

## **Guideline on the Consultative Meeting between the Royal Government of Cambodia and Non-Governmental Organisations April 2019**

### **1. Background**

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) acknowledges the continued contribution of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to national development. NGOs play an important role in terms of [contributing to the development of national and](#) sector policies and programmes, supporting their implementation through mobilising resources for service provision, especially in the social sectors [as well as](#) providing inputs to the [assessment of development progress](#). Formal arrangements for holding meetings with NGOs have been established and consultations on specific sectors or themes have taken place since 2012. To further promote their participation in the implementation of Rectangular Strategy – Phase IV, the RGC reaffirms its commitment to continue working in partnership with NGOs in the interest of national development. This Guideline provides clarification on how such a meeting could be organised for maximum effect and mutual benefit.

### **2. Objectives of the consultative meeting**

The purpose of the consultative meeting between the RGC and NGOs shall be to ensure that NGO support is consistent and effective in line with national development priorities as articulated in the Rectangular Strategy–Phase IV, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) and sectoral/ thematic/reform strategies.

The specific objectives of the consultative meeting shall be to:

- Provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion in a constructive manner on a “*specific sector or theme*”;
- Promote mutual respect and trust, shared understanding, increased collaboration and effective information sharing on progress and challenges faced as well as to identify appropriate actions that can stimulate improved service delivery in line with the national development vision so that performance and development effectiveness can be improved. Information sharing will include consideration of the effective use of the RGC-led information management systems ([Cambodia NGO Database](#)) for key sectors or humanitarian activities;
- Share lessons and innovative practices by promoting knowledge building and information exchange *amongst* NGOs as well as *between* NGOs and the RGC that can be useful for policy making and programme implementation;
- Strengthen and establish effective two-way communication beyond the consultative meeting, including through links to other routine dialogue mechanisms at the national, sectoral and sub-national level in which issues raised at the consultative meeting may be followed-up for further discussion, resolution and/or monitoring.

### **3. Guiding principles for the conduct of the meeting**

A number of general principles are useful to ensure that all parties understand the context for convening a consultative meeting between the RGC and NGOs.

The meeting shall promote a partnership that is based on the following principles:

- (a) *Constructive* – the meeting is designed to promote and review the achievement of national development goals. It, therefore, provides an opportunity for offering feedback that is based on recent experience in programme delivery with a view to promoting future impact through improved policy development and operational practices and effective use of resources and expertise;
- (b) *Coordinating* – the meeting offers an opportunity to bring together a range of actors and partners to ensure that all essential tasks (including the use of information management systems and information sharing) are being performed efficiently with a minimum of overlap and duplication;

- (c) *Consultative* – the meeting shall provide an opportunity for effective two-way communication, allowing all parties to engage in a dialogue and seek clarifications on issues that influence the implementation of their programmes and the impact of their work;
- (d) *Complementary* – the meeting will increase efficiency and effectiveness by promoting linkages between different areas of work and by ensuring consistency across different policies and sectors;
- (e) *Collaborative* – the meeting shall identify opportunities (and learn from current experience) for promoting Government-NGO partnership in service delivery especially in social sector and contracting in key sectors or in coordinating an emergency response;
- (f) *Mutual benefit* – all parties should be able to utilise the meeting to guide their own work more effectively and to promote the achievement of results. This can be achieved, in part, by establishing a greater understanding of the work of other actors in the development process.

#### 4. Organisation of the meeting: roles and responsibilities

The consultative meeting will take place over half a day or full day and will focus on a priority sector or theme (e.g. education, health, agriculture, rural development, environment, climate change etc.) under each ministry/agency's mandate as deemed appropriate and will include relevant representation of NGOs. The sector or theme should be identified in advance, based on its importance to the development of Cambodia. The host Ministry/Agency is encouraged to use the existing or similar arrangement to accommodate the consultative meeting in order to avoid establishing an additional or parallel bureaucratic structure, reduce transaction and administrative costs, and increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Host Ministry/Agency through an existing or ad hoc coordination body will work with NGO representative(s) to identify NGO participants, prepare a draft agenda including theme for discussion and the timing of the meeting, confirm levels of NGO activity/funding in the sector/theme for review, and manage logistics for the meeting. The host Ministry/Agency is encouraged to organise pre-meetings with NGO representative(s) to identify and resolve as many outstanding issues as possible in advance of the consultative meeting; this ensures that the consultative meeting focuses only on most important matters that require the attention of the host Ministry/Agency and relevant NGOs. The host ministry/agency will take responsibility for implementing any follow-up decisions and will prepare a progress report after the meeting for the attention of **Samdech Techo Prime Minister**.

NGO coordination group – this group – either an established NGO coordination body or an ad hoc grouping established for the consultative meeting – will be formed and then nominates a core group (up to three persons) to serve as the “*Principal NGO Focal Point*” for communications with the host Ministry/Agency. The Focal Point will be responsible for coordinating any pre-meetings amongst NGOs for issue identification, for leading the NGO representatives in developing the agenda, for leading discussions during the consultative meeting and for coordinating/monitoring agreed follow-up actions. NGOs, at their own initiative, could organise their own meeting for lesson learning and the exchange of experience.

The Principal NGO Focal Point will be self-selected by their NGO members based on the criterion that it is:

- (i) active in the topic (sector/theme) that is to be discussed at the consultative meeting;
- (ii) able to lead discussions and facilitate information sharing related to technical aspects of the topics to be considered at the consultative meeting and resourced with sufficient leadership and capacity to play a coordinating role in the preparation, conduct and follow-up of the meeting; and
- (iii) willing to engage in and facilitate a results-based dialogue between the host Ministry/Agency and NGOs and to support monitoring efforts after the meeting including to prepare a regular progress report after the meeting to the host Ministry/Agency.

Preparation arrangements will be as follows:

- (a) Host Ministry/Agency, in collaboration with CRDB/CDC, uses the NGO Database and consults with NGO coordination group to identify NGOs that are active in that respective sector or thematic area.
- (b) The Principal NGO Focal Point will convene a pre-meeting or internal consultation that can identify a list of proposed issues for discussion at the consultative meeting.
- (c) The Principal NGO Focal Point will then meet with the host Ministry/Agency to inform their preparation for the meeting, especially the proposed issues for discussion.
- (d) If required, pre-meetings will be organised by the host Ministry/Agency prior to agreeing with the main issues to be put forward for discussion at the consultative meeting.

The format of the consultative meeting will be according to a generic agenda that can be adapted for each meeting based on the following draft template:

- (i) Welcoming remarks and introduction to the agenda by the host Ministry/Agency, to include an overview of the status of development in the sector/theme/reform, recent achievements, current challenges, future objectives etc.
- (ii) Opening address by the Principal NGO Focal Point
- (iii) Presentation by NGOs on achievements, challenges, issues for dialogue and proposed future actions
- (iv) Response by the host Ministry/Agency including proposed actions and monitoring arrangements
- (v) Plenary discussion
- (vi) Identification of agreed actions and monitoring arrangements
- (vii) Summary of the meeting and concluding remarks by the host Ministry/Agency.

Monitoring of follow-up actions will be the responsibility of: (a) the host Ministry/Agency for actions agreed at the meeting that fall under its responsibility; and (b) the Principal NGO Focal Point, which will prepare a brief report on actions taken by NGOs after the meeting. The reports may be used for further dialogue and coordination between the host Ministry/Agency and NGOs.

## **5. Participation and timing of the consultative meeting**

**Participation:** The focus is to be placed on both local and international NGOs that are actively engaged in the sector or theme of the consultative meeting. The meeting will, therefore, place an emphasis on bringing together: (a) NGOs working at the national and sub-national level; (b) international NGOs who finance or support local NGOs; (c) development partners who finance NGOs. The host Ministry/Agency including relevant departments and possibly other key RGC's ministries and agencies related to the sector or theme will also attend the meeting. Invitations will be issued by the host Ministry/Agency.

**Timing:** The meeting shall take place once a year or at any time if required.