There are approximately 400,000 indigenous individuals in Cambodia, making up 2–3% of the national population. They are divided into 458 indigenous communities, representing 24 different indigenous ethnicities across 15 provinces. Indigenous communities have resided in Cambodia for thousands of years and have deep cultural ties to the land.

A Collective Land Title ("CLT") is the shared ownership and rights of a community to its land and natural resources.

To provide legal protection to indigenous communities’ communal land and preserve their identity and culture, Cambodia recognized CLTs for indigenous peoples under the 2001 Land Law. In addition, CLTs are regulated under the 2009 Sub-Decree No.83 on Procedures of Registration of Land of Indigenous Communities.

The first CLT was granted in 2011. Between 2011 and 2017, only 19 indigenous communities received CLTs.

In 2017, the Ministry of Land, Management, Urban Planning, and Construction ("MLMUPC") announced it would accelerate land registration for indigenous peoples for 10 communities per year. Despite this commitment, it remains difficult for indigenous communities to obtain CLTs. While many indigenous communities have started the CLT registration process, the MLMUPC has granted only 18 additional CLTs since 2017.

July 2022
+ 18 CLTs

MLMUPC’s announcement to accelerate communal land registration

2017
First CLT granted

2011

+ 19 CLTs

2017
As of July 2022, 37 indigenous communities comprising 3,652 families have been granted CLTs, as outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N° of CLTs granted</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Ratanakiri</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25,786.58</td>
<td>2,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mondulkiri</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6,155.66</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kratie</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4,784.99</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stung Treng</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,991.51</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Provinces</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,718.75</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,652</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, in over a decade, only 8.1% of the total indigenous communities living in Cambodia were able to legally protect their communal land through a CLT.

The various barriers to obtaining CLTs, especially the complexity and high cost of the CLT registration process, explain the low numbers of registered CLTs. For instance, as of June 2021, only 155 out of the over 400 indigenous communities living in Cambodia have obtained formal recognition as indigenous communities by the Ministry of Rural Development (“MRD”) and 152 have successfully registered as legal entities with the Ministry of Interior (“Mol”), which are two of the three main steps to complete to obtain a CLT.

**CLT REGISTRATION PROCESS IN 2022**

**Step 1:**
Formal recognition of a community as indigenous by the MRD
- ✔️ 155 indigenous communities

**Step 2:**
Official registration as a legal entity with the Mol
- ✔️ 152 indigenous communities

**Step 3:**
Collective land registration with the MLMUPC
- ✔️ 37 indigenous communities

CCHR encourages the Royal Government of Cambodia to fulfill its commitment to accelerate CLT registration for indigenous communities and to address the barriers preventing indigenous communities from registering their communal land in order to preserve their identity, culture, and traditional lands.

Sources:

August 2022