

CAMBODIA

SUPPORT FOR SUB-NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA Strengthening the capacity of administrations at provincial, district and commune levels to deliver equitable services, and to promote citizen participation



Community Accountability Facilitator presents the Service Standard for Health Centre.
 Photo by ISAF team

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supports the third phase of the National Programme for Sub-National Democratic Development (NP-SNDD 2019-2021) with a specific focus on the Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) through the World Bank Trust Fund.

BACKGROUND

After decades of civil war, Cambodia started to rebuild its governing structures in early 2000 by introducing a decentralization reform at commune (rural) and Sangkat (urban) levels. The rationale for the reform was mainly political, with the aim to draw on the historical local roots of the Cambodian People’s Party to establish rural dominance. In 2002, locally elected commune and Sangkat councils opened up to alternative power structures. Thereafter, the reform was extended to province, district and municipality levels by adoption of the “Organic Law” in 2008. The first indirect elections of the councils at provincial and district levels took place in 2009. In 2010, the NP-SNDD 2010-2020 was adopted, combining the processes of devolution,

de-concentration and decentralization with the overarching objective of achieving democratic, inclusive and equitable development. The programme was split into three phases, with a strategic focus on district and municipal levels. The Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) with technical support from the World Bank was adopted as a feedback mechanism for citizens to facilitate participation at commune/Sangkat level, and was integrated as an important element within the good governance component of the second (2015-2017) and third (2018-2020) implementation plan of NP-SNDD. ISAF will again be an integral part of the new NP-SNDD, to be formulated in 2019/2020.

Two other major governance reforms, the Public Finance Management (PFM) and the Public Administrative Reform (PAR), interlink with the SNDD reform. At present, the three reforms implement a joint action plan aiming to improve the quality of and access to service delivery, and to strengthen accountability of local authorities.

SDC supported the government’s basket fund of SNDD during previous phases. As a response to significant changes within the political context (the dissolution of the main opposition party CNRP by the Supreme Court, and the banning of its main politicians), SDC decided to earmark its contribution to the ISAF of this important decentralisation reform. The focus on ISAF is an appropriate and relevant mechanism to pursue democratic dialogue, and allows SDC to channel its funds through the World Bank Trust Fund.

APPROACH

SDC, together with the EU and Germany, is supporting ISAF through the Trust Fund managed by the World Bank. The funders have created a coordination committee to discuss policy implications, experiences and lessons learned, and to approve financial and operational reports of the Trust Fund. The NGOs

PROJECT AT THE GLANCE:

Project Duration

Second phase: 01 May 2019 - 31 December 2021

Budget

Accumulated (2013-2018): CHF 13'611'000
Second phase: CHF 4'200'000

Implementing agencies:

The Royal Government of Cambodia, represented by the National Committee or Sub-National Democratic Development and the World Bank

Other partners

European Union, Germany

Imprint

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and CBOs who receive financing support from the Trust Fund are the key actors to facilitate a dialogue between citizens and service providers through Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs). The Partnership Steering Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Interior, ensures oversight of the joint implementation of ISAF, and makes decisions on policy matters, programme design/planning, implementation, financing arrangements, target areas, sector expansion and functionality of the framework. In addition, the Technical Working Group on SNDD contributes to the overall monitoring and coordination of the reform programme. It serves as a platform for development partners, the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS) of the Government, and other stakeholders involved in the SNDD reform and provides strategic guidance on aid-funded interventions. The TWG meets twice a year, and the DP Group meets monthly to follow up on the progress.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

SDC's strategic focus for this phase is to use ISAF mechanisms to facilitate actions involving different state and non-state actors, and to implement activities that contribute to promoting the quality and accessibility of service delivery, in particular related to health, education and communal services at the sub-national level. It is fully aligned with the priority themes set out in the third phase of the SNDD programme, which aims to simplify the reforms, to increase efficiency of service delivery, and to move from policy to practice.

RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS PHASE

The Sub-National Democratic Development (SNDD) reform has achieved promising results during the previous two phases (2011-2018). Those include the establishment of Sub-National Administration (SNA) structures with the deployment of nearly 10,000 civil servants, and production of large number of acts, decrees, guidelines, manuals and technical documents; among them also the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) plan. Additionally, gender equality was mainstreamed across all guidelines and manuals, providing the basis for their application. Based on the adopted instruments and framework, SNAs have consequently improved their performance, and are better involved in the activities of the line ministries in their jurisdictions. They acknowledge their decision-making power and contribute to a more responsive service delivery. The ISAF was implemented in 98 districts (of

159), 786 communes (of 1410) and achieved noticeable results, including well-established and strengthened partnerships and cooperation between supply-side (state) and demand-side (civil society) actors, enhanced transparency of public services, raised awareness regarding citizen rights and service standards, and strengthened citizen voice on service delivery. This has considerably improved relations and trust between citizens and public service providers.

OVERALL GOAL AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The ISAF programme is implemented nationwide with the objective to increase the performance of public service providers, to improve transparency, and to strengthen citizen engagement and responsive action. The programme encompasses four outcomes:

Goal 1 Performance of public service providers is improved.

Goal 2 Responsiveness of public service providers is improved.

Goal 3 Citizen participation in monitoring of public service providers and engaging in actions for improvement is enhanced.

Goal 4 Citizen voice in engaging with local public service providers is enhanced.



Discussion on Joint Accountability Action Plan with primary school pupils. Photo by ISAF Team