

# National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS)

## Integration of Social Accountability into National and Sub-National Systems Phase II Project

### Terms of Reference

**Position:** National Consultant for Development the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework Phase III  
**Duty Station:** NCDD Secretariat, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
**Duration:** 60 days, over the period from October 15, 2025, to December 25, 2025  
**Basis:** Short-Term Individual Consultancy Contract

### 1. BACKGROUND

#### *National Program on Sub-national Democratic Development*

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has committed to advancing Sub-National Democratic Development (SNDD). The National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) was established by a Royal Decree (firstly in 2009 and updated in 2023) to coordinate and lead the implementation of the Law on Administrative Management of the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts, and Khans, the Law on Administrative Management of Communes and Sangkats; and the Decentralization and Deconcentration Policy. In 2010, NCDD developed the first 10-year National Program on Sub-National Democratic Development (NP-1, 2010-2020), implemented in 3 phases: The first phase implementation plan (IP3-I, 2011-2014), focused on establishing Sub-National Administration (SNA) operational structures, systems, and procedures. The second phase implementation plan (IP3-II, 2015-2017), aimed at applying the new structures, systems, and procedures to improve SNA service delivery, local development, and governance; and Phase III (IP3-III, 2018-2020), prioritized strengthening the transfer of functions and increasing financial resources to SNAs. Building on NP1, NCDD is now implementing the second 10-year National Program (NP2, 2021-2030) to address all important unresolved challenges from NP1 and newly emerging issues. The objective of the NP-2 is that by 2030 structures and systems of sub-national governance are modern, autonomous, effective, transparent, and accountable in their provision of public services and local development, in line with Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and first Pentagonal Strategy. SNAs are expected to facilitate the provision of public services and drive local development in their respective jurisdictions, responding to the prioritized needs of the people equitably and inclusively, with each type of SNA possessing adequate power and capacity to carry out their functions under the oversight of their councils to strengthen accountability to citizens.

#### *Social Accountability*

Social accountability is an essential component for improving SNA service delivery and governance. Recognizing this, NCDD formulated and approved the Social Accountability Strategic Plan on July 11, 2013. To operationalize this Strategic Plan, the Implementation of the Social Accountability Frameworks (ISAF) was developed and approved in two phases: ISAF-I (2016-2018) and ISAF-II (2019-2025<sup>1</sup>). Implementation of the Strategic Plan and ISAF is overseen by the Implementation Social Accountability Framework Partnership Steering Committee (ISAF-PSC) and executed in close cooperation between development partners and civil society organizations. The PSC is composed of a total of 19 members, including both representatives from seven relevant line ministries and nine civil society organizations (CSOs). The PSC usually convenes twice per year to provide overall strategic guidance to program implementation. At the technical level, representatives of the same line ministries and CSOs make up the Technical Working Group, which can be convened as frequently as needed, to provide NCDDS and World Vision technical advice and feedback for resolving and/or advancing implementation matters as they arise. This collaborative effort aims to enhance the constructive engagement between citizens and government as an integral element of governance arrangements through which public decision-making and action take place. Specifically, social accountability encompasses activities enabling citizens and their representatives to advocate for their interests (voice) and thereby hold officials and service providers accountable for their performance in making, implementing,

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<sup>1</sup> The original implementation plan was completed by 2023, but it has been extended to the end of 2025 to achieve its expected outputs and align with NP2.

and enforcing public decisions (collective choices) concerning rights, regulations, investment/resources, and service delivery.

The ISAF constitutes an integral element of both the NP-1 and NP-2. Both ISAF phases outline activities for the demand side—implemented by civil society organizations—and the supply side—implemented by government entities at national and sub-national levels.

Financial support for ISAF II (2019-2025) has been provided through the World Bank's Social Accountability and Service Delivery Trust Fund (SASD-TF), established with contributions from KfW and SDC, which operated from March 2020 to December 2024. Additionally, DFAT funding provided through the Australia-World Bank Promise Partnership Trust Fund supports project implementation in 2024-2025. These resources finance two key projects: 1) Integration of Social Accountability into National and Subnational Systems Phase II, implemented by NCDDDS, and 2) Engaging Citizens to Improve Service Delivery Through Social Accountability, implemented by World Vision International (WVI). Both projects implement an annual cycle of social accountability that includes four main activities: (1) dissemination of information on service standards, service performance and budgets; (2) providers' self-assessment and community scorecards on service performance; (3) interface meetings between citizens and service providers to agree on actions to improve service delivery, which are formalized in Joint Accountability Action Plans (JAAP); and (4) implementation of JAAPs, which is overseen by a committee composed of representatives from communities and service providers. The projects have been supporting improvements in service delivery at the commune-sangkat (C/S) level, focusing on primary schools, health centers, and C/S administrations.

### ***Rationale for this assignment***

In recent years, the implementation of Social Accountability has delivered significant outcomes and impacts, improving citizens' livelihoods, while contributing to strengthening good governance and local development. These achievements stem from promoting information dissemination, enhancing citizen engagement, fostering constructive relationships between citizens, service providers, sub-national administrations (SNAs), and civil society organizations (CSOs), and improving public service delivery. Social Accountability Phase II (2019-2025), a seven-year initiative which will conclude at the end of 2025, has yielded notable results in citizen participation and the promotion of service delivery. While the phase concludes, key priorities will continue beyond 2025, including nationwide expansion to all communes/sangkats, scaling up to additional services, and ensuring sustainability within *graduated*<sup>2</sup> commune/sangkat administrations.

To enhance the effectiveness of Social Accountability implementation, and ensure sustainability at the commune/sangkat level across all C/S in Cambodia—while also scaling up implementation at the district/municipal/khan (DMK) level and across other sectors and services—NCDDDS will develop Social Accountability Phase III (2026–2030). This framework will guide national ministries/institutions and SNAs in preparing their plans for implementing Social Accountability activities, while also enabling development partners (DPs) and CSOs to define their supporting roles over the next five years. With the aim to contribute to achieving the vision, goals, and objectives of IP5 II and NP2, NCDDDS is therefore seeking to recruit a short-term individual consultant to develop the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework Phase III.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY**

The main objective of this consultancy is to develop a comprehensive, practical, and contextually appropriate Implementation of Social Accountability Framework phase III (for the period of 2026-2030). This five-year framework should aim to institutionalize social accountability mechanisms within Cambodia's national and sub-national systems, and should be adopted by key stakeholders, including line ministries, SNAs, and CSOs. Its purpose is to operationalize and support Social Accountability initiatives that promote the effectiveness, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and social equity of public service delivery, while strengthening meaningful citizen participation.

## **3. SCOPE OF WORK**

The consultant is expected to carry out the following tasks:

- Review the existing documents and Cambodia's relevant legal/policy landscape, including:

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<sup>2</sup> The Social Accountability *graduated commune/sangkat administration* refer to those who have completed the 3 years ISAF annual cycle and they have committed to sustain ISAF with their own resources.

- strategic plan on social accountability (SPSA)
- the Social Accountability Framework phases I and II and related project and study reports, including but not limited to reports on the outcomes and lessons learned from pilot initiatives (e.g., alignment of Social Accountability and CIP cycles in Kampong Speu), lessons from the *graduation approach*, etc.
- SNA Investment Program manuals, good practice of technical documents for piloting Social Accountability sustainability, and other relevant documents, including the draft Social Accountability Sustainability Strategy and Guidelines, which are being developed in parallel with this consultancy.
- Legal and policy documents that support the implementation of sub-national democratic development reform, such as D&D/NP2, public finance management, public administration reform, etc. Conduct an assessment among line ministries, SNAs, DPs, and CSOs to identify best practices, lessons learned, challenges, gaps, and opportunities for integrating Social Accountability into SNAs' annual planning and budgeting process, and for scaling up Social Accountability implementation to additional sectors/services, for the development of the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework phase III.
- Propose an updated timeline for the Social Accountability cycle, to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the Social Accountability process, aligned with the development of Commune Investment Programs (CIP) and District Investment Programs (DIP), while incorporating key lessons learned and success from pilot Social Accountability initiatives.
- Design the draft framework, which should include (a) key principles and objectives; (b) roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; (c) tools and mechanisms (including timeline for implementation of the Social Accountability cycle); (d) monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL); (e) components, expected outputs and outcomes, and result framework with indicators aligned with NP2; (f) mechanisms for addressing cross-cutting issues, such as greater inclusion of gender, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities; and (g) implementation budgeting requirements of Social Accountability framework phase III.
- Draft the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework Phase III and for consultation with NCDD, SNAs, and Social Accountability Technical Working Group, including CSOs and DPs.
- Revise and update the implementation of the Social Accountability Framework phase III following inputs and recommendations from stakeholders. The revised ISAF III will be submitted to the PSC for endorsement/approval.
- Finalize implementation of the Social Accountability framework phase III in both Khmer and English.

#### 4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The implementation approach for this assignment comprises (a) desk reviews of relevant D&D reform and ISAF documentation; and (b) key informant interviews with stakeholders engaged in D&D and ISAF processes. NCDD will provide a curated document list for the desk review and extend necessary support throughout the assignment.

The consultant shall conduct interviews with stakeholders (and field visits, to interview SNAs) to collect necessary information to incorporate with the desk review. As part of the Inception Report, the consultant will propose a list of interviewees, and a draft interview guidelines/questionnaire, both of which will be reviewed, discussed with, and confirmed by NCDD prior to the start of interviews. NCDD will also facilitate the outreach to interviewees.

#### 5. TIMELINE AND KEY DELIVERABLES

The consultancy is expected to take place between October and December 2025. The following deliverables are expected to be developed by the consultant as below:

No	Key Deliverables	Timeline for delivery	Lump sum Payments
1	Submit the inception report in English (one week after the contract is signed).	1 week after contract signature, (e.g., 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2025, if contract is signed on October 17)	20% upon acceptance of the inception report
2	Key informant interviews	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	N/A
3	First draft of Implementation of Social Accountability Framework phase III in English.	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	40% upon acceptance of first draft
4	Revised or second draft of Implementation of Social	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2025	30% upon

	Accountability Framework phase III, reflecting comments received from NCDDS and other relevant stakeholders.		acceptance of second draft
5	Delivery of the final Implementation of Social Accountability Framework phase III in both Khmer and English.	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2025	10% final payment after acceptance of final framework

## **6. PAYMENT**

The payment will be made on the basis of a lump sum that will be stated in the contract to be determined based on qualifications and NCDDS pay scales and negotiation with the consultant.

## **7. SUPERVISION AND REPORTING**

The Consultant will work under the overall supervision of the Head of the NCDDS and direct supervision of the Social Accountability Project Manager. The Consultant will work closely with the Social Accountability Project Coordinator and other Social Accountability consultants, SNAs, relevant line ministries, and other relevant agencies following consultation and advice of the Project Manager.

## **8. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES**

The consultant will have a track record of the following qualifications and experiences:

- Master degree or higher in public administration, planning, social sciences, or a related field.
- At least 7 years' experience in working with national and international institutions and local governments in D&D reform, and coordinating with DPs, IOs and CSOs,
- At least 7 years' experience in planning, M&E and reporting, public services and local development,
- Extensive, relevant professional experiences in the areas of social accountability, local governance, policy analysis and/or advocacy, development and review of technical guidance documents and manuals for development, civic participation, and good governance projects.
- Proven knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the Social Accountability Framework in Cambodia.
- Critical thinking skills, initiative, and creativity.
- Strong understanding of the rights-based approach, gender, disability, and inclusion.
- Possession of strong verbal and written communication with stakeholders in both Khmer and English.

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