

# CAMBODIA



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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

## SDP - SUPPORT FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA, PHASE 1



Trainees are gaining practical skills in car repair at a Training Center in Phnom Penh

Photo by SDC

SDC supports rural poor and disadvantaged youth in three Northern provinces to access gainful and decent employment. Its Skills Development Programme contributes to strengthening an inclusive and relevant technical vocational education and training (TVET) system.

### BACKGROUND

Cambodia's economy is growing quickly, but its labour market lacks skilled workers. Cambodia has the youngest population in the Asia Pacific region, with 63 per cent of the population aged under 24 years. Each year, 300,000 new people enter the labour market, representing twice the number of jobs that the narrow-based economy creates. This places pressure on Cambodia's economy to diversify and industrialize so that it can accommodate its rapidly increasing labour force, most of whom work in agriculture and are under-educated.

Some 76 per cent of the Cambodian labour force does not complete lower secondary education and only 2.3 per cent of secondary students enrol in technical vocational education and training (TVET). Only 30 per cent of these

enrolments are for long-term courses. There are two main risks associated with having so many under-educated workers: 1) When workers are not able to improve their skills and productivity to increase their chances of finding a decent job, they will not be able to earn enough income for their families; and 2) The opportunity costs of education for their children is high. This could lead to a 'low skill, low wage' development trap or a so-called 'inter-generational poverty trap'.

TVET and other skills development programmes often fail to meet the demands of the labour market, in particular, the demands of productive industries. This shortage of skilled workers is one of the biggest challenges for the Cambodian economy, especially in the context of a greater and freer flow of labour in the ASEAN Economic Community. Cambodia continues to lag behind most other ASEAN member states with regard to human resources and skills in the labour force.

Internally, a diffused governance structure, frail implementation policies, a lack of appropriate coordination among numerous stakeholders, and no career counselling or labour market information remains challenging. The national TVET system requires substantial reforms in terms of enhancing quality and relevance, improving equitable access, and governance in responding to labour market needs.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has recently taken major steps to formulate key policy documents in the sector to develop and improve an inclusive and relevant TVET system. Policies include the Industrial Development Policy, the National Employment Policy and the TVET Policy, all aiming to provide strategic direction and a roadmap to address these challenges.

SDC's Skills Development Programme is supporting this reform based on thorough assessments, market analysis and design studies. Priority areas of intervention and associated partnerships were developed through multi-stakeholder consultations at national and sub-national levels. Expected to last 12 years, the programme will have three phases. A one-

## PROJECT AT A GLANCE:

### Project Duration

July 2016 – June 2020 (Phase 1)

### Budget

CHF 8, 930,000

### Implementing agencies:

Swisscontact (Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation) in consortium with INBAS GmbH, Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)

### Other partners

Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Women's Affairs, National Employment Agency, Provincial Department of Labour and Vocational Training, Provincial Department of Tourism, Provincial Department of Women's Affairs, Provincial Training Centres, Women's Development Centres, NGOs and the private sector.

### Imprint

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year inception period that provided important insights paved the way for Phase 1, which started in July 2016 and will last until June 2020.

## APPROACH

Three linked programme components promote access to better employment opportunities and conditions, while addressing the specific needs of selected, disadvantaged groups. They are: Dual Vocational Training, Hospitality Training, and Supporting National Policy. A high level of mobility, low ratio of fixed costs and flexible mechanisms that consider a mixture of occupations characterize the first two components. The programme generates direct advantages for students and offers much higher chances of employability and decent income.

The Dual Vocational Training model combines vocational training at training centers and practice at workplace respectively. The training has to mainly support employment and self-employment opportunities for disadvantaged young women and men from the remote villages. The Hospitality Training component is aimed at low-qualified young workers to improve service quality in the three provinces, thus providing job opportunities in a growing sector. In supporting national policy, the programme will work on two inter-related aspects:

- 1) Revising the Cambodia Qualification Framework to make it more inclusive and market oriented. Additionally, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will provide a mechanism to support workers to gain national recognition;
- 2) Involving the private sector in the planning (e.g. developing education and training curricula) and delivery of TVET. As part of policy development to inform policy makers and strengthen capacity development in the responsible ministries, SDC will contribute to the "research and policy programme on technical and vocational education and training" of the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI).

The programme provides access to training for poor, disadvantaged and poorly educated youth. Young women and men with disability and those from ethnic minorities will be given special attention. The programme will be implemented in Preah Vihear, Stung Treng and Kratie, three provinces which are economically far below the national average and are difficult to access due to low levels of infrastructure. The three provinces are characterized by low skill levels and face major rural to urban migration.

## OVERALL GOAL AND EXPECTATIONS

The goal of the programme is to increase the income and employment opportunities of disadvantaged young women and men in the Northern provinces of Cambodia and to contribute to the creation of an inclusive, relevant, qualitative and well-coordinated TVET system nationwide.

The two main outcomes of the programme are:

1. Young women and men in the targeted provinces have increased market-demanded skills
2. A sustainable and inclusive Cambodian TVET system, oriented towards ASEAN integration, delivers quality and accessible TVET to all.

The programme is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Increase outreach to target provinces where there is limited TVET
- Improve access by expanding entry points and permeability of the TVET system
- Expand the Cambodia Qualification Framework with new occupations and pre-vocational skill levels
- Support links with employers

The programme is expected to directly reach 5,400 young people from poor rural backgrounds (at least 50 per cent women). The goal is that 70 per cent of them are engaged in wage or self-employment with decent income six months after completing their training. In addition, 600 owners and managers of private businesses, and 2,400 teachers/trainers/assessors involved in TVET will directly benefit from the first phase of the programme.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

SDC supports rural poor and disadvantaged youth in the Northern provinces of Cambodia to have better access to gainful and decent work through: vocational and life skills, strengthening the national TVET regulatory framework, improving inclusion, effective delivery, and higher relevance of vocational skills to labour market needs.



A trainee is learning sewing skills at the Women's Development Center in Kratie.

Photo by SDC