

## How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and Livelihoods

In Cambodia, one of the widest dams in Asia has been constructed through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), greater than 6 kilometers long. This has displaced many indigenous and ethnic groups and has reduced crucial migration routes for local fish species, which substantially affects the fishermen and people. The ground where they lived on now was dry, rocky and difficult to cultivate. Some refused to move due to the village in which they and their ancestors have lived in for generations. Communities forced to simply accept relocation offers are either prefabricated houses or about \$6,000 to build a new house But they continue to fight.

Not only environmentalists but economists are also against dams. Economists wonder whether or not to offer reliable energy at a lower cost? When you compare the loss with the fishing income and the cost of replacing the dam, it is a serious question whether it is cost-effective. In addition, the geography of the country is not appropriate for hydropower. Dams need to be very wide because the country has no mountains and large canyons that can be reservoirs.

Why is the Cambodian government pushing this dam?

The dam is a part of a large "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) project of the Chinese government. The government aims to stimulate the development and promote China's foreign policy interests around the world.

An ancient shrine inside withinside the village of Srekor, northeastern Cambodia is flooded after the construction of the Lower Sesan 2 hydroelectric plant was completed

This has brought on the Chinese government to reevaluate and negotiate resettlement and compensation programs. However, it isn't only an improvement and overseas coverage program. It also aims to make Beijing appear properly on the arena stage.

As the owner of the company responsible for the operation and construction of the dam, this should be reconsidered. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) should have greater control of the financing projects.

The Cambodian government needs to re-evaluate how they can deal with the effect evaluation for the project. Whether roads, electric wire or energy plants, they should offer reasonable compensation to reduce the impact, including opportunities to grow aquaculture or fish-gathering possibilities for reservoirs.

In my point of view, the government should provide the proper reimbursement to the people. This option might be the best way they could do and it is an important responsibility.