Project Information Document/ Identification/Concept Stage (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 10-Feb-2020 | Report No: PIDC214620
### BASIC INFORMATION

#### A. Basic Project Data

<table>
<thead>
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<td>P173527</td>
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<td>Integration of Social Accountability into National and Subnational Systems</td>
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<td>10-Feb-2020</td>
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<td>Ministry of Economy and Finance</td>
<td>National Committee for Subnational Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS)</td>
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#### PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

**SUMMARY**

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<tr>
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**DETAILS**

**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

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### B. Introduction and Context

**Country Context**

Over the past two decades, economic growth in Cambodia has been impressive and remained robust. The economy experienced an annual average growth rate of 7.9 percent over 1997-2017, ranking among the top seven fastest growing economies in the world. Growth was largely driven by exports of goods and services, which grew 14.6 percent a year over the same period. As a result, Cambodia’s per capita Gross National...
Income (GNI) increased almost fourfold, from $320 in 1997 to US$1230 in 2017. Growth remained strong in 2018, achieving a four year high of 7.5 percent.

Continuous high growth has led to dramatically reduced monetary poverty. As a result of Cambodia’s sustained high growth, GNI per capita more than quadrupled from USD 250 in 1995 to USD 1,230 in 2017. Official estimates show that the percentage of Cambodians living under the national poverty line fell from 47.8 percent in 2007 to 13.5 percent in 2014 (see Figure 3). Poverty estimates for 2015 – 2017 are currently under review by the Government[1], but preliminary indications are that poverty continued to decline.

Poverty reduction has been accompanied by improved human development and significant increases in living standards. Cambodia has experienced one of the fastest improvements in human development indicators in the region: life expectancy increased from 58 years (2000) to 69 (2017); under five mortality rate decreased from 107 per 1000 live births (2000) to 29 (2017); primary school completion rate increased from 51 percent in 2000 to 90 percent in 2017; and child stunting declined from 59 percent (1996) to 32 percent (2014). Indicators of living standards such as asset ownership and housing amenities have also improved. Between 2007 and 2017, ownership of cell phones increased by 65 percentage points, motorcycles by 42 percentage points, and access to electricity by 55 percentage points.

Despite these gains, vulnerability remains high. Most households that escaped poverty did so by only a small margin, leaving them highly vulnerable to falling back into poverty and preventing more sustained social mobility. Small income shocks, reducing consumption, could have a significant impact on poverty.[2] This underscores the fragility of progress made in fighting poverty. The 2018 World Risk Index ranks Cambodia as the 12th most disaster-prone country in its index of 172 countries.[3] Frequent disasters are a major source of catastrophic spending, pushing non-poor households into poverty and making it more challenging for poor households to eventually escape poverty. For instance, based on a 2013 post-flood needs assessment, average monthly incomes of those affected dropped more than 25 percent, enough to push many into poverty.[4] Likewise, 3.1 percent of the population had to incur debt to pay for health expenditures.

Enhancing public sector capabilities to deliver public services effectively and accountably will be critical to meeting the evolving needs of citizens and the private sector. Governance remains an issue in Cambodia, which scores considerably lower than other ASEAN countries according to the World Governance Indicators (see Figure 6). In some areas, such as control of corruption and voice and accountability, little to no progress was made between 2005 and 2014. While some progress has been made, bribery incidence (affecting 63 percent of reporting firms in 2016[5]) remains by far the highest among peer countries suggesting that governance issues have a negative impact on both public sector services as well as the growing private sector. The capacity of public institutions continues to be weak impacting the key regulatory functions, civil service and the efficiency of public resource management. Nascent decentralization reforms will require concerted measures to better equip sub-national administration with the capacity and resources to deliver quality local services. Efforts to reinforce accountability at the level of service provision will need to
continue. Promoting two-way interaction between beneficiaries and government, including by using mobile technology, can enhance citizen engagement and improve service delivery.

[1] The joint review of poverty estimates between 2009 and 2017 shows a robust trend in poverty reduction. The World Bank is collaborating with the National Working Group of Poverty Measurement led by Ministry of Planning and the National Institute of Statistics to review and update the poverty estimation methodology. The identified gaps in consumption measurement have been incorporated in the CSES 2019 to improve poverty measurement going forward.

[2] In 2014, it was estimated that a negative small shock of US$ 0.5 per day would cause the national poverty rate to increase to 40 percent, or approximately six million people.


Sectoral and Institutional Context
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.

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 inevitably concluded with all commune, district and provincial councils being filled with CPP representatives.

Despite the many setbacks 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.

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 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.

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 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.

In response to stakeholder demand, an ISAF Phase II Implementation Plan was prepared in late 2018 by the NCDDS 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. 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).

The goal by the end of Phase II is to establish permanent systems, within government and civil society, to ensure that (both supply-side and demand-side) social accountability activities can be sustained in the long term. After five years, by 2023, it is expected that ISAF Phase II will conclude with both evidence of significant service delivery improvements and an implementation approach that requires minimal external financial support. The proposed project is intended to contribute to the objectives of ISAF II, but government as well as other Development Partners and NGOs are also expected to contribute.

Relationship to CPF

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 activities under the multi-donor trust fund on Social Accountability and Service Delivery (SDSD-TF), are listed in the CPF results matrix under CPF Objective 2, “Strengthen public sector accountability and public finance.”

Cambodia’s Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency - Realizing the Cambodia Vision 2050 - Phase IV (September 2018), also recognizes the importance of social accountability in strengthening transparency within public administration. Through this fourth Phase, RGC seeks to address the issue of "efficiency" in governance, by enhancing the quality of public services. One of its goals is "further strengthening the capacity and governance of public institutions, both at national and sub-national and sub-national levels to ensure an effective and efficient delivery of public services aimed at better serving the people and improving business and investment environment." This project underpins this critical aspect of the core strategy to achieve and accelerate governance reform, by strengthening accountability and integrity in public administration through: expanding public dissemination of public documents, encouraging
citizen participation in developing and implementing activities, and strengthening public feedback and complaint mechanisms.

C. Project Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

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

Key Results

- Percentage of service providers covered by the project that are meeting key national standards.
- Percentage of JAAP actions completed or ongoing in target communes/sangkats.
- Percentage of target communes/sangkats that have completed three full annual ISAF cycles.
- Percentage of target communes/sangkats that allocate resources to support the implementation of the ISAF process.

D. Preliminary Description

Activities/Components

There are three main components of this project which comprise the annual cycle of social accountability activities: (1) Transparency and access to information; (2) Citizen monitoring; and (3) Implementation of Joint Accountability Action Plans (JAAPs). Components (4) Training and capacity development, and (5) National and subnational coordination and partnership support, provide overarching support to building the capacity required to implement the planned activities and sustain them beyond the duration of this project.

Overall there will be three levels of intervention at the district/municipality (DM) and commune/sangkat (CS) level. The intensity of effort in each locality will vary depending upon whether ISAF has been previously implemented in that DM or CS. This differentiated approach is aimed at reducing external support over time as a way of “graduating” DMs from ISAF external support and integrating social accountability activities into core government systems and civil society action. DMs/CSs that have had no previous experience with ISAF with receive the most support as they will need to start from the basic concepts and processes of ISAF. DMs/CSs with previous ISAF experience will not need to receive support on the basics of ISAF, and many of them may also have experienced local NGOs and trained CAFs to draw on, but they will still need support to prepare them to graduate from external project assistance. Finally, a third package of significantly reduced support will aim at leaving behind subnational government, service providers and civil society actors (especially CAFs) that continue to carry out social accountability activities after project support has receded. NCDDS will focus most of its support in new DMs, as the experienced DMs have already been trained and set
up ISAF working groups. Experienced DMs, CSs and district line ministry units will be encouraged to finance and implement social accountability activities without NCDDS support.

In terms of service coverage, ISAF II and this project and the complementary demand-side project in particular, will continue to focus on the basic services covered in ISAF I: commune councils, health centers and primary schools. In addition, a new instrument and methodology for holding District and Municipality Administrations accountable for quality service delivery will be developed, piloted and scaled up over the duration of this project and ISAF II. This represents a fourth type of service provider that will be covered in ISAF. In addition, this project will also enable NCDDS to support other line ministries to develop, pilot and implement ISAF activities for other services. Another World Bank financed project, the Water and Sanitation Improvement Project, will support the piloting of ISAF tools for water supply operators and wastewater services provided by the Ministry of Industry and Handicraft (MIH) and Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MoPWT), respectively. As such, this project will allow NCDDS to support this initiative and others that may emerge during the duration of the project. There are ongoing discussions about the application of ISAF to nutrition-related public services, agricultural extension and protected area/natural resource management.

Below are summary descriptions of each project component.

**Component 1: Transparency and Access to Information (US$ 480,000)**

This component will finance primarily training, consultants and goods to strengthen transparency and citizen access to, and demand for, public service performance information, budget and expenditure data. 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.

For provinces and districts that have not yet implemented ISAF activities, NCDDS will provide training-of-trainers (ToT) to key government officials as well as support overall awareness raising. The NCDDS 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 providers to ensure the timely collection, posting and proactive dissemination of I4C annual “post-on” information (i.e. annually updated data on budget, spending and performance). NCDDS with also work with the ISAF Partnership Steering Committee (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 line ministries as required to meet established national standards and to improve the quality and responsiveness of public services. NCDDS will also encourage subnational authorities (i.e. Commune Councils) and/or the service providers themselves to produce I4C materials using their own resources so that these activities can be sustained over time.

In addition to the continuing focus on commune council services, health centers and primary schools, NCDDS will also develop, pilot and scale up the use of a set of district/municipality administration ISAF tools which
cover a full annual cycle, including the production and dissemination of I4C posters (outlining citizen rights and minimum service standards), and the community scorecard and JAAP processes. These tools will be integrated with processes for evaluating the other three core services. Once these tools have been developed under Component 1 and put into use, their ongoing use will be captured in the components below.

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. Videos will also be developed in partnership with World Vision and other NGO partners, to reach a wider audience with information about public services and to make this information more accessible, including to those who are illiterate, physically disabled, or are unable to otherwise participate in ISAF activities and may instead access information through mobile devices.

Component 2: Citizen Monitoring (US $80,000)

This component will finance primarily training to empower citizens to monitor and assess public services and propose actions for improvement using a well-tested, community scorecard (CSC) methodology. Through complementary demand-side activities, 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 and support separate assessment meetings with the (i) providers and (ii) users of each service. Service provider (i.e. primary school, health center, C/S Council and D/M Administration) assessments 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. external or higher-level) actors.

NCDDS will encourage the integration of CSC activities into Health Center Management Committee and Village Health Support Group activities, in the case of health centers, and integration into the activities of School Support Committees, in the case of primary schools. These community-based service provider groups are natural bodies for incorporating CSC and other social accountability functions over the long term.

For the introduction of the new D/M Administration services, an appropriate approach to citizen engagement will be designed which takes into account the much wider coverage area and the fact that D/M Administration services are less well known and used by the public, except for One Window Services. So, a form of citizen representation of each C/S area and perhaps even C/S Council members will be engaged. The
District Ombudsman office will also play a significant role as their mandate includes obtaining and responding to feedback from citizens on public services.

Through the proposed project, NCDDS will coordinate with all sub-national authorities and service providers to ensure their active collaboration in, and support for, self-assessment meetings, user assessment meetings and interface meetings. Specifically, NCDDS will train district administration ISAF trainers (one from each line ministry) to conduct self-assessment meetings. The NCDDS 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 (US $120,000)

This component will primarily finance training to support 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. A format for the D/M Administration JAAP will also be developed and incorporated into the C/S level JAAPs for review and follow-up at the D/M level, but also with Provincial Authorities as the next highest subnational level to apply accountability and mobilize resources within the government system. NCDDS will also engage specifically in monitoring D/M Administration JAAPs in order to strengthen their capacity, particularly as D/Ms receive increasing resources and authority to invest, deliver services and ensure service quality.

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 financial support (i.e. for direct meeting costs and refreshments) will be provided for district JAAP and JAAP Committee meetings at the C/S level, but this support will be reduced over the course of the project to the point where C/Ss self-finance the meetings. As a whole, NCDDS will work with line ministries and coordinate with all sub-national administrations and service providers to ensure their active collaboration in and support for JAAP Committees. NCDDS will also encourage primary school and health center directors as well as Commune Council Chiefs and Clerks to draw upon their own limited budgets to implement JAAP actions. If health center and school budgets are insufficient to address JAAP actions, then commune, district, provincial or national budgets should be considered.

Component 4: Capacity Development (US $420,000)

This component will finance primarily training, consultants, operating costs and goods to support the review and revision of the ISAF Supply-side Manual, associated forms and documents, incorporating lessons from ISAF Phase I. It will support the development of new guidelines for district administration services, and
possibly additional services to be identified during implementation. These revised documents will be printed and disseminated electronically, as needed. To ensure integration and sustainability, the project will also support strategic planning and training for key stakeholders in MOI, especially officials involved in the National School of Local Administration (NaSLA) and/or other relevant government training bodies. It will also review, revise and standardize the training curriculum and accredit government staff that have completed the required training. At the close of the project, supply-side social accountability training will be integrated into core training for civil servants, in particular through MOI’s training, and likely NASLA’s curriculum which is still under development.

**Component 5: National and Subnational Coordination and Support (US $620,000)**

This component will finance primarily training, consultants, operating costs and goods to complement core annual financing for ISAF activities funded through the national budget and implemented by NCDDS. The national budget will finance two civil servants working in NCDSS 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. 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. Beyond the activities financed through this project and the complementary demand-side project, the core ISAF team in NCDDS would support the overall ISAF II implementation, including reporting to the high-level NCDD (chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Interior), coordination with line ministries, coordination with other DPs and NGOs that are implementing ISAF activities in parts of the country not targeted by the project, and other core ISAF functions that arise over time.

The project is supported with funds from the Social Accountability and Service Delivery Trust Fund (SASD-TF) as the primary financing instrument.

### Environmental and Social Standards Relevance

#### E. Relevant Standards

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Feb 10, 2020
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**Legal Operational Policies**

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**Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts**

The project’s aim is to build a sustainable mechanism for feedback on the quality of government services. The project aims to empower all citizens, but especially those who tend to be excluded from government decision-making processes such as indigenous groups, poor households, youth, women, and people with disabilities, to participate in activities that would hold public service providers accountable for the quality of their services. The project will not finance any infrastructure and/or technical assistance that could conceivably result in any adverse environmental or social impacts. As such the project environment and social risk is classified as low. Four of the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) are considered relevant. These are: ESS 1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts; ESS 2 Labor and Working Conditions; ESS 7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities; and ESS 10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure. An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan will be developed in line with the requirements of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF).
World Bank

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

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Implementing Agencies

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