

# CAMBODIA



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

## SUPPORT FOR SUB - NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA

Strengthening the capacity of administrations at provincial, district and commune level to deliver equitable services and promote citizen participation.



Health service delivered to local people. ©UNICEF Cambodia/Nicolas Axelrod

With support from the international community, local administration reform began, and in 2002 the first local commune council elections took place. Decentralization showed a promising shift towards building trust between local authorities and citizens and opening up democratic space at the sub-national level. With the commune elections, local governments were restored and the first steps towards building the legitimacy of state authorities were taken.

In 2008, a second layer of sub-national governance was introduced with the “Law on Administrative Management of the Capital, Province, Municipality, District and Khan”, defining district and provincial levels. Building on this, the Government launched a new comprehensive 10-year National Program on Sub-National Democratic Development (NP-SNDD) structured into three phases, with an ambitious inter-ministerial reform agenda.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC supports the National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development (NP - SNDD) 2010 - 2019.

### BACKGROUND

Cambodia experienced decades of civil war after the genocide of 1975-1979 in which approximately 1.7 million people lost their lives (21% of the country's population). The 1991 Paris Peace Agreement marked a formal end to civil war and led to the first-ever democratic elections at the national level. However, armed conflicts and widespread violence and insecurity persisted until 1999. From early 2000, Cambodia started to rebuild its governing structures. Poverty decreased substantially, from 36% living in absolute poverty in early 2000 to 19.5% in 2015. However, approximately 50% of people are still considered poor and vulnerable to all kinds of external shocks. They do not have sufficient access to health care or education; they suffer malnutrition and food insecurity; and their incomes are very low.

### APPROACH

SDC, together with Sweden and the EU, is supporting the reform through a basket fund which is managed by the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development-Secretariat (NCDD-S). The three funders have a joint review committee with the Secretariat of National Committee for Sub-National Development (NCDD-S) to supervise the implementation. Several multilateral and bilateral donors are involved in the NP-SNDD with stand-alone projects. Overall Government-donor coordination is assured through a Technical Working Group.

Switzerland is the Co-Chair of the Technical Working Group-SNDD. In this role, Switzerland strives for enhanced donor alignment to increase effective implementation. Specific focus is on harmonizing with Public Finance Management Reform and Public Administration Reform – together with the SNDD, these are the strongly interrelated governance reforms at the core of the National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018.

The overall responsibility of each expected result lies with a specific line ministry. The reform is steered by an inter-ministerial steering body, the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD), representing six line ministries, under the chairmanship of Samdech Kralahom Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. The coordination and reform management lies with the NCDD-Secretariat, which is located in the compound of the Ministry of Interior.

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## STRATEGIC FOCUS

The overarching objective of the NP-SNDD agenda is achieving “democratic, inclusive and equitable development, improved access, quality and utilization of service delivery and contribution to poverty reduction”. The 10-year reform is being implemented in three phases: the first phase ran from 2010-2014, the current second phase (IP3-II) runs from 2015-2017 and the third phase is expected to run from 2018-2020.

The current phase aims to improve the welfare and quality of life of all local residents of Sub-National Authorities (SNA) and to empower citizens (from all social groups) through political and other processes to ensure equality, fairness and the protection of basic rights.

In its dialogue with the reform actors, SDC will pay specific attention to mainstreaming gender equality. SDC also aims to document and learn from the decentralization reform in Cambodia, to foster regional learning and outreach, in particular through the Local Governance Initiative and Network (LOGIN).

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## OVERALL GOAL AND EXPECTATIONS

SDC’s strategic goal is to support Cambodia’s poor and marginalized women and men, especially in rural areas, to equitably benefit from economic growth and to meaningfully participate in decision-making. The support to the decentralization reform will contribute to improved public service delivery based on enhanced citizen engagement, and constructive management of local affairs. Re-building trust and confidence, and therefore support to reconciliation, is a key element of stability, peace and sustainable human development in Cambodia.

IP3-II has set out five results to be achieved, in line with the overall NP-SNDD 2010–2019:

- 1. Reform management:** Improved management of the democratic development reform process geared towards managing change.

- 2. Democratic accountability:** SNAs function as autonomous, local democratic and accountable institutions, including accountability of the board of governors to the council, accountability of councillors to citizens and accountability of SNAs to comply with national laws and standards.

- 3. Human resources management and development:** SNAs autonomously and effectively manage and develop their staff to meet their service delivery mandates and priorities.

- 4. SNA service delivery and functions:** SNAs are able to meet citizens’ service delivery expectations and provide meaningful services at the level of government closest to citizens.

- 5. Fiscal decentralization:** Financial resources are well planned, well managed and adequate for districts and municipalities (DMs) to meet their service delivery mandates.



Community Pre-school Activities. ©UNICEF Cambodia

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## PROJECT AT A GLANCE:

### Duration

Phase 2: 01 May 2015 – 31 December 2017

### Budget

Accumulated (2013-2017): CHF 10,000,000  
Second phase: CHF 7,000,000

### Implementing agencies

The Royal Government of Cambodia, represented by the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development

### Other partners:

EU, Sweden, JICA, GIZ/EU SPACE, ADB, WB, UNICEF, UNDP, UNCDF, UNFPA

## Imprint

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