

**World Bank Country Partnership Framework for Cambodia FY2025-2029
Government Central Line Ministries Consultation Summary
December 5, 2023
Raffles Hotel, Le Royal, Phnom Penh**

The first consultation on the World Bank’s proposed Country Partnership Framework FY2025-2029 with Cambodia was held on December 5, 2023 with Central Level Ministries and Government Partners. 140 participants from various ministries attended (see annex).

Overview:

The consultation began with welcome remarks from Mariam J. Sherman, World Bank Country Director, for Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR, World Bank and H.E. Ros Seilava, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance.

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 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 based on the CPF’s three High Level Outcomes and asked to consider four questions – the following is a collation of responses from that session:

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 – There were two groups discussing HLO1. The first responders encouraged the World Bank to support the health sector as linked to the government’s Pentagonal Strategy. There was an emphasis on improving quality of service delivery at health facilities at the subnational level (at health centers and referral hospitals), nutrition for good health, and requests to focus on nutrition services through enhanced knowledge and service delivery for mothers and children, particularly in provinces where awareness is limited. Respondents also encouraged the World Bank to focus on non-communicable diseases – particularly hypertension and diabetes. The need for inter-ministerial coordination – of health, education, agriculture, environment – towards a One Health approach was noted, with mention of a recent outbreak of H5N1 in the country and a need to pay attention to food safety.

On education, participants referred to enrolment, teacher quality, and capacity building as priorities alongside early access and early education. Some participants noted the need for more support for day care and community kindergarten. Referring to the importance of capacity building, it was noted that focus should not only be on teacher quality but should also address efficient spending, and procurement and institutional strengthening. Moreover, they emphasized the need for greater TVET skills for school leavers, job matching and career orientation especially for youths. The importance of engaging the private sector in building employment opportunities (linking skills development with skills needs of the private sector) and identifying areas for re-skilling/up-skilling were noted. More broadly, some members in the group also suggested that the private sector could be engaged in service provision.

HLO 2 – Groups discussing HLO2 identified improved legal frameworks around trade and investment, increased digital literacy, and boosting competitiveness through improved logistics and business environments as priorities.

The need for improvement in land connectivity and reduce logistic costs were noted. Rural road connectivity within the country was emphasized. Additionally, it was noted that improved regional road connectivity, for example with Vietnam, which is one of Cambodia’s major agriculture exporting country.

There were requests for TA in identifying logistic bottlenecks and institutional constraints and more support for Small and Medium Enterprises. Access to finance, especially for rural women was considered important.

HLO 3 – Groups addressing HLO 3 focused on smaller-scale assistance, suggesting the World Bank should support vulnerable households to strengthen their resilience by supporting small scale farmers to better benefit local livelihoods, including capacity building. They also remarked on the need for localized investments including in infrastructure, local climate investment, resilient water management, technology, agriculture extension and engaging the local communities for community forestry. To support greater resilience, participants also noted the need for private investments and support of partners, in particular CSOs. Moreover, they emphasized the importance of Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D reforms), strong institutions and institutional capacity building at the decentralized level to reduce poverty.

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

HLO 1 – Participants working in health and education referred to complex World Bank processes as especially difficult and urged the Bank to simplify some of these. Alongside simplification of processes, a lack of training for Ministries was also flagged.

It was also viewed that implementation of World Bank financed projects could be better facilitated by hiring local consultants based in the country. Some of them noted that contract processing for hiring of international consultants was time intensive and such consultants were not always immediately available to support project implementation.

Other respondents added that longer term projects needed to adapt to embrace new technologies where appropriate. They also noted the need to strengthen the focus and timeliness of research publications, engaging the government so that they are relevant to government priorities to support the uptake of proposed findings and recommendations.

HLO 2 –Commentors on HLO 2 also flagged the engagement of international contractors with limited knowledge of the local context as an issue that slowed implementation of WB- supported programs.

HLO 3 – Greater coordination between development partners to reduce program overlap was suggested by those focused on HLO 3. Members of one group also suggested a greater and more diverse focus on climate resilient crops.

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

All groups expressed support for the proposed HLOs and objectives, noting their close alignment with the Government's Pentagonal Strategy. Moreover, the objectives focusing on trade and connectivity resonated with the groups discussing HLO2.

HLO 1 – HLO 1 and associated objectives were supported, as they align closely with the Government's Pentagonal Strategy.

HLO 2 – HLO2 supported, especially the objectives focused on trade and connectivity supported.

HLO 3 – HLO 3 supported. There was also broad support for the direction of the CPF and credit was given to the Framework's alignment with government priorities.

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 – Groups focused on HLO1 emphasized more gender mainstreaming to better address equality and inclusion. They noted that with climate change, there is a need to build the resilience of women in rural areas and improve livelihoods, for example, through access to clean water and climate resilient crops. They also noted opportunities in providing greener workplaces and schools. On governance, there was emphasis on institutional capacity, clarifying roles and responsibilities within government, and efficient budgeting.

HLO 2 – Groups focused on HLO2 suggested a greater focus on research around the circular economy in Cambodia to support climate outcomes. They requested more support for government reforms, leadership programs to build future builders, and an enhanced focus on capacity building for women to improve governance and accountability.

HLO 3- Respondents from groups focused on HLO3 commented on the importance of improved D&D reforms and good governance, improved gender support in governance and to carry out gender responsive budgeting. They also noted the need for more institutional capacity building and private sector engagement. Related to Bank-financed projects, they repeatedly referred to fostering a greater sense of local ownership and accountability amongst implementing partners – particularly on small scale projects. Members of the group also noted the importance of simplifying processes, and enhanced coordination of development partners.

Annex:

Number of Participants	Ministries Attending
140 participants	Ministries included: Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) Ministry of Interior (MOI) Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) Ministry of Commerce (MOC) Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS) Ministry of Environment (MOE) Ministry of Health (MOH) Ministry of Industry, Science Technology and Innovation (MISTI) Ministry of Justice Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT) Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) Ministry of Planning (MOP) Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPTC) Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) Ministry of Tourism (MoT) Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) Ministry of Civil Service Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) Ministry of Inspection Council of Ministers (CoM) Non-Bank Financial Services Authority (FSA) National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS) Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) National Audit Authority of Cambodia (NAA) Electricity Authority of Cambodia (EAC) National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM)