

Guideline on the Technical Working Groups May 2024

I- Background

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has established the Technical Working Groups (TWGs) since 2004 to serve as coordinating bodies and partnership dialogue mechanisms at sectoral level that bring together the RGC, development partners, associations and NGOs and private sector to support the attainment of national development goals, set out in national development strategies, and sector strategies and associated thematic/reform programmes. 21 TWGs currently have been effectively functioning across a range of sectoral, thematic and major governance reform programmes although some challenges emerged during the implementation. In the Seventh Legislature, the RGC remain committed to strengthening partnerships and effectiveness of development cooperation featured as an overarching environment of the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase 1 (PS-1), focusing on promoting ODA mobilization, effectiveness of development cooperation and continued enhancement of partnerships with all development stakeholders. Development Cooperation and Partnerships Strategy (DCPS) 2024-2028 adopted by the RGC on 29 December 2023 has continued to deploy the TWGs as a mechanism for coordinating effective and inclusive partnerships.

This Guideline sets out objectives and goals, criteria for TWG formation, guiding principles, priority areas and institutional arrangements, meeting procedure and the review of progress. TWGs are encouraged to use this Guideline to strengthen their work, including by ensuring that they have a clear programme of work that is adapted to their current priorities and working modalities that are appropriate to their respective circumstances.

II- Objectives and Goals

The objectives of TWG mechanism are to support RGC's efforts to facilitate technical dialogue, mobilize and coordinate external assistance to contribute to the implementation of sector/reform strategies/plans that are associated with the PS-1, NSDP and CSDGs. This mechanism is not intended to substitute for or to duplicate the functions of ministries/agencies.

The goals of the TWG mechanism are:

- (i) To promote effective dialogue at the technical level for coordinating and mobilising external resources;
- (ii) To align ODA support with sector or reform priority activities;
- (iii) To serve as a follow-up mechanism for reviewing the progress of jointly identified activities that are included in the TWG's workplan and JMIs; and
- (iv) To complement other partnership mechanisms including Capital-Provincial Partnership Dialogue.

III- Criteria for Formation of TWGs

The criteria for formation of TWGs are established as follows:

- (i) There must be clearly identifiable targets, drawn from the NSDP or sector strategies that the TWG would support the RGC to achieve through its own work;

- (ii) Where adequate coordination and RGC-development partner information sharing mechanisms already exist outside the TWG structure, there is no need to create parallel or additional mechanisms;
- (iii) TWGs should cover clearly identifiable sectors or themes;
- (iv) The subject or theme to be covered should not be too diffused, making it difficult to assign clear responsibilities, identify workplan and monitor progress;
- (v) Prior to the formation (or possible dissolution) of a TWG, the host ministry/agency, in consultation with the Cambodian Development Cooperation Board of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDCB/CDC) where necessary, is to prepare a proposal to be submitted for the Government Decision from the RGC.

IV- Guiding Principles

A number of important principles must be adopted to promote the effectiveness of the TWG mechanism as follows:

- (i) **Ownership** – The RGC will exercise commitment to ownership for continued enhancement of cooperation with development stakeholders so that there can be a relationship based on trust and mutual respect.
- (ii) **Partnership and Alignment** – the RGC will lead the inclusive consultative dialogue, participated by relevant development actors to mobilise resources and align with sector priority aimed to achieve results as stated in the TWG’s objectives in line with NSDP and CSDGs.
- (iii) **Mutual Accountability** – TWG members should hold each other accountable based on the jointly agreed targets, indicators, and activities to attain national development results and sector results.
- (iv) **Results** – partnership mechanism will link to results framework and identify effective monitoring systems to be aligned with sector priorities.

V- Priority Areas

This Guideline presents four areas of work that TWGs should prioritise. TWGs may therefore adopt this Guideline as the ToR in order to formulate their own workplan. Alternatively, they may prefer to develop their own ToRs that take into account of additional priorities, which may inform their workplan. Organisational principles should be determined by each TWG in order to identify, prioritise and sequence its activities based on agreed needs, available resources and existing capacity.

i- Coordination, Mobilization, Alignment, and the Use of Resources

Coordination and resource mobilisation lie at the heart of TWG’s work and should include efforts to:

- Mobilize and align development stakeholders support with TWG workplan, especially capacity development;
- Enter information of all on-going projects in the Cambodia ODA and NGO Databases for coordination and consultation;
- Use available data in the database for analysing, mapping resources and project support funded by development partners and NGOs working within the respective TWG’s mandate;
- Identify funding gaps and pipeline projects that will address sector and reform

priority activities.

ii- Partnership and Mutual Accountability

Dialogue should be based on partnership and development effectiveness commitments as articulated in the DCPS (2024-2028). TWGs should:

- Develop and implement annual workplan and Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs);
- Discuss and promote partnership and development effectiveness principles including aid on budget and aid predictability;
- Promote dialogue on the use of results frameworks of projects/programs under the TWG;
- Promote the use of country systems, principally PFM-related, at the project/program implementation level;
- Include a focus on cross-cutting/thematic/reform issues that are related to the TWG's work required collaboration across RGC's relevant ministries and agencies or relevant stakeholders in order to identify opportunities for dialogue and mutually-beneficial collaboration;
- Identify a coherent capacity development work, based on a needs assessment and functional review for improving the TWG's performance.

iii- Cross-cutting Issues

TWGs are mainly theme, reform or sector based, but must also identify cross-cutting issues that the TWG is expected to support. Key cross-cutting issues to be addressed by TWGs may encompass gender mainstreaming, environment and climate change, and major governance reform (i.e. PFM, PAR and SNDD) including the strengthening of a service-oriented public sector. Where cross-sectoral themes are to be addressed, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Membership of the TWG must be consistent with the issues to be discussed;
- Sub-group(s) may be considered to allow for a specific focus on cross-cutting themes that can then be reported to the main TWG;
- TWGs are encouraged to nominate focal points within the host ministry/agency to manage respective cross-cutting issues;
- Meetings among core members of relevant interconnected TWGs are strongly recommended to ensure consistency and to promote follow-up.

iv- Information Sharing

The opportunity to share information and to ensure that all TWG members can perform their individual and collective tasks is the minimum expectation for TWGs. TWGs should:

- Share information to other members of on-going work (research, studies, missions, reviews etc.) that relates to the functions of the TWG;
- Inform TWG members of other consultations/meetings, especially regarding external support, that have taken place and are relevant to the TWG's work;
- Update other TWG members on the programming or implementation of activities that will impact on the achievement of the TWG objectives as set out in the annual workplan;

- Share information on support of other actors (private sector, development partners not present in Cambodia or non-members of the TWG) that is relevant to TWG's work;
- Develop and/or strengthen information systems that are required to ensure that the RGC's ministries and agencies as well as TWGs have access to sufficient and timely data including project documents/agreements.

VI- Institutional Arrangements

i- Accountability of TWGs

TWGs are under the management of, and accountable to, their host ministry/agency. The **appointed Chair** of the TWG is the final decision-making authority. However, the Chair should make every effort to promote dialogue and consensus with due regard to the partnership spirit that underpins the work of TWGs.

TWGs report to their host ministries/agencies on progress and challenges in terms of workplan, JMIs and cross-cutting issues related to the TWG. Any unresolved issues must be presented to the host ministry/agency for consideration.

Development partners work in cooperation with their RGC counterparts and other development actors to align their resources and direct their development efforts to attain JMIs and TWG's related works. Their contribution to the TWG is made both collectively, through a **Development Partner Lead Facilitator**, and individually, in line with the roles and responsibilities set out in this Guideline.

ii- Composition of TWGs

The composition of each TWG should normally include members from the RGC's ministries and agencies, development partners and representatives of associations and NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. TWG Chairs, in dialogue with current members, are responsible for determining TWG membership but, in order to achieve purposeful and informed dialogue, it is necessary that TWGs consist of:

- TWG Chair** will be appointed by the head of the ministry/agency and is to function as the authority of the host ministry/agency, able to address all matters arising in the TWG as well as to guide discussions smoothly. The Chairperson needs to be fully committed, must liaise and follow-up with other RGC's ministries/agencies represented in the TWG and should be familiar with the development partner portfolio that supports the respective TWG.
- A development partner lead facilitator** must be at a senior level within their organisation, competent in the field and be willing to relate information and decision to all other development partners. Development partners should manage their own arrangements for nominating or replacing the lead facilitator. The development partner lead facilitator should coordinate with all development partners to come up with collectively committed contribution or concrete resource mobilising effort to support the TWG's work.
- RGC representatives of all relevant ministries and agencies** as TWG members should have a technical competency to support cross-government coordination, especially in the main reform areas. In addition, they will represent the views of their organisation, to provide required information and to facilitate follow-up action within their own organisation. Members representing RGC's ministries/agencies should bring information and knowledge from their offices and

communicate information, required actions and decisions back to their ministry/agency.

- d) **Other development partners engaged in TWG** should be represented at an appropriate and competent level and be able to share information and support the Chair in reaching decisions. Development partners need to bring all information about on-going and proposed programmes that they support.
- e) **A CDCB/CDC representative** will be the TWG member to provide advisory and technical support on aid and development effectiveness issues in line with the DCPS (2024-2028).
- f) **Focal points for generic and cross-cutting issues** will be appointed by the Chair, in consultation with their respective ministries/agencies to which staff are attached, and may include, for example, gender mainstreaming, public sector reforms and environment and climate change members, as deemed necessary in each ministry/ agency.
- g) **Technical Advisors of projects/programmes working within the RGC's structure**, either national or international, should participate and contribute to the TWG as experts and an important resource for capacity development. They should not function as development partner lead facilitator(s) or as spokespersons of the RGC.
- h) **NGO, private sector and other relevant stakeholders** may be invited to participated in TWGs. They should have an operational role and/or provide relevant assistance and/or services in areas of work associated with the TWG. They should demonstrate a capacity and commitment to represent in the implementation of agreed workplan, provide support share information about their on-going projects and should coordinate with their respective institutions.

iii- Size of TWGs and formation of sub-groups

Large plenary meetings can be useful for information sharing but an obstacle to effective and meaningful dialogue. The size and structure of the TWGs must therefore be properly managed to ensure adequate representation while allowing for fruitful discussion. It is suggested that:

- An optimum size to facilitate dialogue indicates that some upper limit to membership must be identified by the TWG Chair and the development partner lead facilitator, in dialogue with other members;
- Where it is necessary to accommodate a larger membership that may hinder effective dialogue, it is desirable to constitute a "core group", which could meet more regularly and report to the plenary during full meetings of the TWG;
- As is already being done, smaller "sub-groups" within any TWG may also be constituted to address more detailed issues, thus making the TWG set-up more flexible and adaptable to changing needs and circumstances. Sub-groups can be used on a time-bound, task-specific or permanent basis. Sub-groups have been usefully employed to support the implementation of major reforms, to focus on capacity development and to address cross-cutting issues that can be reported back to the TWG plenary for further review and agreement on any actions that are required.

VII- Support Mechanisms

i- Internal Support

The Chair and development partner lead facilitator should meet regularly to follow-up on any agreed actions, especially in advance of TWG meetings. An informal approach is encouraged to manage this relationship, build mutual trust and establish open communications.

Adequately-resourced and competent Secretariat within the host ministry/agency under the direction of the TWG chair, is essential to support the functioning of TWG. The Secretariat should:

- Have a clear mandate to support the TWG;
- Organise meetings, keep records/minutes of TWG and sub-group meetings and circulate information before/after meetings as required;
- Conduct follow-up activities with line ministries/agencies and be responsible for carrying out actions agreed during the TWG meeting;
- Serve as the designated contact point for the lead facilitator or other TWG members on behalf of the Chair;
- Draft TWG and JMI progress reports and serve as a focal point with CDCB/CDC.

To avoid adding new layers to the existing structure, this Secretariat should be an integral part of the host ministry/agency, such as the planning or international cooperation department. TWGs are expected to mobilise a sufficient level of resources, principally using domestic human and financial resources but, also engaging technical and/or financial support from development partners to support the TWG Secretariat functions. Where resourced with development partner funding, this should ideally be provided as part of integrated support to capacity development in the ministry/agencies rather than be directed specifically to TWG work.

ii- CDCB Support

CDCB/CDC provides support to TWGs in its capacity as the RGC's focal point on aid coordination. A CDCB/CDC representative participates in every TWG meeting to provide immediate support and advice on matters related to aid management and development effectiveness. Support can also be provided to TWGs regarding DCPS's principles, tools (including the Cambodia ODA and NGO Database) and mechanisms.

VIII- Conduct of Meetings

The following points serve as a checklist for ensuring effectiveness of TWG's conduct of meetings as follows:

- The meeting will proceed under the chairmanship of TWG chair, or co-chair. Lead development partner facilitator will provide advisory support and coordinate input for the meeting;
- TWGs should meet as often as deemed appropriate, but with the minimum of twice per year. Meetings should have a clear agenda with documentation shared to the participants at least ten days in advance;
- An annual workplan, JMIs including solutions of cross-cutting issues, should be addressed for formulating an agenda of TWG meetings and to ensure that its objective is focused on related topic or key issues of the TWG;
- Preparatory (and follow-up) meetings between the Chair, the lead facilitators and other members as deemed necessary - as well as within the development partner

community - may ensure focused and productive TWG dialogue and follow-up;

- There must be adequate time for discussion and all TWG members should be provided with an opportunity to inform the TWG of important issues.

IX- Monitoring of progress

An assessment of TWG performance, together with a reflection on challenges, is required to ensure the TWG's ability to realise its sector objectives. The review exercise should also be linked to capacity development work to ensure that monitoring competencies are in place. The following actions are relevant to TWG's work:

- Convene regular meetings to review and monitor the progress of TWG's workplan and propose practical solutions to accelerate the delayed activities;
- Monitor the progress of JMIs implementation. Where needed, TWGs can discuss and revise JMIs to ensure partnership principles, coherence of the implementation of activities and resources and promote mutual accountability;
- Review issues raised at other forums and address them within their mandates.