

News

“Start of Build4People project in Cambodia: A total of 3.1 million euros will be spent for improving quality of life through sustainable urban transformation”

How can sustainable urban development be promoted, and the quality of life be increased in an emerging country like Cambodia? The multidisciplinary research consortium "Build4People" under the guidance of Dr. Michael Waibel at the Department of Earth System Sciences at the University of Hamburg will investigate this. Build4People is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research over the next four years and has started its Research and Development phase on 1st April 2021.

The overall aim of the project is to research and promote possible sustainable building and urban development practices in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. In addition, innovative integrated and participatory approaches will be applied to foster implementation.

Dynamic economic growth and the associated massive construction boom are currently shaping the urban built environment in Cambodia. However, most of these processes are strongly dominated by short-term profit interests. Despite high electricity prices and a long tradition of climate-friendly architecture, most of the newly erected buildings are neither energy-efficient nor adapted to the tropical climate. In addition, the development of a modern consumer society in Cambodia is also leading to more resource-intensive lifestyles.

"In recent times it has become more and more apparent that sustainable urban transformation is by no means just a technological challenge but above

all a social, cultural, economic and political challenge," says Dr. Michael Waibel from the Department of Earth System Sciences at the University of Hamburg, the overall coordinator of the research consortium. "At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that science can only work out solutions for sustainable urban development together with urban society."

Based on this transdisciplinary problem understanding, the Build4People project will work together with local actors from politics, business and civil society to develop practical knowledge and interventions by integrating various disciplines in a cross-sectional manner via participatory formats such as urban living labs or incubators for sustainable business models. Hereby, experts from environmental psychology, civil engineering, urban planning, architecture, urban climatology, remote sensing and human geography are involved.

All of these measures shall lead to more energy- and resource-efficient buildings and neighborhoods, significantly reduced pollutant emissions, an increase in urban greenery, a healthier urban climate, heightened awareness among decision-makers and finally also to more environmentally conscious behavior among the urban citizens.

"The integrating link of the joint research is the urban quality of life which will be conceptualized, empirically analyzed and then also modeled in different steps. Ultimately, the goal is to gradually bring together the more subjectively perceived aspects of quality of life of the city by the urban dwellers with objectively measurable criteria of urban sustainability" says Waibel.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is funding the Build4People project as part of the “SURE: Sustainable Development of Urban Regions” funding line from April 1, 2021, till March 31, 2025. The BMBF has already supported Build4People in a twenty-month Definition phase and a six-month Preparation phase.

Build4People sub-project partners are the University of Hamburg (overall coordination and work package: sustainable urban transformation), Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg (work package: behavior change), the University of Stuttgart (work package: sustainable building), and the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (work package: urban green infrastructures) as well as the industrial partners Eble Messerschmidt Partner (EMP) from Tübingen (work package: sustainable neighborhoods) and INKEK, Institute for Climate and Energy Concepts from Kassel (work package: urban climate).

In Cambodia, Build4People cooperates with various local university partners, among them most importantly, the Royal University of Phnom Penh, with Phnom Penh Capital Administration, the National Council for Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Environment and with various dissemination partner organizations from business, politics and civil society.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project title

Build4People: Enhancing Quality of Life through Sustainable Urban Transformation in Cambodia

Funding institution

German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

Funding volume

Total funding volume including own investments: 3.17 mill. Euro

Funding support from German Federal Ministry of Education and Research:

2.95 million Euro

Funding duration

01 April 2021 – 31 March 2025 (Research and Development phase)

01 April 2025 – 31 March 2027 (Implementation phase, funding TBC)

Project website

<https://build4people.org>

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