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Scaling up Social Accountability in Key Public Services in Cambodia



PHNOM PENH, March 20, 2020—The World Bank approved two complementary grants today to support social accountability in key public services such as health centers, primary schools, and local administration in ten provinces in Cambodia.

While access to public services in Cambodia has improved considerably in recent years, quality continues to be a challenge. Direct and informed feedback from users, and citizens more broadly, has been found to be an important driver of quality improvements for public services around the world.

US\$5.95 million was granted to World Vision International for social accountability activities, including mobilizing community facilitators to inform citizens of the services they are entitled to and the use of public funds. Facilitators will develop community scorecards for citizens to evaluate the quality of public services and agree on joint action plans with the service providers.

US\$1.72 million was granted to the National Committee for Subnational Democratic Development Secretariat to help strengthen the ability of government service providers to provide information to the public about their performance and use of funds, and to better respond to citizen feedback.

*“Strengthening citizen engagement is one of the focus areas of the World Bank’s Country Partnership Framework for Cambodia,” said **Inguna Dobraja, World Bank Country Manager for Cambodia**. “The World Bank recognizes the government’s Social Accountability Framework as a globally significant effort to complement investments in education, health, water and other services with a systematic and sustainable approach to mobilizing citizens and building the capacity of subnational authorities to hold service providers accountable.”*

Both grants are intended to support implementation of the second phase of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF), which lasts from 2019 to 2023. The Framework is an integral part of the government’s decentralization reform program, which aims to strengthen the responsiveness of government to citizen needs. It is a joint government and civil society initiative governed by a Partnership Steering Committee (PSC) that is co-chaired by the Ministry of Interior and an NGO representative. The PSC membership is evenly divided between representatives of government ministries—Interior, Education, Youth and Sport, Health, Economy and Finance, Industry and Handicrafts, and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport—and civil society representatives.

*“The government has strong political commitment to implement ISAF to empower citizens, strengthen partnership between Sub-National Administrations and citizens, and leverage enhanced accountability of these Administrations to improve public service delivery effectively,” said **H.E Ngan Chamroeun, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior and the Head of the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat**. “The expansion of the ISAF coverage will improve the capacity of the Sub-National Administrations to enhance public service delivery effectively, accountably and meet the evolving needs of citizens and the private sector in the future”.*

The projects will cover service providers - including schools and health centers, and commune, Sangkat, district and municipal administrations - in 10 provinces: Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Preah Vihear, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Kandal, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kep and Preah Sihanouk. Pilots focusing on water supply and wastewater management services are also being launched.

“Based on our learning and achievements over the past years, I believe that this support will help strengthen the responsiveness of public services to meet the needs of service users,” said **Daniel Selvanayagam, National Director of World Vision International.** *“The Social Accountability Framework represents a new era of public service provision by fostering constructive dialogue at the grassroots level that will result in lasting changes to public services, especially for the vulnerable.”*

The grants are administered by the World Bank and financed by the Cambodia Social Accountability and Service Delivery Trust Fund, which is supported by the governments of Germany and Switzerland.

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