

## Guideline on the Technical Working Groups April 2019

### 1. Context

Technical Working Groups (TWGs) were established by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in 2004 to serve as coordinating bodies and partnership dialogue mechanisms that bring together the RGC, development partners, associations and NGOs to support the attainment of national development priorities set out in the Rectangular Strategy, NSDP and associated sector/thematic/reform programme/strategy. Twenty TWGs currently function across a range of sectoral, thematic and major governance reform programmes.

A review of TWG performance commissioned in 2018 proves that TWGs continue to be an effective partnership mechanism for facilitating dialogue and for coordinating external assistance. The review also identified a number of challenges that can influence TWG's ability to realise their objectives and the need of TWGs to adapt to the evolving partnership environment and fast-changing context of development cooperation coupled with the issues of management, leadership, membership and organisation.

This Guideline sets out objectives, guiding principles, priority areas and institutional arrangements of TWGs together with the relationship to the Sectoral Multi-stakeholder Dialogue mechanism. 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.

### 2. Objectives of TWGs

The over-arching objective of TWGs is to support RGC's efforts to facilitate technical dialogue, coordinate and mobilise external assistance to implement sector/reform strategies/plans that are associated with the RS-IV, NSDP and CSDGs. This mechanism is not intended to substitute for or to duplicate the functions of ministries/agencies. Specific objectives of TWGs are:

- (i) To promote effective partnership dialogue at the technical level for coordinating and mobilising external resources;
- (ii) To ensure alignment of ODA support to 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 Sub-national Partnership Dialogue and Sectoral Multi-stakeholder Dialogue.

### 3. Guiding Principles for Effective TWGs

A number of important principles must be adopted to ensure the effectiveness of the TWG mechanism in line with the DCPS (2019-2023). To promote purposeful and informed dialogue, TWGs should uphold the following principles:

- (i) **Ownership** – The RGC will exercise commitment to ownership so that, with its development partners, there can be a relationship based on trust and mutual respect that is guided by appropriate frameworks for producing results.
- (ii) **Partnership** – The RGC will promote consultative dialogue with TWG members in order to mobilise funding and achieve results as stated in the TWG's objectives in line with national priorities.
- (iii) **Alignment and results** – Partnership and coordination mechanisms must clearly articulate the objectives for better alignment and identify effective monitoring systems that

are linked to results embedded in, or derived from, existing frameworks.

- (iv) **Accountability** – All TWG members should hold each other accountable for delivering development results.

#### **4. Priority Areas of TWGs**

This Guideline presents five areas of work that TWGs should prioritise. TWGs may therefore adopt this Guideline directly as the ToR in order to formulate a workplan. Alternatively, they may prefer to develop their own ToR that takes 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 need, available resources and existing capacity.

##### **(a) Alignment, coordination and resource mobilisation**

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

- (i) Promote alignment of development partners support with TWG workplan, especially capacity development;
- (ii) Maintain a record of all on-going externally-funded projects in the [Cambodia ODA and NGO Databases](#) and use this information for coordination and consultation;
- (iii) Use available data in the database for mapping resources and project support funded by development partners and NGOs working within the respective TWG's mandate; and
- (iv) Identify funding gaps and pipeline projects that will address sector and reform priority activities to inform the Sectorial Multi-stakeholder Dialogue.

##### **(b) Partnership dialogue**

Dialogue should be based on partnership and development effectiveness commitments as articulated in the DCPS (2019-2023). TWGs should:

- (i) Promote dialogue on the use of results frameworks of projects/programs under the TWG;
- (ii) Strengthen the use of country systems, principally PFM-related, at the project/program implementation level;
- (iii) Discuss and promote other partnership and development effectiveness indicators including aid on budget and aid predictability;
- (iv) Include a focus on cross-cutting/thematic/reform issues that are related to the TWG's work and require collaboration across the RGC or with other development actors in order to identify opportunities for dialogue and mutually-beneficial collaboration; and
- (v) Identify a coherent capacity development work, based on a needs assessment and functional review for improving the TWG's performance.

##### **(c) Monitoring and review of the TWG's progress**

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

- (i) Convene regular meetings to review the progress of TWG's annual workplan and JMIs and discuss cross-cutting issues related to the TWG's work;
- (ii) Confirm and validate relevant available data sources and systems for monitoring JMIs. Identify additional analytical work that the TWG might support to enhance reporting and

- monitoring capacities;
- (iii) Promote the use of the results-based JMIs that are linked to the sector's results framework and use this process to promote dialogue on progress and priority-setting;
- (iv) Identify, monitor and revise where required, agreed JMIs to ensure partnership principles and mutual accountability; and
- (v) Follow-up issues relevant to the TWG that are raised in other forums.

**(d) 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:

- (i) Membership of the TWG must be consistent with the issues to be discussed;
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) TWGs are encouraged to nominate focal points within the host ministry/agency to manage respective cross-cutting issues;
- (iv) Meetings among core members of relevant interconnected TWGs are strongly recommended to ensure consistency and to promote follow-up; and
- (v) The TWG Network Meeting provides an additional opportunity to consider cross-sectoral linkages and inter-ministerial coordination to address common challenges.

**(e) 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:

- (i) Use the TWG mechanism as a forum to inform other members of on-going work (research, studies, missions, reviews etc.) that relates to the functions of the TWG;
- (ii) Inform TWG members of other consultations/meetings, especially regarding external support, that have taken place and are relevant to the TWG's work;
- (iii) 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;
- (iv) 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; and
- (v) Develop and/or strengthen information systems that are required to ensure that the RGC and all TWG members have access to accurate and timely data including project documents/agreements.

**5. Institutional Arrangements**

**(a) Accountability of TWGs**

TWGs are under the management of, and accountable to, their host ministry/agency. The **RGC-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 or may be proposed for discussion at Sectoral Multi-stakeholder Dialogue.

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.

### **(b) Composition of TWGs**

The composition of each TWG should normally include members from the RGC, 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:

- (i) **An RGC-appointed Chair.** The Chairperson is to 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.
- (ii) **A development partner lead facilitator.** The development partner lead facilitator(s) must be at a senior level within their organisation, competent in the field and be willing to relate information to all other development partners. Development partners should manage their own arrangements for nominating or replacing the lead facilitator but, in the interest of continuity, the lead facilitator is expected to support the TWG for at least two years. 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.
- (iii) **The TWG Secretariat.** The host ministry/agency, under the direction of the Chair, will establish a secretariat to support the administration of the TWG, to follow-up on actions agreed at TWG meetings, to facilitate information management and to represent in the Partnership and Harmonisation (P&H) TWG.
- (iv) **RGC representatives of all relevant ministries and agencies.** These TWG members should support cross-government coordination, especially in the main reform areas, and must be well informed, technically competent, and of a sufficiently senior level to 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.
- (v) **Development partners active in the sector/thematic/reform area.** Development partners 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; they should also disseminate deliberations and decisions of the TWG to other members of the development partner community.
- (vi) **A CRDB/CDC representative.** The CRDB/CDC representative of a senior level will provide advisory and technical support on aid and development effectiveness issues in line with the DCPS (2019-2023). Provision is made for CRDB/CDC to provide support to TWGs based on request from the Chair (see page 6 on CRDB support to TWGs).
- (vii) **Focal points for generic and cross-cutting issues.** These should 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.

- (viii) **Technical Advisors of projects/programmes working within the RGC's structure.** Embedded TAs, 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.
- (ix) **NGO representatives and other relevant stakeholders.** The Chair may invite NGOs representatives and other relevant stakeholders to participate in TWGs. They should have an operational role and/or provide relevant assistance and/or services in areas of work associated with the TWG. NGOs should demonstrate a capacity and commitment to represent the broader NGO members and must make a commitment to share information about their on-going projects (including through the [NGO Database](#)). Representatives from NGOs and other relevant stakeholders should coordinate with their respective community and come up with committed support or contribution to the TWG.

### **(c) Size of TWGs and use of sub-groups**

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

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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. Development partner lead facilitators and NGO representatives in such core groups can keep their respective colleagues informed of progress and developments.
- (iii) Smaller "sub-groups" within any TWG may also be constituted to address more detailed issues (as is already being done in some TWGs), 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 discussion and agreement on any actions that are required;

### **(d) Conduct of meetings**

The following points serve as a checklist for ensuring good TWG performance. They guide the organisation of TWGs and conduct of meetings as follows:

- (i) An annual workplan, the JMIs and arrangements for addressing cross-cutting issues, should inform the content of TWG meetings and help to ensure focus and continuity in the meetings.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) There must be adequate time for discussion and all TWG members should be provided with an opportunity to inform the TWG of important issues.

## **(e) Implementation support mechanisms**

### Internal TWG implementation 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.

A well-organised, adequately-resourced and properly-led Secretariat within the host ministry/agency is essential to supporting the TWG's work. The Secretariat should:

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

### CRDB Support to TWGs

CRDB/CDC provides support to TWGs in its capacity as the RGC's focal point on aid coordination and convener of the TWG Network Meetings.

- (i) A CRDB/CDC representative participates in every TWG meeting to provide immediate support and advice on matters related to development effectiveness and aid management. Support can also be provided to TWGs regarding DCPS's principles, tools (including the Cambodia ODA and NGO Database) and mechanisms.
- (ii) CRDB/CDC also serves as an information-sharing hub and convenes dedicated meetings including TWG Network meetings for all TWGs for providing an opportunity for learning, information dissemination and agreeing actions related to TWG performance.
- (iii) CRDB/CDC will ensure the continued facilitation of the TWG Network Meetings which will be convened once per annum or as deemed appropriate. The TWG Network Meetings will provide an opportunity for all TWGs to promote peer-to-peer learning, share information and exchange experiences and good working practices.

## **(f) Criteria for formation of additional 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, with sub-groups where necessary to deal with individual components.
- (iv) The subject or theme to be covered should not be too diffused, making it difficult to assign clear responsibilities or to monitor progress across several RGC's ministries/agencies (cross-cutting issues should be mainstreamed across sectors and TWGs).
- (v) Prior to the formation (or possible dissolution) of a TWG, the host ministry/agency, in consultation with CRDB/CDC where necessary, is to prepare a proposal to be submitted for the Government Decision from the RGC.

## **6. Relationship to Sectoral Multi-stakeholder Dialogue**

In the fast-changing development context, the RGC acknowledges the increasing need to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue at a higher level beyond technical consultation. The DCPS (2019-2023) proposes Sectoral Multi-stakeholder Dialogue to serve as an effective partnership mechanism that elevates discussion from technical to higher level dialogue. The Guideline on the Implementation and Management of Sectoral Multi-stakeholder Dialogue was formulated to ensure that the dialogue is convened in a purposeful manner for maximum effect. The two mechanisms are complementary but not interchangeable.

It is important that the TWGs retain all of their current functions as per this Guideline. The sector dialogue mechanism then adds value, for example by enabling a more strategic and forward-looking dialogue. But it does not replace the TWG's work, which remains focused on mobilisation, alignment, implementation and capacity issues identified in Section 4 of this TWG Guideline. The added-value of the Sectoral Multi-stakeholder Dialogue mechanism is: (a) to serve as a higher level consultation for all development actors that informs RGC's strategic decision-making; (b) to be a forum for high-impact decision making on longer-term reform and service delivery issues beyond the scope of the TWG; (c) to ensure wider representation, with a membership beyond those that usually attend TWG meetings; (d) to provide a strategic look at medium-term sector resourcing and gaps, as well as provide an opportunity to commit new longer-term funding (especially for development partners) outside the scope of specific projects; and (e) to set priorities and the agreed agenda for the next year or over the medium-term.