

## **FP270: Climate Adaptive Irrigation and Sustainable Agriculture for Resilience (CAISAR) in Cambodia**

**Access the document:** <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-b42-02-add12>

As with many similar projects in the past, we question the logic and ultimate objectives of this project. Ostensibly designed to support the most vulnerable people and communities, in a Least Developed Country, it seems more interested in promoting the private sector, in order to ensure that public funding for vulnerable communities is no longer necessary in the near future. The idea that you can, in a seven-year implementation period, substitute public finance and public provision of key agricultural services, like extension services, with private sector ones, in a country with low levels of development, is not only risible, but shows that the objective is not to support small-holder farmers in becoming more resilient, but to create markets for foreign technologies and private companies at their expense.

Evidence of this logic is that, on the one hand, the proposal laments the absence of “attractive financial incentives or government support, such as tax breaks or subsidies” to attract private sector participation in large scale irrigation projects, while including a public–private–producer partnerships initiative designed partly to reduce dependency on subsidies by smallholder farmers and local agri-enterprises. This clearly highlights the pervading logic that subsidies for large private sector companies are necessary and justifiable, under the guise of enabling environments, while the same is not the case for poor and vulnerable farmers and small, local enterprises.

We have also highlighted in the past the dangers of promoting technologies that will lock in poor farmers in cycles of dependency on private companies providing non-locally developed inputs, technologies and services, such as solar pumps, mechanised dry seeded rice, laser land levelling mechanisation services and seeds, instead on promoting the development of endogenous technologies that can truly benefit local people and local enterprises.

On top of this, the ITAP has further identified that GHG emission reduction claims in this proposal are likely overstated, while potential environmental and social impacts have been understated, further bringing into question the potential benefits of this project. The ITAP has even requested conditions to be added, in order to address these issues. We fully agree with these conditions. We would have expected a proposal like this not to come up for Board approval until these considerations had been properly addressed, especially by an IAE with the level of capacity and experience that IFAD should have.

Finally, we note that the ITAP has also indicated that the proposal lacks a clear strategy to involve women in technical training or irrigation leadership, and has requested IFAD to develop a gender-responsive training plan to encourage women's participation. This is just another example of how vulnerable people and communities are included as a result area, but supporting them in building resilience is not really reflected in the actual design of this proposal.