

A GUIDELINE ON THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS August 2010

Background

The 2007 Technical Working Group (TWG) Guideline was produced to strengthen Government ownership and to promote TWG effectiveness. It offered advisory support to the TWGs on their organisation and scope of work. Based on reports received on TWG performance since that time, and in light of policy developments related to the NSDP Update 2009-2013, aid effectiveness work and associated core reforms of the Royal Government (RGC), this Guideline has been revised to address issues of membership, organisation, scope of work and performance. The over-arching objective of this Guideline – to promote RGC ownership, partnerships and TWG effectiveness – remains unchanged.

This revised Guideline provides generic guidance that is intended to ensure that sector and thematic work is consistent with the Rectangular Strategy – Phase II and associated sector, thematic and reform programmes of the RGC. This revised Guideline will therefore support TWGs in prioritizing their work, to strengthen their linkages to the Government-Development Partner Coordination Committee (GDCC), and to focus on the achievement of development results.

TWGs are intended to serve primarily as coordinating and supporting bodies; they are not intended to substitute for or to duplicate the functions of ministries and agencies. TWGs are accountable to their host ministries and agencies, and the TWG Chair, as the Government's lead representative in a TWG, is therefore the sole decision-making authority in the TWG. As part of the mechanism to promote aid effectiveness and development partnership, TWGs also have reporting responsibility to the GDCC, in particular with respect to ensure the continuing implementation of their sector plans, RGC reforms and efforts to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation resources. Activity related to the implementation of the results-based Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs) that were endorsed at the 3rd CDCF in June 2010 will guide much of the TWGs' work.

It is important to emphasize that this Guideline is not intended to be overly prescriptive. The list of tasks and organizational principles are not to be considered as mandatory and it will be necessary for each TWG to identify, prioritize and sequence its activities based on perceived need, available resources and existing capacity. In this regard, the Guideline provides generic principle and procedure to the revised formation and operation of TWGs in the sector work. The TWG functions should be formulated in a Terms of Reference and an annual workplan that give due consideration to some or all of the following issues.

Composition of TWGs

The composition of each TWG should normally include the members from the Government, Development partner and Civil Society (in necessary case). Lest, a TWG comprises of Multi-Ministry participation, the composition should be established by taking the Ministry working in the same umbrella sector or thematic. TWG Chairs are responsible in the last instance 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 needs to be fully committed, with authority within the host ministry, and to be able to address all matters arising in the TWG as well as to guide discussions smoothly; in addition the Chair must liaise with other RGC Ministries and agencies represented in the TWG and be familiar with the development partner portfolio that supports the sector;
- (ii) 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 or substantively competent, and of a sufficiently senior level to be mandated to represent the views of their institution, provide required information and to facilitate follow-up

action within their own institution. A member of CRDB/CDC will attend to provide advisory support on aid management issues;

- (iii) A development partner lead facilitator. The development partner lead facilitator(s) must be at a senior level within their organization, 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, a lead facilitator is normally expected to support the TWG for at least two years;
- (iv) Development partners active in the sector or thematic area. Development partners should also be represented at an appropriate and competent level and be able to share information and support the Chair in reaching decisions. (Development partners might agree and coordinate between themselves so that not every development partner supporting a sector needs to attend the TWG);
- (v) The TWG Secretariat. The Chair will establish a core secretariat to facilitate the administration of the TWG, to work with development partners and to represent the TWG in the Partnership and Harmonisation TWG;
- (vi) Focal points for generic and cross-cutting issues. This will include gender mainstreaming, and environment and climate change members in each ministry or agency;
- (vii) Technical Advisors of projects/programmes working within the RGC structure. Embedded TAs should participate and contribute as TWG members but should not function as development partner lead facilitator(s);
- (viii) Civil society or NGO representatives. Each TWG may invite NGOs and civil society representatives to participate in the TWGs either as full members or as observers:
 - *Full Membership*: NGOs and civil society representatives that have a clear operational role and/or provide relevant assistance and/or services are to be invited as full TWG members. Capacity and commitment to represent the broader civil society community may also be required, together with a commitment to share information about their on-going projects (through the NGO Database supported by CRDB/CDC).;
 - *Observer*: NGOs and civil society representatives may be invited as an observer in the TWG at the discretion of the Chair.

Size of TWGs

The size of the TWG must be managed to balance representation and a need to ensure effective and meaningful dialogue. It is suggested that:

- (i) An optimum size to facilitate dialogue implies a limit of no more than 25 persons. Additional participation can be accommodated with relevant inputs sought by the Chair from other participants;
- (ii) Where it is necessary to have a larger number of members, it is desirable to constitute a "core group" of not more than 25 persons which could meet more regularly and report to the plenary during full meetings of the TWG. Development partner 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), either on a time-bound or permanent basis.

Cross-cutting issues and inter-Ministerial coordination

TWGs are mainly theme, reform or sector based and are related to NSDP priorities. Where cross-sectoral themes are to be addressed the composition of a sub-group should be considered to allow for specific focus on cross-cutting themes. Meetings among core members of relevant interconnected TWGs are strongly recommended to ensure consistency in the positions adopted by RGC in the TWGs and to promote follow-up and implementation of activities. The GDCC provides an additional opportunity to consider cross-sectoral linkages and challenges, which should be highlighted in TWG reporting to the GDCC Secretariat (i.e. CRDB/CDC).

Criteria for formation of TWGs

The criteria for formation of TWGs is established as follows:

- (i) TWGs should cover clearly identifiable sectors or themes, with sub-groups where necessary to deal with individual components;
- (ii) There must be clearly identifiable substantive targets that the TWG would help to achieve through its own work;
- (iii) 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 ministries or agencies (cross-cutting issues should be mainstreamed across sectors and TWGs);
- (iv) Where adequate coordination and RGC-development partner information sharing mechanisms already exist, there is no need to create parallel or additional mechanisms.

The GDCC is the appropriate forum for proposing and discussing the formation of a new TWG, or for re-organising or re-structuring the working arrangements between the RGC and its development partners. The underlying objective is to identify arrangements that deliver results.

Roles and Functions of TWGs

TWG functions should be included in the Terms of Reference and translated into activities in an annual workplan. Priority activities are to be incorporated into the TWG JMI and may additionally include some or all of the following:

NSDP Linkages

- (i) Identify sector priorities and prepare/implement a strategy which is related to the NSDP Update 2009-2013;
- (ii) Identify cross-cutting issues such as gender mainstreaming, environment and climate change that the work of the TWG is expected to support, either through activities within the sector or through collaboration with other RGC Ministries or TWGs;
- (iii) Identify relevant available data sources for NSDP monitoring and agree on any additional analytical work that the TWG might support to enhance NSDP reporting and monitoring;
- (iv) Based on an RGC appraisal of development assistance, promote alignment with national priorities and strategies;

Sector/Thematic Strategies

- (v) Support the development of a sector strategy or programme that promotes the attainment of NSDP Updated 2009-2013 targets (including issues of a cross-cutting nature), supports routine work functions, and which addresses capacity development needs (including to strengthen and use national systems);
- (vi) Identify relevant support, and appropriate modalities, directed to the

development, implementation, financing, monitoring and review of the sector strategy;

- (vii) Implement and monitor the result based JMIs endorsed in June 2010 that are linked to NSDP targets.

Financing

- (viii) Maintain a record, derived from the Cambodia ODA Database, of all on-going development partner funded activities that are relevant to the TWG, whether implemented by RGC or otherwise;
- (ix) Identify pipeline projects - and potential development partner funding - that will address priority activities included in the sector plan or strategy;
- (x) To the extent that it is feasible, cost priority activities and identify funding sources and gaps, working with CRDB/CDC in its capacity as RGC aid coordination focal point;
- (xi) Support the preparation of the Public Investment Plan (PIP), including by ensuring that all projects are up-dated in the CRDB ODA Database;
- (xii) Discuss the sector Budget Strategic Plan (BSP) or Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as a basis for programming comprehensive RGC and development partner support and for implementing the Public Financial Management Reform Programme (PFMRP);
- (xiii) Ensure that activities related to the work and operations of the TWG, in particular the JMIs, are fully-funded.

Capacity Development

- (xiv) Capacity development activities should be located in the context of on-going public service reforms:
 - a) Develop a coherent capacity development strategy, based on a needs assessment and functional review, that addresses capacity development at institutional, organizational and individual levels;
 - b) Identify and agree on a rational and RGC-led programme for providing technical assistance in the framework of a sector capacity development arrangement;
 - c) Establish and monitor indicators that will inform progress toward capacity development.

Partnerships and Aid Effectiveness

- (xv) A member of CRDB/CDC will support each TWG to advise on aid management issues. In the context of the H-A-R Action Plan and the JMI aid effectiveness priority, the TWG is encouraged to identify relevant actions that will promote aid effectiveness and partnership. This may include but need not be limited to:
 - a) Establishment (or strengthening) of a programme-based approach to guide project development/programmatic support in the context of the sector strategy and to coordinate resource mobilization efforts;
 - b) Lead a dialogue on aid modalities and partnership arrangements that are appropriate for the sector/thematic work supported by the TWG, identifying opportunities for more efficient forms of working together and channeling development partner assistance, including PBA; delegated partnerships; basket funding etc, as well as efforts to improve and strengthen partnership dynamics;

- c) Coordinated and rational use of technical cooperation in support of a common capacity assessment and strategy linked to major reforms that will strengthen and use national systems (see capacity development above);
- d) Monitoring the use and integration of PIUs, and in the context of broader capacity development work, agreeing a transition toward increased RGC management of ODA with regard to resource programming, implementation and reporting, making effective use of integrated PIUs where required;
- e) Monitor funds committed, projected and actually disbursed (recorded in the Cambodia ODA Database) so that implementation of sector activities can proceed smoothly;
- f) Monitor missions and support an agreed and coordinated programme of analytical work, promoting joint approaches informed by the TWG Action Plan to the fullest extent possible;
- g) Implementation of the National Operational Guidelines (for grants) and/or the Standard Operating Procedures (for loans).

Reporting and Review

- (xvi) Consolidate and report to the GDCC on JMIs (including aid effectiveness priorities); TWG Action Plan activities; and any other issues necessary for GDCC discussion;
- (xvii) Identify and agree a modality for reviewing TWG and/or sector progress, ideally on a joint basis;
- (xviii) Identify and agree a mechanism for providing inputs to the NSDP Annual Progress Report and Mid Term Review;
- (xix) Follow-up issues relevant to the TWG that are raised in either GDCC or CDCF, and identify those issues within the TWG that may need to be taken forward for dialogue at these higher-level fora.

Conduct of Meetings

The following points may guide the work of TWGs:

- (i) TWGs should meet as often as is deemed appropriate, but at a minimum should meet to discuss and agree the report to be submitted to the GDCC (there are usually three GDCC meetings per year); it is recommended that TWG hold an annual retreat to reflect on issues of partnership, including TWG organization, management and conduct of work, and achievement of result.
- (ii) Meetings should have a clear agenda with documentation shared in advance to the fullest extent possible. The workplan and the JMIs should inform the content of the meeting and maintain continuity and consistency in the meetings;
- (iii) All participants should be provided with an opportunity to inform the TWG of important developments;
- (iv) Preparatory meetings between the Chair and the lead facilitators - as well as between development partners - may ensure a more focused and productive TWG dialogue;
- (v) A Secretariat should be appointed and facilitated with the resources that are required to ensure the secretariat function can be provided. Their role will include keeping records of each meeting, document sharing, drafting reports for the GDCC and serving as the aid coordination focal point, as provided for in Article 35(ii) of the Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management. They will be invited to participate in the Partnership and Harmonisation TWG and the TWG Network and its associated training events;

- (vi) The Chair, or his/her nominated representative, and the lead facilitators should maintain regular contact between meetings to ensure timely follow-up to agreed actions;
- (vii) The GDCC may be employed for dialogue where the TWG feels that it is otherwise unable to make progress or that there is an issue that merits further cross-sectoral discussion. This should be highlighted in the TWG report prepared in advance of the GDCC meeting.

Linkages

Members representing RGC ministries or agencies in any TWG should bring information and knowledge from their offices and communicate information, required actions and decisions back to their ministry or agency. Similarly, development partners need to bring all information about ongoing and proposed programmes that they support; they should also disseminate deliberations and decisions of the TWG to other members of the development partner community.

Support Structures

Internal and external support mechanisms are required:

Internally, a well-organised and properly led unit or secretariat within the lead ministry or agency should organise meetings, keep records or minutes of meetings of TWGs and sub-groups, and conduct follow-up with line ministries and agencies responsible for carrying out agreed upon actions. The unit will also produce GDCC progress reports for dissemination, communicate issues to be resolved by the GDCC and serve as the aid coordination focal point as provided for in the Strategic Framework (see the previous section). To avoid adding new layers to the existing structure, this secretariat should be an integral part of the host ministry or agency, such as the planning department. The unit should also be the designated contact point for the lead facilitator or other TWG members on behalf of the Chair.

Externally, some TWGs may need the continued support of CRDB/CDC in its role as the RGC focal point on aid coordination and GDCC secretariat. This is consistent with the H-A-R Action Plan, which states that "CRDB/CDC provides technical support to sector ministries and agencies on aid coordination and aid management issues based on needs identified and support requested by the Chairs of the TWGs".

CRDB/CDC support to TWGs

The following support lines are offered by CRDB/CDC to the TWGs:

- (i) A CRDB staff member participates in every TWG meeting to provide on-demand support and advice on matters related to aid management;
- (ii) The TWG Network convenes meetings and training events for all TWG secretariats (and occasionally Chairs and development partners). TWG secretariats are encouraged to propose items for the agenda of the next meeting/training.
- (iii) "Clinics" – these are the main vehicles for providing tailored support to the TWGs in the form of facilitated meetings and/or training events. They are principally linked to developing programme-based approaches but can also be applied to a wider range of aid management-related issues.
- (iv) Grant support for aid management related functions – development partners are expected to make available a sufficient level of resources to the TWG secretariat to support its functions. This sum is usually quite modest (up to USD 20,000 per year). In the event that development partners are unable to make these resources available, CRDB/CDC may be able to provide minimum support or training.