

THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
Nation Religion King



Women's Media Centre of Cambodia
(WMC)

Final Report

for

NGO Raising Awareness on Accountability Boxes

To

NCDD Secretariat

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1. Introduction

Background

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has received a Grant from the International Development Association to support implementation of the Rural Investment and Local Governance Project (RILGP). As implementing agent for RILGP, the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) now intends to apply part of these funds to engage services for raising awareness of the Accountability Boxes and its National and Provincial Accountability Working Group's Complaints Mechanism.

Direct Commune/Sangkat elections were held in 2001 and 2006, establishing Commune/Sangkat Councils as the lowest tier of Government and in 2009 District Councils were indirectly elected. Direct fiscal transfers have taken place to the Communes and Sangkats since 2002.

The Decentralisation and Deconcentration (D&D) policies of the Royal Government of Cambodia have primarily been formulated Law on Administration and Management of Communes and Sangkats (2001, 2006), the Capital, Provinces, and Municipalities, Districts and Khans (2008), the Organic Law (2008) and the National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development (NP-SNDD) that was adopted by the Council of Ministers in May 2010. The first three years of this 10-years national program is currently being elaborated in a 3 year Implementation Plan (IP3).

These laws were designed with a strong emphasis on ensuring transparency and fostering a culture of good governance and democratic development. However, it was recognised at an early state that there was room to improve the accountability of officials and other stakeholders, as lines of accountability were often unclear.

Accordingly, in 2004 the National Committee to Support Communes and Sangkats (NCSC, the responsibilities of which were transferred to NCDD in 2006) established a unified internal accountability framework for Commune/Sangkat Fund. This mechanism is overseen at national level by the National Accountability Working Group (NAWG) with membership from key relevant ministries.

In June 2005 NCSC issued Decision # 028 on the establishment of the Provincial C/S Fund Accountability Working Groups (PAWG). The purpose of the PAWG is to ensure the transparent, accountable and effective use and implementation of the C/S Fund. The mandate of the PAWG will be the same period as the mandate of the C/S Councils.

Since 2007, the mechanism of these working groups has been strengthened by the formulation of guidelines, training of PAWG members, the recruitment of provincial and national support teams as well as additional activities by voluntary NGOs.

In 2008, these N/PAWGs introduced the accountability boxes through which citizens could submit complaints about the conduct of public servants. Currently there are 2,545 accountability boxes in the whole country and in 2009. Five hundred seventy-six complaints were submitted in 2009, most of which were anonymous.

In 2007, NCDD commissioned a study on the Commune/Sangkat Fund Accountability Working Groups to assess the performance of the PAWG against (i) the Conformity to and Efficiency and Effectiveness of Procedures; and (ii) Stakeholder Perceptions of Effectiveness.

The study by Knowles¹ identified a number of challenges and made a number of recommendations focussing on the functioning of the N/PAWGs and raising awareness of stakeholders and people at grassroots level that they have no little on the purpose of accountability boxes. Furthermore, the finding from the Process Audit on Implementation of C/S Fund Projects by Leighton Williams in Dec. 2010 indicated low scores of understanding on accountability boxes and its existing complaints handling mechanism. More recently, it was similar to findings what NCDD conducted baseline surveys on local governance accountability, responsiveness and related perceptions

For this purpose, NCDD is seeking a qualified NGO to promote the awareness of accountability boxes and its National and Provincial Accountability Working Group's Complaints Mechanism.

Objectives

The objectives of the assignment are to raise awareness of grassroots people and other stakeholders at all levels on the purpose of Accountability Boxes and its complaints handling mechanism through the National/Provincial Accountability Working Groups.

2. Methodology

WMC had followed the following procedures to produce the required 2 spots through three main activities:

Activity 1: Lay- out Design of Video Spots

- Discussing with staff from National Accountability Working Group's Support Group (NSG);
- Studying document provided by NCDD and conducting research on NCDD activities;
- Reviewing the frameworks of NCDD in order to understand the purpose of setting up N/PAWG mechanism and accountability boxes;
- Drafting scripts/ lay out for the spots;
- Preparing action plan on how these spots will be prepared and shooting arrangement;
- Presenting the lay-out plan to NCDD's responsible officials to seek comment and feedback for improvement;
- Finalizing the draft lay-out of the 2 video spots;
- Conducting field test with 30 villagers where 50 per cent of them are female, over 30 years old, living at TormTaork Commune, Kong Pisey District, Kompong Speu Province; and
- Presenting the final scenes to the officials of NAWG, then submitting the final lay outs to the NCDD for approval.

¹ Final Report - Assessment of the Accountability Working Groups, by Jenny Knowles, July 2007

Activity 2: Shooting Video Spots and Recording Radio Spot

- Conducting field visits to assess the location and actor's identification;
- Arranging schedule, appointments and logistic for the actual video shooting activities;
- Shooting each scene as per proposed layout plan;
- Producing draft live spots with clear sound;
- Organizing a show of video spots to get feedbacks from N/PAWG members;
- Conducting Test-Play the video spots with the same Commune Councillors and villagers for their feedback;
- Editing and producing the final versions of video clips;
- Organizing audio record of Radio Spots;
- Arranging for NSG to screen the radio and television spots;
- Responding to the request of NCDD to make the following changes:
 - ~ NSG preferred to have both spots played immediately after each other, because they felt that the viewers would not understand the links between these two spots.
 - ~ NSG suggested WMC to cut the first spot into 2 minutes and second spot into 3 minutes for broadcasting duration.
- Revising of the spots edition as per account of NSG's comments; and
- Submitting the video and radio clips to NCDD for approval

Activity 3: Broadcasting Video and Radio Spots

- Identifying local TV and Radio Stations at national and provincial levels;
- Signing agreements with the TV and radio stations for video and audio broadcasting; and
- Follow-up the broadcastings as regular schedule.

3. Results:

According to the Contract's ToR, Activity 3: Broadcasting Video and Radio Spots, the result of this activity would had been broadcasting into two video and two audio spots as per each TV channel and radio station at both national and provincial levels for a period of 15 days , starting from the 1st to the 15th December 2010.

During period above, the broadcasting of the two types of spots had been broadcasted by three TV stations (Bayon TV,TVK and South East Asia TV) and other six radio stations including provincial radio (Women's Radio Fm 102MHz, Bee Hive FM 105MHz, Radio National Kampuchea AM918, FM 91MHz in Battambang,Siem Reap FM 102.5 and Ratanakiri Radio). The total broadcasting: 1,114 times, whereby the television spots had been broadcast 270 times on the following channels and timing, while the radio spots had been broadcast 884 times on the following channels and schedule below.

The table below illustrates the broadcasting day/per time by each station:

No	Stations	Day	Broadcasting Time	Duration	Times
1	Bayon TV	Mon- Sun	12:00AM-13:00PM	2mn	50
				3mn	50
2	SEA TV	Mon - Fri	19:30PM-21:00PM	2mn	45
				3mn	45
3	TVK	Mon- Sat	12:00PM-13:30PM	2mn	40
				3mn	40
Sub Total					270
4	RNK	Mon- Sun	6:00AM-21:00PM	2.5mn	85
				3.5mn	85
5	FM 102 MHz	Mon- Sun	6:00AM-21:00PM	2.5mn	67
				3.5mn	67
6	FM 105MHz	Mon-Sun	8:00AM-17:00 PM	2.5mn	45
				3.5mn	45
7	Battambang Radio(FM91MHz)	Mon- Sun	6:00AM-21:00PM	2.5mn	80
				3.5mn	80
8	Siem Reap (FM 102.5)	Mon- Sun	6:00AM-21:00PM	2.5mn	65
				3.5mn	65
9	Ratanakiri Radio	Mon- Sun	6:00AM-21:00PM	2.5mn	80
				3.5mn	80
Sub Total					844
Total					1,114

4. Recommendations:

Based on the experience with the spots, WMC recommends NCDD that:

- a) NCDD should provide the specific information to WMC since the first time of meeting because only NCDD knows clearly what they really want to put in the spot. It wasted lot of time to let WMC review the documents alone and later, when finalized script, most of the points were cut and added new points according to NCDD concept.
- b) Partner (NCDD) should respect the work plan for each activity to finish the production on time. Actually, it took long time to approve the script which interrupts the other activities schedule.
- c) The information need to be separated and each spots containing only one main message within 1 minute duration. The spots comprised a lot of information. For instance, the first spot showed that it is very important to submit complaints (when something incorrect is seen), then explains the importance of accountability box and

where to submit a complaint. The second spot aims on how the complaints were dealt with by the PAWG and contained the following messages: the complaint code and technical terms were repeatedly appearing in the spot and that complaints can be submitted anonymously. It is very common practice to limit the number of messages per each spot.

- d) NCDD should allow that the different spots are separated by other programs. In fact, the 2 spots had turned into two short stories with a total duration of 5 minutes for TV and another 6 minute for radio. That is quite long to capture the viewer's attention. It is normal practice to broadcast such short stories in several spots, separated with some other programs. This is very common with commercial purpose that are based on the research of how best people can absorb information.
- e) It is also recommended to broadcast spots over a longer period and/or repeat the spots after 2-3 months. The spots were now aired for a period of 2 weeks only. Since repetition is the proven way to raise awareness and for people to remember the messages, it would be best if the messages could be broadcasted over a longer period. Alternatively they could be repeated after some months.
- f) NCDD should focus on the spots only on the most important information. This time the second spots contained a lot of numbers in order to show the readers precisely how the complaints are processed. Yet the fact that numbers are used to refer to complaints, is a message that is not the most relevant but makes the spot a bit boring or difficult to understand for the viewers. As a result, they may lose attention and not able to absorb the information well. So they may miss the important point that the complaints are seriously investigated.
- g) NCDD should evaluate the impact of the spots on people's awareness. Such an evaluation should start with examining how many people have actually seen/hear the spots; what their opinion is about the spots and what they remember.

In conclusion, the WMC would like to express her sincere thanks to the NCDD for technical and conceptual supports and provided location for shooting.

We look forward to be a reliable partner of the NCDD for the next project and future collaboration.