

Minute of
Awarding Ceremony and Multi-stakeholder Forum
“Promoting CSO Good Governance and Sustainability” in Cambodia



17 December 2015, 7:30AM-12:00PM

Hotel Cambodiana at 313 Sisowath Quay, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia

I. Background and Rationale

The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) is known as the largest and longest-established membership organization in Cambodia. Since 1990, it has played a unique role in strengthening the cooperation, professionalism, accountability, governance, and development effectiveness of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working across diverse sectors in Cambodia. One of the key working approaches of CCC is inclusive partnership with other development actors in improving good governance and effectiveness, and fostering enabling environment towards effective and sustainable development in Cambodia.

Since 2004, CCC hosts the NGO Governance & Professional Practices (NGO GPP) program (component), which is originally known as the NGO Good Practice Project, aiming at promoting good governance, accountability, transparency, professionalism, and good practices within NGOs operating in Cambodia. The NGO GPP is operated as the Voluntary Certification System (VCS)/ GPP Certification System based on the GPP Standards. The Standards are in line with and responsive to the principles number 5, 6, and 7 of the Istanbul Principles on CSO Development Effectiveness which was globally endorsed in 2010. Since 2007 until November 2015, 69 certificates have been awarded to international and local NGOs that have successfully complied with the GPP Standards.

The GPP Certified NGOs (CNGOs) play a vital role model to contribute to promoting good governance, accountability, transparency, and professional practices in compliance with the GPP Standards and VCS's requirement to NGO community. The certification and practices are beneficial, in return, transferred to the target community, donors, the government, and beneficiaries.

As noticed so far, the topic of good governance, transparency, accountability, enabling environment, and sustainability of CSO are in the top priority list for all development actors, both supply and demand sides, while many efforts intervention, and approach have been made by them respectively.

Therefore, CCC-GPP has initiated a multi-stakeholder forum with an intention to engage all key development actors in promoting and sharing the aspect of Good Governance under the topic of “Promoting CSO Good Governance and Sustainability”.

Brief Overview of the Key Topics of the Forum:

a. Awarding Ceremony:

To honor, appreciate, and encourage NGO practicing good governance, professionalism, accountability and transparency, Awarding Ceremony is celebrated to award the GPP Certificate to six newly Certified NGOs. As an impression, one of the six is the third-time Certified NGO. Within this event, the certificates are honorable awarded by H.E representative from the Ministry of Interior and/or funding partners. In this occasion, one of the certified NGO will share the witness of the success of fundraising through GPP accreditation.

b. Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI):

The Index is an important and unique tool for local CSOs, governments, donors, academics, and others to understand and measure the sustainability of the CSO sector. The Index analyzes and assigns scores to seven interrelated dimensions: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure, and public image. A panel of CSO practitioners and experts in each country assesses the sector’s performance in each of the seven dimensions. The index development is facilitated by Management System International (MSI) and the International Center for Non-Profit-Law (ICNL), which is funded by USAID. Under this essential topic, CCC will also present the key findings of the index, with participation from the USAID representative, and CSO leader’s representatives. It will be beneficial to CSOs to reflect the status and components contributing to sustainability.

c. Thanksgiving Celebration:

So far, GPP Accreditation and Certification process have been supported by the independent committee and working groups, the NGO Code Compliance Committee (NCCC), the NGO Working Group (WG), and the Voluntary Field Assessor (VFA). These committee and WG have supported NGO GPP for non-profits. With their contribution, GPP Accreditation has helped to uphold CSO’s performance, quality, integrity and honesty through good governance, accountability and transparency principles of GPP Standards. More than 200 organizations have participated in this accreditation. In the meantime, Thanksgiving celebration is organized to express our CSO’s favors to them. The WG and NCCC members will be invited onto the stage and awarded the Certification of Appreciation.

Expected Outputs:

1. Six newly Certified NGOs are awarded
2. Participants will be aware on GPP Accreditation System and its benefits

3. Participants will have learned how GPP certification system could add value to the partner selection process of some development/funding partners
4. Participants will have learned about CSO Sustainability Index and reflect the status of level of sustainability of CSOs
5. Thanksgiving is taken to the NCCC, WG, and VFA members
6. Relationship will have been built across the CSOs

Objectives:

1. To award NGO GPP Certificates to the newly certified NGOs in 2015
2. To express thanksgiving and appreciation to NGO Code Compliance Committee (NCCC), Working Group (WG), and Voluntary Field Assessor (VFA) members who support NGO GPP Certification System
3. To promote the GPP Standards and VCS as the tool to strengthen good governance, transparency and accountability for civil society organizations in Cambodia
4. To share and discuss the status of CSO Sustainability in the context of CSO Sustainability Index 2014 for Cambodia funded by USAID

Target Participants:

This forum offers to a maximum of 80 - 100 participants from certified and applicant NGOs as well as NGOs interested in applying for NGO GPP Certificate. Donors, government representatives and private sector, and media will also be invited.

II. Summary Outputs

There were **109 participants (42 females) in total from 64 NGOs**. To begin, **Mr. Chat Sophiep, CCC EXCOM Chair**, delivered an opening remark. He welcomed all participants and extended his profound appreciation to GPP team and CCC staff for organizing this Awarding Ceremony and Multi-stakeholder Forum. He highlighted that although NGO GPP is hosted by CCC, the certification process is not under CCC's authority. Obviously, there have been voluntary groups: Working Groups and NGO Code Compliance Committee (NCCC), who have high experience in various sectors to help assess if applicant NGOs have professional practices. He also claimed that this system standard help the CSOs in Cambodia to have professional practice and promote reputation for their sustainability, and the certificate shows that the certified NGOs have good governance, accountability, and effectiveness. He advised the NGOs who are interested in applying for GPP certificate to be ready by comparing the code with their institutional policies. He also highlighted that there are more than 200 applicants NGOs but only 56 NGOs get certificates excluding 6 newly certified NGOs. He mentioned that some certified NGOs have received certificate twice and thrice. Namely, CCC is receiving its third certification today, which is assessed and made decision by independent committee. He also informed all participants that for those NGOs who receive the certificate as the third time, they will be awarded a special cup. Finally, he extends his appreciation to NCCC, Working groups and GPP team for working hard in the assessment processes. He encourages participants to continue good work.

Then H.E. Huy Vannak, Undersecretary of MoI, delivered a speech in the name GRC and MoI's minister. He remarkably talked about Good Governance and Sustainability for CSOs in Cambodia. He expressed that there are around 4000 NGOs registered with MoI, but some of them have closed the doors because of their poor governance, and he raised a particular example. He affirmed that social enterprise is a factor leading to sustainability, and the capital can be borrowed from the banks. He suggested all NGOs not to focus only on good works but also good governance. He said "none of donors will support us forever."

Ms. Robin, the Strategic Partner for TLC, presented structure and framework of her organization. He encouraged the participants to have accountability with beneficiaries and partners they work with. She shared key successes of her organization. Namely, the TLC is newly awarded for high impact programming for children from Star foundation based in UK. She also mentioned about the 5 criteria from the Star Foundation including impact on children, leadership and governance, finance management, inclusiveness and cooperation. Last but not least, she congratulated to those NGOs who are newly certified today, and thanked to CCC and GPP.

After that, the Chaiyam team performed to congratulate all 6 newly certified NGOs. The representatives of all 6 newly NGOs briefly expressed their impression for receiving certificate. Mr. Soeung Saroeun, CCC's ED, expressed his impression for the third certification with excitement. He also added the plan to promote CBOs from 2016 but there are no certificates. The other 5 representative of new CNGOs were also excited for being awarded GPP certificate.

Mr. Keng Bunchoeuth, member of NCCC, then also had a short message in the name of NCCC. He mentioned about good governance in NGOs, and it comes from everyone's effort and participation, say ordinary staff, MT, BOD, beneficiary, and local authority. He also highlighted the advantages of having good governance such as it allows us to use resources effectively and efficiently. He mentioned that NCCC members have tried to check and discuss to make a right decision to find out gaps for improvements. "CCC and other applicants are equally assessed by independent team" said Mr. Bunchoeuth.

The second session, Dr. El Sotheary, Head of Program for CCC, then presented about Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI). She introduced briefly about CSOSI and the trend of sustainability of Cambodia. She raised that CSOs are crucial agreement partners and Cambodia is one of agreement partners of Busan. There are around 1000 active NGOs with millions of dollars budget to operate in Cambodia. She also briefly showed about other index of Cambodia such as corruption, freedom, rule of law, and failed state index. She then presented about a snapshot on CSO sustainability index with 7 indicators such as legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision and public image by using qualitative methodology. She then also showed the result of study in Cambodia, which is not good. Last but not least, she had some key questions for the participants to consider as below.

- What do you foresee the sustainability index for Cambodia CSOs in 2015?

- What are most critical factors to promote Cambodia CSOs sustainability?
- How CSOs could help/work together to promote their sustainability?
- How GPP help?

Afterward, there was a Q & A session. There were some questions and ideas from participants. First Mr. Vuthy from LWD said that before election suspect, it is foreseen that the fund for CSOs would be decreased. LANGO would cause some NGOs to close the door. We would consider about the risk of climate change and mostly fund flows from international NGOs. Then Mr. Bunchoeuth also had a question “After report distribution, what will be next?” Another participant also asked “What are the recommendations or strategies from researchers for us as CSOs for preparedness?” Dr. Sotheary responded to the question that CCC will provide the presentation to all meetings and stakeholders and share the reports with them. USAID will use this report as a tool to monitor the situation of Civil Society in Cambodia and other countries.

For the last question she said that there aren’t recommendations because it is the format from USAID and MSI, which has only findings and executive summary at the top without recommendations.

It was then the session for thanksgiving and appreciation to independent and voluntary committee including NGO Code Compliance Committee (NCCC), Working Group (WG) and Voluntary Field Assessor (VFA). The appreciation letters were awarded to them for hard working and contributing their personal time to promote CSOs.

The closing remark was done by Dr. Pou Sovann, a member of NCCC and a former ED of Sre Khmer for 10 years. As an NCCC member, he coordinated his organization to apply for GPP certificate and it was certified twice. He hoped that everyone from CSO will take experience to improve good governance for their sustainability. He also raised a quote from PACT “a professional will survive, an unprofessional will die”. There are many world trends for funding, so we have to be ready and have strategies for funding stability. He also encouraged the participants to work hard and to start thinking about good governance for their organizations. He thanked to donors for supporting CCC and NGO GPP. Finally, he wished the participants the best of luck.

III. Conclusion

The Awarding Ceremony and Multi-stakeholder Forum was successfully conducted with 109 participants (42 females) from 64 NGOs. Based on the evaluation result, 66.07% of respondents rated the overall of the forum as good, 10.71% rated as very good and the rest of them just rated as neither good nor poor. The facilitation of the forum was also good. 58.62% of respondents think that the facilitation of the forum was good; 5.17% think it was very good; 32.75% rated as neither good nor poor; while 3.45% rated as poor. The objectives and key topic of the forum is useful as well. 70.69% of respondents rated it as good while 20.69% rated as very good. At the same time, 57.62% of respondents think that the guest speakers are good, 15.51% rated as very good, but 1.72% rated it as poor. Although the forum was conducted successfully, there are some key recommendations from the participants to improve the next forums. 8.62% of respondents think that the timing of each agenda item

should be improved. On the other hand, 3.45% of participants rated snack provision as poor, which needs improvement. They highlighted that the food was not enough so some of the participants didn't have anything to eat. Some participants also advised that there should be better balance between duration of the forum against its numbers of programs so we have enough time to discuss more on key topics. To conclude, it is a fruitful forum even though there are some recommendations for betterment for the next forums.

