Designing and Implementing a Capacity Building Program for Social Accountability: Lessons from Cambodia’s Program to Enhance Capacity in Social Accountability

Introduction – An Increasing Demand for Social Accountability Capacity Building

Addressing governance challenges requires not only government action and commitment, but also an active demand for good governance and accountability from citizens and civil society. Social accountability refers to the broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to help government be more effective and accountable. SA also encompasses actions on the part of the government, civil society, the media, and other societal actors that promote and facilitate these efforts.

Social accountability (SA) refers to the extent and capability of citizens to hold the state accountable and make it responsive to their needs. Although its importance for better governance and reducing corruption is being increasingly recognized, many non-state actors (NSAs) do not have sufficient capacity to effectively engage in SA activities. Consequently, capacity building of NSAs is essential for strengthening SA, and in many countries, demand for programs to build such capacity is growing. The Program to Enhance Capacity in Social Accountability (PECSA) in Cambodia is an example of this type of program. Launched in May 2007, and completed in June 2010, PECSA was a US$2 million grant program managed by the World Bank on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). It was comprised of a range of capacity-building activities, including formal training, mentoring and coaching, exposure visits, and networking as well as grants for implementation of pilots to apply SA tools on the ground. Over its three-year implementation, PECSA trained a total of 218 civil society organizations (CSOs), CSO leaders, and government officials; awarded 31 grants to 29 CSOs for pilot projects; and convened three large national networking events that brought approximately 1,600 SA practitioners together. The independent end-term evaluation of PECSA revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the program from beneficiaries and PECSA graduates. Fifty-six percent of end-term survey respondents planned to continue working on SA after the close of the program. As a successful capacity-building program on SA implemented in an otherwise difficult governance context, PECSA can offer several insights and lessons that may be helpful to teams designing similar SA programs in the future. Summarizing these lessons is the purpose of this note.

The Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) Strategy of the World Bank (the Bank) has emphasized the important complementary role that NSAs play in their demand-side push for governance reforms, particularly in challenging governance environments. In its 2012 update, the GAC Strategy gave SA a more central role in the Bank’s agenda because of its potential to contribute to effective governance by strengthening institutions and country systems. But in several countries, efforts by the Bank to engage with NSAs on governance issues have been constrained by their limited capacity and experience engaging in this specific arena. Consequently, an increasing need and demand from several
countries (e.g., Madagascar, Nepal, Mongolia, Kenya, and Dominican Republic) emerged for capacity-building programs to introduce SA concepts, tools, and examples to NSAs that could be applied in specific contexts. PECSA, which was implemented in Cambodia between 2007 and 2010, is an example of this kind of capacity-building program.

The Cambodian Context and How PECSA Came to Be

Over the last decade-and-a-half, Cambodia has achieved impressive economic growth and poverty reduction despite the postconflict reconstruction challenges following the demise of the Khmer Rouge. Still, the governance environment in the country remains weak, manifesting in a low-quality public administration and high levels of corruption.1 Because of this, it has been widely acknowledged that improving governance is the key development challenge for continued high economic growth and poverty reduction in Cambodia. Consequently, the National Strategic Development Plan and the Rectangular Strategy of Cambodia (2006–10) had improvement of governance, including the fight against corruption, at the center of their development strategies. In this context, the RGC initiated a number of governance reforms with the aim of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of government. While most of these reforms were traditional supply-side interventions such as public financial management or civil service and administrative reforms, over the past decade, there was also a nascent attempt to introduce more demand-side governance measures aimed at improving transparency, participation, and civic engagement—or in other words, social accountability. PECSA is an example of such an intervention.

Several contextual and political economy factors explain the emergence of PECSA. Considering the country context from a broad perspective, by the mid-2000s, the demographic and economic situation in Cambodia had changed quite significantly since the times of conflict. A burgeoning middle class had emerged with a younger population; many had grown up in peaceful times. At the same time, labor and peasant classes were becoming more vocal in their frustrations about sensitive issues like land grabbing by demonstrating through strikes and even violence. In this context, engagement between government and citizens remained limited, especially with respect to governance. The alternative and more constructive venues for government-citizen engagement that SA mechanisms can offer were therefore seen as an increasingly appealing option by the RGC.

Institutional changes in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Cambodia included a proliferation of CSOs. By the mid-2000s, there were about 2,000 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Cambodia.3 Relations between the government and CSOs have remained contentious, especially regarding issues of corruption, good governance and social accountability, natural resource management, and land grabbing. Nonetheless, by the mid-to late-2000s, many CSOs had earned the trust of the RGC on a number of social development issues by working jointly on service delivery, particularly in the health and education sectors.4 While there were still some major gaps, this experience helped the government recognize the importance of continuing to cooperate with CSOs in providing service delivery.

A study of civil society’s role in SA conducted by the Bank5 in Cambodia argued that CSOs could play a strong role in governance, having made important contributions to the emergence of a democratic culture in the country, especially through awareness-raising and training activities. But the study also pointed out that the capacities of Cambodian CSOs had been limited in the governance arena and that there had been little institutionalized interaction between Cambodian CSOs and the government.

When the idea of PECSA and other demand for good governance (DFGG) initiatives were being floated with the RGC in 2006–07, the Cambodian People’s Party had won an absolute majority at the national level. For the first time in over a decade, there was a noncoalition government at the national level. This led to a greater inclination on the part of the RGC to promote transparency, accountability, and participation of NSAs on governance issues.6 Concurrently, though limited in number, there were both individuals and ministries within the government more open to SA-type reforms. These factors created a window of opportunity for the Bank to work with the RGC on SA.

Perhaps the most immediate contextual factor that helped provide the impetus for the Bank’s engagement with the RGC on governance was a series of corruption scandals that emerged in a number of Bank-financed projects in the
mid-2000s. This brought governance and anticorruption efforts to the forefront of the Bank’s Country Assistance Strategy for 2005–08, a pillar of which was dedicated to promoting citizen partnerships for better governance. Within the dialogue that ensued around this pillar, a series of social accountability initiatives were launched in partnership with the RGC, including analytical work on SA, an International Development Association (IDA)-financed DFGG project (box 1), and a capacity-building program for SA—PECSA. The specific case for PECSA emerged during consultations with several leading local CSOs who felt that exposure to international SA tools and mechanisms would be of great value. The DFGG project, which was then forthcoming, was also meant to have a grant window for SA work by NSAs. Therefore, a training program on SA that would take place during the preparation period of the DFGG project could ensure the emergence of high-quality and informed SA grant proposals. And so, PECSA was seen as a natural precursor to the DFGG project.

About PECSA

PECSA was originally set up to be a two-year program financed by a US$2 million grant from the Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) Trust Fund managed by the World Bank. Because of the need to maintain a certain degree of independence from the government to minimize the perception of political capture and associated risks for this particular SA facility, it was agreed that PECSA would be managed by an independent agency. Given the Bank’s experience with SA, which was still a relatively new concept in Cambodia, the RGC agreed that PECSA would be executed by the Bank. This arrangement ensured the quality of the program, giving it neutral space to remain independent from both government and civil society. In fact, RGC officials saw in PECSA an opportunity for themselves to become beneficiaries by learning about SA, building capacity for it, and developing a constructive engagement with civil society.

Five program components were prepared to make PECSA a comprehensive capacity-building program: (1) Training and Capacity Building; (2) Tools Development and Action Learning; (3) Networking and Resource Center; (4) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning; and (5) Program Management. Together, the components would create a capacity-building cycle that followed formal training and mentoring with grants for pilot SA approaches, and then worked toward networking and the creation of resource centers to help improve learning and effectiveness (figure 1).

Component 1—Training and Capacity Building

(Budget: US$633,908; US$483,908 from LICUS + US$100,000 from World Bank Institute-Affiliated Network for Social Accountability + US$50,000 from AusAID)

Component 1 was aimed at providing training to members of civil society, the media, and government on SA approaches and tools. When designing this component, the task team needed to make decisions about the component’s focus. The first decision involved the training format: the length and depth of the training (e.g., a general overview of numerous tools and concepts, detailed guidance on specific mechanisms, and the like). The second decision related to the audience (e.g., the type of audience the trainings should target and if the audience should be made up of representative individuals or entire organizations). The third decision

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Box 1. The Demand for Good Governance Project in Cambodia

Financed by a US$20 million IDA grant, the DFGG project was intended to enhance the demand for good governance in priority reform areas by strengthening institutions, supporting partnerships, and sharing lessons. The DFGG project is based on the following three components: (1) support to state institutions; (2) support to NSAs (i.e., grant provision component); and (3) coordination and learning. Similar to PECSA, grants are provided to NSAs to implement DFGG activities under Component 2. Three different grant sizes are provided: small (up to US$15,000); medium (US$15,000-150,000); and large (US$50,000-150,000).

More information on the DFGG project can be found at the World Bank’s Projects and Operations website; information on its grant provision component can also be found on the project’s NSA Component’s website. A series of DFGG learning notes, developed by the NSA Component’s Secretariat, provide additional information and lessons learned from its SA activities, following those of PECSA.

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related to the trainers: who should develop and implement the training curriculum? Should it be done by local or international organizations and/or experts?

There are advantages and disadvantages to each consideration and there are no “right” and “wrong” answers. In the case of PECSA, several of the issues were addressed by combining options to complement one other. With regard to the format for training, the team used several pedagogical approaches to allow training opportunities not only to be interactive classroom-based learning, but also to be based on hands-on learning experiences as well as direct coaching and mentoring. For example, PECSA designed two-to-three-week comprehensive Social Accountability Schools (SASs) with the aim of providing an overview of general concepts and examples of SA to a selected group of practitioners. These schools proved very useful in providing a concrete orientation to participants on social accountability. This general training was then complemented by in-depth trainings on specific SA tools, including social audits and gender-budget analysis. Various learning events and exchanges for practitioners were provided at the SASs, and the in-depth training made this classroom-based learning interactive and practical.

Similarly, with regard to the audience, PECSA targeted both individuals and institutions for training in the hopes of producing and identifying SA champions and institutionalizing the culture of SA within specific organizations. Moreover, the training not only targeted civil society members but
also media and government practitioners. All participants were selected through an open application process advertised in local media combined with targeted invitations. Final selections were made by PECSA partners based on criteria that included regional diversity, grassroots presence, sector affiliation, and previous SA experience.

With regard to who should design and implement the training, PECSA first decided to rely on two international CSO networks that could draw on their own experiences on SA as well as on their networks of CSO partners: the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG) in the Philippines, which houses the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP) region, and the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), based in India. The idea was to import international best practices on SA into Cambodia. However, it soon became clear that having a local partner with a greater understanding of the country context—one that could resolve language and translation related concerns and gain country ownership of the program—would be of enormous value. Thus, SILAKA, a local NGO with experience in capacity building, was also hired for the project, a decision that would eventually prove essential to the success of the training component.

In addition to the in-country training and learning events, Monitoring, Coaching, and Exposure Visits (MCEV) were provided. These hands-on learning experiences were meant to complement the interactive classroom-based learning of the SASs as well as the brief in-depth trainings. A total of 27 SAS graduates were selected to participate in a MCEV either to India or to the Philippines. During the MCEV to the Philippines, as an example, participants visited the Province of Abra to learn about the experience of the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government, globally acknowledged for its best practices regarding SA and anticorruption. Online or onsite mentoring of MCEV participants by SA practitioners from CSOs and other agencies in related program areas in India and the Philippines was also provided. One great advantage of the MCEV was that participants were almost immediately prepared to begin applying their learning through SA pilots back in Cambodia (box 2).

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**Box 2. Spreading a Culture of SA—From Learning to Project Implementation through PECSA**

Venerable Thorn Vandong, the Executive Director of the Buddhist and Society Development Association (BSDA), graduated from the first SAS and was also selected to participate in the MCEV to India through PECSA. After gaining SA knowledge and skills through learning components offered under PECSA, BSDA applied for grants provided by ANSA-EAP. The grant proposal BSDA submitted was awarded with US$20,000 from ANSA-EAP to spread the culture of SA at the community and commune level. The project consisted of two components: the exercise of SA tools, such as participatory planning and citizen feedback mechanisms, and the promotion of civic engagement through village and commune meetings and forums. The project was implemented in the 15 communes of Kampong Siem district in Kampong Cham Province beginning in February 2009.

The BSDA project succeeded in establishing 15 information boards and citizen feedback collection boxes for each targeted commune and in creating templates for citizen report cards on service delivery. Taking this initiative further, the commune councils developed their own citizen report card templates to conduct feedback surveys on education services. Even though the project encountered some difficulties in implementation (e.g., illiteracy and limited capacity and understanding of governance and social accountability among staff, commune councils, and citizens of target community), by June 2009, the participatory planning activity of the project had mobilized a total of 1,123 citizens—of which 284 were female—to be engaged in the commune planning process. The project also moderated village and commune meetings on a regular basis to discuss emerging issues within the communes, using a participatory approach.

Because greater trust was built through the project, the BSDA-led citizen feedback boxes started receiving 40-50 messages per month, and the issues raised in them are discussed at subsequent commune meetings. In fact, this redress mechanism is the reason why community members submitted messages in the feedback boxes. BSDA received subsequent funding of US$13,899 from the DFGG project to continue its implementation of citizen report cards.

Source: PECSA Newsletter 2009; ANSA-EAP Case Reports; Interviews with PECSA and DFGG project Task Team Leaders.
By the end of the program, PECSA completed three rounds of the SASs and four specialized trainings. In total, 218 participants from 148 institutions were trained. Of the SAS participants, 77 percent were from local CSOs. A total of 202 SAS graduates went on to receive the specialized training modules for more in-depth learning after each round of the SAS. According to the end-term evaluation of PECSA, the inclusive nature of the training—that is, the inclusion of both CSO and government members as well as national and local CSOs—added substantial value by building bridges of trust between them. A random end-term survey of PECSA graduates conducted several months after the last formal training found that 74 percent of the PECSA trainees (n=31) exhibited correct knowledge of SA, and 58 percent reported improved access to SA-related information and resources.

ASoG noted in its final report on the program that the trainings provided an important opportunity—not only to learn about SA—but also to learn about each other in a spirit of trust-building (e.g., CSO representatives becoming more familiar with the Cambodian bureaucracy and government representatives becoming more open toward CSOs). The SASs also facilitated a space for constructive engagement between CSO members and government—a positive side-benefit of this component. This played out most clearly in terms of the development of SA pilot initiatives around participatory planning and budgeting by CSOs with endorsements from provincial governments; these were funded through Component 2.

Component 2—Tools Development and Action Learning
(Budget: US$552,332 from LICUS)

This grant-making component, built on the first component, was aimed at providing opportunities for SAS graduates to practice their newly acquired knowledge in real-life pilots. CSOs that were not participating in the SASs but that had an interest in working with SA tools were also invited to submit project proposals.

PECSA initially planned to provide both small (up to US$15,000) and medium-size (up to US$50,000) grants, but delays in the launch of this component led the task team to focus solely on small grants, which would be easier to handle administratively because they reduce financial burdens on CSOs as well as any associated financial risks. Small grants also provided opportunities for Cambodian CSOs to choose and adapt SA approaches and tools best suited for the Cambodian context and to complete the piloting process more quickly than medium-size grants would have. Subsequently, the small grants enabled the program to reach more SAS graduates, helping to "plant the seeds" of SA. Medium-size grants were then provided by the later DFGG project.

One important decision the PECSA task team had to make was about the implementing agency for this program component. It was agreed by both RGC and the Bank that it would be better to have an NSA manage this grant-making activity to enhance its independence, impartiality, and credibility. This arrangement also allowed the RGC and the Bank to act as oversight institutions instead of implementing agencies. It was further agreed that, given capacity and neutrality concerns, an international NSA would be the favored choice. As a result, and based on a competitive selection process, The Asia Foundation (TAF), an international NGO with expertise in the region and on the topic of SA, was selected to run PECSA’s grant component. It is important to note, though, that in order to maintain country ownership and transparency of the selection process, TAF’s role did not include the actual selection of grantees. The selection process was conducted by an independent grant-making committee (GMC). TAF was responsible for the administration and management of the grant process, including due diligence, monitoring, and oversight of grants as well as the provision of hands-on support for SA activities to the grantees during the pilot implementation.

The independent multistakeholder GMC was formed in order to ensure country ownership and a fair and transparent selection process for grantees. It was comprised of seven civil society representatives and two members from the government. GMC candidates were identified by a search committee composed of representatives from the RGC, the World Bank, TAF, and Cambodian civil society represented by the NGO Forum, one of the largest NSA networks in Cambodia. The candidates were confirmed by His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng, who was also leading the Ministry of Interior. Prior to the formation of the committee, all GMC members were required to sign a code of conduct, committing to professional principles, such as selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, confidentiality, openness, honesty, and leadership. As noted in the Implementation Completion Memorandum of PECSA, this was a critical part of the process for sustaining the independence of GMC. It was a
preventative measure to avoid any perception of political capture, favoritism, or potential of conflict of interest by GMC members. The GMC reviewed grant applications and selected grantees based on detailed scoring guidelines developed by TAF.

By the end of the program, two rounds of small grants, together amounting to approximately US$450,000, were provided to total of 31 projects with 29 selected organizations in 20 provinces covering central, northwestern, and southern Cambodia. The grantees were a mix of local, regional, and national organizations; many were working with informal community associations and neighborhood groups or clubs (box 3). Overall, 174 applications were received, demonstrating the enormous demand for SA grants. Among the 14 organizations receiving grants for the first round, nine were led by SAS graduates, displaying the continuity between PECSA components.

According to the Project Completion Report submitted by TAF, projects funded through this component included ones that promoted citizen participation in commune council activities, monitoring of basic service delivery, and other SA tools (box 4).

**Component 3—Networking and Resource Centers**
(Budget: US$678,760; US$578,760 from LICUS + US$100,000 from AusAID)

The third component of PECSA supported the building of regional networks among CSOs working on SA. For this, PECSA decided to partner with Star Kampuchea, a local network NGO. Star Kampuchea already had regional CSO networks in place as part of its own programs, so PECSA did not need to create many new networks from scratch. Star Kampuchea also had experience in facilitating networking activities and providing coaching to its members.

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### Box 3. Multimedia Citizen Engagement Campaign for Awareness Raising

The Women’s Media Center of Cambodia is one of the successful small-grant-winning local NGOs of PECSA’s first and second rounds as well as the subsequent DFGG project’s medium- and large-grant windows. With PECSA funding, the Citizen Engagement Campaign was the implemented. This project aimed to provide citizens—especially women—with reliable information about legal and development issues including domestic violence, land conflicts, women’s health, migration, and participatory governance through radio, television dramas, and the Women’s Media Center of Cambodia website. This multimedia approach was intended to address the lack of access to information in targeted communities. The project was implemented in the outskirt districts of Phnom Penh and Pursat Province, targeting over 200 viewers and listeners from 20 community clubs established through the project. Additionally, the village community generally benefited from the project because they were invited to join the community club for drama-viewing and radio-listening meetings as well as discussion sessions. As they learned about the project, village chiefs encouraged the village community to participate.

A total of seven radio shows and 10 television dramas were developed through the project, each focusing on different topics and involving local authorities such as village chiefs, commune councils, and commune chiefs. The drama-viewing and radio show-listening sessions were always followed by discussions led by trained facilitators. This allowed participants to increase their understanding of social issues (e.g., health, pregnancy and family planning, and drugs), legal procedures, good governance, and the importance of participation in local development processes.

The project brought several critical benefits to targeted communes. According to interviews with the commune councils and chiefs, the level of domestic violence decreased as villagers were educated on the topic through the project. Lvea Em, one of the commune chiefs, reported that women became more vocal in expressing their views and that in general villagers started to participate more fully in commune meetings after learning about participatory development through the project. While affecting behavioral change in all community members is a difficult task, the Women’s Media Center of Cambodia’s Citizen Engagement Campaign certainly raised awareness on important social issues and brought some positive changes to targeted communities.

Through this program component, networking and knowledge exchange events at different levels were provided: three national networking events, the first of which was also the formal launch of PECSA; three regional networking events; one regional skills building and peer learning event; and one Social Accountability School Alumni Network event. The final report on the networking activities by Star Kampuchea stated that provincial-level networks demonstrated varied signs of activity, some showing more promise than others. In some provinces, for instance, the governor’s representatives participated in civil society practitioner network meetings, agreed to host meetings jointly, and participated in community dialogues on SA. Such partnerships helped cultivate local government–civil society cooperation in the areas of decentralization, deconcentration, good governance, and SA.

Component 4—Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; Component 5—Program Management

(Budget for Component 4: US$100,000 from LICUS; Budget for Component 5: US$205,000 from LICUS)

Tasks within the fourth component, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, consisted of establishing a results framework, conducting a baseline analysis, and performing an ex-post evaluation for PECSA at the completion of the program. The key question the task team needed to consider when designing the program’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was how robust an evaluation methodology could be for a program with diverse activities targeting a relatively qualitative notion like “capacity building.” Monitoring was also critical to providing feedback that could help refine and improve the program on an ongoing basis. For instance, conducting exit interviews of each of the training rounds served

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Box 4. Examples of Activities Funded through the Small Grants Mechanism, by SA Focus Area

Pilot projects supported by PECSA’s small grant mechanism were successfully implemented in 20 provinces, introducing SA approaches and strategies at the national and subnational level. The focus areas of the projects ranged from natural resource management and private sector governance to decentralized service delivery. Many projects focused on access to information as it relates to transparency; monitoring as it relates to accountability; and mediation as it relates to participation.

Access to Information. The Cambodian Civil Society Assessment conducted by the Bank determined that the information networks in Cambodia were extremely weak. Reflecting this result, the greatest number of PECSA-funded pilots focused on promoting access to information and monitoring. For instance, seven grantee organizations from the first round adopted innovative approaches to promote access to information related to local governance. One such organization, the Cambodian Center for Independent Media, developed a call-in radio talk show that exposed gaps in service delivery in order to provide citizens a platform to pressure government officials to improve service delivery.

Monitoring. Grantees applied both qualitative and quantitative SA tools to monitor service delivery, including community report cards, surveys, and focus group discussions. For example, both Amara (Cambodian Women’s Network for Development) and the National Prosperity Association implemented citizen report cards and were able to gain commitments from the provincial departments for undertaking regular monitoring to improve the performance of local health units.

Mediation. PECSA grants supported one participatory mediation project by the Khmer Institute of Democracy for both first and second rounds. The Khmer Institute of Democracy provided an alternative conflict resolution to community members in seven provinces on a range of issues including land law, family law, and domestic abuse; it also held community outreach activities for awareness-raising. Based on the success of this pilot and its potential for a scale, the Khmer Institute of Democracy was continuously funded by the succeeding DFGG project (first round: US$129,000) and implementing projects in nine provinces.

Source: TAF Project Completion Report for PECSA.
to inform the next round of training and also helped adjust the format for the mentoring used.

Because of the complexity of the program and qualitative nature of program activities, the M&E methodology included mixed methods, combining literature review, organizational profile analysis, organizational timeline, semistructured interviews with organizational heads and selected individual practitioners, focus groups, and a quantitative survey.

PECSA decided to contract this project component to a coalition of local and international research organizations: the Economic Institute of Cambodia—a local Cambodian think-tank—and Catalyst Management Service of India—an international consulting firm. While both organizations were in charge of the overall M&E, each partner agency was responsible for different components, including data collection of components allocated. In this way, identified lessons learned from monitoring could be more easily fed back into the management of each component and into the design of the materials and curriculum used in the SASs without concerns about coordination between the partner organizations. Additionally, the lessons learned from PECSA’s M&E informed the design of the succeeding DFGG project.

The end-of-program evaluation by the Economic Institute of Cambodia and Catalyst Management Service relied on a stratified random sample survey of PECSA beneficiaries who were identified in terms of their characteristics (e.g., whether local or national CSOs and whether from Phnom Penh or a province) as well as their involvement in PECSA (e.g., if they only attended the training, if they received grants, or if they attended MCEV programs).

The evaluation showed that participants of PECSA assessed the program as having been most relevant in terms of strengthening existing SA work within their organizations and reported that it was highly effective in enabling them to implement what they had learned. The training and capacity-building component was particularly well received—participants said it improved their confidence in dealing with SA approaches. The majority of participating organizations in the survey (93 percent) indicated plans to use SA tools and approaches in future activities and projects with their organizations; these claims were validated during their subsequent engagement with the DFGG project.

The fifth and final component of PECSA, Program Management, was key to the success of the program. PECSA had a specialized team of experts stationed at the country office to manage the program. Two seasoned international program coordinators who were also CSO leaders led the local PECSA team on the day-to-day management of the program with occasional technical support from the Bank task team in Washington, DC. The role of the coordinators was to manage and coordinate the work of the other four components and to establish links between the World Bank, the donor community in Cambodia, and other partners around issues relating to PECSA and SA more generally. This on-the-ground presence with respected regional CSO leaders at the helm helped PECSA gain immediate credibility and respect among the local CSO community.

Key Challenges

PECSA was a complex and innovative capacity-building program that allowed funding provisions to CSOs and required engagement with various stakeholders. For these reasons, the task team of PECSA encountered some unique implementation challenges, some of which are summarized below with the goal of better supporting future task teams engaged in similar capacity-building programs.

1. Relationship Between Government and Civil Society.

Addressing governance challenges requires government action and commitment as well as an active demand for good governance and accountability from citizens and civil society. PECSA was launched by a request and commitment from the RGC to improve demand-side governance; the government was ready to start engaging with CSOs to cultivate constructive government-citizen relationships for better governance and enhanced SA. Still, during the life of PECSA and since, there continued to be contentious issues such as the introduction of a new NGO law and several cases of land grabbing that tested its ability to foster constructive state-citizen engagement in the governance arena. Therefore, while there was a certain degree of willingness and commitment from the government for SA, the fragile government-civil society relationship prevented SA activities to realize their full potential during the course of PECSA implementation.
2. Synergy between PECSA Components. As stated in the prior section, PECSA was designed to link each project component by following the Capacity-Building Cycle (figure 1). In reality, though, creating linkages between some of the PECSA’s project components during implementation proved challenging, partly due to the unexpected delay of the grant component (Component 2). Not having all program components running on time was a missed opportunity to create synergy between components.

Another side of the challenge was to link Components 1, 2, and 3, respectively, and to ensure coordination among the implementing organizations. Originally, ASoG and PRIA were responsible for serving as implementing agencies for Component 1—Training and Capacity Building. Coincidentally, around the same time, ANSA-EAP was launched, being housed at ASoG. Through this channel, ASoG had an opportunity to support Star Kampuchea, the local implementing agency of Component 3—Networking and Resource Centers—on networking activities at the provincial level for ANSA-EAP. While this was unintentional and there were some attempts for coordination between implementing and funding organizations, this could have been better facilitated in order to maximize the effect of each activity and to create synergies.

Coordination of this kind, especially with five different partners—as was the case of PECSA—is always challenging, but the lesson here is that coordination and prior consultations among the project implementing agencies and agencies providing funding on planned SA activities should be conducted on a regular basis. Coordination efforts among partner agencies are likely to make the capacity-building project implementation run smoothly and create stronger synergies among project components.

3. CSO Consultations. If SA capacity building is to work, it must be customized to local contexts rather than being mere replications of international best practices. In order for this to happen, consultations with local stakeholders—including CSOs, government, and other donors27—must be continuously undertaken from the predesign stage throughout implementation. PECSA became one of the most well-consulted projects in the Bank portfolio in Cambodia because of the continuous stakeholder consultation efforts. Despite this, PECSA received criticism from several CSOs—particularly human rights agencies—that felt their concerns were not being adequately addressed. The criticism was partly due to a lack of understanding among CSOs about the Bank’s mandate to work with and through client governments for development. A gap between the Bank and CSOs in understanding how much change a capacity-building program such as PECSA could bring also contributed to the criticism. This indicates that further outreach and clarifications are needed to manage expectations. It also shows that the process of consulting stakeholders should be sustained, something future teams should bear in mind.

4. Challenges Related to Language and the Concept of Social Accountability in Local Contexts. As noted in the final report on SASs from PRIA, one challenge that implementation teams encountered involved the translation of learning materials—not simply the literal translation of documents, but efforts to translate SA terminologies and the very notion of SA in a way that made sense in local contexts. During the implementation of PECSA, it became evident that Cambodian CSOs had more experience in SA than the team originally expected, but they did not use SA terminology. This language gap had to be closed with effective translation. In the case of PECSA, a team of international and local implementing agencies worked side-by-side during the project preparation phase to generate terminologies and methods to explain concepts like “social accountability,” “empowerment,” and “active citizenship,” in the local Khmer language. Finding equivalent terms and concepts that made sense in the Cambodian context was not an easy task because some of the available terms in the Khmer language had associations with the Khmer Rouge. This linguistic issue was repeatedly raised during implementation, despite the early efforts during the preparation phase. The team noted, however, that the initial intensive discussions about terminologies and concepts helped them strategically select a basic but key vocabulary early in the implementation phase.

5. Procurement and Legal Issues of Bank-Financed Programs. Issues of procurement and legal arrangements were the most difficult operational challenges the PECSA task team faced, and they provided the most important lessons for future Bank task teams. As a capacity-building program, PECSA was effective because it not only contained training opportunities (Component 1—Training and Capacity Building) but also learning-by-doing opportunities for practitioners.
to pilot recently learned knowledge and skills (Component 2—Tools Development and Action Learning). These two components complemented one another. But because Component 2 was aimed at funding CSOs rather than the Bank’s traditional clients (governments), and because the grant component was administered by a separate entity (TAF) but the entire PECSA was executed by the Bank on behalf of the RGC, a combined procurement cum legal issue emerged.

From a procurement perspective, the issue was whether to see TAF as a “contractor” or as an “implementing agency” of the grant provision component, which would make it a “sub-grantee” of PECSA. From a legal perspective, the challenge was deciding who would be held liable for any misuse of sub-grants: the RGC, the legal recipient of the LICUS grant; the World Bank, because PECSA was Bank-executed; or TAF, the administrator of the grant component. A solution was ultimately reached in consultation with the Bank’s legal and financial teams, first to split the overall LICUS grant allocated for PECSA into two parts—one for PECSA overall and another for the grant-making component specifically. This made the grant component a standalone project that was “recipient executed,” resolving the procurement concern by making TAF a formal implementing agency/sub-grantee of the LICUS grant. It also meant that one financial layer of legal liability was removed from the use of funds because an additional account for this specific grant component was set up, independent from the rest of the PECSA grant. In terms of liability, while the Bank would provide oversight, the legal liability of sub-grantee funds would be with TAF, with the agreement that TAF would only administer the grant and that its core legal responsibility would be to provide adequate due diligence and supervision in the process, so the possibility of grant misuse by sub-grantees can be prevented and minimized. TAF, therefore, would not have to repay costs associated with sub-grantee misuse beyond their control if such cases occur.

Because of the procurement and legal issues, not all program components under PECSA started on time. In fact, the grant component only came into effect in late 2008. As noted earlier, this delay also meant that the medium-size grant component of PECSA was cancelled. Not having all the program components up and running as planned was a missed opportunity for PECSA. One recommendation emerging from this challenge is that future task teams involved in similar projects should develop an appropriate procurement and liability agreement in consultation with the legal and financial teams and plan on a minimum of six months to sort out and set up procurement and legal arrangements for the grant provision component.

Lessons from PECSA for Future Capacity-Building Programs

1. Training of Government Officials. A capacity-building program on SA like PECSA could be beneficial in post-conflict countries or countries with pronounced democratic deficits. In these environments, not only CSO practitioners but also government officials at different levels of the government structure could gain knowledge of SA and participatory governance through capacity-building programs. At the end of the day, good governance requires combined efforts from governments as well as CSOs and citizens. Based on this idea, PECSA welcomed both CSO representatives and government officials for its training component. A few government officials participated in the SAS training alongside CSO representatives, contributing to some level of trust-building between them. However, government officials were not considered for capacity-building opportunities beyond SASs (e.g., the MCEV study tour), nor were they eligible for the action-learning (small grant) component, although many CSO grantees worked directly with local government officials. No direct incentives were given to government officials to participate in SA activities. And the fragile government–citizen relationship in the country also dampened the participation of government officials in PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Based on these considerations, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Because of these factors, knowledge and understanding toward SA and good governance did not penetrate deeply among government officials through PECSA. Therefore, a recommendation is to engage in a more deliberate strategy to influence government officials in the SA training such as SASs. Task teams can be innovative regarding the content of such a strategy—especially in order to include senior government officials in the trainings because this could subsequently lead to institutional change. For
example, a certain number of slots\textsuperscript{30} could be set aside in the training for the participation of senior government officials, a shorter SA course could be provided to accommodate busy senior government officials, and a one-day course exclusive to senior government officials and CSO representatives could be arranged. Likewise, incentives such as study tours or direct roles in implementation of the small grants, among others, could be considered. Capacity-building programs like PECSA have enormous potential to transform relationships between governments and civil society by bringing together key actors in the governance arena to share each other’s experiences and build trust and bonds.

### 2. Closing the Capacity-Building Cycle

An effective capacity-building program not only requires training but also learning-by-doing elements. PECSA’s project components were designed to correspond with the capacity-building cycle (figure 1), starting with training and followed by action learning through the grant component. It is not uncommon that a need for practical coaching and mentoring arise after practitioners begin applying learning into practice; this is often the case with any type of learning process. Therefore, hands-on mentoring, coaching, and networking components are essential in capacity-building programs. They enable local practitioners to stand on their own feet. Finally, the M&E component closed the capacity-building cycle of PECSA by incorporating lessons learned into the training materials of the later rounds of training. This type of cycle and interplay of activities should be a core part of future SA capacity-building programs.

### 3. Linking the Program Components to the World Bank Country Program and Establishing Focus Sectors

Alignment with ongoing Bank projects in the country and establishing sector focus for both capacity-building and later pilots are important for achieving greater impact and sustainability of SA activities. In the case of PECSA, program activities were always aligned with the priority areas identified by the Country Assistance Strategy: public financial management, decentralization, public sector development, and natural resource management. But in retrospect, this was too broad a scope to achieve significant impacts. Efforts to link PECSA grantees to ongoing Bank-financed projects in specific sectors came very late in the program. Only some of the grants made under PECSA had a specific sectoral focus on education, health, or natural resource management. Such a “thousand flowers bloom” strategy is useful in the early stages of nurturing SA work, but greater sectoral focus soon becomes imperative to maximize impact.\textsuperscript{31} These are additional areas where PECSA missed opportunities.

Additionally, SA in some of the priority areas, such as public financial management, was too difficult to implement because of limitations in the enabling environment and capacity of CSOs. Identifying target sectors as well as realistic priority areas to focus capacity building would allow training and piloting activities to be better targeted and synergies and coalitions to develop greater effectiveness at a much faster rate. Nevertheless, space should also be maintained to allow organic prioritization to emerge whenever possible.

### 4. Developing a Full Strategic Framework Prior to Implementation

A strategic framework is necessary to identify the mid- to long-term vision for program activities. Without such an overall framework, activities taken under a program may be diffused and become unsustainable. PECSA lacked such a framework at the outset but by mid-term it became evident that one was needed to provide a view of how SA practices in Cambodia could be sustained. Therefore, during its mid-term review, PECSA developed a simple strategic framework by investing in several workshops and additional consultations with key stakeholders, including government and other donors (figure 2).

PECSA’s strategic framework, which aims to sustain SA practices in Cambodia beyond its program cycle, consists of two approaches, one concerning the strategic trajectory and the other the targets-by-client type. The strategic trajectory focuses on a longer-term direction for Cambodian civil society through and beyond PECSA in order to institutionalize SA practices, as institutionalization of SA activities is an enormous goal that will not be achieved during a brief capacity-building program like PECSA. Component 1—Training and Capacity Building—was aimed at moving from a supply-driven to a more demand-driven and proactive approach by introducing mechanisms of SA as well as tools that local CSOs could utilize during and after PECSA. Similarly, Components 3, 4, and 5 all contained elements to bring the isolated and independent Cambodian SA practitioners and CSOs together in an actively networked and coordinated fashion in an effort to institutionalize SA practices in Cambodia over the long run.
The targets-by-client type identifies target goals by clients—Cambodian CSOs—who are at different stages of maturity with regard to SA. All PECSA components were meant to be useful for the development of CSOs on SA practices, but the maturity achieved by the end of the program could naturally vary. A recommendation generated from this lesson for similar projects in the future is to develop an overall strategic framework upfront to match potential clients with proposed services and components through the program.

5. Developing a Clear M&E and Results Framework Upfront for Capacity Building and Overall Program. Overall M&E, particularly the ongoing monitoring framework, is essential to feed learning back into the program components. Moreover, M&E of a program like PECSA, which includes many distinct activities and involves diverse beneficiaries, is an inherently difficult task. Even so, this must be fully developed prior to program implementation. Despite efforts during the program design phase, PECSA was not able to fully develop M&E and the results framework until about six months into the program’s implementation. Future projects should be aware of this difficulty and develop a full-scale evaluation strategy during preparation. Undertaking a results framework workshop prior to the start of a program could be a useful option to consider. Teams might also consult other guidance on M&E of capacity building projects developed by the World Bank Institute.

6. Bringing Together International Experts and Trusted Local Partner Organizations. For capacity-building programs to be effective and sustainable, international experts, together with trusted and devoted local partners, are
needed. While the former can provide advice from experience and international best practices, the latter might be better positioned to implement the program because of their understanding of the local context. PECSA sought to have international experts introduce international SA best practices in Cambodia. The project team also recognized the importance of having a very strong set of local partners to ensure effective program implementation suited to the local context. Local partners such as SILAKA and Star Kampuchea played vital roles for PECSA. While strong local partners are key to a program, PECSA was also an opportunity to expose them to SA. Indeed, training provided through PECSA benefited almost all SILAKA staff members in deepening their understanding of SA. Bringing together international experts and trusted local partners is an important lesson for other SA capacity-building efforts.

7. Recruitment of Program Staff. Having trusted and seasoned program staff on the ground is a critical element for the success and reputation of a capacity-building program—especially in a challenging environment. In the case of PECSA, experienced international program coordinators led the team in Cambodia with support from deputy coordinators with local knowledge. Both of the program coordinators had extensive experience with SA through various institutions, including government, CSOs/NGOs, international organizations, and think-tanks/academia in the EAP region. Deputy coordinators were also CSO experts and had local SA experiences as youth leaders in Cambodia. Having seasoned program staff with vast knowledge of SA and experiences with CSOs both at the regional and country level was key to the Bank’s ability to establish a trust-based relationship with the local CSO community.

8. Identifying Local Champions and Good Practices. While global experiences matter, it is very important to establish a system for identifying and recognizing local SA champions and good practices as the project progresses, with the potential for a demonstration effect, one of the strongest incentives for others to change their approach to SA. With PECSA, the action learning provided opportunities to identify local SA champions and good practices. Sharing good practices, strategies, and tools in a local context is of great benefit for other SA practitioners, especially where government–citizen engagement or the enabling environment for SA is limited. Therefore, as one of its last activities, the program invested in developing a complete Khmer language version of the SAS modules, including a host of Cambodian SA examples. This was used for the last training of trainers workshop that included government officials and that was well received by the participants. Similarly, the local capacity-building partner, SILAKA, was given specific training and support by international partners. The development of such an indigenous version of SA capacity-building and training materials as well as investments in the capacity of local partners was fruitful.

9. Providing Appropriate Incentives to Practitioners. Capacity-building activities are often time consuming, and SA activities can be challenging depending on a country’s sociopolitical context. For these reasons, it is important for a capacity-building program to provide appropriate incentives for practitioners to engage in them. Through PECSA, institutional and individual practitioners were given accreditation for participating in trainings. A MCEV to India or the Philippines was also offered as part of the training as an incentive to participate. The grant component provided an additional incentive for CSO practitioners to be engaged in capacity-building activities for SA, even in a challenging sociopolitical environment. Similar incentives should be considered for future capacity-building programs to attract and sustain the participation of CSO members throughout the program.

10. Pacing of Program Activities. Capacity-building is a gradual process. During the implementation of PECSA, various learning events took place in a short time period. For this reason, participants of the training component did not have much time to reflect on their learning or to think about how the lessons learned should be put into practice in their projects and organizations. Learning from this experience, it is recommended that future task teams of capacity-building programs design program components in a more spaced manner. The pacing may also become critical for continuity between classroom-based participatory learning and subsequent learning-by-doing activities. Continuous support on SA should be given during the learning-by-doing phase through on-site mentoring and facilitated dialogue as TAF did during PECSA despite the fact that the organization’s budget did not account for it. Some program activities should be spaced and coordinated in order to provide this support that would allow practitioners to try institutionalizing SA approaches and tools in their projects and institutions. Arrangement and coordination for continuous SA
support should be made with regard to pacing and budgeted ahead of time to ensure the commitment of the implementation agency for such activities.

Lessons from PECSA for Future Social Accountability Projects Supporting Non-State Actors

1. Conducting Relevant Analysis and Identifying Feasible Entry Points. Knowledge is a powerful tool in designing a SA capacity-building program that fits the needs and context of a specific country. This goes beyond just a training needs assessment or an assessment of the supply-side—i.e., government agencies and legal/policy frameworks. The demand-side assessment—the nature, state, and existing capacities of civil society in areas of SA—should also be examined. In Cambodia, the Bank devoted significant analytical efforts to inform its work on demand-side governance, the most prominent being the Civil Society Assessment conducted by the Bank. Although this Civil Society Assessment was not conducted for the sole benefit of PECSA, it helped to map out the institutional landscape of Cambodian CSOs and allowed the PECSA task team to identify foreseeable challenges as well as entry points for SA work. For example, the Civil Society Assessment stated that the research evidence demonstrated considerable potential interest and willingness to expand and enhance citizen or CSO activity and impact in the field of SA. It also shed light on the social fabric of Cambodia by identifying key contextual factors, including the recent conflict; political, social, and cultural factors; and state–citizen relations. This information greatly helped build both the case for and the content of the program. Additionally, political economy analysis is beneficial for identifying champions, gatekeepers, and entry points prior to program design.

2. Individual versus Institutional—Choosing Target Audience for Training. Both individual and institutional actors are equally important in building capacity on SA, but one should be aware of the different pros and cons of focusing on one or the other target group. While “individual actors” act as change agents and/or expert practitioners of SA, ultimately SA is led by organizations or “institutional actors” that institutionalize these practices.

As noted earlier, PECSA chose to provide training to both individual and institutional actors. The SAS model was more attuned to developing individual skills and capacities in order to introduce the overall concept of SA. However, a tool-based clinic followed by on-the-job mentoring seemed to be the preferred modality for organizational or institutional actors.

While both target audience units benefitted from PECSA’s capacity-development activities, the end-term evaluation of the program concluded that, in the future, efforts should be aimed at a small number of dedicated CSOs and focus on organizational learning rather than on developing individual capacities. This type of training would provide for a stronger institutionalization of SA culture. While designing a capacity-building program, a balance of individual and institutional capacity building should be considered, keeping country context and intended achievements in mind.

3. Managing Potential Political Risks and Capture. Managing actual political risks and capture as well as the perception of them are critical to the success and credibility of an SA program, especially in environments where constructive government–citizen engagement is limited. With PECSA, efforts were made to minimize and manage political risks and capture as well as the perception of favoritism. Such measures included the determination of an executing agency for the program, selection of an implementing agency for the grant provision component, and the creation of grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) for the grant provision component. PECSA succeeded in managing the potential risks of political or financial capture and did not encounter any allegations regarding them because SA principles were incorporated into the management of the program itself using these preventative measures and procedures. Experiences and lessons learned from PECSA were incorporated in the project structure and procedures of the succeeding DFGG project, and there they were put to the test (see following section of this note for details). As PECSA and the subsequent DFGG project showed, managing political risks and capture as well as the perceptions of them in order to ensure fairness and independence requires multiple layers of activities and preventative mechanisms. These may include the establishment of a conflict-of-interest policy and/or code of conduct for GMC and effective GRMs, conducting continuous and active CSO consultations, and selecting an implementing agency with the capacity to manage risk factors. Future NSA support programs should give this adequate consideration.
4. Importance of the Independence of Grant Making Committees. As noted in earlier sections, the GMC—comprised of civil society and government representatives—was responsible for making decisions regarding the funding provision for PECSA. Project teams find it preferable for civil society representatives with vast experience and great local knowledge to serve on GMCs. But seasoned practitioners with this type of background are limited in number and are often involved in CSOs that might apply for program grants, either directly or indirectly (e.g., as board members). This potential conflict of interest can also increase the perception of political capture and favoritism among CSO representatives on the GMC, possibly leading to their resignations. PECSA foresaw this possibility and was able to adequately mitigate the risk with its code of conduct.\textsuperscript{34} Internal good governance rules like a code of conduct and grievance redress mechanisms, among others, are recommended for any program with similar grant-making components.

5. Ensuring the Credibility of the Program through a Grievance-Redress Mechanism. When grants are provided to CSOs (or any other entities) on a competitive basis through a program, managing applicants’ expectations and enabling the redress of grievances, especially from organizations not receiving grants, becomes critical to the credibility of the program. For example, if the GMC is not regarded as independent or if it is viewed as favoring one organization over another, an applicant would file a complaint. No allegations of misconduct were filed throughout the implementation of PECSA. Nevertheless, the GRM was tested with the succeeding DFGG project. The DFGG project received a complaint from an unsuccessful CSO after the first round of small grant provision due to a suspicion of political capture and the perception of donor favoritism.\textsuperscript{35} Fortunately, having learned from the PECSA experiences, the DFGG project and TAF, its grant component partner, had established a clear GRM with guidelines, which stated that a filed grievance had to be investigated within a certain timeline, including the disclosure on the program website of investigation procedures, the content of the grievance, and its redress. This test helped to make the second round of grant making even more transparent and responsive.

Because the issue of grievances is common with grant-provision components, it is recommended that task teams of similar programs create a GRM with clear procedures for the grant-making component, consider the capacity of the implementing agency to address the grievances, and identify the appropriate level of transparency and disclosure of information (e.g., grievances collected and contents of redress), keeping in mind considerations of privacy and country context.

6. Building Networks for Social Accountability. Building and—more importantly—sustaining networks of stakeholders in support of SA is not an easy or straightforward task. PECSA’s Component 3—Networking and Resource Centers—was aimed at building and sustaining the networks of SA practitioners and organizations in Cambodia by expanding existing networks of CSOs. SA resource centers and networks established in every region were initially successful in connecting SA practitioners in the country, but the project was unable to sustain the centers because they were heavily dependent on outside funding. The lesson from PECSA here is that the network component requires special attention—not only in terms of its creation but also with regard to its sustainability.

The establishment of networks must be pursued opportunistically by identifying emerging opportunities for linking up CSOs, governments, and other stakeholders. But at the same time, the creation and maintenance of networks must be carried out systematically. First, it requires a revenue model to continue its networking effort beyond the capacity-building program in a way that is not completely reliant on external financing. Second, a dedicated person or team should be put in place to anchor stakeholders. This person or team should be well connected, familiar with local context, and have well-developed communication and marketing skills to identify and convene relevant stakeholders. Finally, the networks developed should have linkage to or build on existing government programs so that the government–civil society partnership for SA activities will be continuous. Building and sustaining a community of SA practitioners is vital to the institutionalization of SA in a country, requiring dedicated and continuous work.
Concluding Remarks

Although PECSA encountered various challenges in its implementation, it succeeded in spreading the seeds for SA in the sensitive sociopolitical environment of Cambodia. It set the stage for and opened up a discussion about SA, improved the general confidence and awareness of SA for both state actors and NSAs, established the principles of SA in the local language and context, and—to a certain extent—succeeded in including government actors in capacity-building efforts. All of this contributed to initiating and enhancing partnerships between the government and civil society in the governance field, which the subsequent DFGG project was able to leverage.

And yet, despite these achievements, there were also several challenges, missed opportunities, and areas where the program could have better performed. Hopefully, the lessons learned from these will inform future programs working on social accountability capacity building.

References


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4. One of the impediments observed in state–civil society relationship in Cambodia still ranks ranked 157 out of 174 in Transparency International’s Corruption Indicators ranked the country in the 8th percentile in terms of control of corruption indicators placed Cambodia at 2.5 on a 1 (worst) to 5 (best) scale at the time of PECSA. Additionally, in 2007, the World Bank Institute Governance Indicators ranked the country in the 8th percentile in terms of control of corruption and the 21st percentile in terms of government effectiveness. Cambodia still ranks ranked 157 out of 174 in Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index for 2012 and ranks in the bottom 25th percentile in terms of Government Effectiveness and Rule of Law in the Worldwide Governance Indicators.

5. This Civil Society Assessment titled “Linking Citizens and the State: An Assessment of Civil Society Contributions to Good Governance in Cambodia,” is based on research conducted by the Centre for Advanced Study in Phnom Penh and aimed at analyzing the country context for SA and the capacity of CSOs for SA in Cambodia. http://sitesources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1307475897842/CCSA_Eng_Final.pdf.

6. An informal political economy analysis commissioned by the Bank during the preparation of the DFFG project confirmed this view.

7. E.g., Civil Society Assessment (see footnote 5).

8. The total program budget was eventually US$2,245,000 (US$1,995,000 from LICUS + US$100,000 from World Bank Institute’s Affiliated Network for Social Accountability + US$150,000 from AusAID).

9. While the original budget amounts submitted in the LICUS Trust Fund application were US$600,000 (Component 1); US$550,000 (Component 2); US$440,000 (Component 3); US$250,000 (Component 4); and US$155,000 (Component 5), these were later adjusted in a revised Trust Fund proposal after six months of implementation when more detailed cost estimates were available. Additional funding from AusAID and the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) had also emerged by then. The revised budget numbers are presented.

10. Module materials from PECSA’s first SAS can be found on the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-East Asia and Pacific (ANSA-EAP) website. The training topics for the first round of SAS were drawn from other international SA training programs and linked to the themes of Cambodia’s Country Assistance Strategy. Subsequently, a training needs assessment was conducted through consultations with a range of CSOs to make the training more tailored to the Cambodian contexts and needs.

11. These in-depth trainings were provided in a much shorter timeframe than the general SA trainings.

12. Examples of learning events included essay writing, mock project proposal creation, distance learning exchanges, and feedback interactions with each participant.

13. The final selection of government participants was done by the Ministry of Interior while the final selection of CSO participants was done by SILAKA, a local NGO implementing this program component in partnership with other international partners.

14. Supported by the World Bank Institute, ANSA supports CSOs in their efforts to monitor governments in the field of service delivery and to build demand for SA. ANSA-EAP was established in 2008 as a project of ASoG in the Philippines.

15. The rounds of MCEV to India or the Philippines were intended to become South–South learning opportunities, and while the trips were beneficial to many participants, the contextual differences between the visited countries and Cambodia detracted from this learning method, according to some participants.

16. These were on social audits, budget analysis, procurement tracking, and gender-based budgeting in accordance with identified focus areas of PECSA.

17. A combination of procurement and legal issues related to setting up the sub-granting facility under PECSA caused the component to be effective only during the second half of the program. See the Key Challenges section for more detail.

18. These benefits are identified with small grants, but there are also disadvantages. For example, because of the constraints of time and funds, pilot projects may face difficulty being fully implemented, having the accountability loop work, and making a lasting impact. Therefore, choices about the size of grants pose real dilemmas that task teams must consider carefully.
19. In fact, some of the CSOs that were later awarded medium-size grants under the DFGG project (Component 2—Support to Non-State Institutions; see box 1) were the grantees of PECSA’s small grants. The DFGG project provided two rounds of grants that overlapped with PECSA. Among 31 pilot projects funded by the medium- and large-size grants of the DFGG project, 10 were previous grantees of PECSA, and among these, 5 were supported continuously by the first and second rounds of PECSA grants, prior to winning the DFGG grants.

20. The confirmation of appointees by the government was required given that the RGC was the official recipient of both the LICUS Trust Fund and the succeeding International Development Association-funded DFGG project. But the selection of grantees was independently determined by the GMC without further government influence. This arrangement provided legitimacy on the government side, and local CSOs were not opposed to this type of endorsement.

21. For details, see the Lessons from PECSA for Future Social Accountability Projects Supporting Non-State Actors section of this note.

22. The eligibility criteria and guidelines were part of the operations manual of the DFGG project, which was also used by PECSA. The manual can be found at http://www.dfggmoi.gov.kh/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapped&Itemid=147&lang=en.

23. A network created by the SAS graduates.

24. As noted earlier, several CSOs that received funding from PECSA continued to receive funding through the succeeding DFGG project.

25. Both of the program coordinators had vast experience in demand-side governance and SA, leading networks of CSOs and NGOs in the Philippines, working with international organizations, and so on. They were supported by deputy coordinators who were CSO experts with experience in SA activities as youth leaders in Cambodia.

26. Similarly, the timing of PECSA—during a period of intense fiduciary scrutiny and tension with the World Bank concerning the corruption scandal emerged on different Bank-funded projects—also narrowed the focus of broader governance dialogue to corruption. As a result, the nuances of SA as a tool for good governance may not have received the prominence it deserved during PECSA’s duration.

27. To learn more about engagement (e.g., consultations) with NSAs by looking at best practices and lessons learned, see “Guidance Note on Bank Multi-Stakeholder Engagement.” http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/07/08/000333037_20090708235404/Rendered/PDF/492200BR0SecM2101Official0Use0Only1.pdf.

28. Therefore, PECSA had two separate project numbers, one for PECSA (P106040) and another solely for the grant provision component (P113529).

29. As noted, this medium-size grant component was taken up by the succeeding DFGG project.

30. The threshold for government officials’ participation suggested by the PECSA partners is 30 percent. This number is based on an observation of government-CSO interactions during constructive meetings for PECSA. In Cambodia, when government officials became the majority in number, civil society participants became less likely to speak frankly and to actively participate.

31. This is not only because of the technical expertise and focus that can be achieved but also because working with service-delivery CSOs may be more politically feasible/acceptable and constructive, as was the case in the Cambodian context.

32. While an implementable strategic framework with short, mid-, and long-term goals is important, developing one prior to a program implementation might be too ambitious a goal. Keeping this in mind, project teams should prepare a simple, measureable, and flexible action plan or roadmap (e.g., targets-by-clients type of goals).

33. Links to publications on development of results framework for capacity-building projects developed by the World Bank Institute’s Capacity for Development and Results Practice can be found in the Useful Resources section at the end of this note.

34. In fact, while no allegations of conflict of interest concerning GMC members took place during the implementation of PECSA, the mechanism was tested with the succeeding DFGG project. One of the GMC members of the DFGG project resigned in accordance with its code of conduct because the member was associated with an organization that planned to apply for funding provided by the DFGG project. The actual allegation was not filed during this process because the voluntary resignation of the GMC member took place prior to the application for funding. This mechanism sustained the independence of GMC.

35. With respect to transparency, the complaint itself and information on actions taken by TAF (the implementing organization) are disclosed on the project’s website under the Complaint Handling section. http://www.dfgg-nsac.org/en/contact/complaints-handling.
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