A woman from Phnom Penh’s Meanchey district washes clothing in floodwater during nationwide floods last year. MENG KIMLONG

breached flood protection dyke near Prey Veng city that, had it burst during the disastrous 2011 flooding, would have added a further 30,000 to the almost 52,000 households evacuated, is one project nearing completion in Cambodia’s Flood Damage Emergency Reconstruction Project.

But the Asian Development Bank-driven project is in it for the long haul, with about 524 kilometres of roads to fix and 26 irrigation systems across six provinces still waiting for repair. As of June, just over 10 per cent of the work had been completed, one per cent short of the project target.

Peter Brimble, deputy country director of the ADB Cambodia Resident Mission, said national and rural road damage caused by the flooding was worth more than $320 million and was still depriving people of a means of transport and a living.

“Clearly this was a major trauma for the Cambodian economy,” Brimble said. “We basically became a part of the government’s response.”

A road engineer for the ADB said rural roads faced multiple problems with flood-affected soil.

Two contracts had already been awarded for provincial roads, three more competitive bidding contracts were yet to be filled to repair another 179 kilometres of damaged rural roads.

Brimble said that the ADB was working with five government agencies in different phases of the project but another partnership would likely be forged with the National Committee for Disaster Management, for future flood management programs.

This stage would not be financed by loans but rather grant funds and focus on building the capacity of the NCDM to prepare for future floods.