

Advocacy and Policy Institute API, Cambodia

Vision is for a Cambodian nation that through **poverty reduction and the protection of human rights** creates a national culture of harmony with sustainable democratic, political, and economic stability.

Mission is to serve the long term democratic and social development needs of Cambodia through **empowering people to interact with their government to protect their rights and provide for the needs**, since its establishment in 2003, hosted by Pact Cambodia, localized in 2007.

API past experience and expertise over ten years

- Legal and policy analysis of Cambodian laws against international standard on access to information
- Leading and advocating the access to information law
- Review and inputs on decentralisation and local government initiatives,
- Demand driven curricular development and training for local government,
- Civic empowerment improvement,
- Social accountability progress,
- Civil society networking and partnership building,
- Multi stakeholder dialogue for inclusive partnerships in development,
- Capacity for partner civil society organisations, local government and the local councilors (incl. female councilors) on governance based integrity, transparency and accountability, advocacy, communications, facilitation,

API Strategic directions, 2019-2023

1. Citizen engagement and participation:

Through its community engagement, API will work with CBOs (including formal and informal groups) to build their capacity and support them for engaging or contributing meaningfully in ISAF and the D&D process, improving citizens' understanding of ISAF and the D&D process and facilitating their participation in local decision-making processes, identifying citizen needs and determining what livelihood support they need in order to participate meaningfully in local decision-making.....

2. Access to information and good governance

API acknowledges “Access to Information” as a vehicle for citizen empowerment and the promotion of “Good Governance”. The following areas have been provisionally selected as being of crucial importance in this regard over the next 5 years:

- Government budget information from both the national and sub-national levels – enhance the citizens holding the government authorities accountable
- Information on current business investment (contract disclosure)
- Information on natural resources management - citizens’ access and user rights to natural resources which are crucial to their livelihoods
- Information on social services - Because it directly affects local people’s livelihoods/because health care spending can be a huge financial burden for poor people.

3. Advocacy & policy influence:

API will continue to work with other CSOs, solicit advice from experts and lobby decision-makers within government in order to gain influence on and support the policy formulation and implementation process, such as in the work of A2I. The project activities will be determined based on needs assessments conducted in collaboration with relevant government ministries.

- **Policy formulation:** API will work closely together with other stakeholders in identifying gaps and issues in the policy formulation process and then advocate for changes, if necessary.
- **Policy implementation:** Based on past experience, gaps exist in the policy implementation process. In collaboration with other stakeholders, API will monitor, research and document the implementation of selected policies and provide feedback to concerned government authorities in order to improve it.

6. Strategic goal and Objectives

Overarching Goal

‘improve rights, voice, and livelihood of citizens for sustainable development in Cambodia’

Objectives

- To empower citizens, especially youth, women and disadvantaged groups, to hold national and local government accountable for responsive, inclusive decisions and actions to improve public services and policies.
- To improve access to and disclosure of public information on critical issues relating to government decentralization policies and local development planning.
- To strengthen capacities of advocates (citizen representatives, CSOs and their networks) to participate in policy development, monitoring and improvement.

Key interventions to be achieved Objective 1

- 1.1 Strengthen mechanisms and structures for citizen participation and engagement both, at national and subnational levels, to ensure the realisation of diverse citizens' rights and voices.
- 1.2 Improve the capacity of individuals (women, men and youth) and CBOs to participate in, monitor and gain influence on decision making processes at the commune level concerning development planning, budgeting and service delivery.
- 1.3 Provide technical and resource support (e.g. sub-grants) to CBOs/communities to pursue their planned actions for local development.
- 1.4 Support partnerships and actions between government, civil society and the private sector in responding to citizens' priority needs in relation to public service delivery, local development planning and good governance.
- 1.5 Increase capacity of local government and service providers to work with CBOs in responding to citizens' needs.

Key interventions to be achieved Objective 2

- 2.1 Improve the understanding of right to information and A2I law, and promoted demand of citizens for public information disclosure.
- 2.2 Ensure more public information is disclosed and made available for citizens on critical issues at the sub-national level.
- 2.3 Access to information laws and policies debated, adopted and widely implemented.

Key interventions to be achieved Objective 3

- 3.1 Increase capacity of CSOs and their networks on advocacy, policy influencing, good governance, D&D policy framework and implementation.
- 3.2 Strengthen the engagement and participation of CSOs and their networks in advocacy, policy discussions and policy monitoring for addressing the rights of the most marginalized groups. (Especially on the topics of subnational budgeting, functional transfers to local level and access to information across sectors, sectoral policy influencing initiatives joining with other national civil society actors.)
- 3.3 Mobilize CSOs and work with other stakeholders to advocate and influence for greater transfer of functions and resources to the capital, communes/sangkats and districts/municipalities for improving service delivery and functions.

Thank you very much