



Co-funded by the European Union



កិច្ចសហប្រតិបត្តិការ  
អាល្លឺម៉ង់-កម្ពុជា

DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



**TOOLKIT**

# Increasing awareness of OWSO and the Ombudsman

A step by step guide and toolkit  
for district councils.

# Introduction

More and more districts in Cambodia are installing One Window Service Offices (OWSO). Their aim is to provide citizens with a single point of entry for requesting government services. This, in turn, aims to improve efficiency of service delivery. Every district that has an OWSO also has an Ombudsman office. This office is connected to the government but is meant to play the role of a neutral third party who will listen to citizen's concerns and will attempt to mediate between them and the government in case of complaints.

## What is an Ombudsman?

The Ombudsman is an institution which originated in Sweden in 1809, hence the foreign sounding name ("ombud" in Swedish has a similar meaning to "attorney" in English). It is an official who is in charge of representing the interests of the public by investigating and addressing their complaints. He/ She is either appointed by the government or parliament but enjoys a high degree of independence.

In Cambodia, the district ombudsman is selected by the district government. More information on the ombudsman can be found on this website: <http://www.owso.gov.kh/?lang=en>.

This step by step guide and toolkit has been written for district councillors and district committee members who have already identified that citizens are not sufficiently aware of the services that can be delivered in their OWSO and through the Ombudsman.

To implement these activities, the district will need to cooperate with different line departments because it touches upon cross-cutting topics. This is what is meant by coordinated service delivery. If you want to learn more about how Rotonak Mondol District, in Battambang province, approached coordinated service delivery, you can have a look at the video thru this link: <https://youtu.be/gNn8JmxYJc0>

## What is coordinated service delivery?

For the EU DAR project, coordinated service delivery refers to line offices, administration and the board of governors working together to provide social and administrative services to citizens.

The term "coordinated service delivery" has a similar meaning as joined-up services, interagency collaboration, cross-agency work and multi-agency partnerships.

The steps presented here, as well as the tools provided, are based on experiences of the first phase of the European Union Decentralisation and Administrative Reform (EU DAR) project. This project aims at supporting sub-national councils, their administrations and line offices in partner districts and municipalities to deliver public services - and to do so in a more harmonized, responsive and accountable manner.

This toolkit provides a step by step guide to implementing activities at district level. It will include tested tools and approaches from partner districts in Battambang province and share their good practices and lessons learnt. Some tools and approaches have been adapted for districts who wish to draw from their district funds to implement this activity. This means that expenses have been lowered and tools have been adapted to work without external facilitation.

This toolkit is part of a toolkit series that can be found on the NCDD-S website. These are the other toolkits in the series:

- Food and drink hygiene in schools,
- Domestic violence prevention,
- Solid waste management,
- Handwashing in primary schools.



Figure 1 - The OWSO Tuk Tuk receiving new number plate so it's ready for providing services to citizens



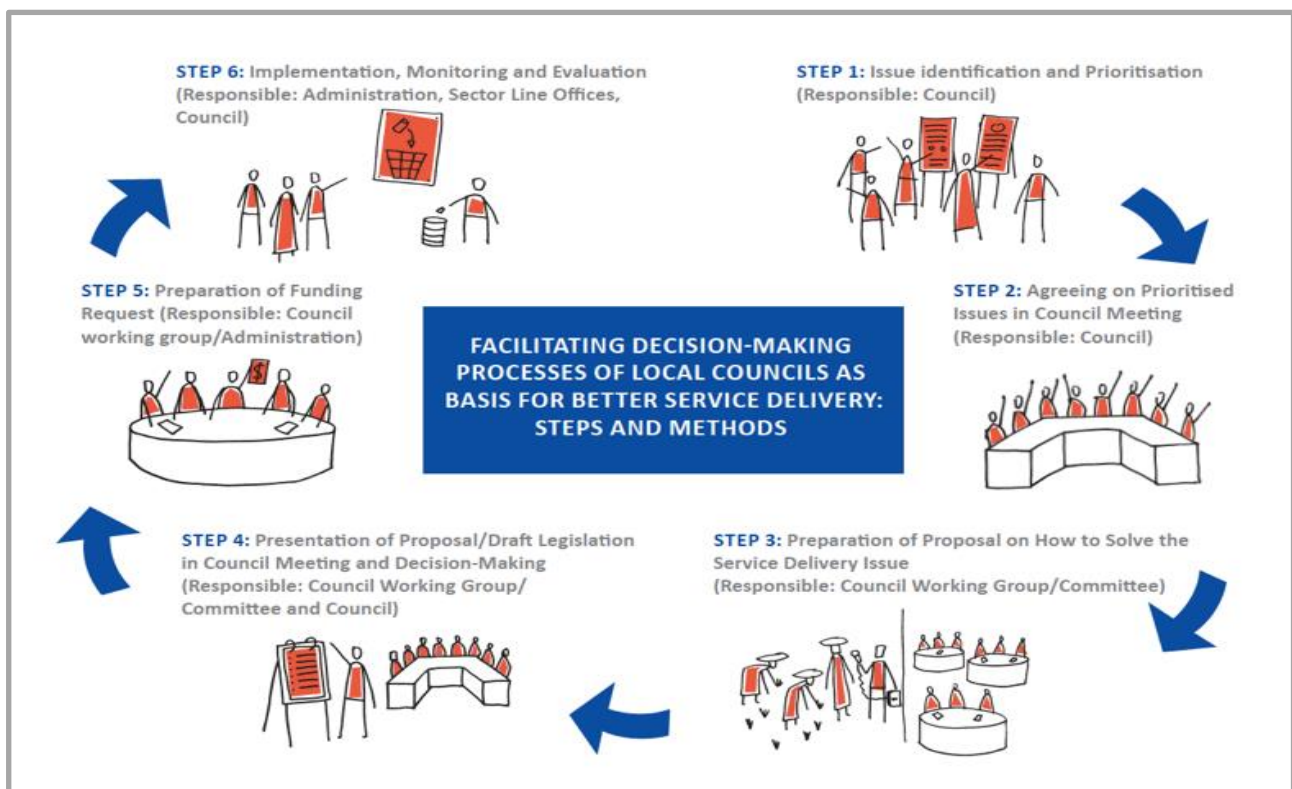
# Proposed process for implementing permissive function

This is a graphic that shows the individual steps we recommend implementing the council's permissive function in a way that is participatory with regards to citizens and coordinated with line departments.

It is based on the so-called facilitated approach that the EU DAR project developed and uses in cooperation with its partner districts. For more information and tools on the facilitated approach please consult the Facilitated Approach Toolkit (annex 1).

The document you have in front of you right now - the sector toolkit - does not cover all sub-steps of the facilitated approach since it is supposed to be implementable without external support.

In the following chapters, each of these steps will be explained in more detail and practical tools will be shared.



## 1. Issue identification and prioritization: Consulting citizens about their needs

The very first step of this process is consulting citizens about their needs. This is essential for the success of democratic decentralization. Needs and wishes should be identified in a bottom-up approach to truly bring government closer to the citizens. It also improves the effectiveness of use of public funds. This can be done in direct ways (e.g. public forums) or in indirect ways (e.g. through WCCC committees, commune and sangkat forums).

This toolkit assumes that you have already completed consulting with the public and that the lack of awareness about the new OWSO and Ombudsman institutions and the services they deliver for citizens came up as an important issue. Now you want to take action. If so, step 2 will show you how to get started with this process.

If you have the feeling that action is needed but you have not yet consulted with citizens, you can look at the minutes of commune and sangkat public forums, consult with WCCC and the facilitation committee or agree with other council members to go out and speak to the people about their needs. Once this is done, all needs collected should be listed and sorted according to level of priority. The facilitated approach toolkit (annex 1) contains links to some tools that can help you prioritize citizens needs once collected.

## 2. Agree on prioritized issue in council meeting: Formal approval for further investigation and forming a working group

Once you, as a council member or chairperson, have identified an issue you want the district council to take action on, you will need to formally reach an agreement on it in the next district council meeting. You can use an ordinary or extraordinary meeting for this purpose. It is sufficient to ask the district administrator for the format to put it on the agenda of the next council meeting. More information on the procedure to follow can be found in the technical document on council meetings (annex 2). Although not formally necessary, it is helpful for relationships to discuss the proposal beforehand with the council chairperson and district governor and get their support.

During the council meeting, you can bring forward that awareness raising on OWSO/Ombudsman should be a priority issue due to citizen requests and ask the council to set up a working group to further explore the problem and inform possible council solutions. Once the council has approved of the topic and decided to take action, the council can ask the district governor to set up a working group on this behalf. You can find some examples from EU DAR partner districts in annex 3.



Figure 2 – Ombudsman staff sharing insights about citizen concerns

In EU DAR partner districts, the following actors participated in the working group:

- District councillors/ chairperson,
- Deputy governor in charge,
- Council personnel,
- Inter-sector office,
- Commune support and planning office,
- Administration and finance office,
- Ombudsman office,
- OWSO staff.

If possible, also try to have a mix of women and men in the working group. As we wish to improve the awareness of, and deliver services to, both men and women, it is important to also have both men's and women's opinions and views included in the survey as well as activity design and implementation.

#### Lessons learnt from EU DAR partner districts

- It is better to have a smaller rather than bigger working group at the beginning of the process (we recommend less than 10 people). When the working group is big, it is more difficult to plan and implement the survey and write the activity proposal efficiently. The working group can then be enlarged in step 6.
- It is important that the members of the working group are those enthusiastic about the topic and are not only present because they are pressured or feel otherwise obliged to attend it. They will also need to be available regularly during approx. three months in which the activity is prepared. Experience has shown that pressured participants will not come to meetings regularly and slow down the process for the whole working group.
- It may be helpful to review the working group membership before entering step 6: The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the activity. This is an opportunity to exchange less active members and also to enlarge the working group if there are more people/ departments needed to implement the activity.
- Prior to formally proposing the topic in a formal council meeting, it is recommended to consult first with the council chairperson and the governor to ensure a smooth process.

## 3. Preparation of proposal on how to solve the priority issue

### 3.1 Further investigate the problem through a study with the working group

After all the relevant departments and other stakeholders are identified, have a first meeting with the working group. You or the agreed-on chairperson of the working group can begin by explaining the purpose of the working group to its new members and you agree jointly on next steps. The following are some things you could begin to discuss and take decisions on.

In EU DAR partner districts, a joint objective for the activity was agreed so that it is clear to all working group members what they are working towards. You can find the examples from EU DAR partner districts in the project proposals in annex 4.

Once you have agreed on what you want to achieve, we recommend you study the issue further and collect more information on the situation in your district. So, the next step would be to do a field study to see the extent of the problem. For small problems, you may be able to proceed without further studying the topic. For instance, this could be the case if the council members have collected sufficient information through their everyday work.

For bigger issues, it is useful to understand if rural and urban citizens have different levels of knowledge about OWSO/ Ombudsman and some geographic areas should be tackled first. It can also tell you about the levels of service satisfaction among those constituents who do know OWSO and have already accessed services there. This is especially important when your funds are limited, and you cannot implement the activity in all parts of the district.

Annex 5 contains some examples of studies implemented in EU DAR partner districts. We recommend you limit yourselves to 5 - 7 questions. This should give you sufficient information to design an informed activity, but still keep the data analysis feasible.

It would be important to add the type of respondent (business/ household) and the sex of the respondent (male/female) to the questionnaire so you can analyse if there are any differences, for example between women's and men's knowledge.

Print out a sufficient number of questionnaires and go to different areas of the district to interview citizens. It's good to cover different age groups, geographic areas, women and men, businesses and private persons.

If you have someone in the working group who can collect the sheets and analyse them in Excel, that would be a great thing to do before the next working group meeting. If not, after conducting the survey, every working group member should go through the questionnaires collected by him/herself and note down things they have noticed: What did participants know about/ not know about? Which commune seems to have more problems than others? etc.

If you do have access and knowledge on doing analysis with Excel, this would be a good program to use for analysis. If you don't have access to Excel, please don't let this discourage you from continuing the activity. If you just note down observations from your survey, you should also have more knowledge than before for designing the next step.

#### Lessons learnt from EU DAR partner districts

- For communication between the working group members, it is a good idea to establish a telegram group. It also allows you to share photos and documents between members.
- For the study on OWSO/Ombudsman awareness, we recommend you do a survey with individual questionnaires instead of focus group discussions. Since you want to have a high diversity in respondents, it is logistically easier to spread out the working group geographically and then administer questionnaires, than it is to ask citizens from different parts of the district come together at the same place at a specific time.
- Before implementing the survey, the working group should meet and decide on which member is to conduct which interview, etc. This way, the following day, everything goes smoothly, and no important part is forgotten.
- When implementing the survey, it is good to work at least in teams of two: One person to record responses and one person to verify if boxes have been ticked for all questions – it is quite common to skip some questions by accident.
- The questionnaire should use simple words and be easy to understand so that local citizens can understand the questions well.
- Concrete data helps the councillors a lot to promote the case during council meetings or to convince the different line departments to work together. Thus, the data analysis is the basis for fact-based decision-making.

## 3.2 Design the activity according to study results

This step will usually happen over a series of 2-3 meetings. Often, in the first meeting, the working group will discuss the survey results and participants will agree on main points of the activity. The second meeting should be in a smaller group and will focus on the drafting of the proposal, sustainability plan and budget. And the third meeting is to discuss, amend and jointly finalize the proposal.

### Discuss survey results

After conducting the survey, meet again with the working group members. If someone has analysed the results in Excel, that person can present the results to the other members. If not, just go around the table and each person can share what they have noticed from the questionnaires themselves and from interacting with the citizens as well as any recommendations they have identified.

### Design the activity based on objective and survey results

Then, discuss what this means for your activity on OWSO/Ombudsman awareness raising? You could, for example, discuss the following questions:

- Whom to target? Businesses, households, schools, people in a specific commune?
- Do the citizens who know about the OWSO/Ombudsman already have a good perception of the service but not enough people know about it? In this case, you could focus on spreading the information.



Figure 3 – OWSO staff working to serve the citizens in an efficient manner



- Do citizens feel the Ombudsman office has unfriendly personnel or slow services? In this case, you may want to consider also training the personnel on customer relations or discussing with line offices how service speed can be increased.

#### **Example: How EU DAR partners have used the survey information to inform their activities**

- EU DAR partners have used survey information to decide to use mobile loudspeakers for awareness raising campaigns since the study showed that citizens across the district were not aware of the services offered.
- In some cases, the survey showed that citizens were unsatisfied with OWSO/ Ombudsman service quality. This led the working group to provide trainings on customer hospitality to OWSO/Ombudsman staff.
- Of the respondents aware of OWSO/ Ombudsman, the large majority had heard about it in public forums. This was followed by information disseminated by mobile loudspeakers. Since this means of communication seemed to be effective and reach the citizens, these methods were also used for awareness raising in the project.

#### **Draft a proposal for the council**

Once the working group has decided what it wants to do, you may want to do write it down in a concept note and develop a budget for the activities. The concept note should give information on the objective of the activity, the different activities contained in it tackling the problems identified in the survey and also include a budget and sustainability plan. These can be in the same document or in separate documents.

The following is a list of activities that EU DAR partner districts have supported and that you can get inspired from for your own activity design:

- Public meetings or forums at commune level to inform about OWSO/ Ombudsman services,
- Installation of information billboards in strategic locations that are frequented often by the public (near pagodas, schools, markets, etc),
- Mobile loud speaker campaigns,
- Development of OWSO/ Ombudsman leaflet and dissemination during meeting or forum.

In annex 4, you can find some examples on proposals developed in EU DAR partner districts.

#### **Calculating the budget**

Once you have selected the activities, you want to carry out, you will need to develop a budget and sustainability plan as well. In annex 6 you can find a budget template EU DAR partner districts used.

When developing the activity, think also about how it will be maintained in the future. If there are future costs for maintenance, think about and agree who will pay for them. If these costs are too high, go back and re-think the activities, maybe opting for a lower-cost solution.

#### **Preparing a sustainability plan**

Who will do what follow up activity and who is responsible for maintaining the communication materials, should be captured in a sustainability plan. It should be as detailed as possible so there are no questions later who is responsible for which task.



**Figure 4 - Supervisor conducting a performance review assuring that OWSO staff's career development will be based on the quality of services delivered to citizens.**

## 4. Presentation of proposal in council meeting and decision-making

Once you have developed a proposal, budget and sustainability plan, you are ready to submit it to the council for decision making.

This is a short step but an important one. In this step, the working group can select some representatives to explain their proposal to the council. You will need to explain why the district should use part of its limited District/Municipal fund on this activity and how it can benefit the people.

Hopefully, the council will approve the proposal. If not, listen to their reservations and ideas and meet back in the working group to revise the proposal. One of the biggest concerns they may bring up is the cost of the activity. If the costs are too high, discuss in the working group if/how you can revise the proposal to be less costly.

### Lessons learnt from EU DAR partner districts

- It has proven successful to maintain dialogue with both the council chairperson as well as the district governor throughout the development process. This will ensure a smooth cooperation after the council approves your proposal.
- The person presenting the proposal should be chosen by his/her ability to present the results of the survey and the recommendations, rather than by formal roles in the working group.
- The council chairperson needs to be prepared to encourage discussions within the council meeting on this topic. It is good to ensure he/she is prepared to encourage discussions and a decision on this matter.

## 5. Preparation of funding request to withdraw DM funds

This step is equally short as the last one. The council administration will need to prepare your request to withdraw funds from your District/Municipal fund (DM fund) and send it to the provincial treasury and Provincial Department of Economics and Finance for approval. According to the National Ministry of Economics and Finance, requests to reallocate DM funds to react to citizen needs, can be made by simple letter throughout the budget year.

Once the funds have been released, you are finally ready for implementation!



Figure 5 – OWSO and Ombudsman awareness raising in S'Ang district, Kandal province



## 6. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

### 6.1 Implementing the activity

Congratulations if you have reached this point, you have already done most of the administrative work to increase awareness on OWSO/Ombudsman! The rest will be more rewarding because you can see an immediate reaction from the citizens.

In the case of OWSO/ Ombudsman awareness raising, you will need to prepare communication and information materials. Some examples from EU DAR partner districts can be found in annex 7.

### 6.2 Reflection meeting

When the activity is implemented, the last step is a reflection meeting within the working group. This will give you an opportunity to reflect on the whole process and also to celebrate your achievements.

First, we recommend you take some time to go through your achievements and celebrate the success. Ask yourselves the following questions:

- What benefit, did you, as an individual and organization, get from this project implementation?
- What was the biggest achievement you made for the citizens? What are you most proud of?
- Think about making an announcement about these achievements in the newspaper, the district information board or on social media so that other citizens also notice that the district has completed this activity successfully on their behalf.

Afterwards, take time to reflect on things you would prefer to do differently next time and how you will make your project achievements sustainable. Ask yourselves:

- What were challenges and concerns during project implementation?
- After the project will end, what is your activity plan to ensure that the achievements of the project will last for a long time. We recommend you make a plan and assign tasks to specific people and organizations.

#### Lessons learnt from EU DAR partner districts

- Districts can save a lot of money if they raise awareness through social media (Facebook for example) rather than relying solely on traditional media channels.
- In the reflection meetings, EU DAR partner districts reflected that they could set up meetings with local development NGOs and inform them about the OWSO and Ombudsman so that those NGOs could spread the information further. This would enable the district to reach more people with less funds.

### 6.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

This very last step consists of writing a report to the council about the results of the activity and further steps. It will summarize the main discussion points from your reflection meeting and should be presented to the district council in its next ordinary meeting. Examples of reports can be found in annex 8.

In case you have done a study in the beginning to investigate the problems more deeply (see part 3.1 of this document), you can also conduct an evaluation of your activity. This would consist of you doing the same interviews and spot checks again – in the same areas, with the same questions – and seeing if the results on knowledge etc. have improved. The results of such an evaluation will help to decide on possible next steps, for instance refresher trainings, a change of approach in similar activities in the future, etc.

We would recommend for you to wait 2-3 months prior to doing such an evaluation study, since this will give you a more adequate picture of what knowledge was retained, and which new habits were continued.

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
Sitz der Gesellschaft  
Bonn und Eschborn

European Union Project for Decentralisation  
and Administrative Reform (EU DAR)

Phnom Penh Office  
#164 A, Street 278,  
Sangkat Beoung Keng Kang I,  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Phone: + 855 23 21 67 56

Battambang Office  
Battambang Provincial Hall  
Road No.1, in front of old bridge,  
Battambang, Cambodia  
Phone: + 855 53 731 262

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/eudarproject>

Website: [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)  
[www.eeas.europa.eu/cambodia](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/cambodia)  
[www.bmz.de/en/index.html](http://www.bmz.de/en/index.html)

Responsible: Ms. Maraile Goergen

The program is co-funded by the European Union and German  
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development  
(BMZ). The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility  
of EU DAR and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the  
European Union.