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**China's Foreign Aid for Road and Bridge Construction in Cambodia**

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**Abstract**

Either traditional or non-traditional donors use their foreign aid to increase their influence on the recipient countries in different ways. Traditional donors have consolidated to create the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) by monitoring their activities through a committee named Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in providing development aid and loan funds to the recipient countries. China has experienced almost the same period with some traditional donors, but China never joins as a DAC member, and never shares information about its development aid to the recipient countries like the other DAC members.

Cambodia and China relations have been constructed since the 1950s reaching a political high and political trust, that the two countries signed a seldom MOU of "China-Cambodia Community of Share-Future", which China declared Cambodia was the first country signed such important document with China. China's aid was gratitude by high ranking officials of the Royal Government of Cambodia for low interest, fast response, and consistency with the basic needs of Cambodian people, especially there is no political conditions attached, and China never interfered local politics of recipient countries.

The stable economic growth of Cambodia for more than two decades since 1998 was influenced by China's foreign aid for infrastructure development in Cambodia, especially road and bridge construction, which contribute directly to the poverty reduction in Cambodia.

The researcher used mixed-method research with content analysis to analyze all data collected and used a personal approach interview with high-ranking officials to confirm

the facts and clarify some lapsed points. Most of the data collection was accessed from internet-based searches by using the keywords and accessed to collect the data from the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) reports. Ms. Excel 2013 was used to codify and analyze the data, and then the researcher used pivot table to generate the graphs.

**Key Words:** Foreign aid, China's foreign aid, China's foreign aid for Cambodia, China's foreign aid for Road Construction in Cambodia, China's foreign aid for Bridge Construction in Cambodia.

## **1- Introduction**

Cambodia and China had built mutual relations since the 1200s and was resumed in the 1950s (Long, 2009), with the initiative by King Norodom Sihanouk, a former king of Cambodia, and premier Zhou Enlai, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, then cut-off during 1980s, and then has been resumed again since 1990s after Paris Peace Accord, in which Cambodia received plenty of loan funds, grants, and capital investments from China (Chap, 2010). Because the strategic location lies at the heart of Southeast Asia (May, 2019; Marsot, 1969) Cambodia can enjoy obtaining foreign aid from several partners including China and the West, especially the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU). Among all donors, the emerging donor China has come to play an important role through its foreign assistance, helping the poor and developing countries to develop their social and economic infrastructure with other traditional donors, since only traditional donors play these roles right after World War II.

China has started providing aid and loan funds to less developed countries since the 1950s (Marsot, 1969), while the country was still poor. So as until now, China keeps applying the concept of "south-south cooperation" in providing grants or loan funds to the recipient countries, and with no string attached (Jakobson, 2009), and abiding by the principle of "Peaceful Co-existence" (Liu, 2014). The unconditional loan and aid of China, in response to the requests of recipient countries (Dreher et al., 2017). Some recipient countries welcome and expressed their gratitude to China for the positive assistances for their countries, in which many leaders called Beijing "a reliable friend" (Wan, 2018), and Cambodia called "the most trustworthy friend" (Zhou, 2019); while some recipient countries, scholars, and researchers criticized China for the no string attached to its loan and aid could be a trap to the recipient countries (Fernholz, 2018) when the countries use the loan or aid in an ineffective way (Easterly & Pfutze, 2008). For instance, Burgos and Ear (2007) viewed that China treats Cambodia as an important

partner for the sake of its energy self-sufficiency. Some researchers blamed China for delivering rogue aid to African countries (Dreher & Fuchs, 2015; Naim, 2009)

Since controversial concepts around China aids, and Cambodia leaders and high ranking officials treats China as the closest friend, there are questions arise whether China contributed much foreign aid to Cambodia? Is China's foreign aid helpful for road and bridge development in Cambodia?

To answer this question the researcher reviewed journals and research papers relating to China's foreign aid to Cambodia, websites, newspapers, and, of course, the Royal Government of Cambodia reports mostly through the internet by using the keywords above, and using a mixed-method with content analysis methodology. The researcher used Ms. Excel Spread sheet to codify and justify the data collected and converted all data collected into USD before data analysis.

This article is structured as follows. First Introduction section, second an Overview on Foreign Aid, third China's Foreign Aid in Cambodia, fourth positive views on China's Foreign Aid in Cambodia, Fifth is Negative View on China's Foreign Aid to Cambodia, Sixth is Discussion, and the last section is Conclusion and Recommendation

## **2- An Overview on Foreign Aid**

Aid donors use their aid to line up the recipient countries to be with their blocs, in other words, they use their soft power to increase influences on the recipient countries (Sarah, 2017; Dan & Nikolai, 2017). To develop the economy in Europe, the United States began to establish an Organization for European Economic Development (OEED) in 1948 and has been changed to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1960, which is called "Traditional Donors", composing of 37 nations in Europe, the Americas, and the Pacific (OECD, 2020). OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) composes of 30 countries as members, a unique international forum, and the largest aid providers (OECD, n.d.).

China experienced as a foreign aid provider and aid recipient at the same time, and normally provided its official development assistance in three categories (grants, interest-free loans, and concessional loans), in which 61.0% is allocated for economic infrastructure, 16.1% for industry, 8.9% for energy and resources development, 4.3% for agriculture, 3.2% for public facilities, and 6.5% for others areas (Watanabe, 2015). China has expanded its official development assistance by spending USD354.3 billion,

while the USA spent USD394.6 billion for the same time frame from 2000 to 2014 (Dreher et al., 2017). In 2007 China contributed to the International Development Association through the World Bank in partial aid to developing countries in East Asia (Wan, 2018).

China's foreign aid to foreign countries fallen under the forms of complete projects, goods and materials, technical cooperation, human resource development, medical teams, emergency humanitarian aid, in-country volunteer programs, and debt relief (Huang et al., 2019). China's foreign aid projects mainly focus on infrastructure, in response to local needs and priorities, which are originated by the government of the recipient country (Reilly, 2015; Nowak, 2015). China helped to construct more than 130 schools, more than 100 hospitals and provided scholarships for 70,627 students from 119 developing countries by the end of 2009, never imposed any political conditions by following the south-south cooperation and adhering to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, including mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence (White Paper, 2011). On contrary, Nowak blamed China for using its aid to compete with Taiwan for diplomatic recognition (Nowak, 2015).

The United States of America had provided foreign assistance to Cambodia in the 1960s and then cut off in response to the request of the first royal government of Cambodia during the Sangkum Reas Niyum era (Marsot, 1969). The USAID provided funds for humanitarian assistance to build roads and bridges in Cambodia in the 1960s and currently moved apart from basic human needs to improve health and education services through contracts and grants to private voluntary organizations, International Organizations, and Cambodian-run organizations (USAID, 2021).

Since 2008, total emerging donors' foreign aid was USD8,679 million, while non-DAC members represented 81 percent (the researcher calculated based on the data from (Smith et al., 2010). They blamed most of the emerging donors for not submitting reports of their foreign aid to the DAC for three reasons- the countries had no statistical system in place to capture their development assistance flows, some governments were reluctant to publicize their reports to avoid criticism from the local people for not fighting the poverty within the country, and some governments concerned the acceptance of ODA definition, would require them to adhere to DAC principles and recommendations (Smith et al., 2010).

Emerging donors are the new breed of development funders influencing the landscape of international development finances, for instance, foreign aid from emerging donors were increased significantly from USD 5.7 billion in 2010 to USD8.4 billion in 2015, in which China was the largest donor with USD 5,400 million, while South Africa was the smallest donor with USD100 million donations in 2015 (Devex, n.d.). Similarly, foreign aid of China as grant equivalent basis was increased from USD5.1 billion in 2015 to USD5.9 billion in 2018 and estimated to be the same amount of USD5.9 billion in 2019 equivalent to 0.044 percent of China's Gross National Index (GNI) of 2019, and it was also estimated to be decreased to USD5.4 billion in 2020 since China applied the budget cut for COVID-19 pandemic fighting (Kitano & Miyabayashi, 2020).

Even though foreign aid helped to alleviate poverty throughout the world, some researchers criticized the world spent billion dollars each year to assist the poorest people, but most of them went to corrupt and autocratic countries (Easterly and Pfitze, 2008).

Cambodia had signed agreements for foreign assistance amounting to USD 1,843.47 billion and USD 1,288.27 billion in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Through this information, the Royal Government of Cambodia prioritized many funds to the infrastructure development projects which represented 82.12%, 85.39%, 92.61% for 2018, 2019, and 2020 respectively (CPDSB, 2020).

### **3- China's Foreign Aid in Cambodia**

China's foreign aid in Cambodia can be classified into three periods: from 1956 to 1990 which was the first grant China offered to develop country amounting to UK£8, in which main China's foreign aid was the four factory building in the 1960s (Marsot, 1969), from 1990 to 2003 China provided aid to Cambodia for win-win results, increasing sharply from USUSD871,000 in 1993 to USUSD5.573 million in 2003, and the last period from 2004 to the present, China based on good bilateral relations between the two countries, China provided aid to Cambodia which increasing from USUSD32.5 million in 2004 to USUSD347.1 million in 2012 (Huang et al., 2019). Currently, China had become the largest donor of Cambodia since 2008, which the aid was amounting to USD257 million, comparing to USD214 million aid of the EU, and USD113 million aid of Japan (Reilly, 2015; Cárerres and Ear, 2013; Heng, 2012), but China became the second-largest donor, after Japan in 2013 which the aid and grants were amounting to USD 2.6 billion (Reilly, 2015). Dresher et al., (2017) indicated that China provided a USUSD12.5 million (about 103 million CNY) in grant aid and

interest-free loans to Cambodia on November 4th, 2002 and 195 students from Cambodia were sent to China for a training program in 2013. China's foreign aid in Cambodia has risen rapidly after 1997 and in 1999 China-funded Cambodia USD218.3 million (which USD200 million was in interest-free loans (Heng, 2018).

China's foreign aid is primarily a request-driven which is prioritized by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and has been provided to Cambodia in nine sectors, which transportation was the largest, with twenty-six projects amounting to USD1.6 billion represented 62 percent of all Chinese aid to Cambodia, Agriculture is the second-largest sector, with ten projects amounting to USD560 million, followed by Community and Social Welfare amounting to USD280 million in two projects and Energy, Power, and Electricity amounting to USD131 million in two projects (Reilly, 2015).

H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce and Pung Kheav Se, president of the Federation of Khmer-Chinese in Cambodia praised China as the leading foreign direct investment (FDI) in Cambodia, reaching USD3.594 billion in 2018, and the bilateral trade between the two countries was ranking from USD5.8 million to USD6.457 billion (Hin, 2019; (Liangyu, 2018). From 2013 to 2017, China was the largest foreign direct investor in Cambodia, with the capital investment of USD5.3 billion (CDC, 2017). The National Bank of Cambodia and the National Institute of Statistics confirmed that China was the biggest investor in Cambodia from 1994 and 2012 was USD9.17 billion, 44 percent of USD19.2 billion total FDI (Hin, 2019; Wikipedia, 2021). The total investment in Cambodia nearly doubled by increasing from USD3.6 billion in 2016 to USD6.3 billion in 2017 (Hor, 2018). The total trade of Cambodian and China was USD732 million, and a trade deficit of Cambodia with China was USD632 million (Wikipedia, 2021). The accumulated FDI in Cambodia from 1994 to 2019 accounting for USD85.88 billion, where China was the largest investor represented 21.81 percent (Santander, 2021).

Table 1: The amount of Foreign Aid and FDI in Cambodia from 2013 to 2020

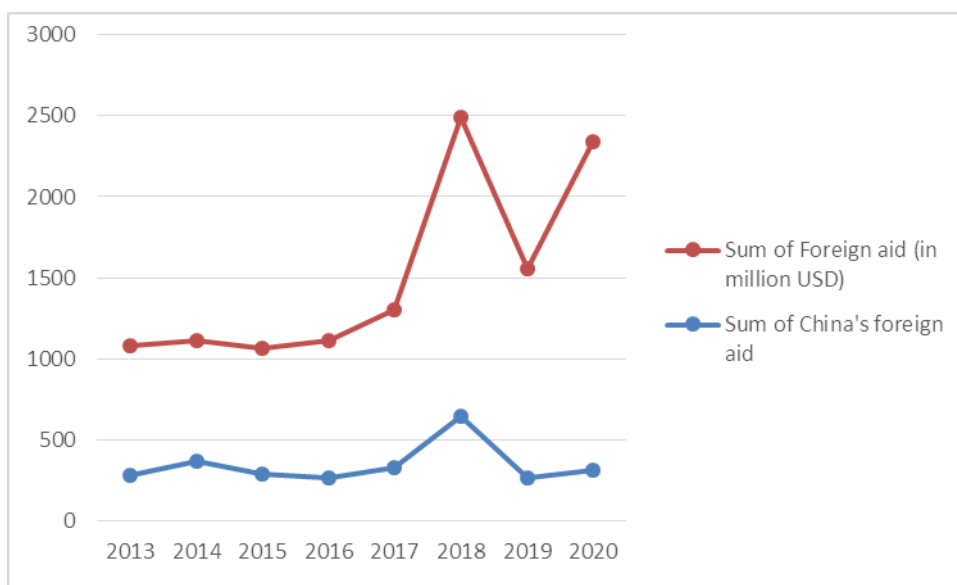
Year	Foreign aid (in million USD)	Foreign aid accumulate amounts	Balance of foreign aid	China's foreign aid	China's foreign aid accumulate amounts	balance of China's foreign aid	Total FDI in Cambodia	China's FDI in Cambodia	%GDP Growth
2013	803	n/a	n/a	281	n/a	1964	2070	n/a	7.36
2014	744	n/a	n/a	372	n/a	2369	1850	499	7.14
2015	778	7654	5648	290	3407	2680	1820	860	7.04

2016	846	8310	5864	267	3600	2815	2480	n/a	7.03
2017	978	9686	6671	327	4053	3210	2790	n/a	6.83
2018	1843	11391	7022	352	4620	3419	3210	n/a	7.47
2019	1288	12638	7596	504	4866	3607	3660	2750	7.50
2020	2022	15039	8810	492	5255	3901	3200	931e	2.3e

(The researcher created the table by using several data sources from CDC, 2017; Santander, 2021; The World Bank Group, 2021; Handley, 2017; Macrotrends, 2021; Sarath, 2021; ADB, 2020; while some data could not be accessed)

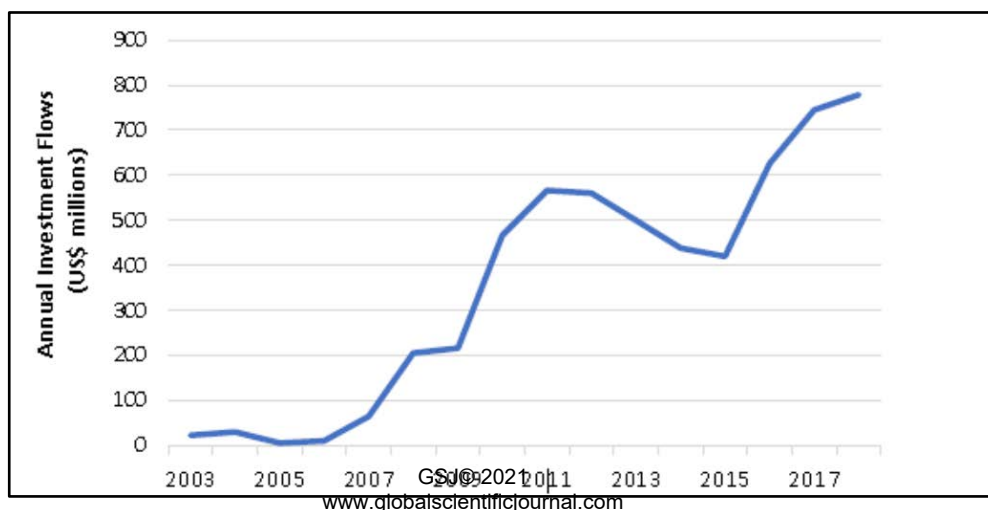
*Notes:* Only integer number is used with a round formula in Ms. Excel, and the short forms n/a = no data available, and e = estimated.

Figure 1: Foreign aid and China’s Foreign Aid Trends in Cambodia



(Source: The researcher used Pivot Table to generate this figure in Ms. Excel by using the data collected in the research)

Figure 2: China’s Foreign Director Investment in Cambodia from 2003-2018



(Source: The researcher adopted from IDI, 2020 which cited from the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, 2019)

Kamchay hydroelectric power station in China's Sino-Hydropower project costs USD 280 million, with a 193-megawatt, which was the biggest foreign investment project in Cambodian history. Besides this project, China invested in 243 projects accounted for USD 925 million in agriculture, mining, oil refineries, metals, automobiles, ports, garments, and tourism (Wikipedia, 2021).

Wang Tianxiang, deputy director of the division of Southeast Asia Affairs of the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry of the People's Republic of China said Cambodia became the closest friend of China for years, and the relations between the two countries reached a political high the two countries reached high level of political trust and Cambodia was the first country who signed an MoU of "China-Cambodia Community of Shared Future" (ZX, 2019). For this sake, China provided a lot of assistance helping Cambodia to build over 8,000 kilometers of roads and more other projects like bridges, infrastructures, and power stations, while H.E. Son Chanthol, Ministry of Public Works and Transports said China helped to construct 3,287km of roads, and 7.95km aggregate length of the large-scale bridges in Cambodia by 2019 (ZX, 2019). The bilateral trade volume sharply increased from USD5.8 billion in 2017 to more than USD6 billion in 2018 and is expected to be USD10 billion in 2023. Samdach Techo Hun Sen expressed his regard to China for its financial and technical support on infrastructure and human resource development in Cambodia during the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Cambodia and China in 2018. (Office of the Council of Ministers, 2018).

While debate among stakeholders on the effectiveness of foreign aid in Cambodia, Ek C. & Sok H. (2008) confirmed that Cambodia is dependent heavily on foreign aid, and technical assistance (TA) consumed about half of the total official development assistance (ODA) in Cambodia from 1998-2006, and the TA applies capacity substitution other than capacity development, which was implied that low efficiency of foreign due to the bargaining technique of the recipient countries and the current norm and practices of the donors



In a collaboration between the Royal Academy of Cambodia and the University of Jiujiang, the first Confucius Institute was operated in August 2009, and a new department of Chinese study was launched within the University of Asia Euro in Cambodia in 2011 (Reilly, 2015).

China was an observer of the annual Cambodia Development Cooperation (CDC) Forum in 2007 and started providing annual reports through the CDC website for all aid projects in Cambodia. (Reilly, 2015).

China's foreign aid to Cambodia was reaching USD652.3 million in 2017 ranking in the top ten among traditional donors (Micah et al., 2019) and follows the South-South Cooperation (SSC) principles and practices, satisfied with some standards set by DAC (Zhou, 2019).

China's foreign aid can be classified in several forms, but the researcher classified it into three categories: Concessional loan, interest-free loan, and grant aid, in which loan exemption was treated as grant aid. The researcher has found China helped providing foreign aid to Cambodia in several sectors and several projects in each sector, including Road and Bridge Construction, Irrigation and Agriculture, Hydropower and Electricity, Building and Stadium, human resource development, Airport, Port and Inland waterway, and industry.

#### **4- China's foreign aid for Road Construction in Cambodia**

Cambodia had 44,709 km road network, consisting of 5,263 km of the national roads, 6,441 km of provincial roads, and 33,005 kilometers of territory roads, in which national roads, provincial roads, and bridges along the roads are under the management of the ministry of public works and transports (MPWT) and the territory roads and bridges along the roads are under the management of the ministry of rural development (CDC, 2017).

As of April 2021, Cambodia has borrowed loan funds from China amounting to USD 2.8 billion and has constructed 29 lines out of 75 lines in total, about 2,888 kilometers of roads, and 8 large-scale bridges by consuming USD2.5 billion (Fresh News, 2021).

Table 2: Length of Road Network in Cambodia by 2009

Road Classification	Length (Percentage)	No. of Bridge (Length)	Management Authority
1- digit national roads	2,117 km (4.7%)	589 (17,643m)	MPWT
2- digit national roads	3,146 km (7.1%)	698 (15,710m)	-
Provincial roads	6,441 km (14.4%)	904 (16,309m)	-
Territory roads	33,005km (73.8%)	1,869 (26,559m)	MRD
Total Length	44.709km (100%)	4,060 (76,221m)	-

(Source: The Researcher adopted the table from CDC, 2017)

By 2020, China has helped to construct new national roads and to repairs existing roads for more than 3,000 km approximately 57% of all national roads, including 1-digit, 2-digit, 3-digit, and 4-digit national roads (Thou,2020).

In 2003, China funded the road construction project in Cambodia to construct the national road No. 7 with a length of 509.17 kilometers connecting from Skun of Kampong Cham with Trapeang Kreal international checkpoint with Laos, with a promising interest-free loan of USD24 million, but the cost-equivalent in 2014 of such construction was USD 52, 879,050 million (Dreher et al., 2017).

In 2007, China-funded 3 projects to construct national road no.57, national road no. 76 and national road no. 8. The national road no. 57 connecting Battambang and Pailin provinces, with a length of 77 kilometers, started the project with a promissory concessional loan of USD 41,580,000, but the cost-equivalent in 2014 of the construction was USD 68,161,036. The national road no. 76 connecting Sen Monorom city of Mondulkiri with Ta Ang of Ratanakkiri with a length of 172 kilometers was inaugurated on November 21, 2016, presided by Samdach Techo Hun Sen, which started the construction with the concessional loan of USD 51,900,000, but the cost equivalent in 2014 was USD 84,468,905. In the same year, China had funded the national road no.8 project connecting Khsach Kandal district of Kandal province with national highway no 7 with a length of 113 kilometers costing USD 71,512,719 which equivalent to USD 116,389,228 in 2014.

In 2008, China funded to construct the Cambodia-Vietnam railroad with a length of 135 kilometers connecting from Kandal, Prey Veng, and Svay Rieng province with the original concessional loan contract of USD500 million which was equivalent to USD689,456,547 in 2014.

In 2009, China-funded four road construction projects including national road no. 78, national road no. 57B, national road no. 3762, and national road no. 8.1 & 8.2. The national road no. 78 with a length of 121 kilometers connecting Stung Treng with Ratanakiri, executed by China's Shanghai Construction (Group) costing 510,770,000 CNY which equivalent to USD 101,467,301 in 2014 (Dreher et al., 2017); ODC, 2015). The national road no. 57B connecting Poipet town at Kon Damrei with Pailin province consumed the cost of 629,091,787CNY loan fund, which equivalent to USD 124,972,582 in 2014. The national road no. 3762 connecting Sen Monorom with Dak Dam districts with 26.45 kilometers executed by China bridge Road Cooperation, and the project cost was USD 15,228,192 equivalent to USD 20,666,161 in 2014, and completed in December 2012 (Dreher et al., 2017). The project to construct national road no 8.1 & 8.2 used the concessional loan funds of USD 14,800,000 equivalent to USD 20,085,062 in 2014.

In 2010, China-funded two road projects for the rehabilitation of national road no. 61 and the rehabilitation of national road no. 62. The national road no. 61 connecting Prek Kdam bridge with Thnal Keng consumed loan fund of USD 9,494,528 equivalent to USD 11,941,250 in 2014. The national road no. 62 connecting Kampong Svay district of Kampong Thom to Tbeng Meanchey of Preah Vihear province, with a length of 128 kilometers, consumed USD 53,563,120 million equivalent to USD 67,366,234 in 2014.

In 2011, China-funded three projects to expanding national road no. 6 from Prek Leap to Thnal Keng, and to construct new national roads no. 59 and national road no. 41. The expanding national road no. 6 above consumed USD 68,392,600 equivalent to USD 75,914,919 in 2014. The construction of national road no. 59 consumed concessional loan amount of 509,593,711 CNY which equivalent to USD 87,540,965 in 2014. The Royal Government of Cambodia used USD 44,922,000 loan funds to construct national road no. 41, which was equivalent to USD 49,862,850 in 2014.

In 2012, China-funded three projects to extent national road no. 76, to construct national road no. 214 and to expand national road no. 5. The extension of national road no. 76, the royal government of Cambodia expended USD 89,271,400 equivalent to USD 94,543,694 in 2014. To construct the national road no. 214 with a length of 143.412 kilometers together with the Sekong bridge, the royal government of Cambodia expended amounting to USD 120,138,965, but the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) reported in RECONNECTING ASIA the expended was the only USD 116.5 million. In another report of Cambodia Development Council reported that the

cost of the Sekong bridge alone consumed expenses only USD 2,558,125, so the rest amounts were for the construction of the national road no. 214. The expansion of national road no. 5 was implemented by using the concessional loan of USD 56,800,000 equivalent to USD 60,153,213 in 2014. In the same year China-funded for road and irrigation projects in Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, and Svay Rieng provinces amounting to USD 302,000,000 equivalent to USD 319,828,701 in 2014.

In 2013, China funded only one road project to construct the national road no. 44 connect Kampong Speu town to Phnom Sruoch district with a length of 139.14 kilometers by spending USD 79,501,979.

In 2014, China gave a concessional loan to Cambodia to construct national road no. 58 and national road no. 1577. The national road 58 connecting Banteay Meanchey to Banteay Oddor Meanchey along the Thailand border, with a length of 174 kilometers, by using the concessional loan fund of USD 119,751,775, in which CSIS reported up to USD 122 million. And in the same year, the national road no. 1577 was constructed to connect national road no. 57 in Battambang province to Thai border with a length of 51.798 kilometers. This project cost was USD 36,301,400.

In 2018, China funded to expand the national road no.6 from Thnal Keng of Kampong Cham to Siem Reap province, spanning 248.53 kilometers with a concessional loan of USD255 million.

In 2019, China funded to construct the first national express highway in Cambodia connecting Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville for 190 kilometers with an estimated cost of more than USD 2 billion (Road Traffic Technology, 2021), but another source stated USD 1.9 billion (Sok, 2019). The project is expected to be completed by 2023. In 2020, China funded a USD132.8 million concessional loan to construct 182 kilometers long national road no. 55 connecting Pursat province to Thailand at Anlong Veng district. Furthermore, China also funded Cambodia to construct national road no. 10 along the Cambodia-Thailand border connecting Samlot district of Battambang to Koh Kong province, for 199 kilometers long. The project is expected to be completed in 2023 and will use USD188 million loan funds (Boken, 2021; CCA, 2020).

In summary, from 2003 up to 2020 China assisted Cambodia to construct 24 lines of roads with a sum amount of foreign aid of more than USD 4,500 million.

Table 3: Road Construction Projects funded by China's foreign aid

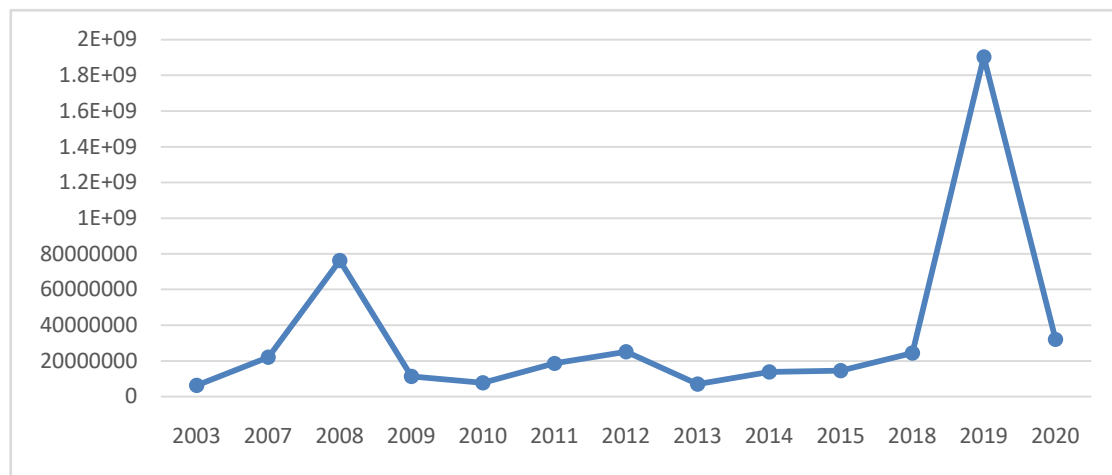
No.	China's Aid	Year	Road Length (km)	Contractual costs In CNY	Contractual costs USD	Total Costs in 2020 USD
1	Interest Free loan for national road No. 7	2003	509	437,838,534	24,000,000	63,454,860
2	Concessional loan for national road No.57	2008	103	473,719,200	41,580,000	68,654,957
3	Concessional loan for construction of national road No. 76	2007	172	642,808,367	51,900,000	93,160,633
4	Concessional loan for construction national road No. 8	2007	109	885,722,025	71,512,719	128,365,511
5	Concessional loan for construction of Cambodia-Vietnam railroad	2008	135	4,791,723,002	500,000,000	694,452,609
6	Concessional loan for national road No. 78	2009	121	510,770,000	74,783,309	74,024,638
7	Concessional loan for construction project of national road No. 3762	2009	26	141,149,880	15,228,192	20,456,504
8	Concessional loan for construction of national road No. 8.1&8.2	2009	24	137,180,973	14,800,000	19,881,301
9	Concessional loan for rehabilitation project of national road No. 61	2010	16	80,842,263	9,494,528	11,716,270
10	Concessional loan for rehabilitation of national road No.62	2010	128	456,069,404	53,563,120	66,097,015
11	Concessional loan for expansion national road No. 6 from Prek Leap to Thnal Keng	2011	40	453,815,000	70,250,000	65,770,290
12	Concessional loan for construction of national road No. 59	2011	176	509,593,711	78,884,475	73,854,161
13	Concessional loan for construction of national road	2011	95	322,114,011	44,922,000	46,683,190

No.	China's Aid	Year	Road Length (km)	Contractual costs In CNY	Contractual costs USD	Total Costs in 2020 USD
	No. 41					
14	Concessional loan for extension of national road No. 76	2012	172	596,570,709	89,273,400	86,459,523
15	Concessional loan for construction of national road No. 214	2012	143	758,076,869	113,441,875	109,866,213
16	Concessional loan for expansion national road No. 5 from Prek Phnov to Prek Kdam	2012	21	379,566,774	56,800,000	55,009,677
17	Concessional loan for construction of national road No. 44	2013	139	488,937,171	78,192,000	70,860,460
18	Concessional loan for construction of national road No. 58	2014	174	737,670,934	119,751,775	106,908,831
19	Concessional loan for construction of national road No.1577 (Battambang)	2014	52	223,616,624	36,301,400	32,408,206
20	Concessional loan for expansion national road no.5 from Prek Kdam to Poipet	2015	407	1,004,800,000	160,000,000	145,623,188
21	Concessional loan for national road no. 6 expansion from Thnal Keng of Kampong Cham to Siem Reap	2018	249	1,690,650,000	255,000,000	245,021,739
22	Concessional loan for construction Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville Expressway	2019	190	13,129,000,000	1,900,000,000	1,902,753,623
23	Concessional loan for construction of national road No. 55 Pursat-Anlong Veng	2020	180	916,320,000	132,800,000	132,800,000
24	Concessional loan for construction	2020	199	1,297,200,000	188,000,000	188,000,000

No.	China's Aid	Year	Road Length (km)	Contractual costs In CNY	Contractual costs USD	Total Costs in 2020 USD
	of national road No. 10 from Samlot of Battambang and Koh Kong					
<b>Total</b>			<b>3580</b>	<b>31,054,111,718</b>	<b>3,911,953,609</b>	<b>4,502,283,399</b>

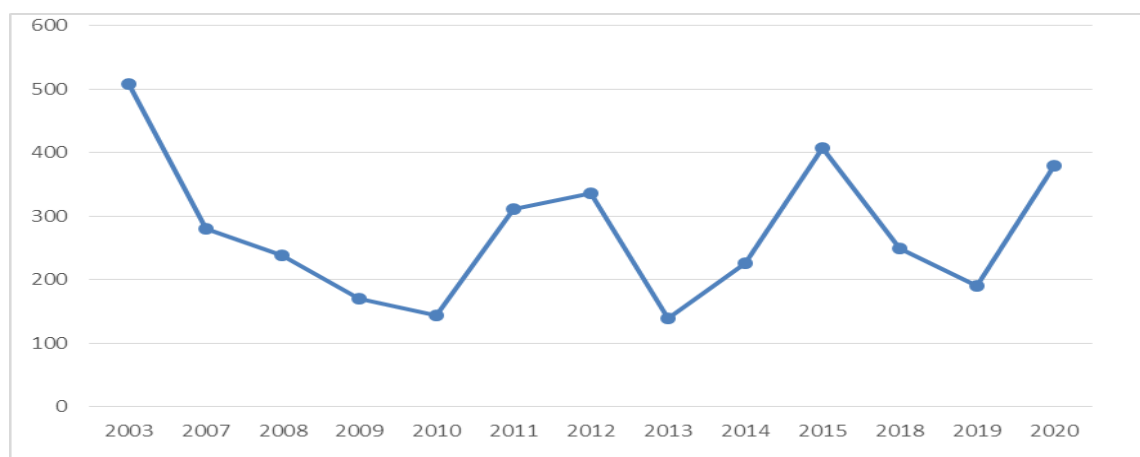
*(The researcher constituted the table by using the data collected from the research)*

Figure 3: China’s Foreign Aid for Road Construction in Cambodia



(Source: The researcher used Pivot Table to generate this figure in Ms. Excel by using the data collected in the research)

Figure 4: Length of Roads construction financed by China's Foreign Aid



(Source: The researcher used Pivot Table to generate this figure in Ms. Excel by using the data collected in the research)

According to the definition set by the Ministry of Public Works and Transports of Cambodia, China helped to construct and renovate roads in Cambodia at least 24

projects by focusing mainly on the national roads with one and two digits, and the provincial roads. The data showed that China financed 60% and 54% for construction and renovation of the national road with one and two digits respectively, and contributed 61% if we combined the national roads with one and two digits together. China contributed only 3% to construct and renovate provincial roads in Cambodia. Further, if we combined all national roads with one digit and two digits with provincial roads, China contributed 31% to the road construction and renovation in Cambodia. Overall, China has contributed to financing 8% of road construction and renovation in Cambodia from 2000 to 2020.

### **5- China's aid for Bridge Construction in Cambodia**

In 2004 China provided an interest-free loan to build the 1<sup>st</sup> Cambodian-China friendship bridge named Sekong Bridge which is the first longest bridge in Cambodia with a length of 1,056.84 meters worth USD 2,558,125. Later on, in 2007, China provided a loan fund to build the second Cambodia-China friendship named Prek Kdam Bridge worth USD 28,783,664 equivalent to USD 46,846,331 in 2014. In the same year, China also funded to build the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Cambodia-China friendship bridge named Prek Tamak Bridge, which worth USD 43,503,619 equivalent to USD 70,803,527 in 2014. Again in 2011, China funded to build Takhmao Bridge worth USD 31,995,392 equivalent to USD 35,514,480 in 2014. Within the same year, China provided additional loan funds to build a new Chroy Changvar bridge which was the 5<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-China friendship bridge, worth USD 26,752,000 equivalent to USD 29,694,381 in 2014. In 2012, China promised a concessional loan fund of USD 2,558,125 to build the 6<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-China friendship bridge named Mekong-Stung Treng Bridge, equivalent to USD 2,709,145 in 2014. In 2013, China provided a loan fund to build the 7<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-China friendship bridge named Koh Thom Bridge worth USD 19,390,000 equivalent to USD 19,714,848. Since 2018, China has provided a concessional loan fund to build the 8<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-China friendship bridge spanning 1,130 meters with an 8.3m connecting road and a width of 13.5 m, connecting Kampong Cham province and Thboung Khmom province, with a contract value of USD 569.99 million (Tian, 2021). This bridge was expected to be inaugurated in 2021, and the construction of the bridge was completed in April 2021, two months ahead of the schedule (Xinhua, 2018; Xinhua, 2021). The Royal Government of Cambodia planned to construct another bridge called the 9<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-China bridge spanning 1,761m across the Mekong River connecting Kratie and Kampong Thom in 2021 by using a loan fund from China, and the cost of this project is not confirmed yet (Chea, 2021).



Table 4: Bridge Construction Financed by China's Foreign Aid

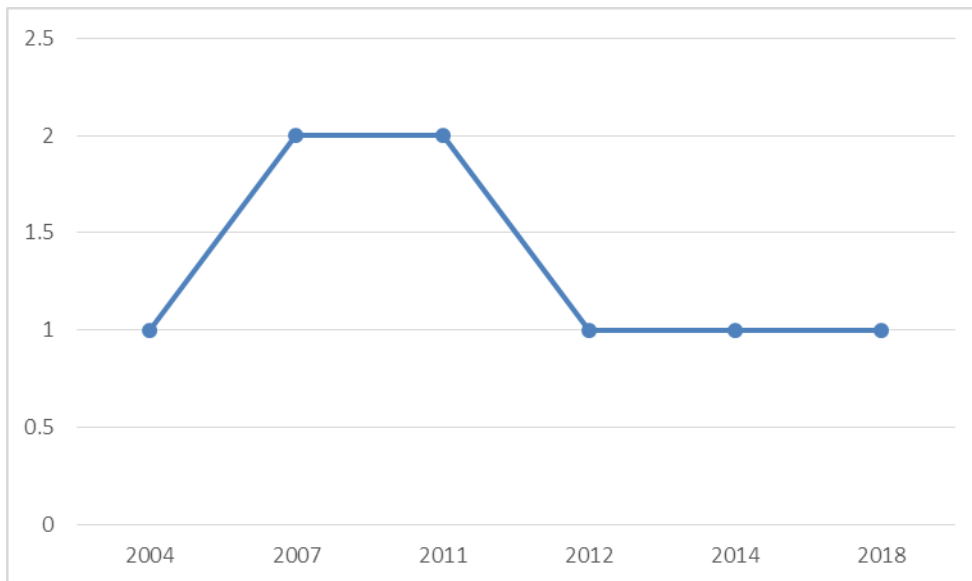
No.	China's Aid	Year Start	Bridge Length (meter)	Actual Amounts		2020 USD
				In CNY	In USD	
1	Interes- Free loan for 1st Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Sekong)	2004	1,057	110, 204,126	13, 309,677	15, 971,612
2	Concessional loan for 2nd Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Prek Kdam)	2007	981	219, 043,683	28, 783,664	31, 745,461
3	Concessional loan for 3rd Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Prek Tamak)	2007	1,060	331, 062,541	43, 503,619	47, 980,078
4	Concessional loan for 4th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Takhmao)	2011	855	206, 690,232	31, 995,392	29, 955,106
5	Concessional loan for 5th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (New Chroy Changva)	2011	971	172, 817,920	26, 752,000	25, 046,075
6	Concessional loan for 6th Cambodian-China friendship bridge in Stoeng Treng	2012	1,731	16, 141,769	2, 558,125	2, 339,387
7	Concessional loan for 7th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Koh Thom)	2014	415	119, 248,500	19, 390,000	17, 282,391
8	Concessional loan for 8th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Kroch Chhma Bridge)	2018	1,130	3,779, 033,700	569, 990,000	547, 686,043
<b>Total</b>			<b>8,200</b>	<b>4,954, 242,471</b>	<b>736, 282,477</b>	<b>718, 006,153</b>

*(The researcher constituted the table by using the data collected from the research)*

Among the sixteen large-scale bridges in Cambodia, China funded to construct eight bridges represented 50 percent of all large-scale bridges in Cambodia. Among all funds financed to build those bridges, concessional loans represented almost 98 percent and another more than 2 percent as an interest-free loan, with total loan amounts of more than USD718 million from 2000 to 2020. The distributions of China represented 50

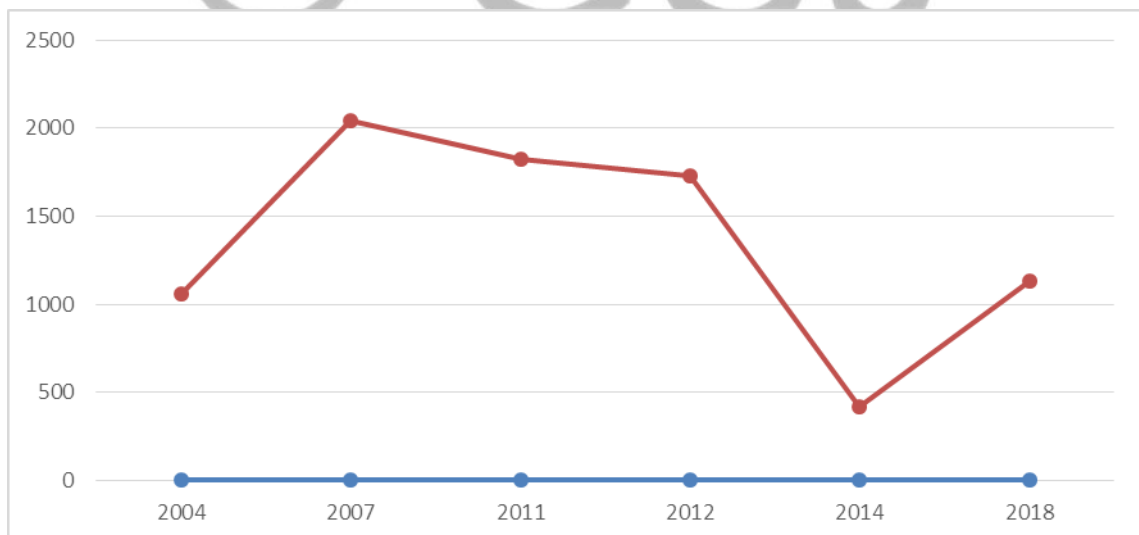
percent of the total large-scale bridges in Cambodia in terms of numbers, and 47 percent in terms of lengths.

Figure 5: Cost of large-scale Bridges construction financed by China's foreign aid



(Source: The researcher used Pivot Table to generate this figure in Ms. Excel by using the data collected in the research)

Figure 6: Length of large-scale Bridge construction financed by China's foreign aid



(Source: The researcher used Pivot Table to generate this figure in Ms. Excel by using the data collected in the research)

Table 5: Large-scale Bridges in Cambodia

No.	Names of Bridges	Year	Bridge Length (meter)	Sources of funds support
1	Chroy Changva I	1995	711	Japan
2	Kizuna Bridge	2001	1,360	Japan
3	Koh Kong Bridge	2002	1,900	Cambodia
4	1st Cambodia-China friendship (Sekong Bridge)	2004	1,057	China
5	Neak Leung Bridge	2015	2,215	Japan
6	Prek Kdam Bridge (Second Cambodia-China friendship Bridge)	2007	981	China
7	3rd Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Prek Tamak)	2007	1,060	China
8	Monivong Bridge	2009	269	Cambodia
9	Prek Pnov Bridge	2010	996	Cambodia
10	Koh Puos Bridge	2011	905	Russia
11	4th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Takhmao)	2011	855	China
12	5th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (New Chroy Changva)	2011	711	China
13	6th Cambodian-China friendship bridge in Stoeng Treng	2012	1,731	China
14	7th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Koh Thom)	2014	415	China
15	8th Cambodia-China friendship bridge (Kroch Chhma Bridge)	2018	1,130	China
16	Prek Ta Sek Bridge	2021	500	Cambodia
<b>Total</b>			<b>16,796</b>	

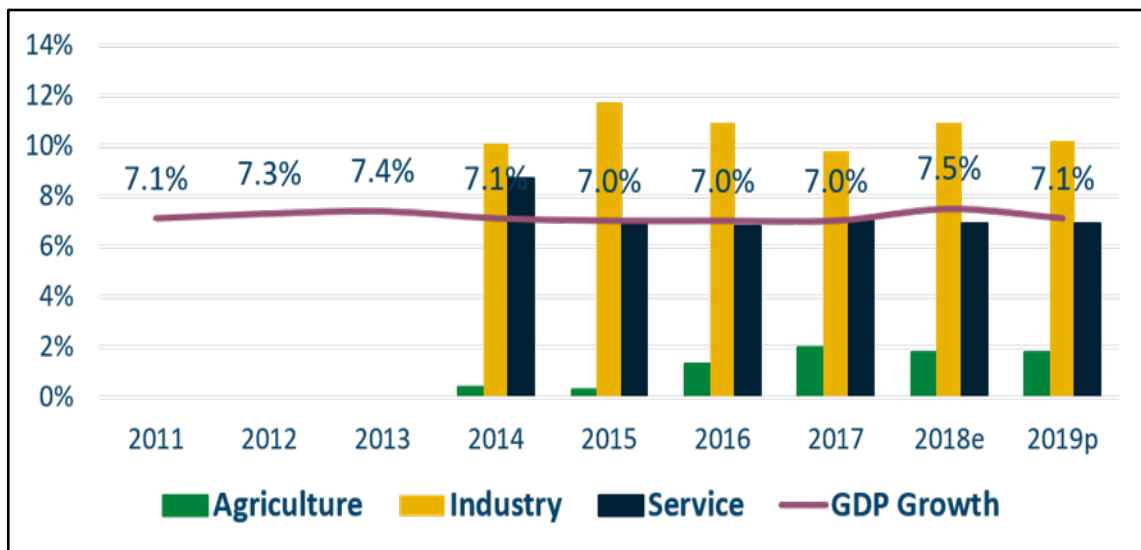
*(The researcher used the data from the research and adapted some data from Wikipedia Website)*

## 6- Discussion

The infrastructure development in Cambodia, especially the road and bridge construction and renovation was improved significantly after Cambodia has obtained full peace since 1998 (Fresh News, 2021) since the impact from the steady economic growth of Cambodia which was reaching two digits 7.7 percent for more than two decades from 1998 to 2019 (The World Bank, 2021). According to RGC, as of April 2021, China disbursed her foreign aid to Cambodia amounting to USD 2.8 billion, and the Government used USD 2.5 billion to construct 29 lines of roads with 2,888 kilometers and 8 large-scale bridges (Fresh News, 2021). Base on this information, the researcher can assume that most of the road and bridge construction in Cambodia from

2000 to 2020 were financed by China’s foreign aid, and among all, there were minor parts as interest-free loans.

Figure 7: Economic growth of Cambodia by sectors



(The researcher adopted from (CDC, n.d.) “Economic Trend”)

The researcher observed that the RGC claimant of the loan funds amounts owed to China was lesser than the loan funds collected during the research for road construction, but, of course, the same information regarding the bridge construction.

Some other donors like Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also contributed to the road and bridge construction and renovation in Cambodia (Fresh News, 2021). China’s foreign aid focused mainly on main roads and large-scale bridges, while Japan and ADB’s foreign aid focusing on road and bridge repairs and construction of medium and small scale roads and bridges, especially in remote areas. According to the Japanese Embassy in Cambodia, Japan prioritized four main priority areas including sustainable economic growth and stable society, social vulnerable support, measure the response to global issues, and support to rectify disparities of the Asian countries, and most of the Japanese aid for Cambodia went through bilateral agreements amounting to USD550 million about 76.38 percent, and small parts of its went through international organizations amounting to USD170 million about 23.61 percent (Japanese Embassy in Cambodia, n.d.). Since China contributed her foreign aid to Cambodia where there were fewer contributions of other donors in such sectors as discussed above, so China’s foreign aid and other development donors are complementary effects of each other, especially in terms of road and bridge infrastructure development in Cambodia.

Since some researchers criticized China's foreign aid as a "rogue aid" (Dreher & Fuchs., 2015; Naim, 2009) or a "Debt trap" for recipient countries, which Rowley Anthony called a loan trap diplomacy (Rowley, 2020). Ambassador of the United States to Australia Anthur Culvahouse wrote in his report by using the word "Payday Loan Diplomacy", and he proposed a new term of "infrastructure wars" between China and a group of western countries (Rowley, 2020).

The researcher has observed that all China's foreign aid projects were implemented by the Chinese companies that can be assumed that China didn't want to contribute technology spillover to Cambodia, as Chheang Vannarith, president of the Asian Vision Institute, described the good bilateral relationship between Cambodia and China and the two countries are the key economic and strategic partner, but both countries need to build more people to people ties and to strengthen more technology spillover to the local companies in Cambodia (Chheang, 2017).

The research was facing many difficulties during the research since there was no complete and comprehensive system can generate China's foreign aid report consistently. Because of this reason, some data were different in dates, numbers, and also loan sizes. For instance, the researcher accepted that the loan size was too big compared with the other bridges, but there was no choice that the researcher recognized the overestimated cost of USD569, 990,000 of the eight Cambodia-China friendship bridge. On the other hand, the researcher has observed that there were some road and bridge construction projects financed by China's foreign aid in Cambodia were not found during the research.

## **7- Conclusion and Recommendation**

Generally speaking, China has contributed much foreign aid to Cambodia since the 1960s, and significantly in hard infrastructure development after 1998 and the bilateral relations of the two countries reaching political high and political trust, and the two countries has signed an MOU of "China-Cambodia Community of Share-Future", in which Cambodia was the first country who signed such a MOU with China. The China's foreign aid is a request-based methodology, with low interest, fast responsiveness, and familiarity with the development needs of the recipient countries, especially Cambodia.

Base on the research findings, China has contributed to the road construction of 3,580 meters, which more than the total length of road constructed claimed by the Minister of Public Work and Transport declared recently. It can be explained that the recent claimant of the Minister of Public Work and Transport through Fresh News referred only to the National Road with one or two digits, and China doesn't finance only to support the construction of National Roads, but also some of the Provincial Roads. Nevertheless, the researcher couldn't find any project to support the territory road construction in remote areas. Further, China financed 100 percent to construct the eight large-scale bridges within the period.

Nevertheless, since China's foreign aid simply focuses on only major roads and large-scale bridges, the RGC should extend roads and bridge construction to far-reach areas to benefit directly the poor people in remote areas. On the other hand, the RGC should bargain with the lenders, not only China, to prioritize local companies to implement the project aid in the order they can gain technology spillover after project completion, as recommended by previous researchers. The research is limited in the scope of sectors, and the research methodology was not prioritized processes. More researches should be conducted on China's foreign aid for all sectors in Cambodia, especially the contribution of China's foreign aid to the economic growth of the country.

Overall, China contributed much to the infrastructure development, especially the road and bridge construction in Cambodia, which helps to alleviate poverty and improve social connections in Cambodia but focus mainly on major roads and large-scale bridges, and it was a complementary approach with Japanese and ADB foreign aid since both donors focus on the repairs and road and bridge construction in a remote area.

The People's Republic of China should create a formal comprehensive and contingent computer-based system to manage her foreign aid adequately and transparently, to avoid loan duplication, increase fairness and transparency competition among donors, and especially it would be useful for further researches and analysis, and to expand her foreign aid projects to smaller-scale infrastructure development projects in recipient countries so that the poor people living in the remote areas will be benefited directly from those foreign aid projects.

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