Cambodian citizens to voluntarily form community fisheries within their locations, the procedural guidelines for such formations dictated by a sub-decree (sub-decree no. 25 issued in 2006), and the allocation of specific

parts of the fishery domain by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. These community fishing areas are determined and periodically reassessed by the Fisheries Administration to ensure they meet the ecological needs and support the traditional practices of the community, with explicit provisions for creating clear boundaries and suitable areas that align with sustainable practices.

Articles 62 and 63 emphasize the operational and management aspects of these community fisheries, specifically how they must adhere to management plans that are subject to approval and regular review by the Fisheries Administration. These plans are crucial for maintaining the ecological balance within mangrove forests, as they regulate fishing activities and prevent habitat degradation. The legislation strictly prohibits the commercialization of these areas (e.g., selling, exchanging, hiring), ensuring that the community fisheries focus solely on sustainable usage and conservation. Additionally, the Minister holds the power to abolish a community fishing area if it conflicts with public benefits, although this is intended as a measure of last resort. These articles collectively enforce a structured approach to environmental and mangrove protection, integrating local community involvement with national conservation efforts to enhance the sustainability of marine and mangrove ecosystems.

Article 21-26 of Natural Protected Areas Law 2008 vs. Prakas on Guideline, Procedure and Process of Community Protected Areas, 2017

Following Article 25 of Protected Areas Law 2008, the Minister of Environment issued Prakas on Guideline on Procedure and Process of Community Protected Areas (CPAs) Establishment in 2017. In support of the establishment of CPAs, Article 4 specifies that management must ensure the participation rights of local communities, indigenous ethnic minorities, and the public in decision-making processes concerning the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity.

The PA Law of 2008, article 25, provides the right for local communities to establish Community Protected Areas in protected areas. This enables local communities and indigenous ethnic minorities to participate in the management and sustainable utilization of natural resources within specified areas of the protected zone. The primary objective of providing this right is to enhance the living conditions of these communities and promote their well-being.

Article 21 stresses the importance of involving local communities, indigenous groups, the public, and civil society in accessing information and participating in conservation efforts for sustainable mangrove management. Articles 22 through 26 detail these communities' specific rights and responsibilities within the conservation framework. The State secures the rights of these groups to engage in traditional uses of natural resources within sustainable use and conservation zones under guidelines that ensure these activities do not adversely impact the mangrove ecosystems (Article 22). Article 23 specifies that the utilization of natural resources by communities must comply with management plans and technical guidelines to sustain the health of the mangroves. Additionally, traditional swidden agriculture is restricted within core and conservation zones to protect these sensitive areas from degradation (Article 24).

5. Lessons learned and suggestions

This paper showed that although the current legal frameworks are comprehensive enough to support sustainable mangrove conservation in Cambodia, there remain gaps in the existing laws that drive mangrove tenure insecurity and overlapping jurisdictions between ministries, hence leading to contradictions, which can hinder the smooth and efficient management of mangrove forests. The existence of conflicting mandates can create confusion and impede the effective management and governance of these crucial ecosystems.

These overlapping jurisdictions and conflicts are particularly evident between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Ministry of Environment (MoE), as well as other significant bodies like the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction (MLMUPC) and the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM). These conflicts highlight the complexities of managing ecosystems that intersect multiple regulatory frameworks.

MAFF manages marine and brackish water ecosystems, including mangrove forests, under the Fisheries Law 2006 (Articles 3 and 6). MoE manages natural protected areas, including marine protected areas and mangrove forests, under the PA Law 2008 (Articles 2 and 7). Despite the 2016 jurisdictional shift between MoE and MAFF, the Fisheries Law 2006 provisions applicable to fisheries management under FiA's jurisdiction at MAFF remain in effect. These provisions will continue unless repealed or overridden by alternative legislation. MoE has the power to exercise their power to manage within the Protected Areas by using Fisheries Law for illegal fishing activities with the cooperation of the Judicial Fisheries Officers of MAFF. The coordination of law enforcement among the inter-ministerial committees have been established by the government through Circular No. 05 on Necessary Measures to Strengthen Natural Resource Management in 2016 and the Cabinet Decision No. 127 on the Establishment of the National Committee for the Prevention and Suppression of Natural Resource Crimes in 2016.

The MLMUPC is in charge of managing land use and policies, which includes areas that have mangrove forests. According to the Management, Usage, and Handling State Properties Law 2020 (Article 08) and Land Law 2001 (Articles 03, 16, and 17), most mangrove forests have not yet been officially registered as state public property. The registration process will occur after the mangrove forests are demarcated and recognized as a state public property under the Ministry of Environment (MoE) as a protected area (Wildlife Sanctuary or National Park, etc.). This can also be done for mangrove forest areas through a sub-decree on marine fisheries management areas (including mangrove forest areas), which is defined by Articles 11 and 12 of Fisheries Law 2006¹. This also impacts CFIs and CPAs, whose management areas are allocated from these areas.

Several mangrove forest areas are threatened due to a lack of information on land registration data (based on Article 3 of Land Law 2001, and Article 14 of Protected Areas Law 2008), and coordination among MAFF, MoE, and MLMUPC. These areas have not been properly demarcated, which has led to encroachment, clearance, and reclamation.

¹ There is no Sub-Decree on establishment of marine fisheries management area within mangrove forest area.

Unfortunately, the law enforcement system is not strong enough to prevent illegal activities and protect the mangrove forests. Some areas have been converted to state private land under the concession scheme or private land due to the lack of demarcation and registration data unavailable at the sub-national level. Some of the mangrove forests that fall under the jurisdiction of MoE have been converted into state private land as part of ecotourism projects and Special Economic Zones. This was done through several sub-decrees on the conversion of state public property to state private property. One of the largest ecotourism projects in the country is the Union Development project in Koh Kong province, and there are four Special Economic Zones located in the same province.

To deal with this problem, the government established the National Committee on Coastal Area Management and Development in 2012 to manage coastal resources sustainably following by the Cabinet Decision No. 45, the Circular No. 05 and the Cabinet Decision No. 127 were issued in 2016 to prevent illegal activities and enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement across various sectors, including forestry, fisheries, and wildlife protection. Despite its strong legal foundations and coordination among inter-ministries committees, mangrove forest management in Cambodia faces significant challenges, particularly in conflict over the management and use of resources among stakeholders and public information availability for any development projects.

The competition between tourist expansion, aquaculture development, urbanization, and other developments is destroying mangrove forests. The available development projects have not been distributed to the local communities on time². This is not compliance to Article 4 of Forestry Law 2001, Article 28 of Fisheries Law 2006, the Environment and Natural Resource Protection Law 1996, the Sub-Decree on EIA 1999.

Fortunately, Cambodia is in the process of renewing the four existing laws, which could be an opportunity for the country to align its legislation, particularly the specific articles that contradict each other, aiming to find consistency and harmonization. The Environment and Natural Resources Code 2023 revokes the Protected Areas Law 2008. The draft new land law is being consulted at the inter-ministerial level and the wider stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

Besides the improvement in the legislative level, there remain underlying issues that require tackling at the implementation level and the roles of parliaments are required to help oversee and monitor the progress of the implementation. Those underlying issues that need to be addressed are as follows:

- **Clear Demarcation of Responsibilities:** It is recommended to develop a more detailed and clear demarcation of responsibilities and jurisdictions for mangrove management among the various ministries. This would involve defining the roles and responsibilities of each ministry involved in the management of mangroves and

² There have been incidents where local communities and authorities were not notified about development projects taking place in their vicinity. For example, there was an occurrence of dumping waste in mangrove forests for constructing roads in Prek Thnout village, Prek Thnout commune, Teuk Chhou district, Kampot, and another incident of dumping sand in the Peam Krasaop Wildlife Century in Mondol Seima district, Koh Kong. The local communities and authorities were not informed about the approval and execution of these projects [9], [10].

clearly outlining their respective jurisdictions. This would ensure that there is no overlap of responsibilities and that everyone is aware of their specific roles and duties.

- **Integrated Management Plans:** It is suggested to encourage the development of integrated coastal zone management plans that involve all stakeholders to ensure that all activities are harmonized and support mangrove conservation. This would involve bringing together all stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, local communities, and the private sector, to work collaboratively towards the conservation and sustainable management of mangroves. Such plans would incorporate all aspects of mangrove management, including zoning, restoration, and protection.
- **Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee:** It is recommended to create or reinforce an inter-ministerial coordination committee that can supervise and resolve disagreements between different ministries, i.e. NCCMD. This committee would be in charge of coordinating the activities of all the ministries involved in managing mangroves and settling any conflicts that may occur. It would also ensure that there is consistency in policy implementation across different jurisdictions.
- **Budget Allocation:** MAFF, MoE, and NCCMD have not received adequate funds to support the conservation and management of mangrove forests. Therefore, it is recommended that the budget allocation for mangrove conservation and management be increased and that the funds are utilized effectively and efficiently. Additionally, exploring alternative funding sources such as private-sector partnerships and international aid may also be considered. This will help to enhance the conservation and management of mangrove forests.

6. Reference

- [1] Ramsar Convention Secretariat. (1971). *The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Retrieved from <https://www.ramsar.org>
- [2] Ramsar Convention Secretariat. (1999). *Cambodia's commitment to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Retrieved from <https://www.ramsar.org>
- [3] Ramsar Convention Secretariat. (n.d.). *Cambodia country profile*. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Retrieved November 6, 2024, from <https://www.ramsar.org/country-profile/cambodia>
- [4] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). *What is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change?* UNFCCC. Retrieved November 6, 2024, from <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>
- [5] Royal Government of Cambodia. (n.d.). *Cambodia's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)*. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Retrieved from <https://unfccc.int/NDC>
- [6] Convention on Biological Diversity. (1995). *Country profile: Cambodia*. Convention on Biological Diversity. Retrieved from <https://www.cbd.int/countries>
- [7] United Nations. (2015). *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. United Nations. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- [8] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2015). *Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia*.
- [9] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2001). *Land Law*. Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. Retrieved from <https://cdc.gov.kh/laws-and-regulations/land/>
- [10] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2023). *Code of Environment and Natural Resources* (Article 633). Ministry of Environment. Retrieved from <https://www.moe.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Code-on-Environment-and-Natural-Resources.pdf>
- [11] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2006). *Fisheries Law*. Fisheries Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. Retrieved from https://fia.maff.gov.kh/storage/publications/english_fisheries_law.pdf
- [12] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2008). *Natural Protected Areas Law*. Ministry of Environment. Retrieved from <https://www.moe.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Natural-Protected-Areas-Law-2008.pdf>
- [13] Fisheries Administration Annual Report (2023). Annual Report 2023.
- [14] Ministry of Environment (2023). Annual Report 2023.

[15] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2023). *Sub-decree No. 107 on the reclassification of land from state public property to state private property*. Open Development Mekong. Retrieved from https://data.opendevelopmentmekong.net/en/laws_record/sub-decree-no-107-on-the-reclassification-of-land-from-state-public-property-to-state-private-prope

[16] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2012). *Royal Decree No. 079 on the establishment of the National Committee on Coastal Area Management and Development*.

[17] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2002). *Forestry Law*. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. Retrieved from https://server2.maff.gov.kh/parse/files/myAppld5hD7ypUYw61sTqML/27df01768d69102ddbf06905e0b164e1_1502935153.pdf

[18] Royal Government of Cambodia. (n.d.). *Draft Land Law*. Open Development Cambodia. Retrieved from https://data.opendevelopmentcambodia.net/en/laws_record/draft-land-law

[19] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2008). *Law on Natural Protected Areas*. Ministry of Environment. Retrieved from https://cdc.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/LAW-ON-NATURE-PROTECTION-AREA-PROTECTED-AREAS-LAW_080104_080104-.pdf

[20] Royal Government of Cambodia. (202). *Law on Management, Usage and Handling State Properties*. Ministry of Economy and Finance. Retrieved from <https://www.coj.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/L1120-030.pdf>

[21] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2007). *Law on Water Resources Management*. Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology. Retrieved from https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/sites/ppp.worldbank.org/files/2024-08/cambodialawwaterm_2007_english.pdf

[21] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2013). *Circular No. 001 on the development of coastal zones of the Kingdom of Cambodia*. Council of Ministers. Retrieved from https://data.opendevelopmentcambodia.net/en/laws_record/circular-on-the-development-of-coastal-zones-of-the-kingdom-of-cambodia

[22] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2013). *Cabinet Decision No. 45 on Regulations on Creation, Conservation, and Supervision of Marine Resources*. Council of Ministers.

[23] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2014). *Cabinet Decision No. 64 on the establishment of committee to prepare an amendment and revise the legal framework related to the management of forest, fisheries, and protected areas*. Council of Ministers.

[24] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2016). *Cabinet Decision No. 127 on the Establishment of the National Committee for the Prevention and Suppression of Natural Resource Crimes*. Council of Ministers.

[25] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2014). *Cabinet Sor Chor Nor No. 124 on the progress of preparing the draft law on forestry, the draft law on fisheries and the draft law on protected areas*. Council of Ministers.

[26] Royal Government of Cambodia. (2016). *Circular No. 05 on Necessary Measures to Strengthen Natural Resource Management*. Council of Ministers.