

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

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

Terms of Reference

Position	: Consultant to Finalize Sustainability Strategy and Development Sustainability Operational Guideline for Social Accountability at Commune/Sangkat Level
Duty Station	: NCDD Secretariat, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Duration	: 65 days over the period from September 5, 2025 to December 26, 2025
Basis	: Short-Term Individual Consultancy Contract

1. BACKGROUND

- *National Program on Sub-national Democratic Development*

The National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) is an inter-ministerial committee that has key roles to assist the Royal Government of Cambodia to lead, coordinate, formulate and implement policies related to Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D) reform or so called Sub-National Democratic Development reform.

The Secretariat of the NCDD (NCDDS) is responsible for assisting NCDD in daily management, preparation and implementation of the National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development which is a long-term plan for the implementation of D&D policies and the Organic Laws, including the Law on Capital, Provincial, Municipal, District and Khan (DMK) Administration Management and Law on Commune/Sangkat (C/S) Administration Management.

Within the framework of D&D reform, so far, the NCDD has been leading and coordinating the implementation of 10-Year National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development Phase (NP-2) after the National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development Phase 1 had successfully completed by the end of 2020. The NP-2 has goal to “promote democratic development, inclusive, equitable, and justice through the modernization of sub-national governance and improve access, quality, and utilization of public service delivery. This will contribute to the elimination of poverty and the improved quality of life for all citizens.”

To ensure the achievement of this goal, the NP-2 has set a specific objective that: “The structure and governance system of sub-national administration is modern, autonomous, efficient, transparent, and accountable in the provision of public services and local development, respond to the needs of the citizens within the jurisdiction of each sub-national administration. Each sub-national administration has the appropriate authority and sufficient capacity to perform all functions under the supervision of the council to ensure accountability to the citizens”

- *Social Accountability*

Social accountability is an essential component for improving SNA service delivery and governance. Therefore, the Social Accountability Strategic Plan was formulated and approved by NCDD on July 11, 2013, and Frameworks for implementation of the Social Accountability Strategic Plan have been developed and approved twice which are the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework Phase I/SA Phase I (2016-2018) and SA Phase II (2019-2025). The Strategic Plan and its frameworks have been implemented through the cooperation between the NCDDS, development partners (DPs) and civil society organizations in order to enhance the constructive engagement between citizens and government as an integral element of governance arrangements through which public decision-making and action takes place. It includes all those activities in which citizens and their representatives can advocate for their interests (voice) and thereby check the performance of officials and service providers (accountability) as

they make, implement and enforce public decisions (collective choices) related to rights, regulations, investments/resources and service delivery.

The Social Accountability represents an integral component of the NP-1 and NP-2. The both phases of Social Accountability specific activities to be undertaken by the supply side-by government entities at national and sub-national level and the demand side – led by civil society organizations (CSOs). Social Accountability Phase II, World Bank through multi-donor trust fund on Social Accountability and Service Delivery (SASD-TF) has designed two projects as following: (i) Integration of Social Accountability into National and Sub-National Systems Project Phase I and II which NCDDS is the implementing agency to coordinate and support I-SAF supply side and (ii) Engaging Citizens to Improve Service Delivery Through Social Accountability Project which World Vision International-Cambodia is the implementing agency to coordinate and support I-SAF demand side.

- ***Rationale for this assignment***

Social Accountability is implemented as partnership between two actors including the supply side-by government entities at national and sub-national level and the demand side – led by CSOs. Otherwise, Social Accountability implementation relies on separate operational guidelines to guide the actively tasks of supply side and demand side which might lead duplications and inconsistencies in the procedures of Social Accountability.

To Address this issue and enhance effectiveness of Social Accountability implementation as well as considering the sustainability of Social Accountability at the commune/sangkat level, NCDDS has developed a technical document with guidance for both the supply and demand side, which was piloted in a few sangkats in Chbar Mon Municipality, Kampong Speu Province. The piloting aims to ensure sustainability of Social Accountability at C/S level, in particularly, completion the Social Accountability cycle of C/Ss without CSOs to support demand side activities as well as to align the timeline of JAAP creation and Commune/Sangkat Investment Program (CIP) development. Moreover, in April 2025, NCDDS and World Vision organized a consultation workshop on sustainability of Social Accountability C/S to gather inputs from a range of stakeholders, including line ministries, subnational authorities, civil society organizations, and development partners, to develop sustainability strategy plan on Social Accountability at C/S level.

This consultancy is intended to support the development of the sustainability strategy for Social Accountability at C/S level, based on three main inputs: (i) a draft strategy developed by NCDDS and World Vision; (ii) inputs from various stakeholders (including development partners) collected during the sustainability workshop and during the meeting of the Technical Working Group in June 2025); and (iii) the lessons learned from the pilot conducted in Kampong Speu province of aligning the social accountability cycle with the CIP development process. With this particular focus, the project is recruiting a short-term individual consultant to finalize Sustainability Strategy and Development Sustainability Operational Guideline for Social Accountability at Commune/Sangkat Level.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY

The main objectives of this consultancy are as followings:

- Assess the outcomes of the pilot alignment of Social Accountability and CIP cycles
- Review and finalize the draft sustainability strategy plan at C/S level following the lessons learned from Social Accountability implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation on piloting sustainability on Social Accountability of service providers in Chbar Mon Municipality, Kampong Speu Province.
- Consolidate and update the operational guideline on Social Accountability for both the supply side and the demand side at C/S level into one combined set of guidelines aligned with the timeline for developing Commune Investment Programs (CIP). This operational guideline will be used to implement the sustainability strategy.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The consultancy is expected to carry out the following tasks:

3.1 Assess the outcomes of the pilot alignment of Social Accountability and CIP cycles

- Assess the quality of the completion of the Social Accountability cycle of C/Ss without CSOs to support demand side activities. It will entail identifying strengths and weaknesses and providing concrete recommendations and lessons learned to improve the process going forward, Social Accountability operational guideline and C/S staff capacity to ensure quality of implementation and sustainability.
- Review the quality of JAAPs developed under the pilot compared to JAAPs developed with the support of CSOs.
- Review if the timeline of the JAAPs creation and Commune/Sangkat Investment Programs development were adequate and allowed enough time for C/S councils to review and potentially integrate JAAPs actions/investments in draft CIPs.
- Conduct discussion with Commune/Sangkat staff to assess their understanding of the JAAPs and their understanding of the process to finance some of its investments in the CIPs.
- Review and analyze JAAPs content and actual Commune/Sangkat Investment Programs from the pilot to identify which JAAPs actions/investments are being financed in the CIPs, and define if there are any trends and/or constraints that does not allow the JAAPs content to be considered in CIPs. This analysis should also look at the share of JAAP actions included in the draft CIPs in the pilot areas, and the type of actions and amount of investments, in comparison with other areas where Social Accountability is not yet aligned with CIP development.
- Based on the review and analysis, provide recommendations and lessons learned to update Social Accountability operational guidelines and identify potential additional needs for capacity building of C/S staff.

3.2 Advance the Social Accountability Sustainability Strategy at commune/sangkat level

- Review existing standard and good practice of technical document for piloting Social Accountability sustainability, SNA Investment Program manuals, draft Social Accountability sustainability strategy, all the inputs and feedback on the draft strategy provided by participants at the Sustainability Workshop (including development partners) and the members of the Technical Working Group, and other relevant documents.
- Conduct data collection withline ministries to provide the recommendations, lessons learned and good practices to benchmark strategy.
- One important consideration in the development of the strategy is the need to reflect and update the procedures and timeline of the Social Accountability process to ensure that, going forward, Social Accountability implementation is aligned with the cycle for developing CIPs.
- Update the draft Social Accountability sustainability strategy including workflow diagram, process, roles and responsibility of national and sub-national level etc. and reflect all comments gathered from stakeholders including from the sustainability workshop.
- Consultative with NCDDDS, SNA, Social Accountability-TWG, and revise, update strategy following inputs and recommendations from stakeholders.
- Finalize sustainability strategy.

3.2 Revise the Social Accountability Operational Guideline, in line with the Sustainability Strategy

- Review existing Social Accountability supply and demand side operational guidelines, and other relevant documents.
- Revise and update Social Accountability operational guidelines more effective and efficient on process and timeline to align CIP based on good practice and lessons learned from piloting Social Accountability sustainability.
- Consolidate the Social Accountability operational guidelines—encompassing both supply and demand-side approaches—and the sustainability guidelines into a unified document to enhance coherence and ease of implementation at national and sub-national levels.
- Consultative with NCDDDS, SNA, NGOs, Social Accountability -TWG, and revise and updated guidelines following inputs and recommendations from stakeholders.
- Finalize guideline.

4. DESK REVIEW AND INTERVIEW

The consultant will conduct a quick desk review of the relevant literature and documents useful to complete the objectives of the review. This will include documents related to Social Accountability supply and demand side operational guidelines, Social Accountability sustainability technical document, technical manual for development commune/sangkat investment program and other relevant documents (Strategic Plan on Social Accountability for Sub-National Democratic Development, 5 years implementation plan for ISAF Phase II, National Program, relevant database systems, etc.). The consultant will also review key documents from the pilot alignment of Social Accountability and CIP development in Kampong Speu, including JAAPs and the draft 2026 CIPs in the 5 Sangkats under NCDDS target, and 15 communes under WVI where the pilot took place. NCDDS will provide the consultant with an initial list of documents.

The consultant shall conduct interview with stakeholders and field visit to collect necessary data and information to incorporate with desk review.

5. TIMELINE AND KEY DELIVERABLES

The consultancy will start on September 5, 2025, and will end no later than December 26, 2025. During this period, the consultant is expected to conduct and deliver the following:

No	Key Deliverables	Due Date	Payments
1	Inception Report, in English, including proposed methodology for the consultancy, workplan, draft structure/outline of the consultancy report, etc.	September 12, 2025, or one weeks after contract signed	15% upon acceptance of Inception Report
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft assessment of the pilot alignment of Social Accountability and CIP cycles - in English First draft Social Accountability sustainability strategy - in English First draft of revised consolidated Social Accountability Guidelines (for supply and demand side) - in English and Khmer. Draft presentation for consultation workshop, including: key findings of assessment, key elements of sustainability strategy, and key elements of consolidated guidelines - in English and Khmer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft assessment: September 30, 2025 Strategy and guidelines: October 30, 2025 	45% upon acceptance of the three deliverables
3	<i>NCDDS, WVI and WB review the drafts and discuss comments with consultant and including consultation workshop with key stakeholders</i>	November 15, 2025	N/A
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised assessment of pilot alignment Social Accountability/CIP - in English Revised draft Social Accountability sustainability Strategy and Guideline, in English and Khmer, reflecting comments received from NCDDS, World Bank, workshop participants, etc. 	November 25, 2025	N/A
5	<i>NCDDS, WVI and WB review the revised drafts</i>	November 30, 2025	N/A
6	Finalize draft Social Accountability sustainability strategy and Guideline reflecting comments from NCDDS and WB – in both Khmer and English.	December 12, 2025	40% upon acceptance of the revised draft both Khmer and English

7	<i>NCDDS, WVI and WB conduct final review of deliverables, and provide feedback (requesting any additional revisions, if needed)</i>	<i>December 15, 2025</i>	
8	Delivery final Social Accountability sustainability strategy and Guideline both Khmer and English and accepted by Project.	December 20, 2025	10% upon acceptance of final strategy and guidelines

6. PAYMENT

The payment will be made on the basis of lump sums to be determined based on qualifications, deliverable outputs, and contract negotiation. Given the mutual agreement of NCDDS and WVI, WVI would contribute funds equivalent to 15% of consultant fees, to be determined and finalized through procurement process under NCDDS's SOP and WB guideline. NCDDS will undertake the full procurement process and at the contract signing stage, there will be two separate contracts determine the delivery outputs under NCDDS and WVI separately.

7. REPORTING

The consultant will work under the overall supervision of the Head of the NCDDS and direct supervision of ISAF Project Manager and include technical support from WVI. 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.
- Extensive, relevant professional experiences in the areas of social accountability, local governance, policy analysis and / or advocacy.
- Proven knowledge and understanding of Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) and Decentralisation and Deconcentration reforms in Cambodia.
- Proven experience in developing policies, regulations, programs, projects, manuals and guidelines related to D&D reform and local development,
- At least 10 years' experience in working with national institutions and local governments in D&D reform,
- At least 10 years' experience in coordinating and cooperating with DPs, IOs and CSOs,
- At least 10 years' experience in planning, M&E and reporting,
- At least 10 years' experience in service delivery and local development projects including projects related to social services and climate change at sub-national administrations especially at commune level,
- Experience with development and review of training curricula and technical guidance documents for development and civic participation projects.
- Experience in capacity development is an advantage.
- Critical thinking skills, initiative and creativity.
- Strong understanding of human rights, right based approach, disability rights and of how discrimination based on gender, disability and belonging to other minority groups reinforce one another.
- Possession of strong verbal and written communication skills with internal and external stakeholders in both Khmer and English.

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