

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	: Consultant to Develop Social Accountability Digital Scorecard
Duty Station	: NCDD Secretariat, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Duration	: 90 days, over the period from October 15, 2025, to December 25, 2025 (with possibility of extension for 3 months for maintenance support, using NCDDS's own funding)
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, 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 three 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. The third phase implementation plan (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 on Sub-National Democratic Development (NP-2, 2021 to 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, and to equitably and inclusively respond to citizens' prioritized needs, 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). 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. 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, ISAF encompasses activities enabling citizens and their representatives to advocate for their interests (voice) and thereby hold officials and service providers accountable in making, implementing, and enforcing public decisions (collective choices) concerning rights, regulations, investment/resources, and service delivery.

The I-SAF constitutes an integral element of 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.

Under the leadership of NCDDDS, the **Integration of Social Accountability into National and Sub-National Systems Phase II Project** aims to transform public service delivery through enhanced citizen engagement, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and social equity, utilizing both physical activities and tools, and digital tools for citizen engagement. Central to this effort is the **Social Accountability Digital Scorecard (SADS)** methodology, which will be integrated into the digital framework to enable citizens to directly evaluate and provide feedback on public service quality.

SADS is a social accountability tool intended to improve the responsiveness of service providers, promote better governance, and enable citizens to actively engage in planning and decision-making. It will allow real-time data collection, visualization, and monitoring, significantly enhancing the effectiveness and scalability of community scorecards as a social accountability mechanism. To achieve this objective, NCDDDS is now seeking an experienced **Individual Consultant** to develop the digital SADS application for deployment across sub-national administrations and the demand side (citizen groups), implementing the Social Accountability initiatives.

Rationale for this assignment

Effective social accountability implementation requires robust tools that allow citizens to engage with public service providers, evaluate service quality, and propose service improvements. While the community scorecard model has proven effective in fostering citizen engagement and social accountability, the traditional paper-based practice has limitations in terms of inefficient data aggregation, lack of real-time analytical capabilities, and scalability challenges, ultimately limiting their potential impact at the national level.

The shift to a digital tool for the SADS is expected to provide several benefits, including:

1. **Increased efficiency:** Real-time and automated response data for analysis will reduce delays in data collection and reporting.
2. **Improved accessibility:** Digital tools can reach a broader end user anytime and anywhere through the internet and/or offline.
3. **Enhanced transparency:** Citizens and service providers will have access to dynamic data in dashboards, tracking progress and ensuring accountability.
4. **Sustainability:** The digital tool will be easier to scale and maintain, ensuring longevity and usability across different sectors.
5. **Supporting accuracy:** Improve data validation and reduce human error related to the scorecard.

Developing this digital tool is crucial to advancing D&D reform by integrating social accountability more effectively into national and sub-national systems. This initiative will contribute to the broader goals of enhancing governance and service delivery outcomes, aligning with NCDD's mission to implement the D&D policy and driving Cambodia's transition toward robust and digitally enabled governance.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

The primary objective of this assignment is to develop the Social Accountability Digital Scorecard (SADS) tool, enabling citizens and service providers to rate public service delivery, offer suggestions for improvement, and encourage service providers and SNAs to respond effectively.

The scope of work for this assignment are:

- **System Design and Architecture**
 - Develop a system design document outlining the overall architecture, including both frontend and backend components.
 - Identify suitable technologies and platforms to be used for both the mobile and web interfaces and the backend database (should provide the direction by using Laravel, MySQL/PostgreSQL and Flutter).
 - Define the process/business flow through SDLC and system integration requirements, ensuring compatibility with existing SA-M&E Database systems and relevant platforms (if applicable).
- **Application Development:**
 - Develop and deliver a fully functional SADS application with integrated Backend and Frontend (web and mobile) components.
 - Develop core features for dynamic forms, emoji-based ratings, data aggregation, automated reporting, and interactive visualizations.
 - Ensure the system is user-friendly, accessible on computer, mobile, and tablet devices, and can be used by both public service providers (supply side) and citizens (the demand side).
 - Conducting a comprehensive desk review of all relevant project documents, including the Integration of Social Accountability into National and Sub-National Systems Project. This will be supplemented by a review of existing civic tech tools and digital scorecard methodologies to ensure the application's design is informed by best practices. Develop the SADS application that enables NCDDS, SNA, and relevant stakeholders to:
 - Support self-assessment, citizen scorecards, and interface meetings, and generate them into JAAP through digital tools.
 - Design and implement dynamic online forms that allow for the creation of criteria/indicators with their categories based on sector.
 - Implement a rating module where users can rate indicators using emojis, providing an easy and engaging way to vote.

- Calculate the result of the rating (center point) of each indicator using the arithmetic mean formula (will be provided).
 - Visualize real-time data via interactive reports and analytics.
- Provide the prototype design (UX/UI) for review and feedback from NCDDS.
- Ensure the system is scalable and can be deployed across multiple sectors (e.g., Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Interior) (a platform with a multiple-database concept) with minimal adjustments.
- Develop functionality for dynamic user roles and appropriate permissions for each role.
- Develop Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to enable seamless data exchange between the digital SADS application and existing NCDD and other relevant systems (e.g., Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Interior).
- Implement Single Sign-On (SSO) integration, allowing users to log in securely using their mail accounts or Keycloak identity provider. This will simplify the authentication process and improve user experience (optional).
- **Integration with Existing Systems:**
 - Ensure seamless integration of the SADS tool with the existing SA-M&E Database system as a microservice, ensuring interoperability with other RGC relevant platforms for seamless reporting and analysis across the RGC (e.g., Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Interior, etc.).
- **User Training and Capacity Building:**
 - Provide training to NCDDS, NGO partners, and other relevant stakeholders (including but not limited to relevant staff at the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Interior), on the use of the tool, including its monitoring and evaluation framework.
 - Develop and deliver bilingual (Khmer and English) user manuals and training materials for supporting ongoing usage of the tool.
- **Testing, Validation and quality assurance:**
 - Conduct rigorous testing to ensure the application is functional, secure, and ready for deployment, and make any corrections as necessary.
 - Perform integration testing to verify that all components (frontend, backend, and database) interact seamlessly.
 - Perform user acceptance testing (UAT) with key stakeholders (incl. representatives from citizens and service providers) to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments before the final launch.
- **Monitoring and Maintenance (M&E):**
 - Set up a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the application's use and effectiveness in collecting and utilizing community feedback. The M&E framework should be included in the User Training to ensure system users will be able to deploy it.
 - NCDDS will manage the support from consultant to provide ongoing maintenance and support for the application after deployment to ensure its functionality and scalability.
- **Deployment and Launch, and early maintenance**
 - Deploy the application and ensure it is fully operational for both UAT and Production.
 - Monitor system performance and provide technical support during the initial launch phase to address promptly any issues that arise. Provide updates and patches to fix bugs and improve application features as necessary.
- **Documentation:**
 - Provide comprehensive documentation for the application, including business flow and technical specifications, installation guides, user manuals and troubleshooting procedures, both in Khmer and English.

3. TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLE

The assignment is expected to be completed within a period of 90 days from the date of contract signing, which is expected in September 2025. The following deliverables are expected to be developed by the consultant as below:

No.	Key Deliverables	Timeline for delivery	Payment schedule
1	Inception Report including Business/Process Flow of SADS Development and provide the prototype design for review and feedback from NCDDS	2 weeks after Contract signed (e.g., by 30 th October 2025, if contract signed by October 15)	20% upon acceptance of Inception report
2	Backend Web Application of SADS	15 November 2025	25% upon acceptance of Deliverable #2
3	-UX–UI Template -Web Front-End Application and -Mobile Application of SADS	15 th December 2025	40% upon acceptance of Deliverable #3
4	-Deliver Training Sessions to Users -Deliver User Manuals & Technical Guidelines, installation guides, and troubleshooting procedures, etc. -Final Report (Final functioning SADS accepted by NCDDS)	25 December 2025	15% upon acceptance of Deliverable #4

Following completion and delivery of the tasks listed above, the consultant would be expected to provide ongoing maintenance support to the application after deployment, for a minimum of 3 months, to ensure its functionality and scalability. NCDDS will extend the contract using its own resources to fund this maintenance.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

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

- **Education:**
 - Minimum bachelor's degree in computer science, Software Engineering, or a related field.
- **Experience:**

- At least 5 years of experience in software development, including building scalable and secure applications.
 - Proven experience in developing mobile and web applications and user-friendly digital systems.
 - Experience in data collection tools or social accountability platforms.
 - Demonstrated ability to work in multi-stakeholder environments, particularly with local governments, CSOs, and community groups.
 - The candidate should demonstrate/provide references for a strong track record of successful projects and the ability to deliver high-quality results.
- **Skills and Knowledge:**
- Strong proficiency in back-end development frameworks (e.g., PHP, Laravel, RESTful/GraphQL API and MySQL/PostgreSQL Database).
 - Strong proficiency in mobile/web development frameworks (e.g., React, Next.js, Node.js, or Flutter and Dart).
 - Knowledge of cloud-based systems and DevOps CI/CD deployment.
 - Experience in user experience (UX) design, particularly for web and mobile applications.
 - Good written and verbal communication skills in English.
 - Strong communication and training skills.
 - Knowledge of social accountability tools and experience in public service delivery systems would be a plus.

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