

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

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Gender and Inclusion Consultant

Sustainable Climate-Resilient Accelerated Local Economic Development (SCALED) Project

Position	: Gender and Inclusion Consultant
Duty Station	: NCDD Secretariat, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Contract Duration	: 45 working days, over the period from November 2026 to February 2027
Market Approach	: National (Short-Term Individual Consultancy)
Expected Start Date	: November 2026
Contract Type	: Lump-sum contract
Grant Number	: E748-KH

1. Background

The 10-Year National Programs on Sub-National Democratic Development, Phase 2 (NP2, 2021-2030), was designed to implement key decentralization and Deconcentration policies, specifically the Law on the Management of the Capital, Provincial, Municipal, District and Khan Administrations (2008), Law on the Management of the Commune/Sangkat Administrations (2001). The NP2 aims at enhancing the delivery of public services and local development with mainstreaming of gender equality, social equity and inclusiveness and climate change adaptation through establishing the structures and governance systems of sub-national administrations to be modern, autonomous, efficient, transparent, and accountable in providing public services and local development. To support this, the Gender Equality, Social Equity, and Inclusiveness (GESEI) Strategy under NP2 (2021-2030) was developed and implemented to ensure that sub-national administrations address the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups. The strategy is structured around six core intervention areas: (i) policies and regulations; (ii). human resources; (iii) service delivery and local development; (iv) women's empowerment and participation; (v). public awareness; and (vi) data management. NP2 is implemented under leadership and management of the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) with assistance of NCDD Secretariat (NCDDS) for day-to-day management and implantation of the program.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), through NCDDS, is preparing the Sustainable Climate-Resilient Accelerated Local Economic Development (SCALED) Project to support implementation of the 10-Year National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development Phase 2 (NP2, 2021-2030). The project is expected to be implemented over a five-year period (2027-2031) with an indicative budget of US\$80-100 million, primarily financed by the World Bank (WB) and other anticipated development partners.

The proposed Project Development Objective (PDO) focuses on three interrelated dimensions:

1. Strengthening subnational administrations' resilience systems and capacities;
2. Delivery of local economic and climate-resilient infrastructure; and
3. Promoting citizen participation, social accountability, and inclusive service delivery.

The project consists of four components:

- Component 1: Local Resilience Systems Strengthening;
- Component 2: Local Resilience and Economic Investments;
- Component 3: Innovation and Learning; and
- Component 4: Coordination, Policy and Implementation Support.

Promoting active citizen participation in local planning, social accountability, and quality of inclusive service delivery - while strengthening local resilience systems and supporting economic investments at the subnational level is a core dimension of the SCALED Project Development Objective. SCALED conducted a Stocktake on decentralization and deconcentration reform in Cambodia, drawing on existing documents and evidence to advance gender equality and women's empowerment at sub-national authorities (SNAs). The Stocktake represents an important step in identifying opportunities to better serve women and other vulnerable groups, recognizing that persistent capacity gaps, inter-agency coordination, and financing constraints have limited their benefits from decentralization reforms. With the NP2 providing a strong framework, there is growing momentum to strengthen the integration of gender equality, social inclusion, and climate change — and the Stocktake lays a valuable foundation for translating government commitment into meaningful action at all levels of government.

Building on the momentum generated by the Stocktake, NCDDDS seeks to recruit a qualified Gender and Inclusion Consultant to strengthen project design and more effectively address barriers to women's economic participation and leadership at the subnational level.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The objective of this consultancy is to identify why Cambodia's already substantial gender and social inclusion policy architecture has not translated into women's meaningful participation, leadership, and economic benefit at the subnational level, and to develop specific, actionable design recommendations for SCALED that respond to those specific failure modes. Cambodia's gender policy and legal framework, which including the SNDD Gender Equality Policy and Neary Rattanak VI — is comparatively well developed for a country at its stage of development; the more consequential and less well-understood question is why this architecture has not closed particular gaps in practice, and what SCALED's design can do about it.

The Consultant is expected to differentiate its analysis and recommendations across the distinct groups of women whose barriers and entry points differ substantially, which including women serving as subnational officials and civil servants, women in elected local leadership, and ordinary women citizens engaging with planning and investment processes; rather than treating “women” as a single undifferentiated category or relying on aggregate participation figures that can mask very different underlying dynamics.

The Consultant's findings must be structured as a direct input to the revision of subnational planning guidelines and to the gender and social inclusion provisions of the Project Implementation Manual, and shall be specific enough to be adopted directly in project design rather than requiring further translation.

3. Scope of Work

3.1. Review of Existing Evidence

- Drawing on existing documents and Stocktake report to advance gender equality and women's empowerment at sub-national authorities (SNAs). The Stocktake represents an important step in identifying opportunities to better serve women and other vulnerable

groups, recognizing that persistent capacity gaps, inter-agency coordination, and financing constraints have limited their benefits from decentralization reforms;

- Focus this review on understanding why Cambodia's comparatively well-developed gender policy architecture has not consistently translated into practice at subnational level, rather than on re-establishing that gaps in women's participation and economic benefit exist;
- Identify the key factors that constrain women's economic participation and leadership in local planning and investment processes in target districts/municipalities and communes/sangkats, differentiating the analysis among women serving as subnational officials, women in elected local leadership, and ordinary women citizens, whose challenges and entry points differ substantially, while also identifying gaps in existing evidence that require targeted primary data collection rather than a separate literature review.

3.2. Identification of Barriers-Stakeholder Consultations and Design Recommendations

- Assess the inclusion and meaningful participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups in local economic systems, planning, and investment decision-making, including the effectiveness of existing institutional mechanisms such as WCCCs/CCWCs and lessons from social accountability approaches such as ISAF; identify practical measures—including appropriate resourcing, tools, incentives, access to information, and institutional arrangements—to strengthen participation within existing SNA systems rather than creating parallel mechanisms.
- Assess how gender and broader social vulnerability are reflected in existing climate and investment appraisal processes and tools, and identify practical, capacity-appropriate improvements that can strengthen inclusive and gender-responsive appraisal and decision-making at district/municipality and commune/sangkat levels.
- Propose a short, feasibility-tested set of gender-disaggregated indicators for SCALED's results framework that track influence over decisions and economic outcomes rather than participation headcounts alone, with each indicator assessed for what it would actually take to collect at DM and CS level;
- Develop a Gender Action Plan — specific, actionable recommendations for SCALED, organized by project component — that responds to the diagnosed causes of underperformance identified through the work above, rather than restating generic good-practice statements;
- Ensure recommendations are structured to feed directly into the revision of subnational planning guidelines and the social inclusion provisions of the Project Implementation Manual, including draft guideline or PIM language where the Consultant's recommendation is specific enough to support it.

3.6. Capacity Building for NCDDs and Subnational staff

- Propose a list of recommended training topics and materials on GESEI aspects of project design, to be handed over to the Capacity Development Consultant for further development and delivery to NCDDs and subnational staff in target areas.

4. Expected Deliverables

No.	Deliverable	Indicative Timeline	Payment Schedule
1	Inception report confirming scope, methodology, data sources, and consultation plan	Within 2 weeks of contract sign expected in November 2026	20% upon acceptance of the inception report
2	Draft findings note on barriers to women's economic participation and leadership, with design recommendations	December 2026	45% upon acceptance of the Draft assessment report
3	Development of Gender Action Plan and presentation at the Consolidated Technical Workshop	February 2027	35% upon acceptance of the Final finding note

5. Duration of the Assignment

The assignment is expected to be conducted over a period of approximately 45 working days between November 2026 and February 2027, with level of effort to be determined by NCDDDS.

The Consultant will be required to travel to selected districts/municipalities and Communes/Sangkats to conduct key formant interviews, focus group discussions, and coordinate with other field activities.

6. Payments

The payment will be made on the basis of lump sums to be determined based on qualifications, deliverable outputs, and contract negotiation.

7. Reporting and Supervision

The Consultant will report directly to the Project Director and/or designated Project Manager of NCDDDS, in coordination with the World Bank Task Team member, gender and social development focal point. For technical implementation, the consultant will closely collaborate and maintain regular coordination with:

- Relevant technical departments of NCDDDS;
- The Senior Local Planning and Governance Consultant and Local Participatory Consultant, to ensure findings are integrated into planning guidelines and citizen engagement design;
- World Bank technical teams.

The Consultant shall coordinate the planning and scheduling of any consultations with DM/CS councils and subnational staff with the Senior Project Management Consultant and other consultants engaged in SCALED preparation, with a view to combining or sequencing consultation activities where possible, and avoiding duplicative engagement or consultation fatigue among subnational stakeholders. NCDDDS will support this coordination, including through a shared consultation calendar where feasible.

All deliverables shall be submitted in English. Khmer summaries may be requested where necessary.

The consultant is expected to:

- Participate in regular preparation meetings with the NCDDDS project team and the World Bank Task Team, are required;
- Provide brief written progress updates to NCDDDS upon request;
- Respond in a timely manner to review comments and requests for revisions from NCDDDS and the World Bank Task Team.

8. Required Qualifications and Experience

Education

- Advanced university degree (master's degree or higher preferred) in Gender Studies, Social Development, Development Studies, Sociology, Public Policy, or a related field.

Professional Experience

- Minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience in gender sensitive design and women's empowerment projects or similar operationalization experience, preferably in Cambodia local governance or local economic development contexts;
- Demonstrated experience in gender-sensitive design and operationalization of women's economic empowerment—ideally with specific experiences in subnational governance or local development in Cambodia.
- Experience translating gender analysis into actionable, component-specific design recommendations for development projects;
- Experience supporting donor-funded projects, preferably financed by the World Bank or other multilateral development partners;
- Familiarity with Cambodia's subnational governance and decentralization context is highly desirable.

Skills and Competencies

- Strong facilitation skills, particularly for engaging women, youth, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups in community settings;
- Excellent analytical and report-writing skills;
- Ability to translate qualitative findings into concise, actionable recommendations;
- Fluency in English and Khmer (written and spoken) are required.

9. Selection Method

The Consultant will be selected in accordance with the applicable procurement and consultant selection procedures of the World Bank and the Royal Government of Cambodia.

10. Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

The Consultant shall:

- Maintain confidentiality of all project information, documents, and personal information shared by consultation participants;
- Apply appropriate ethical safeguards when engaging women, youth, and vulnerable groups in focus group discussions;
- Comply with applicable government and donor policies;
- Avoid conflicts of interest during the assignment; and
- Ensure that all outputs are original and of professional quality.

11. Administrative Support

NCDDS will:

- Facilitate access to relevant documents, data, and stakeholders;
- Coordinate focus group logistics with relevant subnational administrations, in coordination with other Component A field activities;
- Provide available project information and background materials; and
- Review and provide feedback on deliverables in a timely manner.

Stocktake Summary: Gender, Social Inclusion, and Women's Economic Participation

Relevant Findings for SCALED Activity A-3 Design Questions

Prepared for SCALED GFPP Preparation — August 2026

Note on Purpose and Use This summary to review of six key documents from the SCALED Knowledge Stocktake on Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform in Cambodia, supplemented by the Stocktake Gap Analysis Report. It is provided to the Gender and Social Inclusion Consultant as a starting point, not a substitute for direct engagement with the underlying documents. The consultant is expected to deepen and update this synthesis — particularly in light of documents not yet reviewed, including the MoWA (2025) Manual on Management of Transferred Functions at District Municipality and Khan level. Where the summary identifies an implication for a specific design question, this is an analytical proposition for the consultant to test, not a predetermined conclusion. Documents reviewed: - NCDD End Project Evaluation: ISAF Project I — Supply Side (2024) - The Asia Foundation: Advancing Social Accountability in Climate Actions in Cambodia (2024) - CDRI Policy Brief: The Status of Women in Commune/Sangkat Government (2024) - MoWA: Neary Rattanak VI — Five-Year Strategic Plan for Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women and Girls 2024–2028 - NCDD: Policy on Promotion of Gender Equality for Sub-National Democratic Development (2019) - UN Women: Training Manual on Gender and Economics (2017) - SCALED Stocktake Gap Analysis Report (2026) - SCALED Knowledge Stocktake Metadata Index (2026)

1. The Central Problem: A Deep Policy-Practice Gap

The most consistent finding across all documents reviewed is not an absence of policy commitment but a deep and persistent gap between legal architecture and operational outcomes. Cambodia has an unusually comprehensive gender normative framework for a country at its stage of development: the SNDD Gender Equality Policy (2019), Neary Rattanak VI (2024–2028), the WCCC Prakas, the Strategic Plan on Gender Increment in SNA Management Positions (2024–2028), and the Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change collectively constitute ambitious and detailed national commitments.

Yet the CDRI study finds that 96% of commune council members believe the government has already done enough on gender equality — a figure that signals not satisfaction with outcomes but a fundamental disconnect between the existence of policy and awareness of the gap between policy and lived reality. The SCALED Stocktake Gap Analysis describes this as "integration deficits" — cross-cutting gender mechanisms that "lack the dedicated resources necessary to ensure equitable access," and gender inclusion that has succeeded in some spaces "by default rather than by intentional design."

An analytical framework for structuring the assessment: The stocktake documents, taken together, implicitly address three distinct categories of women whose constraints and opportunities differ substantially — and for whom SCALED's design responses will need to be differentiated:

- **Female bureaucrats and public servants at the DM and CS levels** — the primary focus of the SNDD Gender Policy (2019) and the Strategic Plan on Gender Increment in SNA Management Positions. Their barriers relate primarily to recruitment pathways, institutional culture, role assignment within SNA structures, and access to capacity building.
- **Women in local elected leadership** — the primary subject of the CDRI study on commune council members. Their barriers relate to party recruitment gatekeeping, confidence and self-perception gaps, functional marginalization within councils, and the dual burden of official and household duties.
- **Ordinary women citizens** — the primary subject of the ISAF evaluation and the Asia Foundation report. Their barriers relate to access to information, capacity to articulate priorities in formal planning settings, and the structural conditions under which voice translates into influence.

The existing gender policy architecture is most developed for the first category and weakest — in operational terms — for the third. SCALED's design responses need to address all three, and the consultant should assess barriers and entry points for each category systematically. This framework is also directly relevant to the design of the results framework (Design Question 7): indicators should be differentiated by beneficiary category rather than relying on aggregate participation headcounts that conflate all three.

The implication for all design questions: the consultant should not be asked to establish whether barriers exist — that is already well-documented — but rather why the existing policy architecture has failed to close specific gaps for each category of women, and what design features within SCALED can address those specific failure modes.

2. Findings Relevant to Design Question 1

Planning Committee Composition and Decision-Making Architecture

Finding 2.1 — Numerical inclusion does not equal substantive participation. The ISAF evaluation records impressive headline participation numbers: 70% of scorecard meeting participants were women, and 53% of Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs) trained were female. The Asia Foundation report provides the essential counterpoint: women are frequently over-represented in village planning meetings because men have migrated for work — but this attendance often reflects social obligation rather than genuine agency. Women at these meetings frequently have limited understanding of the Commune Investment Program (CIP) and lack confidence to participate in formal agenda-setting discussions.

Finding 2.2 — WCCCs/CCWCs are structurally marginalized within councils. The CDRI study finds that female councillors are three times more likely than male colleagues to serve on the CCWC — effectively siloed into social programming roles — and five times more likely to spend the majority of their time administering IDPoor, the most time-consuming and least strategic function in the council. Strategic planning and investment functions remain male-dominated.

Finding 2.3 — The recruitment pipeline is structurally skewed. Only 27% of female council members reported that a party official encouraged them to run, compared to 54% of men. Despite female recruits being more educated (61% completed high school vs. 29% of men), they are significantly less likely to feel qualified to serve or identify as leaders prior to election. Confidence and self-perception gaps, not educational deficits, are the binding constraint.

Finding 2.4 — WCCCs are formally mandated across sectors but operationally confined to gender-specific programming. The WCCC/CCWC training manual confirms that WCCCs are formally mandated to work across all key sectors — health, education, agriculture, natural resources, and administration — and are expected to integrate gender analysis into the three-year rolling investment plans and annual budgets of subnational administrations. The GRB CIP manual explicitly states that gender-responsive budgeting is "not a separate budget for women" but a tool for ensuring all subnational plans address the differing needs of men and women across sectors. However, in practice, WCCCs are routinely confined to administering a nominal gender budget line and managing social protection and GBV-related functions — sidelined from the substantive investment planning and LED functions where gender mainstreaming would have the greatest impact. This pigeon-holing reflects a compound failure across four dimensions: resources (no dedicated WCCC operational budget beyond sub-decree mandates); tools (planning templates and data collection instruments exist in the manuals but are not integrated into standard CIP processes); incentives (WCCC members receive no differential recognition or support for cross-sectoral engagement); and access to information (WCCC members typically do not receive CIP investment proposals or DM budget documentation in time to meaningfully contribute to appraisal).

Design implication: The evidence points clearly toward the WCCC/CCWC structure as the right institutional vehicle — creating a parallel project mechanism would be costly, unlikely to be sustained beyond SCALED's implementation period, and would further fragment an already complex institutional landscape. The design question is therefore not whether WCCCs are the right vehicle, but how the four operational dimensions of resources, tools, incentives, and information access need to be addressed together to shift WCCCs from a gender-programme administrator to an active participant in cross-sectoral investment decision-making. The GRB CIP manual and the WCCC training manual together provide a basis for the consultant to propose concrete provisions — including draft planning guideline language — without starting from scratch.

3. Findings Relevant to Design Question 2

Social Accountability Mechanisms: ISAF Provisions for SCALED

Finding 3.1 — ISAF is a donor-financed project operating outside the core SNA administrative framework — its participation numbers cannot be read as indicative of mainstream SNA performance. This is a critical contextual point for SCALED design. The 70% female participation in scorecard meetings and 53% female share of CAFs trained are genuine achievements, but they were generated by a dedicated project with its own facilitation infrastructure, incentive structures, and implementation support. They do not reflect participation levels in core subnational planning forums such as the CIP process or DM investment committees, where the institutional environment is very different.

Finding 3.2 — The quality of women's participation in ISAF processes is more limited than the headline numbers suggest. The Asia Foundation report finds that women's high attendance at scorecard meetings frequently reflects social obligation rather than genuine agency — men have migrated for work, and women attend because they feel they must, not because they feel empowered to influence decisions. Crucially, women at these meetings often lack access to the planning information that would allow them to make substantive contributions, and lack confidence to speak in formal meeting settings. Women are largely positioned as beneficiaries providing feedback on services, rather than as actors shaping investment priorities. This is directly relevant to the three-category framework in Section 1: ISAF processes have engaged women as citizens, but have not significantly altered the position of women as local leaders or as officials in the planning system.

Finding 3.3 — The scorecard tool has structural weaknesses that limit its utility for gender monitoring. The scorecard instrument as currently designed does not allow for adequate gender disaggregation of findings, making it difficult to feed women's specific priorities into planning and decision-making processes in a systematic way. The ISAF evaluation documents misalignment between project indicators and the ISAF framework, and the Asia Foundation report notes limited standardization of scorecard tools across sites. As a result, even where women's participation generates findings at the local level, those findings cannot be reliably aggregated upward into DM or provincial planning systems. This is a design flaw in the instrument, not just an implementation gap, and it needs to be addressed in SCALED's SA provisions.

Finding 3.4 — Facilitator capacity on sensitive gender issues, including GBV, is inadequate. The ISAF evaluation flags significant concerns about the quality of cascade training for CAFs and SNA focal points, noting that slide-based training has not produced the depth of understanding needed for effective facilitation, and that high turnover among SNA officials leads to continuous loss of accumulated capacity. The WCCC training manual identifies GBV counselling as a core WCCC function requiring specific facilitation skills — including safety planning, informed decision-making support, and referral to legal and health services — but this specialized competency has not been integrated into ISAF facilitator training. The Asia Foundation report further notes that "fear and distance" from authorities act as structural barriers preventing women from raising sensitive issues in formal scorecard settings. The result is that ISAF processes, as currently designed, are poorly equipped to surface gender-specific concerns beyond service delivery — and GBV, which the WCCC framework explicitly addresses, is largely absent from the scorecard agenda.

Finding 3.5 — The central challenge for SCALED is institutionalization, not replication. ISAF demonstrated that well-facilitated social accountability processes can achieve strong gender participation outcomes in numerical terms. The breakdown occurred in the JAAP implementation phase, where institutional capacity and political will to act on findings were uneven — and where women's priorities were most likely to be deprioritized once project facilitation support stepped back. This is precisely the failure mode that mainstreaming into core SNA systems risks repeating at greater scale.

Finding 3.6 — Social accountability in climate actions is an emerging and underdeveloped space. The Asia Foundation report identifies significant potential for integrating gender-responsive social accountability into climate planning processes, but notes that existing ISAF mechanisms were not designed for this purpose. The institutional infrastructure (CCWCs, CAFs, scorecard processes) exists; the climate-specific content and analytical tools do not.

Design implication: The central design question for SCALED is not how to modify the ISAF model at the margins, but how to retain and institutionalize its participation gains while addressing three compound weaknesses that the evidence identifies: the quality gap between women's numerical attendance and substantive voice; the scorecard tool's inability to aggregate gender-disaggregated findings into planning systems; and facilitator capacity gaps on sensitive gender issues including GBV. Provisions in the revised planning guidelines, the JAAP process, and the scorecard instrument design should be assessed specifically against these three dimensions. The consultant should also assess what minimum institutional conditions — staffing, budget, information systems, and facilitator competency standards — are prerequisites for institutionalization to succeed without a dedicated project driving it.

4. Findings Relevant to Design Question 3

Capacity Gaps at DM and CS Level

Finding 4.1 — Capacity building has not reached commune level. The ISAF evaluation finds that civil servant training reached only 25% women (1,330 of 5,285 trained) — a stark contrast to the 70% female participation in citizen engagement processes. The Stocktake Gap Analysis notes that LED capacity building is delivered primarily at the DM level and fails to cascade to commune officials, who often manage multiple portfolios with minimal technical support.

Finding 4.2 — Knowledge of gender policy frameworks is very limited at SNA level. The ISAF evaluation records that working group officials at SNA level had "limited knowledge and capacity on process and procedures." The SNDD Gender Policy (2019) has not been systematically disseminated or operationalized at the DM and CS levels. The gap between the national policy framework and SNA-level operational knowledge is wide.

Finding 4.3 — The UN Women Gender and Economics training manual is useful but requires significant adaptation. The manual is pitched at practitioner level and contains valuable conceptual frameworks — including Gender-Responsive Budgeting (Module 7), the 3R framework for unpaid care work (Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute), and the Value Chain Engendering Tool. The Cambodia-specific data point — that men perform only 18 minutes of unpaid work per day, the lowest recorded globally — is a stark anchor for discussions of the care burden and its economic implications. However, the manual requires substantial adaptation for DM and CS-level counterparts and should be used as a source framework, not a deployable training product.

Design implication: The Component E capacity building workstream should be designed with differentiated approaches for DM and CS levels — the content, format, and delivery modality appropriate for DM technical staff differ substantially from what is feasible and appropriate for CS council members managing multiple functions with limited administrative support. The consultant's handover note to Component E should propose this differentiation explicitly.

5. Findings Relevant to Design Question 4

DM-level Investment Window: Gender Risks and Safeguards

Finding 5.1 — Women's political presence is weakest precisely at the DM level. The CDRI study shows that women's influence within councils, while perceived by women themselves as equivalent to men's at the CS level, has not translated to the DM level where representation is lower and investment decision-making is more technical and less community-proximate. Neary Rattanak VI's monitoring indicators focus on the National Assembly, Senate, and public sector management positions — the DM level is conspicuously absent as a specific monitoring target.

Finding 5.2 — SCALED's investment consolidation at DM level creates a structural risk. The shift from CS-level investment financing (where women's engagement has historically been strongest) to a single investment window primarily at the DM level moves decision-making upward to an institutional layer where women's representation and institutional influence are weaker. This risk is not yet acknowledged in SCALED's preparation documentation.

Finding 5.3 — Gender-responsive budgeting has been committed to in policy but not practiced. The SNDD Gender Policy (2019) explicitly calls for "ensuring gender budget allocation" in SNA investment planning, and Neary Rattanak VI Strategy II (Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming) makes gender-responsive budgeting a core mechanism. Neither has been operationalized in CIP or DM investment planning practice to date.

Design implication: The PIM should include specific provisions on: (a) minimum thresholds or scoring criteria for women's investment priorities within the DM investment menu; (b) mandatory gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment as part of investment appraisal; and (c) a formal role for WCCC/CCWC consultation in the DM investment proposal process, with documentation requirements. The consultant should propose draft PIM language for each.

6. Findings Relevant to Design Question 5

Climate Investment Appraisal and Gender-Differentiated Vulnerability

Finding 6.1 — Women's climate priorities are not actually different from men's — but their capacity to articulate them formally is. The Asia Foundation report finds that women's stated climate priorities (water management, irrigation, reservoirs) largely converge with men's. The gender gap is not in what is prioritized but in who shapes the formal appraisal and selection process, and whether gender-differentiated vulnerability is captured in technical investment criteria.

Finding 6.2 — The existing VRA methodology does not systematically capture gender-differentiated vulnerability. The Technical Manual for Inclusion of Climate-Resilience includes the Vulnerability Reduction Assessment (VRA) methodology, but it does not disaggregate vulnerability indicators by gender or include gender-differentiated risk weighting in investment scoring criteria.

Finding 6.3 — The Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2018–2030) identifies this gap. MoWA's plan calls for gender-responsive indicators for climate adaptation at the subnational level, but monitoring of this commitment has not been operationalized by NCDD or the line ministries responsible for climate investment planning.

Design implication: Rather than identifying specific investment types with gender-differentiated impacts (which the evidence does not strongly support as a categorization principle), the design question should focus on how the VRA methodology should be augmented to capture gender-differentiated vulnerability in ways that are operationally feasible for DM and CS-level appraisers. The consultant should propose specific additions to VRA scoring criteria or a supplementary gender-climate checklist that could be incorporated into the investment appraisal PIM provisions.

7. Findings Relevant to Design Question 6

Innovation and Learning Pilots: Service Model Prioritization

Finding 7.1 — The care economy is a structural constraint, not a peripheral concern. Neary Rattanak VI Strategy I identifies the care economy as a core priority, calling for measures to "Recognize, Reduce, and Redistribute" unpaid care work. Cambodia's data — men performing only 18 minutes of unpaid work per day — is among the most extreme gender-care burden ratios globally. Any LED pilot that does not account for the time constraints imposed by care responsibilities on women's economic participation is likely to underperform.

Finding 7.2 — Community-based childcare has a policy basis but limited evidence of effectiveness at the SNA level. Neary Rattanak VI explicitly supports childcare solutions as part of the care economy response, but there is limited evidence from Cambodia of community-based childcare models operating effectively at commune scale. The consultant should assess whether sufficient implementation evidence exists to justify a SCALED pilot, or whether a co-design and feasibility assessment approach is more appropriate.

Finding 7.3 — Women's savings groups have a stronger evidence base in Cambodia's subnational context. Savings groups linked to income-generating activities have been piloted across several development programmes and have demonstrated evidence of sustained economic outcomes for women at the village level. The link to commune-level investment planning — for example, through matching grants or LED service referrals — is underexplored.

Design implication: The current framing in SCALED preparation documents positions community-based childcare as a near-default pilot option. The stocktake review does not support this assumption — the evidence base for childcare models operating effectively at commune scale in Cambodia is limited, and the operational demands of establishing and sustaining community childcare infrastructure may exceed NCDD's SNA-level capacity during a preparation-phase pilot. Women's savings groups linked to LED services, by contrast, have a stronger track record in Cambodia's subnational context and a more direct line of sight to economic participation outcomes. The design question for Component 3 should therefore be reframed: rather than asking how a childcare pilot should be designed, the consultant should first be asked which pilot model or models the evidence most strongly supports, assessed against three criteria — strength of evidence in Cambodia's subnational context, operational feasibility for NCDD at the SNA level, and potential to generate learning transferable to the full programme. Childcare should remain on the table as one option to be assessed, not the assumed answer. The consultant's recommendation on pilot prioritization should feed directly into Component 3 design before pilot parameters are finalized.

8. Findings Relevant to Design Question 7

Results Framework: Gender-Disaggregated Indicators

Finding 8.1 — The ISAF results framework failed on gender monitoring. The evaluation is explicit: the framework did not clearly distinguish supply-side from demand-side indicators, and training data showed only 25% women among civil servants trained — a figure buried under the 70% citizen participation headline. No disaggregated data exists on whether women's participation influenced investment decisions or service outcomes.

Finding 8.2 — Neary Rattanak VI provides a useful alignment anchor. The strategic plan includes monitoring indicators at the national level that, in several cases, could be adapted for SNA-level tracking — particularly on women in governance positions, access to financial services, and economic empowerment outcomes. Aligning SCALED's results framework with Neary Rattanak VI indicators would position the project as contributing to a national monitoring system, avoiding duplication and building MoWA's coordination role.

Finding 8.3 — Collection feasibility at SNA level is the binding constraint. Multiple documents note that SNA capacity for gender-disaggregated data collection is limited. Indicators that require primary survey data or complex administrative records are unlikely to be reliably collected. The results framework must be designed for feasibility, not just analytical ambition.

Design implication: The consultant should propose a short list of 5–8 indicators that: (a) track decision-making influence and economic outcomes, not just participation headcounts; (b) are aligned with Neary Rattanak VI

monitoring targets where possible; and (c) are assessed individually for collection feasibility at the DM and CS levels. Each proposed indicator should be accompanied by a brief feasibility note specifying the data source and collection modality.

9. An Additional Design Question Not in the Current TOR

Coordination Between SCALED GESEI Provisions and Neary Rattanak VI Monitoring

The evidence strongly suggests that a critical institutional coordination question is currently absent from the TOR's design agenda: what mechanism is needed to align SCALED's GESEI provisions and results reporting with the Neary Rattanak VI monitoring framework?

MoWA's TWG-G is the primary monitoring body for Neary Rattanak VI at the subnational level, but there is no formal coordination mechanism between NCDD (the SCALED implementing agency) and MoWA on gender monitoring at the DM and CS levels. SCALED has an opportunity to fill this gap by building in a formal reporting linkage — positioning the project as both a delivery vehicle and a monitoring contributor for national gender commitments. The consultant should assess the feasibility and design of such a mechanism as part of the coordination provisions recommendations.

10. Priority Documents for Consultant Review

The following documents are recommended for direct consultant engagement at the outset of the assignment, in addition to this summary:

Priority	Document	Relevance
Essential	NCDD End Project Evaluation: ISAF Project I (2024)	Design questions 2, 3, 7
Essential	CDRI Policy Brief: Women in Commune Government (2024)	Design questions 1, 4, 7
Essential	Asia Foundation: SA in Climate Actions (2024)	Design questions 1, 2, 5
Essential	Neary Rattanak VI (2024–2028)	Design questions 6, 7, 8
Essential	SNDD Gender Equality Policy (2019)	Design questions 1, 3, 4
Essential	GRB CIP Participant Manual (MoWA / ACCESS)	Design questions 4, 7 — contains structured GRB methodology and tools for commune investment planning directly applicable to PIM provisions
Essential	CCWCA Training Manual (2020)	Design questions 1, 3 — documents WCCC formal mandate, tools, and the gap between cross-sectoral mandate and single-sector practice
Important	Strategic Plan on Gender Increment in SNA Positions (2024–2028)	Design question 1
Important	MoWA Manual on Transferred Functions at DM/Khan level (2025)	Design questions 3, 4
Important	Technical Manual for Inclusion of Climate-Resilience (VRA)	Design question 5
Supplementary	UN Women Gender and Economics Training Manual (2017)	Design question 3 / Component E inputs
Supplementary	Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change 2018–2030	Design question 5