

**World Bank Country Partnership Framework for Cambodia FY2025-2029  
Civil Society Organizations Consultation Summary  
December 6, 2023  
Raffles Hotel Le Royal, Phnom Penh**

The second consultation on the World Bank’s proposed Country Partnership Framework FY2025-2029 with Cambodia was held on December 5, 2023 with civil society; and representatives from youth groups, academia and think tanks. 45 participants attended the face-to-face consultations (see Annex).

**Overview:**

The consultation began with welcome remarks from Maryam Salim, World Bank Country Manager, Myanmar. Presentations on progress, challenges, and opportunities in Cambodia as set out in the World Bank’s Systematic Country Diagnosis alongside an outline of the proposed Country Partnership Framework (CPF) were delivered by World Bank staff. These can be accessed on the [Cambodia CPF FY25-29 consultation website](#).

The room was then divided into breakout groups, assigned a CPF High Level Outcome (HLO) to consider, and asked to discuss four questions – the following is a collation of responses:

**Question 1: What are the top three issues that the World Bank Group (WBG) should focus on in the next 4-5 years?**

**HLO 1** – The group suggested the World Bank focus on skills for sustainable, green jobs to support Cambodia’s youth alongside early primary education and holistic early childhood education and nutrition, with emphasis on marginalized groups.

This group also noted that the World Bank could consider more support in improving public expenditure alongside greater investment in human capital, social services, education and TVET. The need for affordable and quality healthcare was noted.

**HLO 2** – Participants discussing HLO2 emphasized the importance of robust education. They noted the need to support training with a special focus on increasing agricultural productivity (noting that agriculture remain important for Cambodia’s economy), making improvements to the business environment by addressing business registration challenges, improving taxation systems and combating tax avoidance. They also noted the need to address growing debt issues, in particular by farmers.

Respondents highlighted the need to enforce existing laws and regulations, challenge of corruption, lack of fair competition, and complex bureaucracy that deters private investment and local businesses. They emphasized the need for infrastructure support, particularly to address road conditions and their poor construction due to corruption and weak project oversight and high cost of energy. To improve oversight and accountability of public works, they noted the need to improve independence and power of auditing bodies, and suggested the World Bank’s program could better address this by increasing accountability through World Bank financed projects.

**HLO 3** – Participants for HLO 3 flagged a need to focus on skills for vulnerable people, particularly in climate smart agriculture (e.g., climate resilient rice); a need for greater access to finance especially for agriculture production and dealing with small business debt; improving land use, irrigation, and

electricity access to support improvement in livelihoods; and boosting transport and energy infrastructure to support trade.

There were also suggestions for better multisectoral investment; increased R&D for climate smart agriculture; appropriate technology for local business start-up; and identification of products for not only exports but also for local markets. The need to enhance the impact of climate policies where it was noted that the country has good policies but there is an issue of implementation.

The importance of addressing duplication of work by development partners and of engaging people and communities were highlighted.

**Question 2: What should the World Bank be doing less of in Cambodia considering the World Bank's comparative advantage?**

**HLO1-** It was noted that while many participants encouraged the World Bank to invest more in infrastructure and access to micro- and small, medium enterprises, it was also important to address human capital, social services, healthcare, technical and vocational education and training, skills development for better jobs.

**HLO 2-** Respondents observed that despite World Bank work in the education sector for 20 years, student performance has not improved. They suggested that the World Bank review the root cause of limited progress in education. They noted that the issue could be due to teachers and their capacity, and incentives to be educators where teacher's pay was considered low.

**Question 3: What are your views of the proposed high-level outcomes and objectives for the CPF?**

**HLO 1 –** The proposed high-level outcomes were supported. Members discussing HLO1 suggested there could be more focus on social inclusion, with appropriate indicators.

**HLO 2 –** Participants indicated the HLOs were relevant and effective but called for a greater focus on governance and transparency and investing more in the vulnerable.

**HLO 3 –** Respondents suggested that an objective on climate adaptation, disaster risk management, and resilience be incorporated. They also suggested that government, development partners, NGOs/CSOs and private sector work together inclusively (considering joint monitoring indicators).

**Question 4: How may the World Bank better address the cross-cutting challenges of:**

- **Climate change impacts**
- **Governance and institutional capacity**
- **Gender equality and inclusion**

**HLO 1 –** This group suggested inclusive oversight of the World Bank's program by CSOs, NGOs, the government and private institutions would assist the World Bank in better addressing the cross-cutting challenges. It was suggested that CSOs and NGOs continue to play a central role in monitoring impact. To address gender equality and inclusion they also stressed fostering greater leadership from women through role models and awareness, including at the community level. They also encouraged engagement of youths, especially to support green jobs.

**HLO 2 –** Financing and support for greater institutional capacity was flagged as the most effective to address these cross-cutting challenges. They noted the importance not only of addressing gender but also LGBTQ. Respondents suggested that governance and strengthening institutions should be

treated as standalone high-level outcomes, not just only cross cutting issues so that adequate attention and resources are provided to show tangible development impacts.

**HLO 3** – The group responding on HLO3 suggested greater and more meaningful inclusion of vulnerable groups including, women, the poor, and those with disabilities would best address these cross-cutting challenges. The group also suggested that good governance should be one of the HLOs or indicators to strengthen active citizen engagement at central and subnational level.

## Annex

Participants	Organizations attending
45 participants	The NGO Forum Rachana Strey Northeastern Rural Development (NRD) Buddhism For Social Development Action Organization (BSDA) Action Aid Cambodia (AAC) Transparency International Cambodia (TIC) Save the Children International (SCI) Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) Credit Union Foundation Australia (CUFA) Community Translation Organization (CTO) Family Health Cambodia (FHC) Community Advancement Organization (CAO) Samaky Handicap International (HI) Aide et Action (AeA) Heifer International People's Action for Inclusive Development Organization (PAfID) The Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA) Vicheastanh Bamreu Neak samrabsamroul Karngea akphiwat (VBNK) Caritas Australia NUPPUN Center for Policy Studies (CPS) Khmer Youth Association (KYA) Legal Aid Cambodia (LAC) Future Forum Analyzing Development Issues Centre (ADIC)Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) World Vision Cambodia (WVI) Legal Aid Cambodia (LAC) Open Development Cambodia (ODC) Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) National University of Management (NUM) Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) University of Cambodia (HC) Alliance for Conflict Transformation Organization (ACT) STAR Kampuchea International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) Planète Enfants & Développement