



# Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 14-Oct-2019 | Report No: PIDC27957



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country Cambodia	Project ID P172632	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Integration of Social Accountability into National and Sub-national Systems (P172632)
Region EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC	Estimated Appraisal Date Oct 21, 2019	Estimated Board Date Nov 14, 2019	Practice Area (Lead) Social
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Economy and Finance	Implementing Agency National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS)	

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

To improve the performance of public service providers through the development and institutionalization of national and sub-national government systems with improved transparency, strengthened citizen engagement and responsive action.

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	1.72
<b>Total Financing</b>	1.72
<b>of which IBRD/IDA</b>	0.00
<b>Financing Gap</b>	0.00

**DETAILS**

**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Trust Funds	1.72
Cambodia Social Accountability and Service Delivery	1.72



Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Low

Concept Review Decision

Track I-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

## B. Introduction and Context

### Country Context

1. Cambodia has experienced remarkable economic growth and macroeconomic stability over the past years. The growth rate has averaged 8 percent per annum during the ten-year period (2002–2012), ranking the 14<sup>th</sup> fastest real GDP growth in the world over that period. Per capita income in current prices has doubled over the past decade, reaching US\$1,036 in 2013 from US\$367 in 2003. As a result, the poverty rate has halved in seven years from 53.0 percent in 2004 to 20.5 percent in 2011, surpassing all expectations and far exceeding the country's Millennium Development Goal (MDG) poverty target. This performance has been achieved after Cambodia managed a challenging transition from a planned economy toward a market-based economy, and ended a two-decade long devastating conflict.
2. Despite impressive economic progress, Cambodia is still one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. Vulnerability of falling back into poverty is a significant issue, particularly in rural areas where 90% of the poor live. 2011 data shows this affects a significant proportion of the rural poor: a loss of about \$0.30 per capita per day would put about 3 million people back into poverty and double the poverty rate to 41.0 per cent.
3. Nine out of ten of Cambodia's poor live in rural villages where access to services is still lacking. Non-income dimensions of poverty (as described by access to basic services) are significantly higher in rural areas. In 2011, just over 31% of Cambodian people had access to improved sanitation while rural sanitation coverage is only 18% – the lowest in the region. Only 61% of students are reaching grade 6, making it the lowest in Southeast Asia, and the quality of the education of Cambodian children and youth is poor. Maternal mortality is still at 206 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010 and infant mortality rate in 2010 stood at 45, the second highest in Southeast Asia. Of further concern is that a number of key indicators are not changing despite growth and improved livelihoods. Cambodia's institutions are still emerging and there is much evidence that the delivery of basic services is not effective or accountable. As a result, living standards remain low for much of the Cambodian population.

### Sectoral and Institutional Context

4. To strengthen access to, and the quality of public services, and to enable government to be more responsive to the needs of citizens, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) began subnational governance reforms back in 2001 with passage of the Law on Management of Commune and Sangkat Administration, followed by passage of the Law



on Management of Capital, Province, Municipality, Khan Administration in 2008. A National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development (SNDD) 2010–2019, was subsequently created with the intention to establish a “vibrant, democratically-elected and locally accountable sub-national governance system,” supported by local budgets to empower local government councils and effective citizen engagement in local decision-making. The SNDD was broken down into three, three-year implementation plans, each with specific activities, outcomes and annual budgets. RGC is currently in the last of its 3-year implementation plans (IP3-3), and the period of implementation has been extended to 2020.

5. The SNDD reform agenda has seen significant progress in many areas including: the direct election of commune/sangkat councils and indirect election of districts and provincial councils; the establishment of financial management, planning, administration, and council procedures; the directing of financing of local development priorities through a Commune/Sangkat Investment Fund and District/Municipality Fund; the creation of policies for functional transfer from national to subnational levels and permissive functions; and the transferring of primary education, solid waste management and other significant functions to districts/municipalities (DMs). However, many of the goals set out in the SNDD program have yet to be realized, in particular, the transfer of functions (and finances) from central line ministries to DM administration. The legitimacy and representativeness of local councils also suffered a major set-back in 2017, when the main opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) was abolished. This led to the replacement of all recently elected CNRP commune council members with ruling Cambodia Peoples Party (CPP) members, creating a one-party local government system. The indirect elections of district and provincial councils by commune/sangkat council members in May 2019 will inevitably conclude with all commune, district and provincial councils being filled with CPP representatives

6. Despite the many set-backs and obstacles to progress in the SNDD reform agenda, one of the bright spots has been the successful implementation of the 3-year Implementation Plan for the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF), 2015-2018. The preparation and initiation of the ISAF followed endorsement of the *Social Accountability Strategic Plan for Subnational Democratic Development* by the RGC’s National Committee for Subnational Democratic Development (NCDD) in July 2013. This policy framework was developed through a consultative process involving government, over 80 NGOs, NGO networks and development partners. ISAF was added to the second 3-year SNDD implementation plan (IP3-2), and has since been included in IP3-3, with the overall aim of empowering citizens to hold government to account for local service delivery and resource allocation covering all primary schools, health centers and commune councils in 120 communes across the country.

7. During its first 3-year implementation period, the four ISAF operational components of: (1) access to information and open budgets, (2) citizen monitoring, (3) capacity building and facilitation and, (4) program management, learning and monitoring were designed, tested, and refined. Partnerships with and between supply-side (state) and demand-side (civil society) actors were established, and, ISAF activities were successfully rolled out to 75% (18 out of 24) of provinces, 62% (98 out of 159) of districts, and 56% (827 out of 1410) of communes across the country.

8. ISAF is a unique and groundbreaking program in the Cambodian context, and the achievements over the first 3-year implementation period (referred to subsequently as, ISAF Phase I, or ISAF I) prompted all of the involved stakeholders to call for a second phase of ISAF implementation, ISAF Phase II, or ISAF II. There is still much to be done to extend ISAF coverage, refine ISAF methodologies and ensure that achievements to date are consolidated and integrated into sustainable systems, behaviors and practices of sub-national service delivery and active citizenship. ISAF II will allow more time for the kinds of social and behavioral changes required for social accountability to be sustainable to take place.



9. A rigorous evaluation of the impact of the first phase of ISAF is underway and will be completed by the end of 2019, with the findings informing the implementation of social accountability and service delivery activities, including this proposed project. Preliminary findings from ongoing monitoring and evaluation indicate that some principal benefits of ISAF I have included:

- Enhanced transparency of key public services through the public posting and dissemination of annually updated financial and performance data for all primary schools, health centers and commune services in 827 target communes (referred to as “Information for Citizens” or I4C).
- Increased awareness of citizen rights and service standards through the direct participation of more than 554,000 people in public outreach and awareness-raising events.
- Strengthened citizen voice through the active involvement of more than 270,000 citizens in community scorecard assessments of communes, primary schools and health centers.
- Improved relations and trust between citizens, public officials and service providers.
- Strengthened capacity for local level social accountability through the recruitment, training and mentoring of approximately 3,700 volunteer Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs).
- Concrete improvements in local public service delivery, as a result of the implementation of actions for improvement (as collectively agreed in “Joint Accountability Action Plans,” or JAAPs).

10. In response to stakeholder demand, an *ISAF Phase II Implementation Plan* was prepared in late 2018 by the NCDDES with support from the World Bank, and in consultation with a range of government and civil society stakeholders, outlining the key dimensions of a new five-year phase of ISAF, from 2019 to 2023. The plan was produced based on an assessment of Phase I strengths, weaknesses, achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. The methodology for preparing the plan included: a desk review (of ISAF Phase I project documents, progress reports and assessments) as well as interviews, consultations and focus groups discussions with key informants and stakeholders. A detailed description of the ISAF Phase II design process, including a bibliography of documents reviewed and a list of stakeholders consulted are attached as an annex to the *ISAF Phase II Implementation Plan, 2019 to 2023*. Some key features of ISAF II will include:

- Expansion of ISAF coverage to all rural communes.
- Expansion of ISAF coverage to all urban areas (and adaptation of ISAF methodologies for urban settings).
- Extension of ISAF activities to district administrations (DAs) and other selected services (such as water supply, sanitation and potentially agricultural extension services, protected area management, solid waste management, and/or referral hospitals).
- Use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile applications (apps) to involve a larger number of citizens in ISAF (I4C, citizen monitoring and JAAP) activities.
- Measures to enhance government responsiveness to citizen feedback, particularly to increase JAAP implementation (including possible use of performance-based financing to districts and/or communes, and/or “matching funds”).
- Institutionalization and enhanced sustainability of ISAF processes (including the establishment of a national CAF volunteer Community of Practice/Network).

#### Relationship to CPF

11. The recently approved *Country Partnership Framework for the Kingdom of Cambodia, 2019-2023*, recognizes that public sector capabilities to deliver public services effectively and accountably will be critical to meeting the evolving



needs of citizens and the private sector in the future. As such, it includes a “cross-cutting theme” on “Strengthening Governance, Institutions and Citizen Engagement.” As a cross-cutting theme, activities in this area will be applied across all activities in the World Bank portfolio. The CPF specifically states, as well, that the Bank will continue to invest in social accountability in health, education and commune administration services, while also expanding to include new public services such as district administration, water and sanitation, urban/municipal services and other areas of support, including through the Bank’s broader support for decentralization efforts. This proposed project as well as the multi-donor trust fund on Social Accountability and Service Delivery (SDSD-TF) which would finance it, are listed in the CPF results matrix under CPF Objective 2, “Strengthen public sector accountability and public finance.”

### **C. Proposed Development Objective(s)**

12. To improve the performance of public service providers through the development and institutionalization of national and sub-national government systems with improved transparency, strengthened citizen engagement and responsive action.

Key Results (From PCN)

13. The following indicators will be used to measure the achievement of the PDO:

- Number of households in communes that are participating in ISAF activities supported by the project
- % of communes that complete the full annual ISAF process for at least one service
- % of target communes, primary schools and health centers demonstrating improved performance (according to a composite indicator based on several impact survey questions).
- % of primary school, health center and commune-related Joint Accountability Action Plan (JAAP) activities completed
- Increased voice of citizens in their engagement with service providers (according to a composite indicator based on several impact survey questions).

### **D. Concept Description**

14. As with ISAF Phase I, an annual cycle of social accountability activities will be clustered into five program components: (1) Transparency and access to information, (2) Citizen monitoring (3) Implementation of Joint Accountability Action Plans (JAAPs) (4) Training and capacity development, and (5) National and Subnational Coordination and Support. As the main coordinator and supporter of supply-side ISAF activities, the NCDSDS will be the main implementing agency for the proposed project, providing support at a national level and downward through the levels of subnational government.

#### **Component 1: Transparency and Access to Information**

15. This component aims to strengthen transparency and citizen access to, and demand for, public service performance information, budget and expenditure information. The goals are to: (i) strengthen the supply and dissemination of relevant public service information (including financial information), (ii) make the information more accessible to the public, and (iii) strengthen the capacity of citizens to understand the information provided so that



they may more actively and effectively participate in dialogue on service provider performance and use of funds.

16. For provinces and districts that have not yet implemented ISAF activities, NCDDDS will provide training-of-trainers (ToT) training to key government officials as well as support overall awareness raising. The NCDDDS will support the concerned line Ministries to review and update as necessary, service performance indicators, produce Information for Citizen (I4C) Posters, and work with relevant sub-national authorities and service provider to ensure the timely collection, posting and proactive dissemination of I4C annual “post-on” (annually updated information on budget, spending and performance) information and data. NCDDDS will also work with the PSC and individual line ministries to ensure that the aggregated results of I4C data are effectively communicated to national, provincial and district-level officials and that corrective actions are implemented by lines ministries as required to meet established national standards and to improve the quality and responsiveness of public services.

17. This component will also support the enhancement and management of an electronic platform for access to information through investments in system upgrades as well as consultants to manage the system, conduct training on system use and encourage public use of the system through a mobile application and website.

### **Component 2: Citizen Monitoring**

18. This component will empower citizens to monitor and assess public services and propose actions for improvement using a community scorecard methodology. Through complementary demand-side activities (led by a demand-side implementing agency also financed through the SASD-TF) volunteer, Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs), with the support of local NGO partners, as needed, will undertake the groundwork for the citizen monitoring process by identifying and mobilizing community participants and making logistical preparations for assessment meetings. CAFs will then help to prepare (in the case of citizen/community assessment meetings, and in districts organizing self-assessment meetings for the first time) and support separate assessment meetings with (i) the providers and (ii) the users of each service. Service provider (i.e. primary school, health center and commune) assessment are called “self-assessment”

meetings. In both the citizen/community and service provider meetings, participants collectively generate and prioritize assessment criteria, score each criterion, describe strengths and weaknesses, and identify priority actions for improvement. Following these separate assessment meetings, users and providers for each service come together in an “interface meeting” to discuss the outcomes of their respective assessments and to collectively agree a set of priority actions for improvement – distinguishing between those actions that they can implement themselves with available resources and those that will require additional resources and/or action on the part of other (i.e. higher-level) actors.

19. Through the proposed project, NCDDDS will coordinate with all sub-national administration and service providers to ensure their active collaboration in, and support for self-assessment meetings, community assessment meetings and interface meetings. Specifically, NCDDDS will train district ISAF trainers (one from each line ministry) to conduct self-assessment meetings. The NCDDDS will also liaise with relevant line ministries and authorities to ensure that, by the end of ISAF Phase II, the (minimal) direct costs of conducting these meetings on an annual basis are built into government budgets.

### **Component 3: Implementation of Joint Accountability Action Plans**

20. This component aims at supporting the communities, public service providers and subnational government officials to take collective action to implement agreed Joint Accountability Action Plans (JAAPs). In each target



community, at the final interface meeting, a joint committee made up of local officials, service providers and community members is formed to support and monitor the implementation of the resulting JAAP. The JAAP Committee prepares a detailed implementation plan for each priority action, mobilizes the resources required, coordinates/supports the implementation of each action, monitors progress and reports publicly on results twice yearly. The Committee also ensures that the JAAP is presented at the annual District Integration Workshop and that JAAP actions are incorporated into Commune Investment Plans, health center and school improvement plans as appropriate.

21. The NCDDS will conduct JAAP training of district JAAP Focal Persons as well as cascading training by district staff down to each commune for all JAAP Committee members. For districts which are implementing ISAF for the first time, basic support (i.e. refreshments) will be provided for district JAAP and JAAP Committee meetings at the commune level, but this support will be reduced over the course of three years to the point where communes self-finance the meetings. As a whole, NCDDS will work with line Ministries and coordinate with all sub-national administration and service providers to ensure their active collaboration in and support for JAAP Committees. NCDDS will also liaise with these actors to ensure that JAAP items requiring additional resources are effectively communicated to the relevant national, provincial and district-level officials and that appropriate actions are taken to respond to these requests.

#### **Component 4: Capacity Development**

22. This Component will support the review and revision of the ISAF Supply-side Manual, associated forms and documents, incorporating lessons from ISAF Phase I. It will also support the development of new supply-side guidelines for district administration services, and possibly additional services to be identified during implementation. Once such documents are finalized, they will be printed and disseminated electronically, as needed. To ensure that supply-side ISAF training is integrated into the Ministry of Interior's (MOI) training for subnational administrations as well as line ministry training, this component will also support strategic planning and training for key stakeholders in MOI, especially officials involved in the National School of Local Administration (NaSLA), School of Governance and/or other relevant government training bodies. Much the same as CAFs would receive training leading to accreditation, this component would also aim to standardize the training curriculum and accredit government staff that have completed the required training.

#### **Component 5: National and Subnational Coordination and Support**

23. Financing for this component will complement core, annual financing for ISAF activities financed through the national budget and implemented by NCDDS. The national budget will finance two civil servants working in NCDDS to provide national leadership for ISAF as well as support for operational costs such as office space, utilities, and travel. The project will support this management team with a small team of consultants, namely a Social Accountability Advisor, Social Accountability Officer and Finance Officer to manage project finances. In addition to the cost of consultants, the project would finance monitoring and support for the national team at the provincial and district level to ensure overall quality implementation. Provincial and district ISAF Working Groups would also be supported to prepare annual workplans and budgets as well as quarterly meetings, with financing reducing each year until these activities are self-financed by the subnational governments. Modest support would also be provided for the joint, government-civil society, national-level Partnership Steering Committee (PSC) and funds would also be allocated for targeted evaluation studies such as an assessment of the new district administration ISAF activities and steps toward sustainability such as CAF networks and the role of the district ombudsman office.





Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No
Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	

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**APPROVAL**

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