



MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE CAMBODIAN CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING (CCSS) ACTIVITY

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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ABSTRACT

The USAID/Regional Development Mission for Asia contracted Social Impact to conduct a Midterm Evaluation of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity from October 2019 to February 2020. Evaluation questions focused on how CSO capacities have changed as a result of the intervention, the effectiveness of CCSS interventions, how CCSS has adapted to mitigate operational risk, and how gender equality and inclusiveness, as well as CSO self-reliance, may be improved. Data collection methods consisted of desk/secondary literature review, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Mini Survey.

Most CSOs stated that their capacity had improved overall as a result of CCSS, with the activity's two funds helping CSOs expand their services to increase access for citizen engagement. Customized coaching, digital security training, and financial management training have specifically catered to the needs of a wide variety of CSO partners. Through CCSS support, CSOs have increased the number of Human Rights Defenders cases they support, but the use of external lawyers on these cases leads to challenges with the other casework of these lawyers. CSOs note that additional support is needed in monitoring and evaluation, outcome reporting, proposal writing, risk planning and mitigation (especially with populations at risk), and funding diversification. CCSS's results framework, Theory of Change, and indicators should also be reviewed to ensure effective understanding and communication of CCSS impacts and outcomes. Finally, risks for women, youth, and minority groups persist, requiring additional support around gender and social inclusion. The report concludes with recommendations to guide CCSS moving forward.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
TABLE OF FIGURES	II
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	III
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	VIII
Evaluation Findings and Conclusions	viii
Recommendations	xii
INTRODUCTION	I
METHODOLOGY	2
Evaluation Purpose and Questions	2
Evaluation Design and Methods	3
Data Collection	3
Limitations and Mitigation Strategies	4
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	4
Evaluation Question 1 - Findings	4
Evaluation Question 1 - Conclusions	7
Evaluation Question 2 - Findings	8
Evaluation Question 2 - Conclusions	10
Evaluation Question 3 - Findings	11
Evaluation Question 3 - Conclusions	13
Evaluation Question 4 - Findings	14
Evaluation Question 4 - Conclusions	15
Evaluation Question 5 - Findings	15
Evaluation Question 5 - Conclusions	18
Evaluation Question 6 - Findings	19
Evaluation Question 6 - Conclusions	20
RECOMMENDATIONS	21
ANNEX 1: STATEMENT OF WORK	28
ANNEX 2: USAID MINI-SURVEY RESULTS	32
ANNEX 3: EVALUATION SCHEDULE	33
ANNEX 4: ACTIVITY STATUS (2016-2019 Q3) REPORTS	34
ANNEX 5: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) PROTOCOLS	37
ANNEX 6: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) PROTOCOL	41
ANNEX 7: MINI-SURVEY (MS) PROTOCOL	44
ANNEX 8: LIST OF RESPONDENTS	46
ANNEX 9: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	48
ANNEX 10: DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE FUND CSO PARTNERS	51
ANNEX 11: EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION	54
ANNEX 12: APPROVED INCEPTION REPORT	55

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Strengthened Capacity	5
Figure 2. CCSS DGF Grant Coverage.....	9
Figure 3. Requested Areas for Future Support.....	12
Figure 4. CDCS Development Objective 1.....	16
Figure 5. CCSS Results Framework.....	17
Figure 6. Current CCSS Theory of Change.....	17
Figure 7. Proposed TOC for CCSS.....	26

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Alliance for Conflict Transformation
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ADS	Automated Directive System
AMELP	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
ANSA	The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability
BCV	Building Community Voice
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCSP	Cambodian Civil Society Partnership
CCSS	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Activity
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CEDT	Community Empowerment and Development Team
CET	Commune Expression Teams
CIRD	Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCHA/DRG	USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/Human Rights and Governance
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DG	Democracy and Governance
DGF	Democracy and Governance Fund
EOP	End of Period
EQ	Evaluation Question
ER	Evaluation Report
ET	Evaluation Team
EWMI	East-West Management Institute, Inc.
FCR	Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HA	Highlanders Association
HACC	Health Action Coordinating Committee
HRD	Human Rights Defender
ICT4D	Information and Communications Technologies for Development
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity Contract
IP	Implementing Partner

IR	Intermediate Result
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAC	Legal Aid of Cambodia
LANGO	Law on Non-Governmental Organizations and Associations
LDF	Legal Defense Fund
LOA	Life of Award
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MS	Mini-Survey
NAS	Nak Akphivath Sahakum
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OD	Organizational Development
ODC	Open Development Cambodia
PDP	People for Development and Peace Center
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PKH	Ponlok Khmer Organization
POC	Point of Contact
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RDMA	Regional Development Mission for Asia
RF	Results Framework
RFA	Radio Free Asia
RFTOP	Request for Task Order Proposal
SI	Social Impact, Inc.
SOW	Statement of Work
TA	Task Area
TL	Team Leader
TOC	Theory of Change
TOCOR	Task Order Contracting Officer Representative
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VOA	Voice of America
YCC	Youth Council of Cambodia
YEA	Youth Eco Ambassadors
YRDP	Youth Resource Development Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Civil Society Strengthening Activity (CCSS) is a five-year contract awarded to the East-West Management Institute, Inc. (EWMI) by USAID with a period of performance from June 27, 2016, to June 26, 2021. The goal of the CCSS is to increase the capability of Cambodian civil society to engage in democratic processes by representing citizen concerns. The objectives of this contract are to: 1) strengthen the capacity of civil society in Cambodia and 2) provide analytical and technical services to USAID/Cambodia's Office of Democracy and Governance to respond to opportunities for democratic development. The USAID/Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA) has contracted Social Impact, Inc. (SI) to conduct a Midterm Evaluation of the USAID CCSS Activity, focused on six questions:

Evaluation Question 1: How and to what extent have CSOs strengthened capacities as a result of the activity?

Evaluation Question 2: Which interventions and/or approaches have been effective in meeting CCSS objectives? Why?

Evaluation Question 3: Which interventions and/or approaches have been least effective and why?

Evaluation Question 4: How and to what extent has CCSS adapted to mitigate operational risks to target CSOs? How effective have they been?

Evaluation Question 5: What should the implementing partner do to improve overall performance as well as to meaningfully integrate gender equality and inclusiveness for the remainder of the activity?

Evaluation Question 6: What should the implementing partner do to ensure CSO self-reliance in the longer term?

The evaluation is intended to inform USAID, EWMI, and other key stakeholders on the outcomes achieved thus far by USAID CCSS with the purpose of assisting in identifying the status of the CCSS activity. The midterm evaluation will also help USAID in achieving the contract's objectives and assist in identifying lessons to improve activity implementation and inform future USAID civil society strengthening activities. The Evaluation Team (ET) collected qualitative data from 97 (47% female/ 53% male) respondents overall, with 42 Key Informant Interviews (KIs) and 55 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) respondents over three weeks of fieldwork in Cambodia with site visits to Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey, Uddor Meanchey, Kampong Cham, Mondulikiri and Ratanakiri.

The ET also conducted a mini-survey (MS) of all current Civil Society Organization (CSO) grantees of the CCSS activity. The MS targeted 17 CSOs receiving support from the CCSS Activity. The 17 respondents (29% female/ 71% male), all senior managing staff (either Executive Directors, Deputy Directors or Financial Managers) came from Phnom Penh, Ratanakiri, Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Cham, Kampot, Battambang, Kampong Speu, Kep, Kratie, Monduliri, Preah Vihear, Steung Treng, Tboung Khmum, and Uddor Meanchey.

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

EVALUATION QUESTION 1 – CSO CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The primary skillsets noted by CSOs in KIs as improving as a result of interventions of CCSS were Financial Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Outcome Reporting, Strategy Development, Advocacy, Public Speaking, and information and communications technologies for development (ICT4D). According to the MS conducted with 17 leaders from CCSS partner CSOs, the training by VBNK, particularly custom coaching, assisted them in feeling more competent in notable areas of Organizational Development (OD). According to the mini-survey, 82% of respondents reported that the program strengthened capacity overall. Financial management (76%),

compliance with laws (71%), technical/organizational capacity (65%) and social accountability (65%) had the highest capacity improvement.

In terms of capacities for specific CSOs, in Task Area One (TAI), Legal Aid of Cambodia (LAC) – a Legal Defense Fund (LDF) grantee – utilized this opportunity to expand their human rights work to provide direct legal aid and support for individual human rights cases. LAC has been providing human rights training for many years, but with CCSS support, expanded their pool of consultant lawyers to provide increased direct support for individual human rights cases. The funding support provided by CCSS allowed LAC to hire 9 additional consultant lawyers to assist with legal support for Human Rights Defender Cases. This support also allowed LAC to increase the number of CSOs that receive legal support and guidance on compliance laws relevant to civil society.

With CCSS Democracy and Governance (DG) Fund support, approximately 25% of CSOs expanded services, started new initiatives, or increased staffing or geographic range. For example, Media One expanded their public forum support work and expanded their pool of community reporters enabling them to focus on issues important to local minority groups, such as women and youth. The Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC) used these funds to enhance their work with youth leaders and expanded their work training young women and men in improving their public relations and public speaking skills. Finally, Nak Akphiwath Sahakum (NAS) increased their Community Expression Teams (CETs) that assist with public forums at the commune level.

More than 80% of the interviews conducted with senior CSO staff also noted the impact of financial management training on increased program efficiency. EWMI and VBNK provide financial management systems training, which is proving essential for small CSOs with high staff turnover. A focus on QuickBooks as a tool for financial health has helped increase organizational confidence by ensuring that financial systems are understood by financial management staff and Executive Directors.

EVALUATION QUESTION 2 – INTERVENTION STRENGTHS

As noted above, the LDF Grant allowed LAC to expand their work supporting human rights in Cambodia and provide direct case support for Human Rights Defenders, while DGF support has enabled CSO partners to expand their work or start new initiatives. LDF and DGF grants have therefore increased the scope and scale of CSO partners working on DG issues, including amongst women- and indigenous-led groups and within most provinces in Cambodia.

One of the most effective interventions has been the customized coaching from VBNK which allows senior managers to adapt and reflect on their most pressing service gaps and needs. Customized coaching allowed CSOs to develop individual Capacity Development Plans (CDPs) based on training needs assessments and work with CSO partners on current staffing, resources and field program planning. For instance, CSOs requested support in improving financial management systems, M&E, strategic planning, and fundraising. VBNK provided this support to all 17 CSOs.

Digital security training was noted as an area of immediate value by all 17 partners interviewed receiving this intervention. Training in this area, as well as social media security and awareness, was noted as being particularly helpful during a time of restricted access to information. Specifically, platforms such as Signal allowed secure text and email communication of sensitive information. CSO staff felt that having access and knowledge of these new and evolving secure platforms protected CSO partners and beneficiaries as well as CSO field staff working on sensitive advocacy campaigns. Furthermore, as a result of this training, staff noted that they were more conscious of the potential impacts of social media reporting, with several CSOs stating that they were working on social media policies to better protect themselves.

VBNK's focus on financial management systems, such as QuickBooks, rather than individualized staff training helped CSOs weather staff turnover in financial management personnel. CSO managers noted the value of these financial systems in programmatic efficiencies such as improved financial reporting and program expenditure tracking as well as increased financial literacy for program staff.

EVALUATION QUESTION 3 – INTERVENTION WEAKNESSES

According to LAC interviews, defending human rights clients presents unique challenges that the project is not addressing effectively yet. As most lawyers attending to human rights defender (HRD) cases are consultant lawyers for LAC, it was noted in interviews that their other cases can be impacted by their defense of human rights and political cases for CCSS. LAC staff noted that hiring permanent staff to cover these cases may be important in the future as consultant lawyers are not always willing or able to cover all the case needs that these HRD clients have.

There is an increase in risk for citizens at the local level working on contentious public accountability issues. This was particularly noted for areas such as land access and natural resource management. CSO and beneficiary respondents stated that there is an increased need for legal services at the local level for citizens working on these issues. Indigenous and minority owned (women led) CSOs were particularly concerned about pressure that can be exerted on local commune members who are in the process of lodging complaints against illegal or questionable concession contracts. Respondents stated there are fewer resources at the local level for judicial support as well as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for citizens and local officials seeking to resolve tensions regarding shared asset management, particularly of water, forestry, and land resources.

Another aspect of CCSS activity management and programming that should be addressed is the consistency and clarity of reporting. Based on discussions with USAID and EWMI and a review of the activity reporting, the theory of change (TOC) does not adequately capture all three task and objective areas. An increased focus on case studies as a tool for learning about changes in civil society and advocacy in Cambodia would help to increase awareness of the correlation between improvements in organizational development and improved access to critical CSO services and efforts, particularly in improving democratic processes for citizen engagement.

EVALUATION QUESTION 4 – OPERATIONAL RISKS

The space for CSOs to operate has become more constricted over the past 3 years. Although there have been noted improvements, there has also been increased risks for human rights defenders as well as diminished public space for citizen engagement. This was described as particularly true for organizations working on advocacy, public accountability, or information campaigns that are viewed as political. Many of the CSO partners that EWMI works with seek to increase public access, forums, and citizen engagement in policy in Cambodia, and several of these CSOs work directly on issues that are often viewed as political or promoting citizen rights. With this work comes risk, particularly when CSO efforts include citizen engagement in public forums or public policy. Although there seems to be more space at the local level, this is highly dependent on the issue or policy under public discussion. Citizen efforts are still closely monitored and CSOs feel there is an increasing need for more secure communication to protect program efforts as well as constituent participation in sensitive public campaigns. EWMI is aware of the risks that CSOs face and conducted trainings as well as shared learning sessions with CSO staff and leadership to help organizations better identify, track and program for operational risk.

CSOs interviewed and EWMI stated there is still a risk of targeting at the local level when CSOs or citizens engage in local advocacy efforts. For example, in interviews with Community Forestry members, participants noted that local villagers who file complaints about illegal logging activities can be threatened by public officials. Highlander Association gave some examples of ways that local

officials have pressured indigenous groups to not make complaints at the provincial level. CSOs stated that advocacy and public information campaigns can be problematic, but communication and cooperation with local officials helps to minimize tensions. VBNK and EWMI have adjusted their training approaches to address 'strategic communication' needs instead of terming interventions "advocacy". By focusing on improved and more strategic communication, CSOs are developing new skills in reporting as well as planning public information efforts with public officials, specifically local government representatives. This is one approach, but there is a clear need for more support for these CSO efforts.

According to interviews with CSO grantees, digital security training and conflict sensitive social media training are critical for CSOs. EWMI has worked to increase exposure and training for CSO partners on more secure platforms for digital, email, and text messaging. Of the organizations interviewed, over 70% are now using these secure communication platforms (12 out of 17 CSOs).

EVALUATION QUESTION 5 – OVERALL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AND GESI INTEGRATION

Based on interviews with USAID, EWMI, and CSO partners of the CCSS activity, one of the primary gaps that should be addressed are gaps in current and interim reporting on CCSS achievements. There is a need to clarify and adjust some discrepancies in the Results Framework (RF). Notable is the replacement of the goal of the CCSS activity stated in the original EWMI contract as '*to increase the capability of Cambodian civil society to engage in democratic processes by representing citizen concerns*' with '*increase capability of civil society to engage in political processes*' in the current CCSS activity RF. The CCSS activity established a TOC for the activity based on its RF. This TOC, however, is primarily for Task Area 2 (TA2) and does not reflect all objective areas of the activity. The CCSS activity would benefit from an integrated TOC.

CSO partners discussed how the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Assessment conducted by EWMI in early 2019 helped them look at other ways to capture their field-based efforts to enhance GESI integration and its relevance to outcome reporting. CSOs that had some type of GESI policy or practice, however, did not have strong M&E plans to track GESI improvements over time and a very small percentage had GESI indicators. Even fewer CSOs had GESI technical staff.

CSOs identify different ways that citizens are vulnerable to predation and pressure from various elements of the government as well as from within their own communities. There is a clear need for risk analysis that includes social risks for vulnerable populations. Although CCSS tracks these populations in cooperation with CSO partners, this can be better integrated. Several CSOs working on these issues wanted to have more support on GESI programming for vulnerable groups, particularly for natural resource protection and shared asset management interventions.

There are several CSO partners that are women and indigenous led. There is a need to provide space for minority led CSOs to provide peer-based learning and sharing, particularly on working with vulnerable populations on tenuous natural resource management issues and/or resource capture. For example, CSO field staff interviewed, particularly CSOs with indigenous and women-led staff felt that local citizens can be targeted if taking part in sensitive forest protection campaigns. They noted that contentious land issues or community conflicts over planned concessions can put local families at risk and that there is a need to make these issues more public to minimize the targeting of individuals and increase public accountability.

EVALUATION QUESTION 6 – CSO SELF-RELIANCE

For most CSOs, there is a need to have some type of social enterprise or activity to assist in operational funding. CCSS does not currently support this need although VBNK has done some customized coaching on identifying ways to increase financial support. CSO staff highlighted how

important integrating livelihood development initiatives into other capacity development efforts is for formal and informal groups working on advocacy. The vast majority of CSO Executive Directors interviewed valued VBNK's and EWMI's emphasis on outcome reporting improvements as they felt this would assist in better proposal writing and increase their other grant funded projects, perhaps resulting in increased funding. CSO Executive Directors want more training on how to identify diversified funding as it is becoming increasingly more competitive to get grants with a steadily increasing number of CSOs in Cambodia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need for EWMI to work with LAC to identify ways to mitigate potential gaps that may occur in providing support for individual human rights defender cases.
- EWMI needs to develop new communication tools that better illustrate to CCSS stakeholders how local level advocacy efforts from DG Fund partners have assisted in improving citizen engagement in democratic processes. These tools should include more targeted case studies showing the relationship between the task areas and their specific impact on local level governance issues and civil society improvements over time.
- Customized coaching provided by VBNK has been effective, but there is need for EWMI to work with VBNK to improve interim measurement and monitoring of organizational development changes in close collaboration with CSO partners.
- There is a need for EWMI to look at additional ways to support CSOs in mitigating operational risks, specifically in program planning and risk tracking of advocacy campaigns and citizen engagement in these efforts. This could be done through improved field monitoring systems and by providing additional legal guidance on local level resources available at the commune or provincial level for citizen conflicts and cases.
- There is a need for EWMI and USAID to address ongoing challenges in secure communication and evolving digital security needs within the CCSS project.
- There is a need for a careful review of indicators of CCSS and a need to streamline these to more effectively capture anticipated impacts and to strengthen data utilization.
- EWMI, VBNK and DG fund CSO partners should report more effectively on outcome level changes as a result of improving their strategic communications and advocacy campaigns.
- There is a critical need for EWMI and the CCSS activity to enhance risk tracking and tools for CSOs working with populations at risk, particularly indigenous-, youth- and women-led efforts who are committed to challenging the exclusion of particular groups in advocating for citizen rights in decision-making.
- EWMI needs to more effectively capture and promote cross sectoral sharing on GESI improvements and practices as well as challenges that women-led and/or indigenous organizations face for enhanced CCSS stakeholder learning
- There is a need to improve support for CSOs in designing and identifying ways to track GESI integration into program interventions and outcome measurement.
- VBNK may want to consider expanding their modules on proposal writing to also include ways to create small social enterprises or do some skills sharing on this between CSOs that have managed to support these ventures at the local level.
- EWMI and VBNK should assist CSO Directors in developing financial planning tools to assist in developing local as well as donor funding strategies.
- There is a need for EWMI to revise and strengthen the CCSS Activity TOC to better capture the entire scope of the activity and its causal links to the goal.
- There is a need for USAID and EWMI to do a midterm strategy review session with the objective of strengthening information dissemination and learning, particularly regarding evolving conditions for CSOs working on human and civil rights.

INTRODUCTION

The CCSS Activity is a five-year contract awarded to EWMI by USAID with a period of performance from June 27, 2016, to June 26, 2021. The goal of the CCSS Activity is to increase the capability of Cambodian civil society to engage in democratic processes by representing citizen concerns¹. The objectives of this contract are to: 1) strengthen the capacity of civil society in Cambodia; and 2) provide analytical and technical services to USAID/Cambodia's Office of Democracy and Governance to respond to opportunities for democratic development.

For this contract, “democratic processes” are defined as the interaction amongst civil society and between civil society and the government, at all levels of society, and in all sectors. “Civil society” is defined as the sector of society that can express itself independently of the government and private sector. Civil society refers to the aggregate of: non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including umbrella organizations; associations; trade unions; faith-based groups; private academic institutions; community-based organizations (CBOs); informal grassroots communities and networks; social movements (e.g. peace movements, student movements, pro-democracy movements) consulting firms and think tanks; independent media outlets; professionals contributing directly to the improvement of human rights (e.g. humanitarian workers, lawyers, doctors, medical workers); HRDs - including online activists; and relatives and/or associates of victims of human rights violations.

CCSS directly supports USAID's goal to strengthen democracy and accountability in Cambodia. Tasks under this contract focus on increasing the capacity of local organizations – which include direct USAID/Cambodia civil society grantees within the democracy and governance portfolio, capacity service providers, and grantees and informal groups supported by the CCSS Project – and also developing of Cambodian civil society as a whole through interventions aimed at protecting the enabling environment of civil society.

Three tasks have been defined to provide the implementation framework for CCSS. Specific segments of civil society are targeted under each task of the contract as described below.

- Under Task 1, CCSS administers two grant funds: 1) the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), which provides legal representation to constitutional rights defenders and CSOs, and 2) the Democracy and Governance Fund (DGF), which awards competitive grants to support strategic initiatives that promote engagement of citizens in governance.
- Under Task 2, CCSS delivers capacity development assistance to CCSS grantees, organizations that do or may receive direct support from USAID, and grassroots/informal groups.
- Under Task 3, CCSS is responsible for conducting a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and two public opinion surveys.

EWMI's key subcontractors on CCSS are two national organizations: VBNK, a Cambodian learning organization which delivers most of the Task 2 assistance, and BDLINK, a Cambodian market research and business development consulting firm which conducts the public opinion surveys.

This report first presents the methodology used for the evaluation followed by a presentation of findings organized by Evaluation Question (EQ). Within the findings section, text boxes provide summary conclusions. The ET then presents detailed conclusions and targeted and actionable recommendations for evaluation users.

USAID/CAMBODIA AND THE CCSS ACTIVITY

A vibrant civil society sector is necessary to ensure that citizens are well informed about the actions and performance of their government and provides space for public discourse and accountability. Between 1993 and 2018, the United States provided roughly \$235 million in assistance related to good

¹ There is a need to clarify the CCSS Results Framework (RF) to align the EWMI contract goal with the CCSS current RF.

governance, democracy, and civil society². In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the United States provided an estimated \$79.3 million in foreign assistance to Cambodia, a decrease of 10% compared to FY2017. USAID's focus for the CCSS activity is on strengthening the capability of civil society advocacy in Cambodia, where USAID has had a strong and extensive history of supporting CSOs.

Beginning in 2015 with new restrictions on NGOs and during the lead up to the 2018 national elections, the government of Cambodia (GOC) placed increasing restrictions on political and social activism, civil society, free speech, and foreign-funded democracy programs. For instance, from 2015-2017, more than 25 opposition members and GOC critics were arrested, and many fled the country.³ In June 2016, GOC critic Kem Ley was killed under suspicious circumstances. In 2017, the Cambodian Foreign Ministry expelled the Washington, D.C.-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) – who was engaged in democracy programs in Cambodia – on the grounds that NDI was not registered with the GOC. GOC media outlets also alleged that NDI – who received financial support from USAID – was involved in a conspiracy involving an opposition party to overthrow the government.

In 2017, the GOC closed more than one dozen Cambodian radio stations that sold airtime to Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA). Facing political and economic pressure from the government, RFA closed its Phnom Penh office. Authorities further ordered the Cambodia Daily, known as an opposition newspaper, to shut down in September 2017 – ostensibly for failing to pay taxes. In 2018, the government made its first arrest under a lèse-majesté law passed by the National Assembly in February 2018, which makes insulting the monarch a crime.⁴

As such, the enabling environment for civil society is dynamic in Cambodia and has been increasingly more restrictive in recent years, impacting access for citizens in such areas as public accountability, government transparency, and citizen engagement in the formation of public policy.

METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of the CCSS Mid-Term Performance Evaluation is to: (1) assess the performance to date of the CCSS Activity; (2) propose actionable recommendations for USAID and the implementing partner (IP) EWMI that would help improve the activity's performance over the remainder of the performance period; and (3) provide USAID with a summary of lessons learned from the implementation of CCSS about how to design and manage civil society programs. The primary audience for the evaluation report (ER) will be USAID/Cambodia, USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/Democracy, Rights and Governance (DCHA/DRG), and EWMI. The questions to be addressed during this evaluation are listed below.

EQs 1-4 address mid-term performance and impacts while EQs 5 and 6 address lessons learned, sustainability, resiliency, and assisting the team in developing recommendations for USAID and EWMI.

Core Evaluation Questions for Performance and Impact

1. How and to what extent have CSOs strengthened capacities as a result of the activity?
2. Which interventions and/or approaches have been effective in meeting CCSS objectives? Why?
3. Which interventions and/or approaches have been least effective and why?

² Data from USAID, Foreign Aid Explorer, "governance and civil society" assistance, <https://explorer.usaid.gov/>.

³ Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017: Cambodia, April 20, 2018.

⁴ Cambodian authorities detained a teacher for posting on Facebook that the King and other members of the royal family colluded with the government to outlaw the CNRP. Eli Meixler, "Cambodia Has Made Its First Arrest Under a Repressive New Law," Time, May 14, 2018.

4. How and to what extent has CCSS adapted to mitigate operational risks to target CSOs? How effective have they been?

Cross Analytical Questions – Sustainability, Resiliency, and Lessons Learned

5. What should the implementing partner do to improve overall performance as well as to meaningfully integrate gender equality and inclusiveness for the remainder of the activity?
6. What should the IP do to ensure CSO self-reliance in the longer term?

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODS

The ET used a mixed-methods approach that integrated a suite of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to answer the EQs. This approach afforded USAID a greater depth of comparative analysis across the geographic areas where the ET conducted fieldwork. The ET collected data via a desk/secondary literature review, Key Informant Interviews (KIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a Mini Survey (MS). The ET answered EQs with a combination of these methods by triangulating evidence and using contribution analysis to estimate CCSS' unique contribution to observed results.

The ET analyzed the data primarily through gap analysis, content analysis, GESI analysis, and contribution analysis. Contribution analysis in particular enabled the ET to assess the contribution that CCSS activities are making to observed outcomes based on the totality of evidence. The essential value of contribution analysis in this case is that it offers an approach designed to reduce uncertainty about the contribution CCSS is making to the observed results through an increased understanding of why the observed results have occurred (or not) and the roles played by CCSS initiatives as well as other factors (both internal and external).

DATA COLLECTION

The ET collected qualitative data from 97 (47% female/ 53% male) respondents overall, with 42 KI and 55 FGD respondents. The socio-demographics of persons contacted for KIs are shown in [Annex 8](#). Documents reviewed are listed in [Annex 9](#). The evaluation itinerary is presented in [Annex 3](#).

In most cases, the ET conducted KIs in-person with one or two members present. In KIs with two ET members, one team member served as the lead interviewer and the other served as the primary notetaker – providing additional or probing questions as relevant. In all KIs, the ET had at least one person present who was fluent in the language of the respondent to permit interviews in Khmer. The ET was composed of three Cambodian subject-matter experts and an international Team Leader (TL). Notes from each interview were compiled and summarized by the TL as well as a Senior M&E Specialist.

The ET consistently reviewed summary notes during fieldwork to ensure quality and identify emergent themes and topics. Following fieldwork, the ET presented preliminary findings and themes from fieldwork to USAID/Cambodia. Finally, in preparation of this report, the TL and the ET analyzed each interview – assessing key themes for each EQ and identifying emergent findings based on the collected evidence from KIs, FGDs, and the Desk Review.

MINI-SURVEY

The ET also administered a MS in Khmer with beneficiary CSOs of the DGF and LDF Grant. CSOs were asked to identify the interventions they received, and responses were disaggregated by intervention type. The MS was tailored to ensure that it accurately reflected CCSS activities and their expected outcomes while also answering the EQs within the constraints of the methods designed for the evaluation. The MS targeted 17 CSOs receiving support from the CCSS Activity and their senior staff. The 17 respondents (29% female/ 71% male) came from Phnom Penh, Ratanakiri, Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Cham, Kampot, Battambang, Kampong Speu, Kep, Kratie, Monduliri, Preah Vihear, Steung Treng, and Uddor Meanchey. The percentage of male and female respondents

reflects the actual gender leadership of the CSO partners of CCSS. Approximately one-third of the current CSO grantees are women-led organizations.

LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The ET identified several potential constraints to the evaluation alongside the following proposed mitigation strategies.

Incorrect attribution of CCSS's interventions. Respondents may attribute higher-level outcomes to CCSS activities rather than other external factors. The ET addressed this through its contribution analysis, which includes examining other potential factors that may have contributed to outcomes.

Respondent answers may be subject to recall bias related to past events or experiences. The ET addressed this through the MS by ensuring a larger number of CSO respondents, thus mitigating individual challenges with recall. Primary data collection was cross-checked with desk review documents (see [Annex 9](#) for a list of these documents) which, given the timeframe over which they were developed, was subject to less recall bias.

Having an ET composed of individuals from different ethnic groups and nationalities from those interviewed may evoke response/desirability biases whereby respondents alter answers due to explicit or implicit expectations. The ET mitigated these biases by clearly indicating, as part of the informed consent procedures, the independence of the evaluators. Documentation provided by USAID reinforced this independence. The team members also switched facilitation roles depending on the cultural context.

Biased CSO respondents. Some CSOs may not have wished to participate in FGDs and KIs, and those that did participate might be different in fundamental ways than those that did not. By conducting surveys that allowed for greater anonymity, the ET obtained a larger sample of respondents.

Non-representative sample of respondents. CCSS programming extends throughout Cambodia. Though it was easiest to do so, collecting data from respondents in Phnom Penh is unlikely to be representative. The ET traveled to locations outside of Phnom Penh to ensure a more representative respondent base. Incorporating surveys into the evaluation also ensured a more robust number of respondents from a larger number of provinces.

Fieldwork coincided with a significant number of national holidays in Cambodia. The ET planned to conduct the majority of fieldwork from October 28 to November 15. During this time though, there were a series of national holidays as well as travel restrictions that inhibited data collection. Due to anticipated political tensions with the potential return of Sam Rainsy, travel by the team had to be before or after the November 9th. This limited the initial data collection period. The ET remedied this by having their Cambodian members to continue data collection after the TL departed Cambodia on November 15.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

EVALUATION QUESTION 1 - FINDINGS

How and to what extent have CSOs strengthened capacities as a result of the activity?

Key Findings:

1. The primary skill sets noted by CSOs in KIs as improving as a result of CCSS's interventions were financial management, M&E, outcome reporting, strategy development, advocacy, public speaking, and ICT4D – specifically digital security improvements.
2. As organizational assessment scores are only measured at the beginning and end of the grant period with CSO partners, changes in capacities are self-reported by CSO partners and were triangulated with both VBNK reporting and EWMI quarterly and annual reports. Financial

management improvements were mentioned as significant by over 75% of the CSO senior staff interviewed.

3. In terms of specific capacity self-reported improvements; financial management (76%), compliance with laws (71%), technical/organizational capacity (65%), and social accountability (65%) were determined to be the most effective by CSO survey respondents.
4. According to LAC as well as DG Fund CSO interviews, CSO confidence and capacity improved in areas of compliance with civil society law (specifically taxation requirements) and compliance with the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations and Associations (LANGO).
5. Over 85% of CSO partners have GESI policies, but GESI integration into program planning and reporting is less evident.

Based on interviews with CSO partners and VBNK (the primary subcontractor for CCSS working to assist in strengthening organizational development), there were notable areas in which CSO capacities have been strengthened. The primary skill sets noted by CSOs in KIs as improving as a result of CCSS's interventions were financial management, M&E, outcome reporting, strategy development, advocacy, public speaking, and ICT4D – specifically digital security improvements.

According to the MS conducted with leaders from 17 CCSS partner CSOs: the training by VBNK, particularly custom coaching, led them to feel stronger in notable areas of OD, and 82% of respondents reported that the program strengthened CSO capacity overall. In terms of specific capacity improvements, CSO survey respondents described financial management (76%), compliance with laws (71%), technical/organizational capacity (65%), and social accountability (65%) as the most effective (see [Figure 1](#)). The 18% who noted that the support provided by CCSS had been less effective suggested increased training in areas such as proposal writing, fundraising, and M&E reporting. There were also several comments requesting more training on GESI indicators and reporting. There was no significant variation of this between female and male respondents.

Figure 1. Strengthened Capacity

Most respondents reported that the program **strengthened capacity overall (82%)**. Financial management, compliance with laws, technical/organizational capacity, and social accountability saw the highest capacity improvement.



In TAI, LAC – an LDF grantee – utilized this opportunity to expand their human rights work to provide direct legal aid and support for individual human rights cases. LAC has been providing human rights training for many years, but with CCSS support they expanded their pool of consultant lawyers

to provide direct support for individual human rights cases. This is a departure from their previous focus primarily on training. According to LAC interviews, this expansion helped the organization increase their networks with legal service providers providing support for HRDs and to also increase their pool of consultant lawyers with experience in this area of legal support. With CCSS support, LAC has also improved their proposal writing skills. The funding support provided by CCSS allowed LAC to hire nine additional consultant lawyers to assist with legal support for HRD Cases. This support also allowed LAC to increase the number of CSOs that received legal support and guidance on compliance laws relevant to civil society.

Also under TAI and with CCSS DGF support, several CSOs have expanded services and have started new technical initiatives. Interviews with senior staff and field managers note that these grants have provided funds for service area expansion as well as increased staffing. The funds helped CCSS partners better utilize their new skills and training from EWMI and VBNK in current operations and programs, and interviewees detailed local and provincial examples of CSO intervention impacts, particularly in the areas of increased advocacy of local accountability and public transparency.

For example, Media One expanded their public forum support work and expanded their pool of community reporters – enabling them to focus on issues important to local minority groups such as women and youth. Media One created a new story series highlighting public policy issues impacting women (particularly single women), youth, and widows at the commune and local level. This community reporting has provided an important forum for gender and public policy issues to be highlighted at the Commune level particularly around policies that most impact these potentially vulnerable groups. These story pieces also enhance the capacity and skills of local reporters in investigative journalism.

Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC) used these funds to enhance their work with youth leaders and expanded their work training young women and men in improving their public relations and public speaking skills. In an all-female FGD conducted in Banteay Meanchey, participants highlighted several examples where this training provided through YCC and the DGF had increased their ability to conduct public forums and engage with their communities on local issues. One female youth respondent gave an example where she had led and conducted a public forum on land access where 265 local residents attended and the provincial governor was invited. Although the governor could not attend, this forum resulted in youth being invited to attend a local planning session on land rights issues – a first for these local youth. By connecting local residents and youth to land rights issues, YCC is better able to engage individuals in democratic processes, the overarching goal of the CCSS Activity. Youth interviewed attributed the additional training that they got from YCC as contributing to this increased exposure with local officials.

The CCSS grant to CSO partners combined with capacity building in such areas as strategy planning, M&E and custom coaching provided by VBNK enabled the expansion of CSO services as well as improved efficiencies at the local level. For instance, Nak Akphiwath Sahakum (NAS) increased their Community Expression Teams (CET) that assist with public forums at the commune level. Training needs assessments conducted by VBNK helped to increase the efficiency of the CETs and helped NAS raise local funds to support these teams. Several NGO partners were able to increase their staffing as well as increase their service range. LAC has increased the number of human rights lawyers providing services to Human Rights Defenders, and several CCSS partners (Building Community Voice, Highlanders Association, Nak Akphivath Sahakum, and Youth Council of Cambodia) have increased the number of communities in which they are working.

More than 80% of the interviews conducted with senior CSO staff also noted the impact of financial management training. EWMI and VBNK provide financial management systems training, which is proving essential for small CSOs with high staff turnover. A focus on QuickBooks as a tool for financial

health has helped to increase organizational confidence by ensuring that the financial systems are understood by financial management staff as well as Executive Directors. These simple systems have helped to also improve reporting for CSOs, and multiple interviewees described the training for non-finance managers conducted by VBNK as essential.

Another area of noted improvement in CSO capacity, which the ET triangulated with the MS results and the desk review, was increased confidence and compliance with civil society law. Interviewed CSO staff felt more confident in their legal understanding of NGO laws and restrictions—particularly relating to new tax and labor regulations. CSOs interviewed also noted the importance of increased guidance on tax preparation (a fairly new CSO requirement), which helped CSOs assess their financial health and liabilities. These are both interventions provided by CCSS under the LDF grant.

In March 2019, EWMI conducted a GESI Assessment to assess LDF and DGF grantees' GESI-related strengths, weaknesses, and results achieved; extract lessons learned; and develop a framework for EWMI to apply to the CCSS program moving forward. The assessment covered both the partners' internal institutional structure and external program interventions. While most CSOs interviewed (85%) had a GESI policy in place prior to the GESI Assessment, these policies were primarily limited to simple disaggregation of gender and minority groups. Based on interviews with CSO partners, this assessment and its process had been helpful for CSOs in addressing gaps in their programming approaches as well as staffing structures. Partners also discussed how this process had helped improve their own GESI policies and practices.

That said, one of the challenges with this assessment process is that several recommendations were made to EWMI to better integrate GESI measurements, particularly outcome indicators into their RF and measurement systems. These recommendations have not been integrated into CCSS activities at this specific stage, although there is evidence in EWMI reporting that they are focused on these changes and are working to better disaggregate and measure these elements. Based on interviews with CSO partners, there is a need for improved GESI reporting – particularly in designing indicators that more effectively track outcomes relating to increased access to services and forums for the participation of women, youth, and minority groups. CCSS has several women-led CSO partners as well as the 100% indigenous-led Highlander Association (HA) that have strong practices in place for minority and inclusion programming, but even these organizations struggle to effectively report these outcomes in their M&E frameworks.

EVALUATION QUESTION I - CONCLUSIONS

EQI Conclusion I: *Most CSOs stated that their capacity had improved overall as a result of the CCSS activity interventions. However, as there is no interim scoring to measure organizational development changes at the mid-term, most measures are self-reported.*

The grants provided under TAI for LAC and CSO partners is a critical component of CCSS and has contributed to increases in CSO capacity, but measuring this on an annual basis has been challenging for the CCSS activity. As organizational capacity measurements are primarily done at the beginning and end of the grant cycle, there is a need for the activity to develop interim reporting mechanisms to capture CSO capacity changes for CCSS stakeholders. EWMI and VBNK should consider adapting the organizational capacity assessment (OCA) scoring tool for interim measures. This could be done by conducting a simple survey with CSO partners with a Likert scale to assess progress in specific areas of technical training such as financial management, proposal writing, and outcome reporting. VBNK could also administer a simple annual test for technical retention of specific training modules for key staff.

EQI Conclusion 2: *The LDF and DG Fund Grants have helped CSOs expand their services to increase access for citizen engagement, but there is a need to better capture the outcomes of these grants.*

With DG Fund support under TAI, several CSOs have also expanded services and started new initiatives, and many of these initiatives have increased access for citizens to critical local DG issues, such as natural resource management, information campaigns regarding local policies, and increased access to citizen accountability tools. Skills and training received from EWMI and VBNK have been utilized to improve current and planned programs and interventions, but capturing these improvements has not been as effective as it needs to be. Multiple interviews with CSO leadership as well as a review of VBNK and EWMI reporting illustrated a need for more concise reporting and monitoring systems that better captures improvements in programming interventions as a direct result of CSO technical capacity building interventions. New reporting tools such as infographics, case studies and advocacy tracking tools may assist in bridging this gap.

Importantly, there are lessons to be captured from women led and indigenous led CSOs that would benefit USAID Cambodia in identifying current and evolving challenges in an expanding space for minority expression and views in public policy. For example, NAS felt that the support provided by CCSS enhanced their stakeholder engagement, specifically with women's inclusion in local governance issues. As a result of some of the strategy and capacity building work with EWMI staff and VBNK, NAS felt that they had improved their fund mobilization. NAS staff and partners stated that field reporting and work on local governance issues gave them confidence to apply for a new United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) grant to increase the role of women in local governance. NAS staff attributed this funding increase to the implementation of the CCSS model for improved reporting on outcomes as well as improvements in proposal development and writing.

EQI Conclusion 3: *Most CSOs had a GESI policy, and stated that the CCSS GESI Assessment activity in March 2019, helped them to improve their GESI practices. However, there is a need for GESI measurements to be better integrated into the EWMI systems as well as in the technical support provided to CSO partners.*

There is an increased need for improved integration of GESI tools and reporting into the EWMI practices as well as work with CSOs. VBNK and EWMI need to focus on integrating suggestions from the GESI Assessment conducted in March 2019. Over one-third of CSO partners are women or indigenous led, and case studies focused on the integration of GESI tools into program operations and monitoring is an important area of learning for USAID. Case studies conducted in collaboration with these groups alongside a greater focus on peer-based learning would strengthen VBNK's training approaches as well as increase USAID learning for future civil society efforts in Cambodia.

EVALUATION QUESTION 2 - FINDINGS

Which interventions and/or approaches have been effective in meeting CCSS objectives? Why?

Key Findings:

1. LDF and DGF grants allowed CSO partners, particularly women-led and minority-owned CSOs, to expand geographically and into new service areas.
2. VBNK custom coaching was particularly effective for small CSOs with few staff and regular field travel.
3. Digital security training is essential for CSOs working on DG and human rights issues.
4. Financial management training for non-finance staff and an emphasis on simple finance systems is assisting CSOs in planning for greater self-reliance.

Providing LDF and DGF grants has increased the scope and scale of CSO partners working on DG issues and is an important tool for meeting CCSS objective area I. Despite the small pool of partners, the geographic range of these partners is impressive – with the 17 CSO grantees working in almost every province in Cambodia (see [Figure 2](#)) – and in areas with some of the highest concentrations of minority and indigenous people. The LDF and DGF grants also provided additional support to CSOs working on minority protection issues, and several of these grants were given to women-led and indigenous-run organizations. A third of CSOs interviewed for this mid-term evaluation had women Executive Directors, and one CSO partner is entirely (100%) staffed with indigenous people.

Figure 2. CCSS DGF Grant Coverage

EWMI CCSS DGF partners



DGF grants from CCSS helped CSOs expand services at the local level and also helped CSOs innovate into new areas that improve local accountability and access to public information. NAS, a DGF partner, developed CETs in each commune they work in. The role of CETs – which are predominately female (estimated at 75%) – is to coordinate and facilitate with community council and district administration, and to represent the community for commune council meetings. These CET members work with local communities to ensure that local issues important to the community are prioritized in multiple sectors. They also ensure that the voices of marginalized citizens are expressed in these forums. These CET members have become important members of their community as a result of this work: to date 6 CET members have become commune clerks and deputy village chiefs. The support provided by VBNK custom coaching along with the program strategy work with EWMI staff have assisted NAS in increasing local systems for increased citizen engagement through these CETs.

Customized coaching provided by VBNK is an important aspect of meeting objective 2's goals and was valued by CSO leadership and staff. The flexibility in this approach – which included the option for some coaching in person with CSO staff and other coaching on the phone or remotely – allowed CSOs to address gaps more responsively and provided space for improved program planning. For instance, some CSOs needed support in improving their financial management systems, while others needed greater support in M&E, strategic planning, or fundraising. One of the noted weaknesses expressed by VBNK is the need for more local service providers, local, coaching staff, and staff that can speak indigenous languages. To mitigate this, they have adapted their own training methods to provide more remote based support as well as concentrated field training delivered regionally. The process of developing capacity building plans and strategies with small CSO staff has also been

mentioned as challenging for VBNK. However, VBNK has improved their training modules based on feedback from these customized coaching sessions with CSO leadership and field staff.

Another important intervention provided by CCSS is digital security training, which contributes to improved programming for civil society partners working on DG and human rights issues. This training covers such topics as secure communication, social media, and censorship as well as a review of current secure communication platforms that provide safe spaces for civil society to communicate without government censorship and/or oversight. For instance, though Facebook is a primary platform for civil society communication, respondents note that postings have been censored and monitored. As such, training and guidance on secure communication platforms and social media security were noted as highly valued interventions that the CCSS project provided. Interviewed CSO managers noted that the training made them more aware of the risks to their constituents by posting on Facebook and social media. Furthermore, CSO staff felt that having access and knowledge of new and evolving secure platforms (such as Signal) helped protect CSO partners and beneficiaries as well as CSO field staff working on sensitive advocacy campaigns. As a result of this training, staff noted that they were more conscious of the potential impacts of social media reporting, with several CSOs stating that they were working on social media policies to better protect themselves. However, CSO respondents stated that EWM and USAID do not use these same platforms, thus creating vulnerabilities for CSO staff and partners.

A final area of significant intervention noted by the majority of KII respondents interviewed was training and support on financial management for non-finance staff and effective financial management systems (QuickBooks, etc.). Several interviewed CSO Executive Directors and Program Managers discussed how this particular training had helped to more effectively track program expenditures and improved their reporting to donors and local partners. They also felt that these simple systems were more sustainable than relying on staff members who may leave their positions unexpectedly, creating gaps in financial management. One of the primary challenges noted by CSO leadership was the vulnerability presented by turnover of financial managers and staff – especially of smaller CSOs. This training approach by VBNK focused on financial management systems improved programmatic efficiencies as well as financial literacy for non-finance staff. CSO senior staff also noted the importance of this training in improving self-reliance as budget acumen is highly valued by all donors.

EVALUATION QUESTION 2 - CONCLUSIONS

EQ2 Conclusion 1: *Customized coaching by VBNK has helped to cater services and technical needs to a wide variety of CSO partners.*

Customized coaching by VBNK is an important intervention for CCSS, as its tailored approach has helped to enhance the technical and organizational capacities of CSOs engaged through CCSS. Training modules from VBNK were valued, and the flexibility and adaptation of custom coaching for CSOs of various sizes and locations has been critical in strengthening the capacities of an array of CSO partners as highlighted in EQs 1 and 2 findings.

EQ2 Conclusion 2: *Digital security training and improvements in secure communication tools and platforms have helped CSOs working on sensitive DG and advocacy work protect important information and reduce risks.*

Increased government censorship as well as the targeting of civil society activists has created an atmosphere that is increasingly more laden with risk. Digital security training and improvements have helped strengthen CSO operational capacities through better security policies and practices. As CSOs have already started moderating the content they posted online, this should help mitigate some of the

risk faced by CSOs working on DG issues such as human rights, access to resources for indigenous groups, and land and forestry issues. The protection of this space and new challenges in social media messaging is critical in the current Cambodian context.

EQ2 Conclusion 3: *Financial management training that focuses on improving systems and capacitating non-finance staff has helped CSOs have greater confidence in financial management and reporting.*

Staff turnover – particularly of senior finance management staff – has been destabilizing for small CSOs. VBNK training and support of simple and effective financial management systems (QuickBooks, etc.) as well as financial management training for non-finance staff have been particularly effective in increasing the financial capabilities of CSOs. As noted in EQ1’s findings, by helping improve CSOs’ financial management systems, these CSOs improve reporting, which may enable CSOs to access funds from more donors (thereby further expanding programming and improving financial diversity).

EVALUATION QUESTION 3 - FINDINGS

Which interventions and/or approaches have been least effective and why?

Key Findings:

1. The LDF grant partner LAC, is struggling to keep up with increasing human rights caseloads based on its current structure. This is primarily a staffing structure issue but needs to be addressed.
2. There is an increasing risk at the local level for citizens engaging in DG issues and CSOs are struggling to respond when citizens are targeted politically or through the judicial system.
3. Increased civil society competition for funding makes proposal writing, strategy planning, and outcome reporting critical for CSO self-reliance.
4. Reporting on CSO impacts as a result of CCSS capacity strengthening interventions is not well linked to objectives and captured in interim reporting to CCSS stakeholders.
5. GESI integration is necessary, but not currently being tracked as effectively as it can be in the CCSS activity. This is also true within EWMI systems in training CSO partners on GESI tools.

According to LAC interviews, the expansion into human rights legal assistance has helped the organization increase their networks with legal service providers. However, increasing human rights caseloads also presents challenges given the current staff structure within LAC. Senior Lawyers from LAC and representatives from other human rights support organizations highlight two key challenges: First, defending human rights and political cases are difficult as these clients need specific and varied support services. Second, working with consultant lawyers rather than fulltime staff presents unique challenges. This is because the caseloads of these consultants can be impacted by the defense of human rights and political cases, which prevents some contract lawyers from taking on additional human rights defender cases. Interviews with LAC senior staff expressed concerns that using contract lawyers to support human rights cases may not be as effective as having fulltime lawyers who are working on human rights. According to LAC and other human rights staff interviewed, organizations with permanent human rights support staff are less susceptible to government pressure.

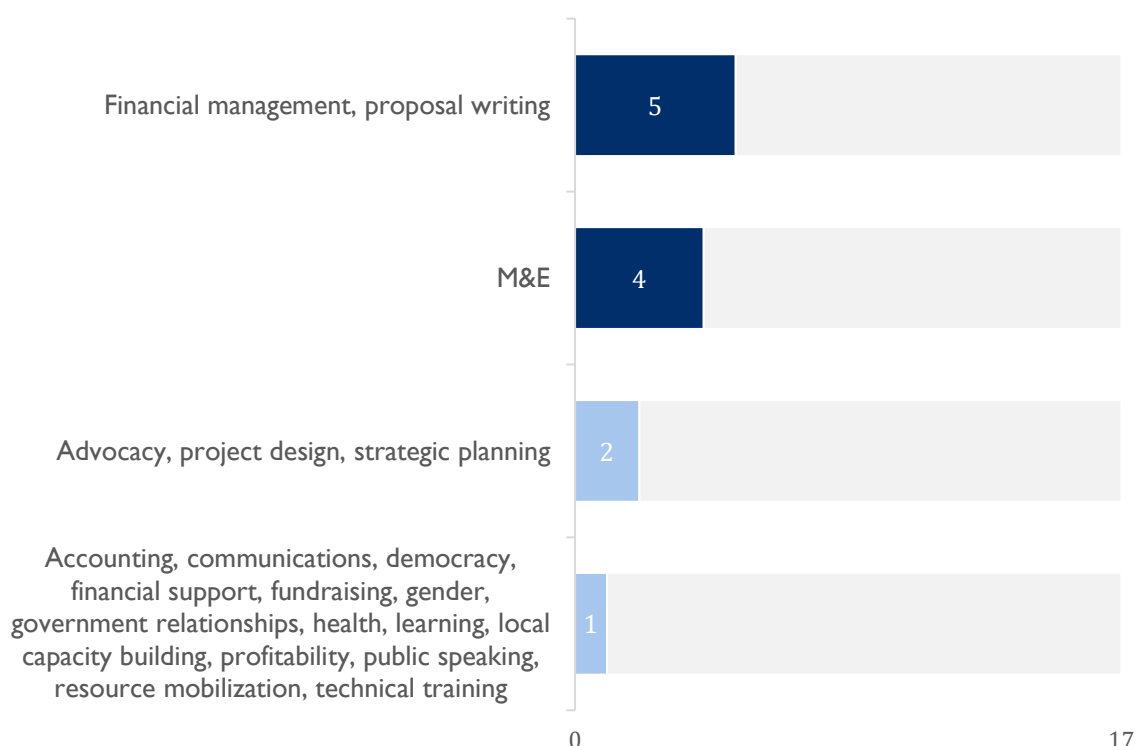
DGF grant partners interviewed in the field noted that there is an increased risk for citizens at the local level working on contentious public accountability and/or DG issues. This was particularly noted by indigenous-led CSO partners, especially in areas such as Mondulikiri and Rattanakiri with higher concentrations of indigenous and marginalized communities. Although LAC is providing support on legal compliance of NGO laws, they noted a gap in legal advice for this type of risk management, particularly at the local level. Indigenous and minority owned (women-led) CSOs were particularly concerned in interviews, and this was evident in FGDs with minority and vulnerable group members as well. As stated by respondents, there are fewer resources at the local level for judicial support as well alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for citizens and local officials seeking to resolve tensions surrounding shared asset management – particularly of water, forestry, and land resources. CCSS DGF grantees also stated that the judicial system is often used as a tool to embroil local communities in

contentious land conflict, which is especially challenging for indigenous people working with limited legal guidance on complex land or natural resource management issues.

Other areas where CSOs noted augmented support would be valuable were strategic planning and M&E, particularly to support implementation and program planning. In the MS, financial management, proposal writing, and M&E were the most requested areas for future support (see [Figure 3](#)). In Klls, these areas were also noted as being particularly important for self-reliance: CCSS partners noted there are more CSOs and fewer funding opportunities, making self-reliance and financial diversification critical. CSO staff often felt the impact of their work was not easy to capture for donors and external funders, but that they were making a difference in citizen engagement and access to public accountability.

Figure 3. Requested Areas for Future Support

Financial management, proposal writing, and monitoring & evaluation were the three most requested areas of future support, according to the 17 CSOs surveyed.



Number of CSOs

Based on secondary research and a review of EWMI and CSO reporting, a primary challenge is the steady increase in the number of CSOs seeking funding in Cambodia. This is coupled with a decrease in funding, particularly for organizations working on advocacy and human rights. Areas of increased funding and emphasis seem to be for organizations working on minority rights issues or with strong reporting and M&E capabilities. Although EWMI is in the process of integrating more GESI indicators and approaches into program improvements, there is little evidence that this has been integrated into CCSS implementation reporting and M&E tracking both internally and with CSO partners.

In the GESI assessment conducted in March 2019, several areas of improvement in CCSS systems were noted for increased GESI programming and integration. These were: (1) TOC, (2) the CCSS RF, (3) Outcome indicators, (4) M&E and reporting templates (quarterly and annual reports), (5) the USAID CSO Strategic Communications Index Interview Guide, (6) the USAID Organizational

Development Interview Guide, (7) Quarterly partner meetings, and (8) the CCSS mid-term review and final evaluation. Specific recommendations were made, but EWMI staff have yet to integrate these into current programming.

Another aspect of CCSS activity management and programming that should be addressed is the consistency and clarity of reporting. CCSS has been working to improve this, and in FY20 is going to start using some infographic approaches, but there is a need to do a careful review of indicators currently used to measure projects achievements and the linkages between task areas. Based on interviews with USAID and a review of the RF (see [Annex 4](#)), there are some indicators not closely linked to the narrative reporting and thus making it difficult to track intermediate results. Based on discussions with USAID and EWMI and a review of the activity reporting, the current TOC does not adequately capture all three task and objective areas.

EVALUATION QUESTION 3 – CONCLUSIONS

EQ3 Conclusion 1: *With CCSS support, LAC has increased the number of Human Rights Defenders cases that they support, but there is a need to review the current way consultant lawyers are used to support these caseloads.*

Defending human rights clients presents challenges and CCSS is not yet addressing these challenges effectively: human rights clients often require services that extend beyond legal support, and consultant lawyers risk their defense of human rights clients negatively impacting their other caseloads. Recommendation 1 examines potential pathways forward, including hiring full-time lawyers skilled in human rights cases.

EQ3 Conclusion 2: *There is a need for the CCSS activity to increase the support provided to CSOs working with populations at risk and provide more resources and guidance on legal challenges and risk mitigation.*

Citizens at the local level working on advocacy, public accountability, and/or DG issues face increased risk, and the judicial system is often used to entangle local communities in contentious land conflict, with indigenous, minority, and vulnerable groups most adversely affected. Therefore, CSO and citizens have an increased need for legal services and local ADR mechanisms. This is further explored in Recommendation 4.

EQ3 Conclusion 3: *CSOs need more support for monitoring and evaluation, outcome reporting and proposal writing. With increased competition for limited funds there is a need for improved reporting to show past performance and evidence of measurement systems.*

Based on interview and MS results, CSO partners need more training to increase self-reliance, particularly on strategy planning, proposal writing, and outcome reporting, especially as they continued to be challenged by increased competition for funding with more CSOs competing for fewer funding opportunities.

EQ3 Conclusion 4: *There is a need for EWMI and USAID to carefully assess ways to improve the results framework and reporting to ensure effective understanding and communication of CCSS activity impacts and outcomes. The current TOC does not capture all CCSS objective areas.*

Based on interviews with USAID and the ET's review of the EWMI reporting, RF, and indicators, CCSS would benefit from constructing its TOC in a way that covers all three objectives and clearly shows the linkages, as well as re-examining its indicators. This would also help improve capture of activity-level data between the objective areas. There is also a need to look carefully at the integration of GESI tools into the current EWMI systems as a result of the GESI Assessment conducted in March 2019 and its recommendations to the EWMI team. Suggestions and examples of this have been included in the Recommendations 6 and 13.

EVALUATION QUESTION 4 - FINDINGS

How and to what extent has CCSS adapted to mitigate operational risks to target CSOs? How effective have they been?

Key Findings:

1. There is an increased risk for CSOs working on advocacy, and there is a gap in adapting program strategies to this increasing environment of risk.
2. There is a need for CSOs to not only track risk, but to also develop tools to track the impact on program activities.
3. There is insufficient risk analysis training for CSO partners and their constituents.
4. CCSS stakeholders do not always use secure communication platforms, and this presents operational risks for CSOs and their programs.

Based on qualitative data collection (KIs and FGDs), desk review, and discussions with USAID, EWMI and other human rights organizations working in Cambodia, the operating space for CSOs has become more constricted over the past three years. This was described as particularly true for organizations working on any type of advocacy, public accountability, or information campaigns viewed as political. Many of the CSO partners that EWMI works with seek to increase public access, forums, and citizen engagement with policy in Cambodia, and several of these CSOs work directly on issues that are often viewed as political or promoting citizen rights. With this work comes an increased vulnerability and this requires CSOs to plan and assess risks to their constituents and staff. They also need to identify anticipated risks in their annual and program planning processes.

For example, LAC cited that they are often watched by the government when working with Category I clients and that lawyers can also be targeted for this work. Category I clients are individual human rights cases, and these tend to be viewed as controversial by the government. LAC has hired several consultant lawyers to address additional human rights cases and Category I clients to ensure that multiple cases can be handled at once and to ensure a diversity of legal providers.

EWMI is aware of the risks that CSOs face and has conducted trainings as well as shared learning sessions with CSO staff and leadership to help organizations better identify, track and program for operational risk. Based on interviews however, there are still gaps and tools are not well integrated into current monitoring methods of CCSS.

EWMI and interviewed CSOs stated that there is a steady and increased risk of targeting at the local level when CSOs or citizens engage in local advocacy efforts. EWMI has increased risk analysis training and support for CSOs but noted in interviews with field staff that there is a gap in local services and resources for *citizens* at risk. This is an area that EWMI has not yet tackled but has the potential to with its LDF grant with LAC. Based on interviews with EWMI and CSO staff, risk tracking with CSOs is supported by EWMI, particularly in programming with vulnerable groups and in advocacy efforts, but these approaches and tools are not streamlined into regular and consistent program and field use by the CSOs. There is a need for more effective implementation and use of risk assessment training and process within the CCSS activity.

VBNK and EWMI have adjusted their training approaches to address 'strategic communication' needs instead of terming interventions as "advocacy". Based on interviews, this has helped to address risks in working on advocacy efforts and has increased and improved field-based tracking of programs and activities that may be vulnerable to government scrutiny.

EVALUATION QUESTION 4 - CONCLUSIONS

EQ4 Conclusion 1: *There is a need for EWMI and VBNK to increase risk analysis and planning with CSOs, particularly those working with populations at risk advocating for controversial changes in local policy and practice.*

There is a need for CSOs working with CCSS to constantly assess and adapt their operational risks, as an increasingly restrictive environment has increased both operational as well as constituent risk for local beneficiary populations. Though EWMI has conducted trainings and shared learning sessions with CSO staff and leadership to help organizations better identify, track, and program for operational risk, there is a need for more streamlined and simple tools that CSOs can use in monitoring field conditions and using this information to plan program adaptations. There is also a need for LAC and VBNK to work together to provide additional support (if possible) to address increased citizen risk and what it may mean for future and current CSO program planning.

There is an increased risk of targeting at the local level when CSOs or citizens engage in local advocacy efforts. Risk analysis training and support for CSOs is critical, and although EWMI provides some of this training, there is a need to provide greater support for CSOs to increase their capability to mitigate and manage local risks encountered from expanded DG-related programming. This is an area that EWMI and USAID needs to address in future program strategies, and there is potential to increase or strengthen guidance and support from LAC for CSO partners that would help address this gap. EWMI should reflect on this with CSO partners to ensure that risk mitigation is linked directly to risk assessment for CSO constituent populations.

There also remains a need for CSOs to be able to observe outcome level changes as a result of improving their strategic communications and mitigating problems and tensions from conducting advocacy campaigns. This may be best addressed through customized coaching with VBNK, but there are minimal feedback loops and formal reporting frameworks to get this information into CCSS project learning. CSOs may need reflection templates or tools to encourage more risk management thinking that impacts and influences outcome planning.

EQ4 Conclusion 2: *If USAID and EWMI are not able to use secure communication platforms, then there is a need to create a more secure way to capture sensitive information that protects CSOs and their program activities.*

As noted in EQ2, CSO respondents noted the importance digital security training, but noted that USAID and EWMI were not using these platforms. This may present a risk to CSOs when communicating with or reporting to EWMI or USAID, thus potentially warranting further conversations between CSOs, EWMI, and USAID around digital security and communication platforms.

EVALUATION QUESTION 5 - FINDINGS

What should the implementing partner do to improve overall performance as well as to meaningfully integrate gender equality and inclusiveness for the remainder of the activity?⁵

⁵ As EQs 5 and 6 are focused on recommendations, the information under these EQs present the findings and conclusions that formed the basis by which the ET arrived at recommendations 9 to 13.

Key Findings:

1. There is a currently a gap in reporting the linkages between objective and task areas in CCSS reporting frameworks. This appears to be based on a mistake in the CCSS activity goal statement and its reflection in the results framework of the project.
2. There is currently no activity-wide TOC for the CCSS project.
3. There are lessons to capture from women and indigenous-led CSOs that would enhance program learning for not only CCSS stakeholders but also current CSO grantees.
4. Most CSOs interviewed had GESI policies, but still struggled with indicators and M&E frameworks that effectively captured GESI changes over time and challenges.

Based on interviews with USAID, EWMI, and CSO partners of the CCSS activity, one of the primary gaps that should be addressed are gaps in current and interim reporting on CCSS achievements. There is a need to clarify and adjust some discrepancies in the RF. Doing this may also require a careful review of current indicators and their alignment with objective and task area measurement. The Activity's RF is presented in [Figure 5](#). Notable in the current CCSS activity RF is the replacement of the goal of the CCSS activity stated in the original EWMI contract as *"to increase the capability of Cambodian civil society to engage in democratic processes by representing citizen concerns"* with *"increase capability of civil society to engage in political processes"*.

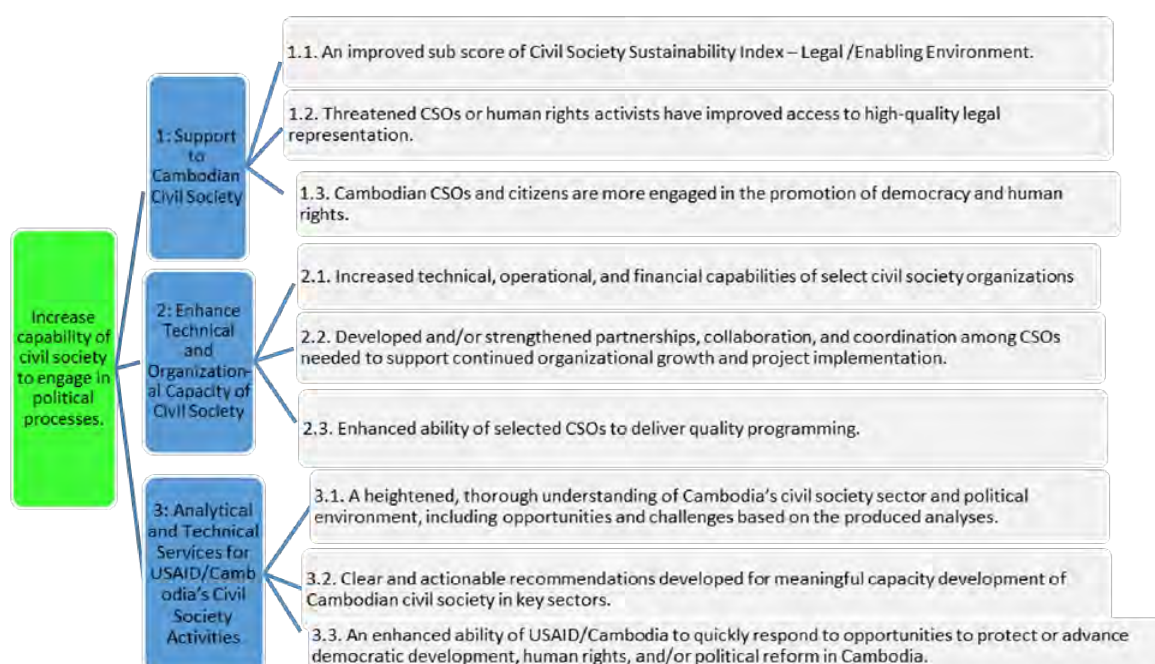
The ET could not determine when this change was made, but it aligns with Intermediate Result (IR) 1.2 under Development Objective I (DOI) from the USAID Cambodia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2014-2018 (Figure 4). However, the CCSS goal fits better with IR 1.1. According to the activity contract and background, the CCSS activity primarily corresponds to the first and fourth pillars of USAID's Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) programming, specifically civil society and human rights.

DOI: Strengthened democracy and government accountability, and enhanced respect for human rights

IR 1.1: Constructive civic engagement promotes human rights

IR 1.2: Increased capability of civil society to engage in political processes

IR 1.3: Improved political competitiveness and electoral accountability



The CCSS activity established a TOC for the project based on its RF (Figure 5). The TOC (Figure 6) presented in the activity documents, however, does not reflect all objective areas of the project. The CCSS project would benefit from an integrated TOC to assist with strategic reporting and to also assist in periodic gap analysis of program impact observations from field monitoring of objective area activities.



Figure 6. Current CCSS Theory of Change

Turning to the gender equality and inclusiveness part of the EQ, based on interviews with CSOs and EWMI, the GESI Assessment conducted in March 2019 was shared with CSO partners, with several CSOs describing ways they had used this assessment to improve aspects of their programming. Though the majority of partners already had GESI and/or gender policies in place prior to this assessment, several stated that as a result of the assessment process, they worked to diversify and address inclusion in hiring women, minority groups, and people with disabilities (PWD). For example; NAS, YCC, and HA all have expanded their GESI staff. CSO partners also discussed that the GESI Assessment helped them look at new ways to capture their field-based efforts to enhance GESI integration and its relevance to outcome reporting. Some partners have improved their GESI reporting by focusing on case studies specific to women and youth. Other organizations, such as HA, are working with local partners and funders to advocate for greater inclusion of indigenous issues in public planning.

Though most CSOs interviewed (85%) had a gender plan or GESI policy in March 2019, current DGF grantees highlighted in KIIs that such policies were not always paired with a strong M&E plan. CSOs noted that most of their GESI tracking was at the output level (i.e. number of staff or women

participants). Furthermore, though CSO reporting frameworks are often disaggregated by gender and minority groups, there was less evidence of specific GESI indicators or monitoring frameworks designed to note GESI improvements over time, with several CSO partners mentioning they needed more information on how to create M&E plans that reflect measurable GESI programming approaches. There is a clear need for CCSS to address this need either with direct support or with VBNK training. CCSS has also partnered with women and indigenous-led CSOs. In interviews, these CSOs noted that their programming approaches could be shared with other CSOs seeking to deepen their GESI integration in strategy, programs, and demographic targeting. Three CSOs in particular (Highlanders Association, 3S Rivers Protection Network, and Building Community Voice) have adapted and changed their programs over time to more effectively target issues that impact minority groups and have implemented program monitoring and impact measurement changes. Though several CSO grantees have worked on increasing access to citizen engagement in natural resource management, these lessons learned from field-based programming are not adequately captured in current outcome reporting. Current reflection and CSO coordination workshops supported by EWMI do not provide an adequate forum to highlight these lessons.

In interviews, CSOs indicated that citizens are vulnerable to predation and pressure from various elements of the government as well as outside forces working in their communities. Indigenous CSO partners highlighted how indigenous groups were often manipulated into signing erroneous contracts and concessions, and how private sector partners and sometimes even government officials cajoled semi-literate or illiterate minority groups into signing documents that they did not understand.

Based on FGDs and KIs, it is often difficult for women to be engaged in some aspects of CSO programming like community forestry protection, yet women often witness infractions and illegal use of forestry resources. Even so, reporting is not always easy and often puts women and families at risk. Several FGD respondents noted that women are pressured to not express infractions they see by male community members or members of their household. As such, CSOs working on these issues wanted to have more support on GESI programming for vulnerable groups, particularly for natural resource protection and shared asset management interventions.

EVALUATION QUESTION 5 – CONCLUSIONS

EQ5 Conclusion 1: There is a need to clarify and adjust some discrepancies in the RF, as this would assist with strategic reporting and enable better analysis of program gaps and contributions.

CCSS established a TOC for the activity based on its RF. However, this TOC does not reflect all objective areas of the activity. CCSS would therefore benefit from an integrated TOC and an examination of how indicators, the RF, and the TOC align.

EQ5 Conclusion 2: *The CCSS activity has started a GESI Assessment and planning process with CSO partners, but there are still significant gaps in improving M&E systems both for EWMI as well as support for CSO partners.*

USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy outlines outcomes that should be adapted and translated into specific results with associated targets and indicators. These are: (1) reduce gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefit from resources, wealth, opportunities, and services; (2) reduce gender-based violence and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals and communities; and (3) increase the capability of women and girls to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and society. EWMI has several CSO partners working on programming in areas 1 and 3, but there is a need to assist them, particularly in strengthening their M&E approaches to directly impact program planning and measurement.

The majority of interviewed CSOs had GESI or gender policies in place and found the GESI Assessment helpful. However, CSOs with a GESI policy or practice did not have strong M&E plans to track GESI improvements over time, and a very small percentage had GESI indicators. Where indicators were present, they were limited to the output level. Even fewer CSOs had GESI technical staff. CSO partners felt they needed more information about how to create M&E plans that reflect measurable GESI programming approaches and integrated into activity planning.

EQ5 Conclusion 3: *Although there have been improvements in the civil society space, there are still significant risks for women, youth and minority groups – particularly indigenous groups working on natural resource protection issues. There is a need for the CCSS activity to address this gap through increased technical support for CSOs working with at-risk populations.*

CSOs identified various ways that citizens are vulnerable to predation and pressure from various government elements and from within their own communities. As such, there is a clear need for risk analysis that includes social risks for vulnerable populations. Although CCSS tracks these populations in cooperation with CSO partners, there is room for this to be better integrated. Several CSOs working on these issues wanted to have more support on GESI programming for vulnerable groups, particularly for natural resource protection and shared asset management interventions. There is a need for EWMI and the CCSS team to consider how to address this gap with VBNK training. Certain CSOs contend with this more regularly, so it could be addressed with customized coaching.

EQ5 Conclusion 4: *Lessons learned should be better captured from youth-, women, and indigenous-led organizations to assist other CSOs in working more effectively on GESI planning and programming.*

There are several CSO partners that are women and indigenous-led. There is a need, particularly at this time in the program, to allow these CSOs more of a platform to share their experiences with other CSOs so that lessons learned can be more directly integrated into current CCSS and VBNK training. This is an area of increased risk in Cambodia, particularly in Rattanakiri, Mondulikiri and Kratie.

There is a need to provide space for minority-led CSOs to provide peer-based learning and sharing, particularly on working with vulnerable populations on tenuous natural resource management issues and resource capture. This is an issue that is becoming more and more critical in civil society work, particularly on DG-related issues in Cambodia where certain populations are at greater risk or directly targeted.

EVALUATION QUESTION 6 - FINDINGS

What should the implementing partner do to ensure CSO self-reliance in the longer term?

Key Findings:

1. The majority of CSOs felt that work with the CCSS activity was helping them identify ways to be more self-reliant.
2. CSO managers and senior staff were particularly interested in identifying more localized forms of funding, particularly to support operations and volunteers working with their programs.
3. Most CSO senior staff saw a direct relationship between improved outcome reporting and M&E systems to increases in donor funding.
4. Several CSOs wanted more training and technical assistance on identifying diversified forms of funding, particularly in developing appropriate social enterprises that would offset operational costs, not always covered by grants.

KILs with CSOs stated a need for training in designing and implementing a social enterprise or activity to assist in operational funding. CCSS does not currently support this need, although VBNK has done some customized coaching on identifying ways to increase financial support. CSO staff highlighted how important integrating livelihood development initiatives into other capacity development efforts is for formal and informal groups working on advocacy. CSO staff expressed that small community-based enterprises increase sustainability. They also noted that advocacy interventions or involvement often takes time away from work that many Cambodians rely on for survival, limiting their ability to engage.

Based on KILs, the vast majority of CSO Executive Directors interviewed valued VBNK and EWMI's emphasis on outcome reporting improvements, as they felt this would assist in better proposal writing and perhaps resulting in increased grant funding. Based on KILs, some CSO Executive Directors wanted more training on how to identify diversified funding, as it is becoming increasingly competitive to get grants given a steadily increasing number of CSOs in Cambodia. It is particularly difficult for CSOs in Cambodia working on DG or human rights-related work to get funding for program operations. Often these groups are reliant on donor funds and must run several projects at once to survive with small numbers of permanent staff. They also wanted to increase their ability to identify more localized forms of funding. CSO staff felt that more localized forms of funding would assist in supporting volunteer networks essential for increasing the impact and scope of local interventions. There was also interest in targeting local level funding to increase constituent power and cooperation.

Several senior managers discussed at length the importance and viability of their CSO beyond donor funding and wanted assistance in devising strategies to diversify their funding sources. Specifically, CSOs wanted assistance outlining plans to develop independent funding streams to support operations and activities through improved fundraising skills, leveraging partnerships with the private sector, and soliciting individual contributions.

EVALUATION QUESTION 6 – CONCLUSIONS

EQ6 Conclusion 1: *There is a gap in training for seeking social enterprise models as a way to increase self-reliance.*

For most CSOs, there is a need to have a social enterprise or activity to assist in operational funding, and CSO leadership feels that this is critical for sustainability and self-reliance. As such, VBNK may need to consider expanding their modules on proposal writing to also include ways to create small social enterprises, or facilitate skills sharing on this between CSOs that have managed to support these ventures at the local level. VBNK has done some customized coaching on identifying ways to increase financial support, but there is also a need to address this technical gap, which is critical in improving self-reliance for small local and regional CSOs working with the CCSS activity.

EQ6 Conclusion 2: *There is a need to assist CSOs in diversifying funding and also to assess local and regional options for fundraising.*

There is also a need for CCSS to develop technical assistance training and support to help CSOs identify more localized sources of funding, or design livelihood development initiatives to help them finance planning and strategy. CSO Executive Directors particularly valued support for outcome reporting and proposal writing and felt that discussions and training with EWMI and VBNK also had helped improve their confidence in applying for other funding opportunities. Executive Directors felt it was critical to diversify their funding sources, and that improving skills in outcome reporting helped, but they also felt that they needed more technical training to assist in identifying funding opportunities.

There seemed to be a concern that funding was harder to acquire and that there was a need to identify other local and regional forms of funding to ensure operational continuity. The increase in commune

level funding seemed to be influencing strategic thinking for some CSOs seeking to access these funds as a way of increasing local programming. Most CSOs wanted more assistance finding other local sources of funding and or economic assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

Recommendation 1. *There is a need for EWMI to work with LAC to identify ways to mitigate potential gaps that may occur in providing support for individual HRD cases.*

TAI and the LDF grant have helped to meet CCSS objectives, but there are lessons to capture on the challenges that defending human rights cases in Cambodia presents. LAC is not a regular defender of human rights cases and this is a new area of expansion for them – and one that has unique requirements and service needs. There is a need for EWMI to assess how this support is provided and whether the current model of consultant lawyers is effective. There may be a need for LAC to hire additional full-time lawyers with these skills so that this issue of representation does not become a problem for CCSS and TAI. As legal support for HRDs is a critical aspect of the CCSS activity, finding an effective way to address this potential gap is important in seeking resolution for some of these complex cases.

Recommendation 2. *EWMI needs to develop new communication tools that better illustrate to CCSS stakeholders how local level advocacy efforts from DGF partners have assisted in improving citizen engagement in democratic processes. These tools should include more targeted case studies showing the relationship between the task areas, their impact on local level governance issues, and civil society improvements over time.*

Under TAI, the DG grant has provided an opportunity for CSOs to increase local activities and add service areas such as increased access to public information, which are critical in increasing citizen advocacy space. CCSS has allowed CSOs to increase work on public access to information and platforms for accountability, but advocacy is risky in Cambodia. Work at the local level (commune and district) seems to have more traction and allows for greater potential for collaboration with citizens and local government. For example, local initiatives from People for Development and Peace Center (PDP), YCC, NAS, and HA show how VBNK and CCSS support helped these CSOs work more effectively on local level DG issues with citizens, local government, and in some cases provincial staff. There is a need for VBNK and EWMI to improve and strengthen how CSOs provide feedback on this and design ways to narrate this for USAID that are clearly linked to both TA2 and CCSS objectives.

Recommendation 3. *Customized coaching provided by VBNK has been effective, but there is a need for EWMI to work with VBNK to improve both interim measurement and monitoring of organizational development changes in close collaboration with CSO partners.*

EWMI needs to work with VBNK to create consistent ways for CSOs to conduct interim self-assessments to better capture annual organizational capacity changes and interim impacts with DGF partners. A challenge in measuring capacity changes overtime is that the OCA scoring is done at the beginning and end of the grant cycles, but interim scoring is not done and there are not consistent or regular tools utilized by VBNK or EWMI to assist CSOs with assessing their improvements periodically. Specifically, there is a gap in reporting and indicator tracking as to how the TAI grants' impact and how they are influenced by TA2 service support from VBNK. For example, an intervention tracking form for CSO partners that targets and monitors key events planned as part of the CCSS DGF grants would assist in helping CSOs reflect on interim impacts of CCSS Activity support and link it to specific capacity development interventions provided by VBNK or EWMI staff. This could also be much better captured in reporting, the CCSS TOC, and the activity's RF.

Recommendation 4. *There is a need for EWMI to look at additional ways to support CSOs in mitigating operational risks, specifically in program planning and risk tracking of advocacy campaigns and citizen engagement in these efforts. This could be done through improved field monitoring systems, and by providing additional legal guidance on local level resources available at the commune or provincial level for citizen conflicts and cases.*

CSOs noted that there is increased risk for local level citizens working on contentious public accountability issues, and there is a need for legal services and guidance in supporting citizen engagement efforts. EWMI should work with LAC to see what type of CSO support may be helpful in mitigating and/or addressing these concerns. LAC could assist CSOs in increasing their local networks for these services. The judicial system is often used as a tool to embroil local communities in contentious land conflict, and access to alternative forms of conflict mitigation are almost non-existent at the local level – particularly for indigenous people working with limited legal guidance on complex land or natural resource management issues. Indigenous, minority, and vulnerable groups are the most adversely affected, and this is evident particularly in areas with higher concentrations of indigenous and marginalized communities such as Mondulikiri and Rattanakiri.

Recommendation 5. *There is a need for EWMI and USAID to address ongoing challenges in secure communication and evolving digital security needs within the CCSS project.*

CSOs noted that there is a much greater need for digital security now than in the previous two years of CCSS. They especially noted the importance of social media training and the value in being more sensitive about materials posted. CSO senior staff noted that USAID and EWMI do not use the same digital security platforms, which can cause problems for the CSO if sensitive information (such as partner contact data or the names of event attendees the GOC may be keeping tabs on) is shared. There is a need for USAID and EWMI to consider ways to improve secure communication with CCSS partners. If USAID and EWMI are not able to use these secure platforms, then it may be necessary to have targeted and regular face to face forums where sensitive information can be shared differently and without fear of monitoring or censorship. It may also be necessary to code participant data and information to protect the identity of certain citizens taking part in contentious advocacy efforts.

Recommendation 6. *There is a need for a careful review of indicators of CCSS and a need to streamline these to more effectively capture anticipated impacts and to strengthen data utilization.*

Based on KIs with USAID and a review of EWMI reporting and the RF, there are some indicators that do not effectively measure or capture potential program impact at this stage of the activity. There is a need to review the RF to ensure that indicators not capturing anticipated program impacts are removed and that measurement tools better measure progress toward CCSS objectives.

From the ET's standpoint, these indicators may be unnecessary as they are primarily output indicators that track only the LDF and DGF CSOs. It is also unclear how Indicator 1.6 is calculated based on the current grant mechanism.

- Indicator 1.2: Number of domestic CSOs engaged in monitoring, advocacy or legal defense work on human rights receiving United States Government (USG) support through the LDF
- Indicator 1.6: Number of CSO partners supported through DGF grants

Other examples include the following indicators that do not effectively capture program measurements linked to objective area tasks:

- Indicator 2.4: Percentage of CCSS-related CSO activities that involve multiple CSOs
- Indicator 2.5: Percentage of CCSS-related CSO activities that involve multiple CSOs
- Indicator 3.2: Percentage of citizens with perception of the positive contribution of CSO activities.

Narrative reporting also does not link well with indicators, and linkages between the task areas are not well delineated in current reporting frameworks, making intermediate results difficult to ascertain. Infographic reporting would be a helpful tool to illustrate for CCSS stakeholders the current activity achievements, their linkages to CCSS objectives (task areas intermediate results), and the activity goal.

There is also a need to add and improve GESI indicators, which will also improve outcome reporting. Recommendations from the GESI Assessment make sense to integrate into the current RF and EWMI measurement systems. The below outcome indicators were recommended and should be considered:

- **Indicator 1.8:** Percentage of Cambodian citizens (men/women, IP, PWD) that report engagement in activities organized/sponsored by CSOs.
- **Indicator 1.10 (New-Outcome):** Number of commune public forums held where citizens (men/women, IP, PWD) provide input and/or feedback on commune councilors. (DGF)
- **Indicator 1.11:** Number of issues (related to GESI) raised with subnational authorities as a result of CCSS grantees' activities. (DGF)
- **Indicator 2.6:** Number of civil society organizations receiving CCSS assistance to improve organizational capacity, and who successfully integrate GESI into this process.
- **New Indicator:** Number of CSOs who successfully complete GESI action plans. This can be turned into to composite GESI index (made up of key sub-indicators for each area) to measure progress similar to the one VBNK are using. (Noting that not all sub-indicators are equally weighted, e.g. while internal representation matters, at the end of the day partners' success will be assessed based on their external deliverables.)
- **Indicator 2.8:** Percentage of CSO partners that have developed a multi-year planning document identifying the needs and priorities (breakdown priorities related to GESI) of stakeholders (breakdown men/women, IP, PWD), against which they target strategic fundraising.
- **Indicator 3.2:** Percentage of citizens (breakdown men/women, IP, PWD) with perception of the positive contribution of CSO activities.

Recommendation 7. *There is a need for EWMI, VBNK and DG fund CSO partners to more effectively report outcome-level changes as a result of improving their strategic communications and advocacy campaigns.*

VBNK and EWMI have adjusted their training approaches to address strategic communication needs instead of terming interventions as "advocacy". Based on KILs, this has helped to address risks in working on "advocacy" efforts. CSOs noted that these trainings and planning sessions with VBNK are helpful, but there is no current documentation of the reflection process currently used to capture the impact of these changes on CSO programming. This is critical information and learning for CCSS. There are minimal feedback loops and formal reporting frameworks to get this information into CCSS project learning. There is a need for CSOs to have additional training in support of outcome level reporting that is more targeted and focused on specific changes in their programs and operations as a result of VBNK and EWMI technical support. There is also a need to improve the usage of case studies as learning tools to more effectively communicate the effects of CCSS activity inputs on civil society changes to USAID and CCSS stakeholders. Increasing focus on cultivating case studies as learning tools will also enhance TA3, an essential area for USAID learning about civil society changes in Cambodia.

Recommendation 8. *There is a critical need for EWMI and the CCSS activity to enhance risk tracking and tools for CSOs working with at-risk populations, particularly efforts of indigenous, youth, and women committed to challenging the exclusion of particular groups in advocating for citizen rights in decision-making.*

There is a need for a more targeted and adaptive approach in helping CSOs address risks that seem to be trending upward. These include; strategic communication with local government, digital communication and Facebook, and support for citizens working on controversial asset management

issues (i.e. community forestry, natural resource management, etc.). The gap seems to be in developing tools that VBNK and EWMI can use to ensure reflection sessions and coordination meetings are not the only spaces where risk assessment is captured. Each CSO needs a unique place to do this independently and with clear monitoring systems in place that minimize operational risk. This could be integrated into a VBNK customized coaching as a stand-alone module and also be a focused aspect of quarterly support and learning sessions with CSOs. This is an area that also requires targeted cooperation between VBNK training efforts and LAC inputs, and support for CSOs to ensure legal vulnerabilities are identified (should citizens fear being targeted based on local level work with CSOs).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING LEARNING AND SELF-RELIANCE

Recommendation 9. *EWMI needs to more effectively capture and promote cross sectoral sharing on GESI improvements and practices as well as challenges that women led and/or indigenous organizations face for enhanced CCSS stakeholder learning.*

Several CSO partners (HA, 3SRN, and BCV) are women and/or indigenous led. KIs and document review suggest these CSOs have valuable experiences to share with other CCSS partners seeking to strengthen their work on GESI issues, particularly program planning for vulnerable groups. There is a need, particularly at this time in the program, to allow these CSOs more of a platform to share their experiences with other CSOs so that lessons learned can be more directly integrated into current CCSS and VBNK training. This is an area of increased risk in Cambodia, particularly in Rattanakiri, Mondulikiri, and Kratie. Several interviewed CSO partners wanted greater support in integrating GESI planning into programs. They also discussed the challenges in increasing indigenous participation when minority groups fear retaliation from local government officials and/or business owners. There is a need to provide space for minority-led CSOs to provide peer-based learning and sharing, particularly on working with vulnerable populations on tenuous natural resource management issues and/or resource capture. This issue is becoming increasingly critical in civil society work, particularly on DG related issues in Cambodia where certain populations are at greater risk or directly targeted. Based on CSO interviews, documentation review, and the MS, there is a need for greater gender and social inclusion analysis and integration into EWMI program management, reporting, and monitoring systems.

Recommendation 10. *There is a need to improve support for CSOs in designing and identifying ways to track GESI integration into program interventions and outcome measurement.*

Almost all interviewed CSOs had either a Gender Plan or GESI policy, but often these plans or policies were not paired with a strong M&E plan. Most CSOs already had some gender tracking policy in place, but other minority group tracking was less evident in reporting and could be improved. Although output level information was reported, valuable field-based lessons seem to be missed in CSO reporting and M&E. One way to improve this would be integrating this analysis into work with CSOs on tracking program outcomes and M&E reporting improvement efforts with VBNK. There is a need to more effectively report challenges to providing space for women and minority citizens, particularly in areas with larger percentages of indigenous groups and exclusion issues. This primarily relates to natural resource access, shared resource use, and abuses related to exclusion of these resources for indigenous and minority groups. There is a need to assist CSOs to improve M&E plans to better capture GESI activities, not just demographic disaggregation and tracking minority participation. EWMI has started work on this with CSOs, but there is a need to clearly recalibrate the CCSS RF and provide additional support to CSOs in this technical intervention area. The GESI Assessment conducted in March 2019 provided a valuable account and framework for making these changes and should be a continued focus for CCSS over its remaining time.

Recommendation 11. *VBANK may want to consider expanding their modules on proposal writing to also include ways to create small social enterprises or do some skills sharing on this between CSOs that have managed to support these ventures at the local level.*

For most CSOs, there is a need to have some type of social enterprise or activity to assist in operational funding. CCSS does not currently support this need directly but could integrate some of this into funding mobilization training. It is particularly difficult for CSOs in Cambodia working on DG or Human Rights-related work to get funding for consistent operations, and often groups are reliant on donor funds and must run several projects at once to survive with small numbers of permanent staff.

Recommendation 12. *EWMI and VBANK should assist CSO Directors in developing financial planning tools to assist in developing local as well as donor funding strategies.*

There has been a steady increase of CSOs in Cambodia over the years, and the environment for funding is becoming increasingly constricted. Funding is harder to acquire, and there is a need to identify other local and regional forms of funding to ensure operational continuity. CSOs wanted assistance outlining plans to develop independent funding streams to support operations and activities such as through improved fundraising skills, leveraging partnerships with the private sector, and soliciting individual contributions. There is a need for CSOs to continually adapt, evolve, and innovate in a continuously fluid environment with limited resources. Most CSOs wanted more assistance in targeting local level funding to increase constituent power and cooperation as well as to increase the efficacy of local activities and interventions.

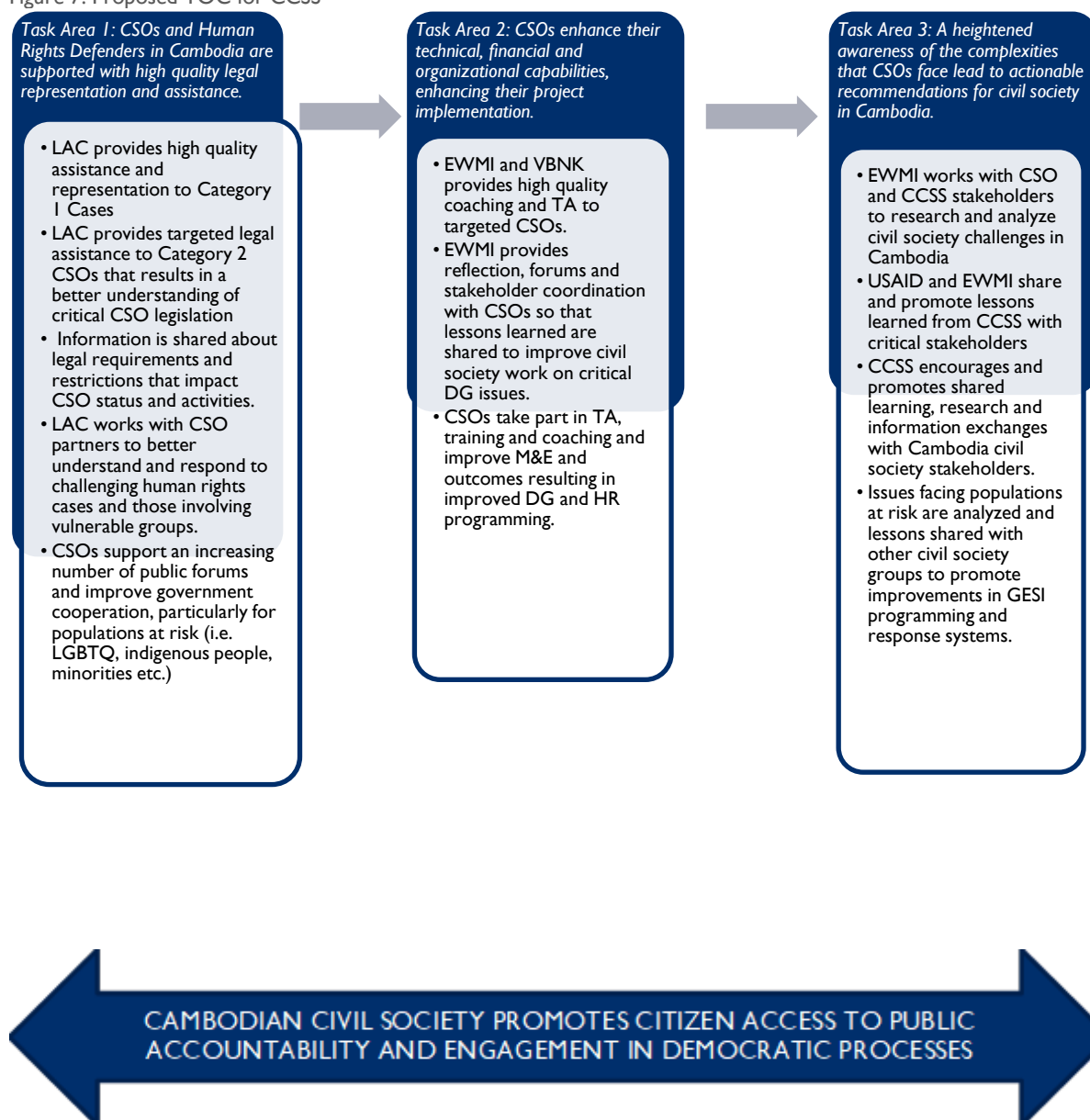
Recommendation 13. *There is a need for EWMI to revise and strengthen the CCSS Activity TOC to better capture the entire scope of the activity and its causal links to the goal.*

The CCSS TOC does not adequately capture the anticipated project outcome nor the linkages and causal relationship between the three task areas of the activity, as it only captures the grants. The ET suggests that this TOC be revised. The ET has developed a TOC for consideration below (Figure 7).

A more integrated TOC would need to be discussed with USAID and EWMI, but may be as follows:

- a) *If targeted CSOs and HRDs in Cambodia are supported with high quality legal representation and assistance that improves their capabilities to protect human rights and public accountability, **then** Cambodian citizens will be more engaged in the promotion of democracy and human rights; and*
- b) *If CSOs enhance their technical, financial, and organizational capabilities and enhance their project implementation, **then** CSOs will deliver quality programming that strengthens civic engagement; and*
- c) *If a heightened awareness of the complexities that CSOs face lead to actionable recommendations for civil society in Cambodia, **then** USAID can respond more adaptively and effectively to protect and advance democratic development, human rights, and/or democratic reform in Cambodia;*
- d) ***Then** Cambodian civil society will promote citizen access to public accountability and engagement in democratic processes.*

Figure 7. Proposed TOC for CCSS



Developing a task area and activity level TOC would allow CCSS to more effectively track the relationships between their activities and create synergies that may highlight current and critical areas of civil society support and impact for USAID. This would greatly strengthen TA3, promote more effective data use, and assist in strategic reporting of the CCSS Activity for the USAID DG Team.

Recommendation 14. *There is a need for USAID and EWMI to do a midterm strategy review session with the objective of strengthening information dissemination and learning, particularly regarding evolving conditions for CSOs working on human and civil rights.*

Conditions for civil society have improved on some levels in Cambodia, but there is still restricted space for citizen engagement and public accountability. The CCSS Activity has given grants to DG organizations working throughout Cambodia. These CSOs have experience in minority rights, women-led governance, natural resource protection, citizen policy development, civic education, and youth-led programming. There are unique areas of learning that would be beneficial to USAID and the DG Office in particular. Strong thematic NGOs working on DG-related issues are critical for civil society

and democratic reform. Targeted support for organizations working at the local level and increasing citizen engagement with government during difficult political periods is important for USAID and DG learning. Much of the learning is also cross-sectoral in nature and would benefit the USAID program office in considering other ways to integrate civil society strengthening efforts into technical sectors of USAID that need strong civil society partners to deliver critical services.

ANNEX I: STATEMENT OF WORK

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is to (1) assess the performance to date of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening activity (CCSS); (2) propose actionable recommendations for USAID and implementing partner (East West Management Institute) that would help improve the activity's performance in the remainder of the performance period; and (3) provide USAID with a summary of lessons learned from the implementation of CCSS about how to design and manage civil society programs.

The audience for the evaluation report will be USAID/Cambodia, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/Human Rights and Governance (DCHA/DRG), and the implementing partner.

The evaluation will cover the three-year period from the beginning of the implementation on June 27, 2016 until June 26, 2019.

BACKGROUND

Activity Name	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Project
Implementer	East West Management Institute (EWMI)
Cooperative Agreement Number	AID-442-C-16-00002
Total Estimated Amount	\$9,198,671.00
Life of Activity	06/27/2016 - 06/26/2021
Geographic Region	Cambodia: Nationwide with main target provinces (Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Thbong Khmom, Sihanouk Ville, Kampong Thom, Siem Reap, Uddor Meanchey, Banteay Meanchey, Kratie, Steung Treng, Monduliri, Ratanakiri, Preh Vihear, Kampot, Kep, Kampong Speu, Svay Rieng, Takeo, Kampong Chhnang, and Kampong Thom.
Development Objective(s) (DOs)	This aligns with DOI: Strengthen Credible Voices to Promote Fundamental Democratic Principles and Human Rights.
Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)/USAID Managing Office	Serey Chan, Civil Society and Human Rights Team Leader, Office of Democracy and Governance

The CCSS Activity has three main Tasks:

Task 1: Support to Cambodian Civil Society

- 1.1 Administer Legal Defense Fund
- 1.2 Administer a Democracy and Governance Fund

Task 2: Enhance Technical and Organizational Capacity of Civil Society

- 2.1 Organize Orientation and Ongoing Civil Society Collaboration Forum
- 2.2 Facilitate Organizational Capacity Assessments
- 2.3 Assist in Establishing Capacity Development Plans
- 2.4 Deliver Customized Technical Assistance, Training, and Ongoing Mentoring

2.5 Conduct Monthly Site Visits

Task 3: Analytical and Technical Services for USAID/Cambodia's Democracy and Governance Office

3.1 Provide Assistance to Conduct Special Analyses

3.2 Periodic Public Opinion Polling

3.3 Technical Assistance to Respond to Opportunities for Democratic Development

CCSS Results Framework



(3) Summary of the Activity to be Evaluated

The CCSS activity directly supports USAID's goal to strengthen democracy and accountability in Cambodia. The activity seeks to increase the capability of Cambodia's civil society to engage in political processes, defined as the interaction between civil society and government, at all levels of society. 'Political processes' are not thus limited to elections or processes involving political parties, but rather encompass the entire political environment under which civil society operates.

As of March 2019, CCSS reports having carried out the following tasks:

Task 1: Support to Cambodian civil society

- Provided legal assistance to over 564 organizations with awareness raising, consultation and representation to those organizations seeking to comply with a range of laws including Labor Law requirements, Tax Law, LANGO, and represented 7 Constitutional Rights Defenders.
- Provided grants to 18 CSOs in 21 provinces to work on issues related to land rights, natural resource management, social accountability, women and youth engagement, health, and education. CCSS reports having engaged citizen in social accountability campaigns addressing the issues of dam construction, illegal logging, community forest and wildlife protection; and promoted accountability.

- CCSS reports that approximately 40 communes that took concrete action in response to citizen initiatives generated by the CSOs partners which it supported.
- Provided in-kind grants to 5 informal groups to build their organizational capacity and livelihood activities reportedly enabling these groups to conduct trainings on social media and information security for their members.

Task 2: Enhance technical and organizational capacity of civil society

- Regular capacity development assistance delivered to CSO partners. EWMI claims 78% will reach their organizational development target.
- 14 CSOs partners have Capacity Development Plans in place and achieved the targets within their 2018 Annual Action Plans.
- Assisted 12 sub-grantees to include gender and social inclusion in the organization policy and programming.
- Organized quarterly stakeholder coordination meetings for 70 NGO/CSOs on variety of issues (digital security, LANGO compliance and Tax Law).
- Organized quarterly grantee coordination meeting for almost 100 grantee staff members to share experience and lesson learned. CCSS introduced Applied Political Economy Analysis tools to help grantees analyze stakeholders in their work, and identify options in restricted environment.
- Organized quarterly meeting for financial improvement team members from 40 CSOs to discuss fraud detection and prevention.

Task 3: Analytical and Technical Services for USAID/Cambodia's Democracy and Governance Office

- Conducted one political economy assessment.
- Completed a midline opinion poll to assess the public view of local CSOs.

CCSS is required to collect data on the following indicators:

- 1.1: Sub score of Legal/Enabling Environment within civil society
- 1.2: # of domestic CSOs engaged in monitoring, advocacy or legal defense work on human rights received USG support through the Legal Defense Fund
- 1.3: # of constitutional rights defenders supported through Legal Defense Fund (LDF)
- 1.4: # legal analyses supported through LDF re: civil society enabling environment
- 1.5: # of CSOs that receive support on compliance with LANGO, other Cambodian laws
- 1.6: # of people engaging in monitoring, advocacy or legal defense work on constitutional rights receiving CCSS support
- 1.7: # of CSO partners supported with Democracy and Governance Fund (DGF) grants
- 1.8: % Increase in target CSOs implementing citizen advocacy with government entities
- 1.9: % of citizens reporting engagement in activities organized/sponsored by CSOs
- 2.1: % target CSOs that meet benchmarks organizational capacity development benchmarks
- 2.2: % target CSOs that reach functional organizational management system benchmarks
- 2.3: Change in organizational performance of CSOs beneficiaries
- 2.4: # of CSOs participating in quarterly civil society stakeholder coordination meetings

- 2.5: % of CCSS-related CSO activities that involve multiple CSOs
- 2.6: % of CSOs receiving CCSS assistance to improve organizational capacity
- 2.7: Change in the “CSO Advocacy Index” scores
- 2.8: % of CSO partners that develop a multi-year planning document
- 3.1: # of opinion surveys produced re: Cambodia’s civil society and political environment
- 3.2: % increase in citizens’ perception of the positive contribution of CSO activities
- 3.3: % Clear and actionable recommendations developed for meaningful capacity development of Cambodian civil society in key sectors • 3.4: # of Political Economy Analyses conducted
- 3.5: An enhanced ability of USAID/Cambodia to quickly respond to opportunities to protect or advance democratic development, human rights, and/or political reform in Cambodia

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The Evaluation Team must answer the questions below. The Evaluation Team must collaborate with the TOCOR to determine the sub-questions related to the following main evaluation questions. How and to what extent have CSOs strengthened capacities as a result of the activity?

1. Which interventions and/or approaches have been effective in meeting CCSS objectives? Why?
2. Which interventions and/or approaches have been least effective and why?
3. How and to what extent has CCSS adapted to mitigate operational risks to target CSOs? How effective have they been?
4. What should the implementing partner do to improve overall performance as well as to meaningfully integrate gender equality and inclusiveness for remainder of the activity?
5. What should the implementing partner do to ensure CSO self-reliance in the longer term?

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Contractor must address the evaluation questions above for this mid-term performance evaluation. USAID requires a mixed methods approach, comprising quantitative and qualitative methods, be used for the evaluation. This approach may include, but not be limited to: a desk review, key informant interviews, surveys, focus groups, and site visits. The Contractor may use other qualitative and quantitative methods as needed.

Data requirements, collection methods, and analyses will be determined collaboratively with USAID/Cambodia under the lead of an independent, external evaluation team. Details on final datasets, collection methods and instruments (including interview questions and key informants to be interviewed), and analytical framework(s) must be approved by the Task Order Contracting Officer’s Representative (TOCOR) as part of the work plan approval. All people-level indicators data must be disaggregated by sex.

The Contractor will develop an Evaluation Design which contains the methodology the Contractor intends to use in order to address the evaluation questions, including information on data collection and analysis. Tools and methodologies to collect data from program participants must be clear.

USAID/Cambodia will share the documents below with the Contractor upon award of the Contract. The Contractor may request additional documents from USAID/Cambodia.

CCSS Contract and Modifications

- CCSS Contract and Modifications
- CCSS Work Plans
- CCSS AMELP
- CCSS Progress Reports
- Public Opinion Poll Survey on CSO perspective
- Political Economy Analysis of civil society in Cambodia

In addition to collecting data in Phnom Penh, the Contractor must conduct field research and data collection in provinces where CCSS has been active, to include, but not limited to Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Preah Vihear, Kratie, Steung Treng, Mondulhiri or Ratanakiri. The Evaluation Team should coordinate with the TOCOR to identify the most relevant provinces to visit if necessary beyond these provinces required above. The Evaluation Team will arrange meetings needed for field research and data collection.

USAID requests that the evaluator complete the following table as part of its detailed design and evaluation plan. Please note that another format may be used if the table is not preferred, but any chosen format should contain all the information specified for each question.

Evaluation Question	Data Source	Data collection method (including sampling methodology, where applicable)	Data Analysis Method

DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All deliverables for the internal use of USAID/Cambodia unless otherwise specified by USAID/Cambodia.

(1) Evaluation Design:

Within 12 calendar days of the contract's effective date, the Contractor must submit an Evaluation Design to USAID/Cambodia. The Evaluation Design must include: A Work Plan with a draft schedule for field research, data collection, analysis, reporting;

1. A Matrix linking evaluation questions with data sources, methods of data collection;
2. A plan for analysis which includes:
3.
 - a) A brief description of data collection instruments to be used, and their main features;
 - b) A preliminary list of key informants/respondents and affiliations; and
 - c) A forthright summary of the known limitations to the Evaluation Design.

The TOCOR will review/comment on the draft within 5 calendar days. The Contractor shall submit the final Evaluation Design within five (5) calendar days. Work shall proceed immediately after the Evaluation Design receives concurrence from the TOCOR.

(2) In-Brief:

After receiving TOCOR concurrence for the final Evaluation Design, the Contractor shall present the Evaluation Design to USAID/Cambodia in person. This presentation should introduce the

Evaluation Team and describe the elements of the Evaluation Design as described above, including the Work Plan.

(3) Updates

The Evaluation Team Leader must brief the TOCOR weekly on progress, in person, or by email. Any delays or complications must be communicated to the TOCOR as early as possible to allow quick resolution and minimize any disruptions to the evaluation.

(4) Exit Briefings:

Within 42 calendar days of the effective date of the contract, the Contractor will give two briefings prior to leaving the country. One briefing is with implementing partners (as defined by USAID/Cambodia) and a second exit briefing is for USAID/Cambodia staff. Both briefings will be done at the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh. The briefings will include a slide deck with initial key findings. The Contractor must consider USAID/Cambodia and partner comments received during the exit briefings and incorporate them appropriately in drafting the Evaluation Report.

(5) Draft Evaluation Report:

Within 56 calendar days of the effective date of the contract, the Contractor must submit the first draft Evaluation Report. Once the first draft report is submitted, the TOCOR will share the draft and consolidate comments from relevant reviews and provide comments within 20 calendar days after receipt of the first draft. One set of comments will be from USAID/Cambodia; the second from the implementing partner. The contractor must address all comments and submit the second evaluation report within 10 calendar days. Once the second draft report is submitted, the TOCOR will review it and provide comments within 20 calendar days after receipt of the second draft.

The draft Evaluation Report must be consistent with the guidance provided (Final Report Format). The report must address each of the questions in the Statement of Work (SOW) and any other issues the team considers to have a bearing on the objectives of the evaluation, after consultation with and approval of the TOCOR.

(6) Final Evaluation Report:

The Contractor must address USAID comments and submit the Final Evaluation Report within 10 calendar days of receipt of USAID comments on the draft report. All data and records must be submitted in full and in electronic form in readable format.

EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

The Contractor will provide a five-person Evaluation Team. The team must have the following expertise: experience managing civil society activities or promoting civil society engagement, evaluations for USAID or other major donors, and program management or evaluation in Cambodia or South-East Asia.

The Evaluation team must be composed of:

Team Leader, International (Senior Evaluator):

A senior-level evaluator with appropriate educational level and work experience in line with the Labor Categories set forth in the Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity Contract (IDIQ) in managing and conducting this evaluation. The team leader must have several years of experience evaluating or managing civil society programs. The team leader must also be an excellent English writer. Familiarity with USAID evaluation policy [USAID Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 201] is required. The team leader must have a good understanding of development issues in Cambodia. The team leader

will develop the evaluation and coordinate the team, ensuring team members understand their roles and responsibilities, and assign individual data collection, analysis, and reporting responsibilities.

Four Local Team Members:

A team of four local experts are required for this evaluation: three mid-level technical experts with at least a Master's degree and 5-years of relevant work experience (or Bachelor's degree with 8 years of relevant work experience), and a logistician with a Bachelor's degree and 5-years of relevant work experience. All team members must have experience in civil society and possess knowledge of the Cambodian context. The team members must possess a general understanding of development issues in developing countries. The candidates must possess experience in conducting evaluation or research studies. The team should have at least one candidate with expertise on gender issues in the Cambodia context, including gender norms and how gender interacts with other identity elements. All team members must have strong English language skills in both written and verbal communications. The team must consist of members of both sexes.

EVALUATION SCHEDULE

This evaluation must be completed within a 16-week period, starting on the effective date of the contract. This includes preparatory work before arrival in-country and finalization of deliverables after departing Cambodia. A six-day work week is authorized for this activity while in Cambodia.

Activity	Schedule
Desk review	Week 1
Submit draft Evaluation Design	Week 2
In country fieldwork (in-brief, data collection, analysis, out- brief)	Week 3-7
Draft first evaluation report preparation and submission	Week 8
USAID/Cambodia review of draft report (20 days)	Week 9-12
Draft second evaluation report preparation and submission	Week 13-14
Final evaluation report preparation and submission	Week 15-16

FINAL REPORT FORMAT

The final evaluation report will include

- an abstract;
- executive summary;
- background of the local context and the activity being evaluated;
- evaluation purpose and evaluation questions;
- evaluation methodology and limitations; and
- findings, conclusions, and recommendations (FCR).

For more detail, see “How-To Note: Preparing Evaluation Reports”

(https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/How-to-Note_Preparing-Evaluation-Reports.pdf) and A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 201

<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201mah>). An optional evaluation report template is available in the Evaluation Toolkit (<https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/evaluation-report-template>).

The executive summary will be 2–5 pages in length and summarize the purpose, background of the project being evaluated, main evaluation questions, methods, FCR and lessons learned.

The evaluation methodology must be explained in the report in detail. Limitations to the evaluation must be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology.

The annexes to the report will include at a minimum:

- The Evaluation SOW; and approved Evaluation Design
- Any statements of difference regarding significant unresolved differences of opinion by funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluation team, if any;
- All data collection and analysis tools used in conducting the evaluation, such as questionnaires, checklists, and discussion guides;
- All sources of information, properly identified and listed;
- Signed disclosure of conflict of interest forms for all team members, attesting to a lack of conflicts of interest or describing any conflicts of interest relative to CCSS; and
- Summary information about evaluation team members, including qualifications, experience, and role on the team.

In accordance with ADS 201, the Contractor will make the final evaluation reports publicly available through the Development Experience Clearinghouse within 90 days of the evaluation's conclusion (approval of the final report by USAID).

CRITERIA TO ENSURE THE QUALITY OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

USAID will evaluate the quality of evaluation report based on the Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 201, Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201maa>). The draft and final evaluation reports will be evaluated against the following criteria to ensure the quality of the evaluation report.

- Evaluation reports should represent a thoughtful, well-researched, and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate the strategy, project, or activity.
- Evaluation reports should be readily understood and should identify key points clearly, distinctly, and succinctly.
- The Executive Summary of an evaluation report should present a concise and accurate statement of the most critical elements of the report.
- Evaluation reports should adequately address all evaluation questions included in the SOW, or the evaluation questions subsequently revised and documented in consultation and agreement with USAID.
- Evaluation methodology should be explained in detail and sources of information properly identified.
- Limitations to the evaluation should be adequately disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).
- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or simply the compilation of people's opinions.

- Findings and conclusions should be specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- If evaluation findings assess person-level outcomes or impact, they should also be separately assessed for both males and females.
- If recommendations are included, they should be supported by a specific set of findings and should be action-oriented, practical, and specific.

See the Evaluation Report Review Checklist from the Evaluation Toolkit (<https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/evaluation-report-checklist-and-review-template>) for additional guidance.

ANNEX 2: USAID MINI-SURVEY RESULTS

Below is a sampling of information from the Mini-Survey data. This data was triangulated and integrated into the main body of the report as well.

Figure 1. Most respondents reported that the program **strengthened capacity overall**. Financial management, compliance with laws, and technical/organizational capacity had the highest capacity improvement.

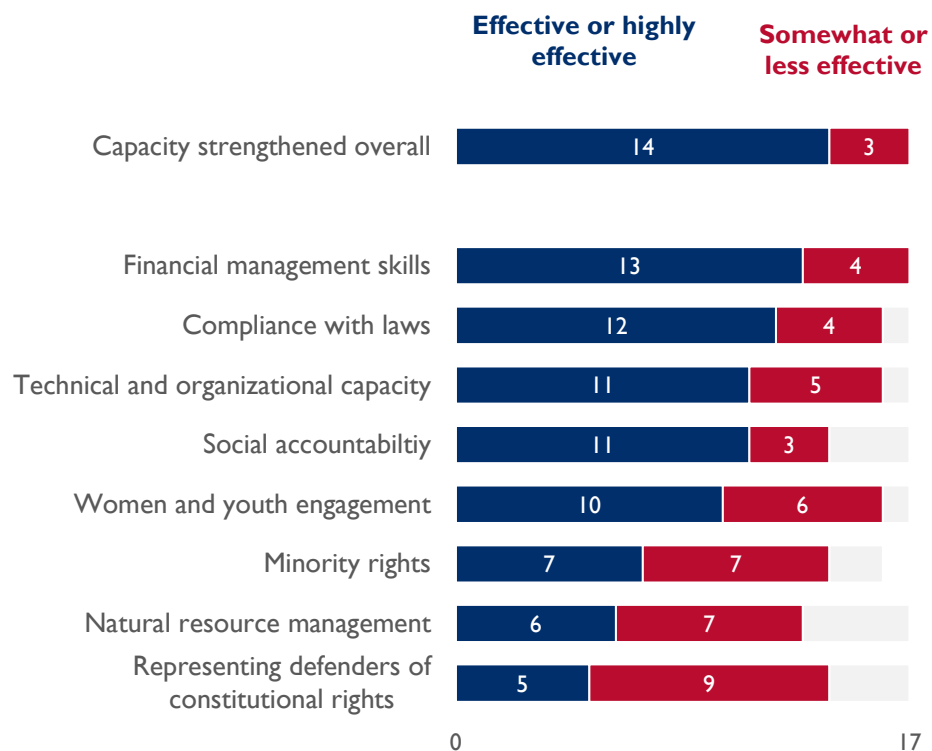
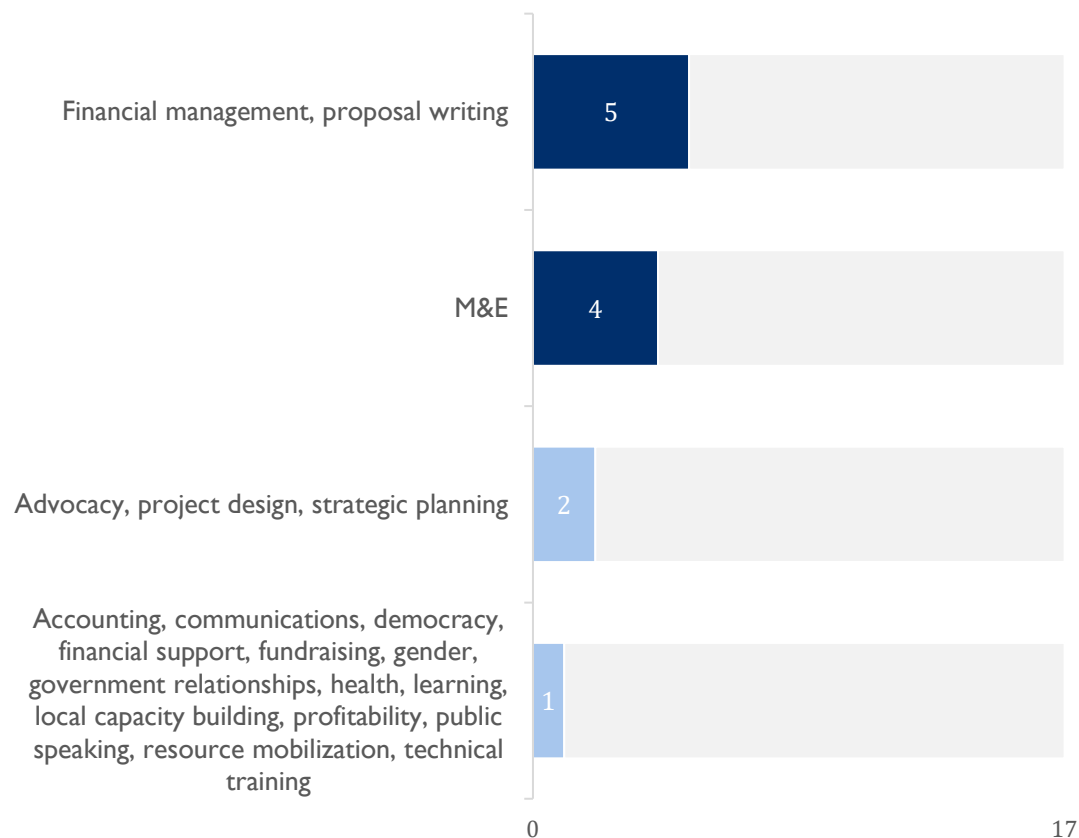


Figure 3. Financial management, proposal writing, and monitoring & evaluation were the three most requested areas of future support, according to 17 survey respondents.



ANNEX 3: EVALUATION SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Team A & B: Activities		Team A & B: Location	
Mon	28-Oct	Team Planning Meeting		Phnom Penh	
Tue	29-Oct	KIs and Planning with IP		Phnom Penh	
Wed	30-Oct	KIs with CSOs and EWMI		Phnom Penh	
Thu	31-Oct	KIs with CSOs		Phnom Penh	
Fri	01-Nov	In-brief with USAID KIs with CSOs		Phnom Penh	
Day	Date	Team A: Activities	Team A: Location	Team B: Activities	Team B: Location
Sat	02-Nov	Team Planning Meeting Travel to Siem Reap	Phnom Penh Siem Reap	Team Planning Meeting KIs with CSOs	Phnom Penh
Sun	03-Nov	REST DAY	Siem Reap	Travel to Mondulakiri	Phnom Penh Mondulakiri
Mon	04-Nov	KIs and FGDs with CSOs	Siem Reap	KIs and FGDs with CSOs	Mondulakiri
Tue	05-Nov	Travel to Udor Meanchey KIs with CSOs	Udor Meanchey	Travel to Ratanakiri KIs with CSOs	Mondulakiri Ratanakiri
Wed	06-Nov	FGD with CSOs Travel to Banteay Meanchey	Udor Meanchey Banteay Meanchey	KIs and FGDs with CSOs	Ratanakiri
Thu	07-Nov	KIs and FGDs with CSOs	Banteay Mean Chey	FGDs with CSOs Travel to Kampong Cham	Ratanakiri Kampong Cham
Fri	08-Nov	Travel to Siem Reap	Siem Reap	KIs and FGDs with CSOs	Kampong Cham
Sat	09-Nov	Team Planning and Data Analysis	Siem Reap	Team Planning and Data Analysis	Kampong Cham
Sun	10-Nov	REST DAY	Siem Reap	REST DAY	Kampong Cham
Mon	11-Nov	Interviews and Team Meetings	Phnom Penh	Interviews and Team Meetings	Phnom Penh
Tue*	12-Nov	Interviews and Team Meetings	Phnom Penh	Interviews and Team Meetings	Phnom Penh
Wed	13-Nov	KIs with CSOs, EWMI, or USAID	Phnom Penh	KIs with CSOs, EWMI, or USAID	Phnom Penh
Thu	14-Nov	KIs with CSOs, EWMI, or USAID	Phnom Penh	KIs with CSOs, EWMI, or USAID	Phnom Penh
Fri	15-Nov	Exit Brief (USAID) Exit Brief (EWMI)	Phnom Penh	Exit Brief (USAID) Exit Brief (EWMI)	Phnom Penh

ANNEX 4: ACTIVITY STATUS (2016-2019 Q3) REPORTS

The CCSS Activity commenced in June 2016 and is scheduled for completion in June 2021. The status of Activity achievements against Life of Award (LOA) targets set in the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP) are summarized in the table below. The areas marked in red represent areas where the project did not meet its established targets. Indicator numbers reflect current EWM numbering based on indicator removal in FY18 and early FY19.

INDICATORS ¹	Cumulative FY 2016-19 ²	LOA TARGET	MIDTERM NOTE
CCSS Goal: To increase the capability of civil society to engage in political processes³			
TASK ONE: Support to Cambodian Civil Society			
Expected Result (R)1.1			
An improved sub score of Civil Society Sustainability Index – Legal /Enabling Environment			
Sub score of Civil Society Sustainability Index Legal/Enabling Environment	NA ⁴	4.5	Baseline conducted in 2015 with a score of 4.3. End of Period (EOP) score.
Expected Result (R)1.2			
Threatened CSOs or human rights activists have improved access to high-quality legal representation			
Indicator 1.2 Number of domestic CSOs engaged in monitoring, advocacy or legal defense work on human rights receiving USG support through the Legal Defense Fund (LDF)	1	To-be-determined	CCSS started supporting two Legal Defense Fund Grantees, but now has one partner.
Indicator 1.4 Number of human rights defenders (HRDs) supported through the Legal Defense Fund (LDF)	0 - FY17 4 - FY18 23 – FY19	To-be-determined	Annually targeted. Targets not met in FY17 and FY18, exceeded to date in FY19.
Indicator 1.5: Number of legal analyses supported through the LDF concerning civil society enabling environment	2 - FY17 4 - FY18 11 – FY19	To-be-determined	Annually targeted. Targets met in FY17 and FY18, exceeded to date in FY19.
Indicator 1.12 Number of CSOs that receive support from CCSS on issues related to compliance with LANGO and other Cambodian laws (LDF)	50 - FY17 496 - FY18 640 – FY19	To-be-determined	New Indicator. Targets met in FY17 and FY18, exceeded to date in FY19.
Expected Result (R)1.3			
Cambodian CSOs and citizens are more engaged in the promotion of democracy and human rights			
Indicator 1.3: Number of people engaging in monitoring, advocacy or legal defense work on human rights receiving CCSS support	2,973 - FY17 11,830 - FY18 24,023 – FY19	To-be-determined	Targets not met in FY17. Met in FY18 and exceeded to date in FY19. Disaggregated by gender only for FY19.
Indicator 1.6: Number of CSO partners supported through Democracy and Governance Fund (DGF) grants	14 - FY17 18 - FY18 67 – FY19	55	Targets not met in FY17. Met in FY18 and exceeded to date in FY19.
Indicator 1.7: Percentage increase in the number of CCSS-supported CSOs that implement mechanisms for citizen advocacy with government entities	57.14% - FY17 79.31% - FY18 NA – FY19	90%	71.43% from Baseline conducted in 2017. Targets not met in FY17 and FY18. Data will be updated in FY19 Annual Report. Annually Targeted.
Indicator 1.8: Percentage of Cambodian citizens that report engagement in activities organized/ sponsored by CSOs	20% - FY19	65%	45% from Baseline conducted in 2017. Targets not met in FY19.

¹ Indicator numbers reflect what is in the current CCSS Performance Indicator Tracking Table.

² Data from Performance Monitoring FY19 (to June 2019) .

³ This is not the stated goal of the project. Should read, *increase the capability of Cambodian civil society to engage in democratic processes by representing citizen concerns*.

⁴ Baseline conducted in 2015 with a score of 4.3.

Indicator 1.9 Number of commune councils that take concrete action in response to citizen initiatives generated by CCSS grantees (DGF)	NA - FY17 31 - FY18 95 - FY19	28	New Outcome Indicator in 2017 2017 Established Baseline - 12/16 Targets met in FY18 and exceeded to date for FY19.
Indicator 1.10 Number of commune public forums held where citizens provide input and/or feedback to commune councillors (DGF)	NA - FY17 24 - FY18 26 - FY19	27	New Outcome Indicator in 2017 2017 Established Baseline - 12 Targets met in FY18 and exceeded to date for FY19.
Indicator 1.11 Number of issues raised with subnational authorities as a result of CCSS grantees' activities. (DGF)	NA - FY17 158 - FY18 261 - FY19	103	New Indicator in 2017 2017 Established Baseline - 12 Targets met in FY18 and exceeded to date for FY19.
TASK TWO: Enhance Technical and Organizational Capacity of Civil Society			
Expected Result (R)2.1 Increased technical, operational, and financial capabilities of select civil society organizations			
Indicator 2.1: Percentage of targeted CSOs that meet annual proposed benchmarks for specific categories of organizational capacity development.	NA - FY17 78% - FY18 NA - FY19	NA	Target not met in FY17 and exceeded in FY18. Data will be updated in FY19 Annual Report
Indicator 2.2: Percentage of targeted CSOs that reach benchmarks related to their functional organizational management system	NA - FY17 NA - FY18 NA - FY19	NA	Target not met in FY17 and FY18 *Data will be updated in FY19 Annual Report
Indicator 2.3: Change in organizational performance of Task 2 CSOs beneficiaries.	NA	4.63	3.5% from 2017 Initial OCA Measures. To be reported at EOP
Expected Result (R) 2.2 Developed and/or strengthened partnerships, collaboration, and coordination among CSOs needed to support continued organizational growth and project implementation			
Indicator 2.4: Number of CSOs participating in quarterly Civil Society Stakeholder Coordination Meetings	63 - FY17 119 - FY18 60 - FY19	NA	Targets exceeded in FY17, FY18 and FY19.
Indicator 2.5: Percentage of CCSS-related CSO activities that involve multiple CSOs	46.67% - FY17 52.63% - FY18 NA - FY19	75%	66.67% from 2017 Baseline. Annually targeted. Target not met in FY17 and FY18
Indicator 2.6: Number of civil society organizations receiving CCSS assistance to improve organizational capacity	40 - FY17 23 - FY18 66 - FY19	25	Exceeded targets in FY17 and FY19. Target not met in FY18.
Expected Result (R) 2.3. Enhanced ability of selected CSOs to deliver quality programming			
Indicator 2.7: Change in average 'CSO advocacy index' scores	3.68 - FY17 3.66 - FY18 3.98 - FY19	3.67	3.34 from 2017 Baseline. Annually targeted, Data to be updated in 2019 Annual Report.
Indicator 2.8: Percentage of CSO partners that have developed a multi-year planning document identifying the needs and priorities of stakeholders, against which they target strategic fundraising.	NA	75%	Task Order be reported at the EOP
TASK THREE: Analytical and Technical Services for USAID/Cambodia's Civil Society Activities			
Expected Result (R) 3.1. A heightened, thorough understanding of Cambodia's civil society sector and political environment, including opportunities and challenges based on the produced analyses			
Indicator 3.1: Number of public opinion surveys produced regarding the civil society and political environment in Cambodia.	1 - FY17 NA - FY18 1 - FY19	3	To be reported in year 3 and 5.

Indicator 3.2: Percentage of citizens with perception of the positive contribution of CSO activities. DELETE	NA - FY17 NA - FY18 NA – FY19	90%	64.33% from 2017 Baseline. To be reported in year 3 and 5.
Expected Result (R) 3.2. Clear and actionable recommendations developed for meaningful capacity development of Cambodian civil society in key sectors			
Indicator 3.3: Number of Political Economy Analyses conducted. DELETE	0 - FY17 NA - FY18 NA – FY19	1	Not currently programmed or planned.
Expected Result (R)- 3.3. An enhanced ability of USAID/Cambodia to quickly respond to opportunities to protect or advance democratic development, human rights, and/or political reform in Cambodia.			
Percentage of relevant USAID/US Embassy staff that find CCSS Public Opinion Polls and Political Economy Analyses useful	NA	NA	Deleted indicator.

ANNEX 5: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) PROTOCOLS

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I am with Social Impact, a US-based research organization working under contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

We are conducting a Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity. This is a mid-term performance evaluation of the Activity to assess performance and identify recommendations and lessons learned. As a key informant, we would like to ask your expert opinion about the CCSS Activity including the effectiveness of the activity in terms of least and most effective practices including ; Awareness raising, Strengthening organizations seeking to comply with laws (ex. labor, tax, LANGO), Representing defenders of constitutional rights, Issues related to land rights, Natural resource management, Social Accountability, Women and youth engagement, Health, Education, Enhance the technical and organizational capacity of civil society, sustainability of the activity, and recommendation that you may have on improving the activity that can includes, but not limited to best practices to improve gender and social inclusion.

The interview today is expected to take no longer than 40-60 minutes, though you can stop participating or leave the room at any point without consequences. If during this interview, we ask any questions that you do not wish to answer, you do not have to respond. You can drop out at any time and your decision bears no consequence on your participation in the program or any benefits you receive, now or in the future.

Confidentiality Protocol

- We will collect information on individuals' names, organizations, and positions. A list of organizations contacted will be made available as an annex to the final evaluation report; the names, positions, and organizations of respondents will not be associated with any particular findings or statements in the report.
- We may include quotes from respondents in the evaluation report, but will not link individual names, organizations, or personally identifiable information to those quotes, unless the respondent grants express written consent. Should the team desire to use a particular quote, photograph, or identifiable information in the report, the evaluators will contact the respondent(s) for permission to do so.
- All data gathered will be used for the sole purpose of this evaluation, and will not be shared with other audiences or used for any other purpose.
- Some interviews may be recorded. All recordings are uploaded on a secure cloud server and are only accessible to the evaluation team for data analysis and confirmation or perspectives. They will be erased permanently prior to the conclusion of this contract. Please let us know if this is an issue for you and we will not record this interview.

KII COVER SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Interview Place and Date:

Interviewer(s):

Participant Name:

Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

Location: ☐ Phnom Penh ☐ Banteay Meanchey ☐ Uddor Meanchey ☐ Siem Reap
☐ Mondulkiri ☐ Ratanakiri ☐ Kampong Cham ☐ Other: _____

Stakeholder Group:

☐ EWMI ☐ CSO
☐ USAID Cambodia ☐ Other stakeholder

Name of CSO or respondent role/position:

Do you confirm your consent to participate in this interview? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you understand that your participation is voluntary? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you understand that you can stop participating at any time? ☐ Yes ☐ No

To guarantee accuracy, we find it useful to keep an audio record of the conversation. If you prefer, however, we will not use recording devices.

Do you confirm your consent for us to record this interview? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant Signature:

KII INTERVIEW GUIDE: USAID, EWMI

Interview Questions
1. As a result of CCSS, in what areas, if any, have CSO capacities strengthened? What has been the result of this strengthened capacity?
2. What information have you relied on to determine that CSO capacities have changed? (For instance, higher OCA scores, improved fundraising, etc.)
3. In what areas, if any, have CSO capacities not been strengthened to the extent you expected? Why do you believe CSO capacities in this area did not improve?
4. Were there any specific interventions or approaches used by CCSS that you considered effective? Which ones and why?
5. Should similar approaches/interventions be supported or replicated in the future? Why/why not?
6. Have any of CCSS's interventions or approaches strengthened CCSS CSOs working relationships among Cambodian government institutions and other CSOs? If so, please describe how.
7. Were there any specific interventions or approaches used by CCSS that you considered ineffective? Which ones and why?
8. Should similar approaches/interventions be kept, removed, or modified in the future? If modified, how? If kept, why?
9. What are the endogenous (inside of an organization) and exogenous (outside of an organization) risks facing CSOs?
10. How effective has CCSS been in helping CSOs address these risks? What factors have helped or hindered this effectiveness?
11. To what extent was CCSS able to encourage civil society actors to collaborate and develop relationships? What worked, what didn't, and why? Please provide examples of successes and failures.
12. What does CCSS perceive to be the unique needs for needs organization working with women and minority groups in terms of increasing access to opportunities and services (including legal services), reducing gender-based violence, and capacity building to stand up for their own rights, and to influence decision-making in household, communities and society? To what extent has CCSS considered these needs of organizing working with women and minority groups in its programming/criteria to be awarded? How has this shaped CCSS's programming?
13. Since CCSS's inception, how, if at all, has CCSS adjusted its programming to better include the unique needs of women and minority groups – or organizations working with women and minority groups – in its programming? What have been the results of the above interventions regarding the improvement situation of women and minority groups? If so, please give us a specific example.
14. How, if at all, have CCSS initiatives promoted gender equality and social inclusion? How, if at all, have the CSOs supported under CCSS initiatives promoted gender equality and social inclusion?
15. How did CCSS Activity select the actors/organizations that became awardees (ex. was there a mapping process)? Are there sectors of civil society, or prominent local groups, that could not or would not work with CCSS Activity?
16. How do you define CSO self-reliance? What specific considerations or parts constitute self-reliance?
17. What impact, if any, has CCSS had in strengthening CSO self-reliance? (Probe about potential areas of CSO self-reliance, such as organizational capacity, financial health, human resources, etc.)
18. As you see it, are CCSS's initiatives setting CSOs up to be self-reliant after CCSS initiatives end? Why or Why not?
19. As you see it, what are the main challenges the Cambodian CSOs are dealing with? Have CCSS Activity addressed those challenges? If so, to what extent? If not, why not?

KII INTERVIEW GUIDE - CSO PARTNERS

Interview Questions
0. What CCSS intervention(s) have you been involved in?
1. As a result of the intervention, in what areas, if any, have you or your CSO's capacities strengthened? What has been the result of this strengthened capacity?
2. What information have you relied on to determine that your or your CSO's capacities have changed? (For instance, higher OCA scores, improved fundraising, etc.)
3. In what areas, if any, have your or your CSO's capacities not been strengthened to the extent you expected? Why do you believe capacities in this area did not improve?
4. Why did you choose to engage with CCSS in this intervention?
5. How effective was this intervention? As a result of the intervention, were you able to make progress towards the goals you sought from this intervention? Towards your organization's goals?
6. What parts of the intervention, if any, did you find especially helpful? What parts of the intervention could be improved? Should this intervention be kept, removed, or modified in the future? If kept, why? If modified, how?
7. To what extent has this intervention strengthened your working relationships with Cambodian government institutions and other CSOs? If so, please describe how.
8. What are the endogenous (inside of your organization) and exogenous (outside of your organization) risks facing your CSO?
9. How effective has CCSS been in helping your CSO address these risks? What factors have helped or hindered this effectiveness?
10. To what extent was CCSS able to encourage you to collaborate and develop relationships with other CSOs? What worked, what didn't, and why? Please provide examples of successes and failures.
11. What are the unique needs of women and minority groups in terms of increasing access to opportunities and services (including legal services), reducing gender-based violence, and capacity building to stand up for their own rights, and to influence decision-making in household, communities and society? To what extent have CSOs considered these needs of women and minority groups in its programming? How has this shaped CSO programming?
12. In what ways, if any, have CCSS initiatives promoted gender equality and social inclusion?
13. How do you define self-reliance for your CSO? What specific considerations or parts constitute self-reliance?
14. What impact, if any, has CCSS had in strengthening your CSO's self-reliance? (Probe about potential areas of CSO self-reliance, such as organizational capacity, financial health, human resources, etc.)
15. As you see it, what are the main challenges the Cambodian CSOs are dealing with? Has CCSS addressed those challenges? If so, to what extent? If not, why not?

ANNEX 6: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) PROTOCOL

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I am with Social Impact, a US-based research organization working under contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

We are conducting a Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity. This is a mid-term performance evaluation of the Activity to assess performance and identify recommendations and lessons learned. As a key informant, we would like to ask your expert opinion about the CCSS Activity including the effectiveness of the activity in terms of least and most effective practices on the topics including; Awareness raising, Strengthening organizations seeking to comply with laws (ex. labor, tax, LANGO), Representing defenders of constitutional rights, Issues related to land rights, Natural resource management, Social Accountability, Women and youth engagement, Health, Education, Enhance the technical and organizational capacity of civil society., sustainability of the activity, and recommendation that you may have on improving the activity that can includes, but not limited to best practices to improve gender and social inclusion.

The interview today is expected to take no longer than 60 minutes, though you can stop participating or leave the room at any point without consequences. If during this interview, we ask any questions that you do not wish to answer, you do not have to respond. You can drop out at any time and your decision bears no consequence on your participation in the program or any benefits you receive, now or in the future.

Confidentiality Protocol

- We will collect information on individuals' names, organizations, and positions. A list of organizations contacted will be made available as an annex to the final evaluation report; the names, positions, and organizations of respondents will not be associated with any particular findings or statements in the report.
- We may include quotes from respondents in the evaluation report, but will not link individual names, organizations, or personally identifiable information to those quotes, unless the respondent grants express written consent. Should the team desire to use a particular quote, photograph, or identifiable information in the report, the evaluators will contact the respondent(s) for permission to do so.
- All data gathered will be used for the sole purpose of this evaluation, and will not be shared with other audiences or used for any other purpose.
- If everyone agrees to it, these discussions may be recorded. All recordings are uploaded to a secure cloud server and are only accessible to the evaluation team for data analysis and confirmation or perspectives. They will be erased permanently prior to the conclusion of this contract. Please let us know if this is an issue for you and we will not record this interview.

FGD COVER SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Interview Place and Date:

Interviewer(s):

Participant Name:

Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

Location: ☐ Phnom Penh ☐ Banteay Meanchey ☐ Uddor Meanchey ☐ Siem Reap
☐ Mondulkiri ☐ Ratanakiri ☐ Kampong Cham ☐ Other:

Stakeholder Group:

☐ EWMI ☐ CSO
☐ USAID Cambodia ☐ Other stakeholder

Name of CSO or respondent role/position:

Do you confirm your consent to participate in this discussion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you understand that your participation is voluntary? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you understand that you can stop participating at any time? ☐ Yes ☐ No

To guarantee accuracy, we find it useful to keep an audio record of the conversation. If you prefer, however, we will not use recording devices.

Do you confirm your consent for us to record this discussion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant Signature:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDANCE

After reviewing the consent statement, note the following points to participants:

- Request the participants to introduce themselves, where they are from and what they do.
- After introductions, explain that names will not need to be stated during the discussion.
- Request participants to put cell phones on silent mode or turn them off for the duration of the discussion.
- Inform participants that the discussion is supposed to be free and open and that there is no right or wrong answer. This is supposed to be a discussion where participants give their opinions freely based on their experiences.
- Explain that divergent opinions are most welcome as people's life experiences are different.
- Request participants to please engage in the discussion according to the questions as that will save time.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) QUESTIONS

Focus Group Discussion Questions	
0.	What CCSS intervention(s) have you been involved in?
1.	As a result of the intervention(s) and/or based on your opinion, to what extent do you think CCSS has contributed to your ability to engage in democratic processes? Has this resulted in any changes in your political life concerning greater inclusiveness or transparency? Can you think of any specific examples?
2.	'Political processes' are not limited to elections or processes involving political parties, but rather encompass the entire political environment under which civil society operates. Based on this definition; Do you think that CCSS Activity contributed to an increase in local groups' abilities to engage in political processes? If yes, please describe.
3.	What improvements have CCSS Activity made in terms of building the capacity of Cambodian civil society and/or CSOs? In what area(s)? Please describe.
4.	Based on your opinion and your experience with CCSS Activity, are there other improvements that could be made to increase CSOs' capacities that have not happened? If yes, please describe.
5.	Did CCSS initiatives yield unexpected outcomes, either positive or negative? If yes, please describe.
6.	Based on your perception, did CCSS Activity contribute to an increase in local or national state democratic performance? If yes, how so?

ANNEX 7: MINI-SURVEY (MS) PROTOCOL

Introduction

Social Impact, a US-based research organization working under contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is conducting a Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity.

As part of the assessment, we would like to conduct a survey of CCSS Activity performance on key areas. The results of the survey and the assessment will be used to inform USAID's next year strategy and future project and activities in Cambodia, especially regarding strengthening Cambodian civil society.

The survey is expected to take about 10-15 minutes, though you can stop participating at any point and you are free to skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable or knowledgeable to answer.

Your involvement in this survey is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. All of your responses will be kept confidential and any information you provide that might identify you will be kept confidential to the fullest extent under local law and U.S. Government policy. For reports we write about the research, your answers will be combined with those of other people and presented in a summary format. You can drop out at any time and your decision bears no consequence on your participation in the program or any benefits you receive, now or in the future.

There is no payment or direct benefit to you for participating in this survey. We do not anticipate any major risks to you for participating other than losing time you could spend on other things.

If you have any concerns, you may contact the Social Impact Institutional Review Board at irb@socialimpact.com or +1 703 465 1884 with questions about the study or results.

MINI-SURVEY QUESTIONS - CSO PARTNERS

1. To what extent has your CSOs capacity been strengthened as a result of your engagement with CCSS?

<i>Not at all strengthened</i>	<i>Slightly strengthened</i>	<i>Somewhat strengthened</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>	<i>Highly strengthened</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
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2. How effective has CCSS been in each of the following areas?

	<i>Not at all effective</i>	<i>Slightly effective</i>	<i>Somewhat effective</i>	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Highly effective</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Financial Management Skills						
Strengthening organizations seeking to comply with laws (ex. labor, tax, LANGO)						
Strengthening technical and organizational capacity						
Representing defenders of constitutional rights						
Issues related to land rights						
Minority rights						
Natural resource management						
Social accountability						
Women and youth engagement						
Health						
Education						

3. What other types of support can CCSS (EWMI) provide you with to ensure help your CSO become self-reliant in the long term?

<Open-ended question>

ANNEX 8: LIST OF RESPONDENTS

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS RESPONDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCATIONS

No.	Location	Organization
1	Mondulkiri	My Village (MVi)
2	Ratanakiri	Highlanders Association (HA)
3	Ratanakiri	3S Rivers Protection Network (3SPN)
4	Kampong Cham	Nak Akphivath Sahakum (NAS)
5	Phnom Penh	Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC)
6	Phnom Penh	The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) Cambodia
7	Phnom Penh	Building Community Voice (BCV)
8	Phnom Penh	Open Development Cambodia (ODC)
9	Phnom Penh	People Center for Development and Peace (PDP-Center)
10	Phnom Penh	Youth Eco Ambassadors (YEA)
11	Banteay Meanchey	Media One

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS RESPONDENTS BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP

Male	Female	Age 18-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age 60+
24	31	21	25	3	4	2

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCATIONS

No.	Location	Organization
1	Phnom Penh	Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC)
2	Phnom Penh	Building Community Voice (BCV)
3	Phnom Penh	Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)
4	Ratanakiri	My Village (MVi)
5	Ratanakiri	Highlanders Association (HA)
6	Ratanakiri	3S Rivers Protection Network (3SPN)
7	Kampong Cham	Nak Akphivath Sahakum (NAS)
8	Phnom Penh	Youth Resources Development Program (YRDP)
9	Phnom Penh	Health Action Coordinating Committee (HACC)
10	Phnom Penh	Open Development of Cambodia
11	Phnom Penh	Youth Eco Ambassador
12	Phnom Penh	Cambodia Civil Society Partnership (CCSP)

13	Phnom Penh	Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD)
14	Phnom Penh	EWMI
15	Phnom Penh	LAC
16	Phnom Penh	PDP
17	Phnom Penh	VBK
18	Oddor Meanchey	YCC
19	Banteay Meanchey	Media One

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP

Male	Female	Age 18-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age 60+
25	17	6	14	12	8	2

ANNEX 9: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

	Title	Date
CCSS Policy and Sector Overview		
1.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Draft Finding Report: The Midline Public Opinion Poll Survey Implementation Period 14 November to 20 December 2018	2019
2.	Summary of Key Findings of 2018 Public Opinion Poll on Civil Society Organizations	2019
3.	Political Economy of Civil Society in Cambodia Report	October 2017
CCSS Technical Training, Communications, and Awareness		
4.	East-West Management Institute - Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Risk Management Strategy	October 1, 2019
5.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Draft Annual Workplan, October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019	September 14, 2018
6.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Draft Annual Workplan, October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018	September 15, 2017
7.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Draft Annual Workplan, October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017	September 13, 2016
8.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Annual Workplan, June 27, 2016 – September 30, 2016	August 25, 2016
CCSS Monitoring, Evaluation, and Other Reporting		
9.	Memorandum Re: Challenges faced by CCSS partners in Q3 of FY19	July 31, 2019
10.	Memorandum Re: Summary of legal assistance in Q3 of FY19	July 31, 2019
11.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q3 FY19 Quarterly Report, April 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019	July 30, 2019
12.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q2 FY19 Quarterly Report, January 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019	April 30, 2019

	Title	Date
13.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q1 FY19 Quarterly Report, October 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018	January 31, 2019
14.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q1 FY19 Quarterly Report, October 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018 Annex A: Performance Indicator Tracking Table	January 31, 2019
15.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: FY18 Annual Report, October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018	November 30, 2018
16.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project Reflection Workshop Report	August 29, 2018
17.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q3 FY18 Quarterly Report, April 1, 2018 – June 30, 2018	July 30, 2018
18.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q2 FY18 Quarterly Report, January 1, 2018 – March 31, 2018	April 30, 2018
19.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	March 26, 2018
20.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q1 FY18 Quarterly Report, October 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018	January 31, 2018
21.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: FY17 Annual Report, October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017	November 29, 2017
22.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q3 FY17 Quarterly Report, April 1, 2017 – June 30, 2017	July 30, 2017
23.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q2 FY17 Quarterly Report, January 1, 2017 – March 31, 2017	April 28, 2017
24.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Q1 FY17 Quarterly Report, October 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016	January 30, 2017
25.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: FY16 Annual Report, June 27, 2016 – September 30, 2016	November 29, 2016
CCSS Contracts, Modifications, and Related Documents		
26.	Contract No. AID-486-I-14-00001 / 72044219F00002 between USAID/Cambodia and Social Impact, Inc.	September 13, 2019

	Title	Date
27.	USAID/Cambodia Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Designation Letter	September 11, 2019
28.	Social Impact's Technical Proposal 72044219R00006: Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity, USAID/Cambodia	August 8, 2019
29.	USAID/Cambodia: Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP) No. 72044219R00006: Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity	July 12, 2019
30.	Modification 5 to Contract No. AID-442-C-16-00002 (Fully Executed) between USAID/Cambodia and East-West Management Institute, Inc.	September 28, 2018
31.	Modification 4 to Contract No. AID-442-C-16-00002 (Fully Executed) between USAID/Cambodia and East-West Management Institute, Inc.	August 15, 2018
32.	Modification 3 to Contract No. AID-442-C-16-00002 (Fully Executed) between USAID/Cambodia and East-West Management Institute, Inc.	May 9, 2018
33.	Modification 2 to Contract No. AID-442-C-16-00002 between USAID/Cambodia and East-West Management Institute, Inc.	May 25, 2017
34.	Modification 1 to Contract No. AID-442-C-16-00002 between USAID/Cambodia and East-West Management Institute, Inc.	August 17, 2016
35.	Contract No. AID-442-C-16-00002 (Fully Executed) between USAID/Cambodia and East-West Management Institute, Inc.	June 27, 2016
Other Relevant Documents		
36.	Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Project: Grantee Program Supports, Budgets, and Locations as of October 2019	October 2019
37.	USAID/Cambodia Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2014 -2018	October 2, 2014

ANNEX 10: DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE FUND CSO PARTNERS

SUB-RECIPIENTS UNDER DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE FUND GRANTS	
No	Grantees/Types of Organizations. Locations. Project Supports.
1	My Village (MVi) Type of the organization – Natural Resource Management and Minority Group Locations - Mondulkiri, Steung Treng and Kratie Project Supports. Enhance engagement of indigenous youth and indigenous women in natural resource conservation and protection through building the capacity of community members to demand that the government protect natural resources and increasing capacity of local government officials to understand and address natural resource issues.
2	Open Development Cambodia (ODC) Type of the organization – Data in Tech Locations - Phnom Penh, specifically to CSOs staff, independent think tanks and journalists Project Supports. Introduce open data, online resources/digital tools, as well as community and school mapping, to communities and ministerial agencies working in the natural resource sector. Project Supports. To enhance the use of data-driven stories and visualizations by training journalists and communicators in data analysis and data-driven storytelling; and raise public awareness for demanding higher transparency and accountability from the government. Nationwide
3	People Center for Development and Peace (PDP-Center) Type of the organization – Good Governance, Democracy, and Natural Resource Management Locations - Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap Project Supports. Improve sustainable and accountable natural resource management, that benefits community living conditions through access to and control over forestry and fishery resources, by mobilizing women, men, youth, ethnic minorities and vulnerable people.
4	Ponlok Khmer organization (PKH) Type of the organization – Natural Resource Management Locations - Preah Vihear Project Supports. Support rights-based and peacebuilding approaches to co-protection and co-natural resource management based on innovative data collection to protect Prey Preah Rokha Forest and the rights of the indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples.
5	Highlanders Association (HA) Type of the organization – Minority Group and Natural Resource Management Locations – Ratanakiri Project Supports. Support rights-based and peacebuilding approaches to co-protection and co-natural resource management based on innovative data collection to protect Prey Preah Rokha Forest and the rights of the indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples. Empowerment, in the Northeastern Provinces, of youth and women through networking and enhancing capacity on policy analysis, electoral rights, democracy, law enforcement and promoting respect for rights to natural resources.
6	Media for Education and Development in Action (Media One) Type of the organization – Media

	Locations – Phnom Penh, Rattanakiri, Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey Project Supports. Strengthen communication and advocacy skills to empower women/youth through multimedia platforms that will expand civic engagement.
7	Nak Akphivath Sahakum (NAS) Type of the organization – Human Rights and Development Locations - Kampong Cham, Tbaung Khmom & Kratie Project Supports. Expand citizens' (particularly women, youth & vulnerable people) engagement in the political process, by building capacity, and effective expression/engagement in local decision-making.
8	3S Rivers Protection Network (3SPN) Type of the organization – Fisheries Management and Aquaculture Locations - Ratanakiri and Steung Treng Provinces Project Supports. Empower 3S Rivers' communities, through capacity building, to raise awareness of their rights, conduct research and provide documentation for community rights-based advocacy on hydropower dams.
9	Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP) Type of the organization – Youths and Citizenship Education Locations - Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Battambang, and Siem Reap Project Supports. Empower youth to be committed and active citizens to make concrete initiatives and to motivate other people to promote sustainable peace, justice and democratic society.
10	Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC) Type of the organization – Youth Locations - Grant 1) Phnom Penh and Grant 2) Uddor Meanchey Project Supports. Empower youth and women to foster greater participation in the democratic process, through increased demands by youth for political parties to address their concerns. Build capacity of existing networks of 60-youth-led groups on youth participation in democracy, principles of democracy, governance, fundamentals of citizen journalism, public speaking and advocacy skills so that they can engage in better democracy reform process effectively to respond to the youth's concerns and issues.
11	Building Community Voice (BCV) Type of the organization – Gender and Natural Resource Management Locations - Kampot Project Supports. Strengthen the capacity of CSOs and marginalized communities affected by inappropriate development, land rights violations, and commercial exploitation to increase their access to and control over land.
12	Cambodian Civil Society Partnership (CCSP) Type of the organization – Good Governance, Democracy and Gender Locations - Kampong Speu, Kampot, and Kep Project Supports. Increase engagement of target beneficiaries on good governance and democratic development with the local authorities.
13	The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) Cambodia Type of the organization – Anti-Corruption and Good Governance

	Locations - Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri
	Project Supports. Enhance constructive engagement between the government and civil society on improving education services. The project's approach is to build partnerships with the sub-national administration and strengthen the capacity of indigenous women and youth to improve education services through citizen led monitoring.
14	Community Empowerment and Development Team (CEDT) Type of the organization – Natural Resource Co-management Locations - Mondulakiri province
	Project Supports. Engage community people in the development of innovative community-based natural resource management approaches in application of innovative mechanisms and improve systems of engagement between communities and legal service providers.
15	Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT) Type of the organization – Conflict Transformation Locations - Kampot, Kampong Chhnang, Kratie, Svay Rieng, Takeo, and Kampong Speu
	Project Supports. Ensure that community leaders, commune councilors and sub-national officials support their communities in addressing conflicts, both with external and internal stakeholders; specifically, to address conflicts on livelihood-related issues concerning land, natural resources, fisheries and credit/savings; and domestic violence, which often flourishes in the private sphere under difficult economic conditions.
16	Health Action Coordinating Committee (HACC) Type of the organization – Advocacy on Health Locations - Phnom Penh
	Project Supports. Improve health service to Cambodian citizens, including community people and vulnerable groups by raising their voice in improving health care quality.
17	Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD) Type of the organization – Advocacy on Consumer Protection Locations - Phnom Penh
	Project Supports. Consumer Movement for Food Safety Assurance through stimulating private sector and government's responsiveness to consumer problems on food safety

ANNEX II: EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

This evaluation was conducted by the following Evaluation Team:

Table I: Evaluation Team Composition

Role	Responsibilities
Evaluation Team	
Team Leader & Senior Evaluation Specialist Ms. Sarah Wood	• Manage the entire evaluation, including overseeing team members and the local partner's technical inputs, and producing timely, high-quality deliverables. • Lead the development of all deliverables by delegating assignments to team members and partners, then reviewing and consolidating their inputs. • Serve as a point of contact (POC) to USAID and deliver briefings and presentations to USAID and other stakeholders.
Local Evaluation Civil Society Technical Advisor Dr. Chey Tech	• Use subject matter expertise to contribute significantly to the desk review; evaluation design and data collection tools; and data analysis and reporting. • Conduct data collection and manage the Data Analyst when split into sub-teams. • Assist the TL to prepare and deliver briefings and presentations.
Local Evaluation Civil Society Technical Advisor Mr. Pheak Young	• Provide localized subject matter expertise to the desk review, to development of the design and data collection tools, and to data analysis and report writing. • Conduct data collection under the guidance of the TL. • Participate in the briefings and presentations to USAID.
Local Gender Evaluation Advisor Dr. Soheang Pak	• Contribute to the document review, evaluation design and data collection tools, data analysis, and report writing. • Support in conducting data collection. • Lead data compilation and subsequent coding and analysis after completion of field work.

ANNEX 12: APPROVED INCEPTION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In September 2019, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Cambodia contracted Social Impact, Inc. (SI) to conduct a mid-term performance evaluation of its Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) Activity (see Annex A for the Scope of Work). The evaluation will cover the three-year period from the beginning of implementation on June 27, 2016 through June 26, 2019. The SI Evaluation Team (ET) is pleased to present this evaluation design and work plan in fulfillment of the initial deliverable under the contract. SI understands the importance of assessing the CCSS Activity's accomplishments and lessons learned over the past three years and presenting this body of information in a manner that is accessible and useful to the Mission in Cambodia to help inform the development of future USAID investments.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Following the 2017 election, where opposition parties received strong popular support, Cambodia's government banned the Cambodian National Rescue Party – the largest opposition party – allowing the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) to run almost unopposed in the 2018 National Assembly election. The CPP government has also instituted restrictions on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and curtailed the activities of civil society groups. The United States has criticized these restrictions placed on the political opposition and the prosecution of opposition political leaders but has sought to remain engaged in Cambodia through foreign assistance geared towards strengthening the rule of law and supporting civil society initiatives.

CCSS is a five-year contract awarded to the East-West Management Institute, Inc. (EWMI) by USAID with a period of performance from June 27, 2016, to June 26, 2021. The goal of the CCSS Activity is to increase the capability of Cambodian civil society to engage in democratic processes by representing citizen concerns. The objectives of the activity are to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Cambodia and provide analytical and technical services to USAID/Cambodia's Office of Democracy and Governance to respond to opportunities for democratic development.

OBJECTIVES, TASKS, AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

CCSS directly supports USAID's goal to strengthen democracy and accountability in Cambodia. The activity seeks to *increase the capability of Cambodia's civil society to engage in political processes*, defined as the interaction between civil society and government, at all levels of society. "Political processes" are therefore not limited to elections or processes involving political parties, but rather encompass the entire political environment within which civil society operates. The activity has three main tasks:

Task 1: Support to Cambodian Civil Society

- 1.1 Administer Legal Defense Fund
- 1.2 Administer a Democracy and Governance Fund

Task 2: Enhance Technical and Organizational Capacity of Civil Society

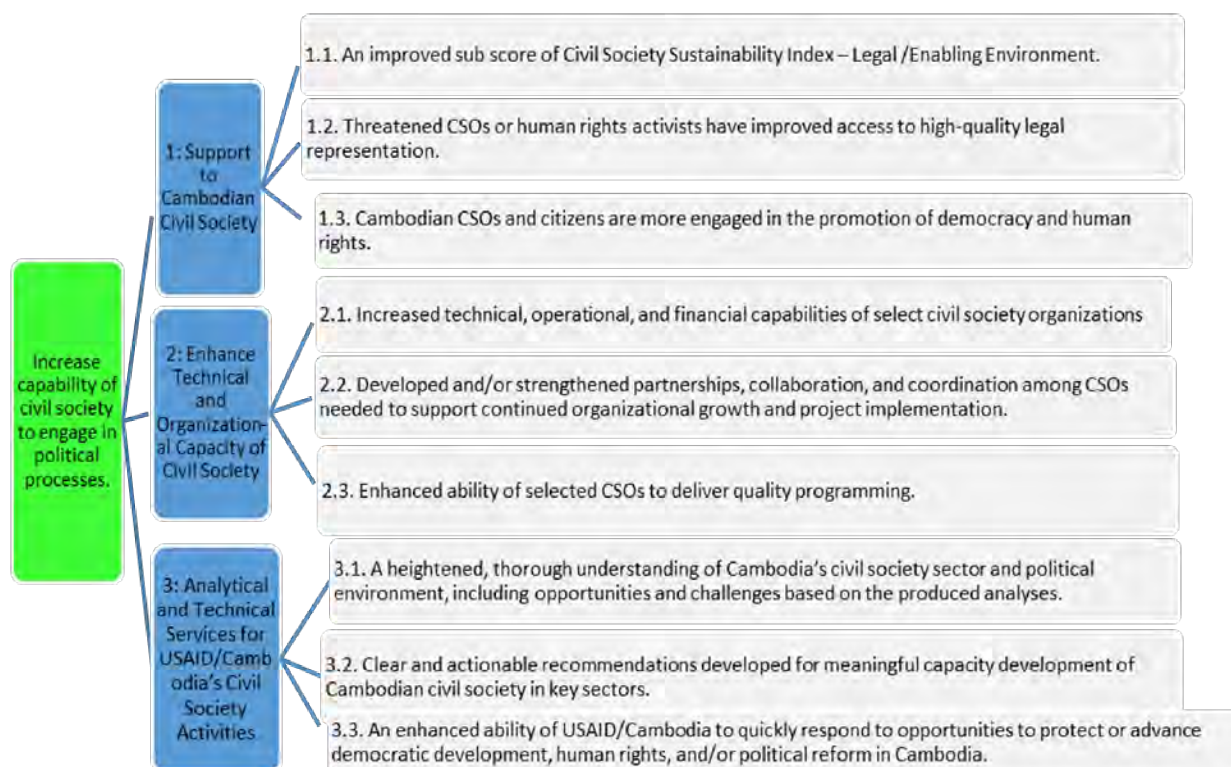
- 2.1 Organize Orientation and Ongoing Civil Society Collaboration Forum
- 2.2 Facilitate Organizational Capacity Assessments
- 2.3 Assist in Establishing Capacity Development Plans
- 2.4 Deliver Customized Technical Assistance, Training, and Ongoing Mentoring
- 2.5 Conduct Monthly Site Visits

Task 3: Analytical and Technical Services for USAID/Cambodia's Democracy and Governance Office

- 3.1 Provide Assistance to Conduct Special Analyses
- 3.2 Periodic Public Opinion Polling
- 3.3 Technical Assistance to Respond to Opportunities for Democratic Development

These tasks and the activity objective form part of the Results Framework, which is as follows:

Figure 8: CCSS Results Framework



EVALUATION PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

The purpose of the CCSS Mid-Term Performance Evaluation is to: (1) assess the performance to date of the Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening Activity; (2) propose actionable recommendations for USAID and the implementing partner (IP) EWMI that would help improve the activity's performance over the remainder of the performance period; and (3) provide USAID with a summary of lessons learned from the implementation of CCSS about how to design and manage civil society programs. The primary audience for the evaluation report will be USAID/Cambodia, USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/Human Rights and Governance (DCHA/DRG), and EWMI.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The specific evaluation questions (EQs) to be addressed during this mid-term evaluation are listed below. EQs 1-4 address mid-term performance and impacts while EQs 5 and 6 address lessons learned, sustainability, resiliency, and assisting the team in developing recommendations for USAID and EWMI.

Core Evaluation Questions for Performance and Impact

7. How and to what extent have CSOs strengthened capacities as a result of the activity?
8. Which interventions and/or approaches have been effective in meeting CCSS objectives? Why?
9. Which interventions and/or approaches have been least effective and why?
10. How and to what extent has CCSS adapted to mitigate operational risks to target CSOs? How effective have they been?

Cross Analytical Questions – Sustainability, Resiliency, and Lessons Learned

11. What should the implementing partner do to improve overall performance as well as to meaningfully integrate gender equality and inclusiveness for the remainder of the activity?
12. What should the implementing partner do to ensure CSO self-reliance in the longer term?

EVALUATION DESIGN

The CCSS mid-term evaluation will use a mixed-methods approach that integrates a suite of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to answer the above key evaluation questions. This methodology will afford USAID a greater depth of comparative analysis across the geographic areas where fieldwork is conducted. Data collection methods will consist of desk/secondary literature review, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and mini-surveys (MS). EQs will be answered using a combination of these four data collection methods via the triangulation of evidence and the use of contribution analysis to estimate CCSS unique contribution to observed results. Annex D contains an evaluation design matrix, which synthesizes the following sections.

Contribution analysis will constitute the primary means by which to analyze the data. Contribution analysis is a pragmatic and methodologically rigorous approach to situations in which the activity is one of many potential contributory causes and where it is not possible to measure attribution directly via creation of a scientifically valid counterfactual as is the case here. Instead, contribution analysis assesses attribution in terms of the contribution that CCSS activities are making to observed outcomes based on the totality of evidence. The essential value of contribution analysis in this case is that it offers an approach designed to reduce uncertainty about the contribution CCSS is making to the observed results through an increased understanding of why the observed results have occurred (or not) and the roles played by CCSS activities and other internal and external factors.

DATA COLLECTION

Under the proposed mixed-methods design, the ET will implement a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to answer the EQs. The sole quantitative method is the MS, which will be administered to CSOs directly benefitting from CCSS initiatives. The qualitative data collection instruments include in-depth KIIs with diverse CCSS stakeholders and FGDs with persons participating in and benefiting from the CCSS activities. This robust evidence base will be analyzed to provide comprehensive answers to EQs 1-4 – which look at evidence of performance and impact – as well as EQs 5-6 – which will provide a clustered, cross-analysis to both assess lessons learned and also explicate sustainability and resiliency gaps and needs. A description of each data collection method is provided below. Annex B provides a preliminary list of the organizations from whom primary data will be collected.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The CCSS ET will conduct in-depth, semi-structured key informant interviews (KII) conducted with individual activity stakeholders. The selection of key informants (KI) will be informed by USAID and EWMI to develop a representative list of individuals well-versed in the project design, implementation, and anticipated impacts. The CCSS ET will ensure that KIs interviewed have substantive knowledge and exposure to CCSS. The ET will also work with USAID and EWMI to ensure that, to the extent possible, the CSO representatives that the ET interviews include women and minority group respondents.¹

Interviews will be conducted from the following stakeholder groups, with other stakeholder groups and key informants added to address any data gaps encountered.

- USAID officials in the USAID Cambodia Office
- EWMI senior management, regional offices staff and sub-contractor staff
- CSO representatives who have received direct technical and intervention support

¹ If women and minority groups are underrepresented in the list of potential interviewees provided by USAID and EWMI, the ET will, to the extent possible, oversample respondents from these groups.

- Community members, local leaders, and key staff from other civil society strengthening programs that interact with CCSS or support programming that shares its objectives and geography

The KI protocols, which can be found in Annex E, will follow an open-ended format to give participants the space to describe their experiences in their own words and allow the interviewer to probe for information that will uncover new insights of key aspects of the CCSS Activity's performance. The guides will be modular such that certain question modules will be asked of all respondents, while other question modules will be tailored to specific groups of respondents, field sites, and objectives.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The CCSS evaluation team will conduct in-depth moderated focus group discussions (FGD) with small groups of CCSS CSO staff or volunteers. FGDs are a key method for measuring program performance as perceived by beneficiaries because in-depth information can be collected on the effects of participation in activity interventions. A major advantage of the FGD method (as opposed to other forms of qualitative research) is its flexibility for in-depth exploration of the knowledge and attitudes of the group towards processes used during CCSS implementation (e.g., representativeness, transparency, and participation by women, youths, and minority and marginal groups) and the outcomes of the activities in which they participated.

FGDs will be guided by the scripts, questions, and guidelines in Annex F. This protocol will give the discussion moderator a set of key questions and topics for guiding the discussions. FGDs will uncover key information for answering the EQs, including if CCSS met its objectives, how CCSS initiatives with CSOs unfolded, and the contribution of CCSS activities to observed changes.

The FGDs will include 6 to 8 participants for 90-to-120-minute session, with 1-2 FGDs attempted in each selected field site. The FGD participants will be selected purposively, guided by criteria established by the evaluation team in conjunction with CCSS management and field staff. Proposed criteria include the following:

- FGD participants will be permanent community residents
- FGD participants will have participated in one or more of the activities implemented by CCSS in their community

To get a fully representative picture of the activity and implementation, the composition of FGD participants will be determined in coordination with EWMI in each successive field site depending on the nature of activities implemented within those communities and the coverage of CCSS participants in prior data collection efforts. To the extent possible, FGDs will be organized at the venues where participants will be comfortable to be recorded using digital audio recorders. As with KIIs, the ET will work with USAID and EWMI staff to ensure women and minority groups are appropriately represented in FGDs, oversampling as necessary and to the extent possible. The ET will also attempt to have 2-3 all-women FGDs to ensure comfort for women to express varied views in a more gender-sensitive forum.

MINI-SURVEY

The ET will conduct a mini-survey (MS) administered in Khmer over the phone with beneficiary CSOs. CSOs will be asked to identify the interventions they received so responses can be disaggregated by intervention type. CSOs invited to participate in the MS will be notified in advance by EWMI to ensure high participation rates. As with other data collection protocols, a consent script will be read to respondents at the beginning of the call. The MS will be tailored to ensure that it accurately reflects CCSS activities and their expected outcomes while also answering the EQs within the constraints of the method.

Survey respondents will be comprised of purposively sampled CSOs determined by the ET and EWMI. In its purposive sampling, the ET will ensure that respondents from diverse locations – including those outside of the provinces to be visited – and groups (i.e. CSOs working with women, youth, minority groups, etc.) are surveyed. Annex G includes the consent script and questions to be used during the mini-survey. As a mini-survey, the questionnaire is confined to a limited number of primarily closed-ended questions to allow for greater comparability of informant responses.

SECONDARY DATA AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

Complementing primary data collection, the ET will conduct a comprehensive review of internal and external documents of relevance to the CCSS Activity. The ET will work in coordination with the CCSS management team to identify, collect and review documents over the course of the evaluation that include, but are not limited to the following:

- Statements of work
- Activity designs, training curricula, event agendas, and other key documents for understanding the content of activities
- Annual Work plans (initial and subsequent)
- Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (initial and revised)
- Quarterly and annual reports
- Results from CCSS participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities
- USAID monitoring and verification reports
- Additional documents provided with the evaluation (i.e., CCSS's midline Public Opinion Poll Survey on CSO perspectives)
- Political Analysis
- External publications by donors, academic researchers, non-governmental organizations (NGO), etc.

The Evaluation Team Leader (TL) will incorporate information from the desk research during the evaluation team's initial planning meeting to ensure that all team members understand the background and context of CCSS and are attentive to the need for data to answer the core evaluation questions. Of particular importance is the geography of CCSS, its M&E framework, progress in implementing activities over time, key challenges reported by the project in achieving its objectives, and other key information for understanding the activity and how best to evaluate its performance using the other methods described below.

The results from CCSS's M&E activities will further comprise a source of performance data for the evaluation. CCSS M&E data will be integrated with the data generated from the ET's primary data collection methods and will be used as a source for triangulation to answer the key evaluation questions.

DATA ANALYSIS

The ET will deploy various data analysis techniques – and will triangulate qualitative and quantitative data – to formulate an evaluation report. Triangulation is a data analysis strategy in which qualitative and quantitative data are first analyzed independently, in parallel, and then cross-verified for validity. The ET will subsequently conduct a comparative analysis of the desk review findings, qualitative data, and quantitative data to validate findings across all data sources. SI will ensure that findings are disaggregated, with a special emphasis on disaggregating data based on respondent sex, geography, and group.

Throughout fieldwork, the TL will lead internal working sessions with the ET to discuss emerging findings and categorize analysis and recommendations by EQ. Such discussions will inform the creation of an internal preliminary Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations (FCR) matrix. Along with SI's

Evaluation Quality Use and Impact (EQUI®) Quality Assurance (QA) Checklist for the Preliminary Findings Matrix, the FCR matrix: i) ensures that the ET is collecting data that systematically and thoroughly answers each evaluation question, ii) verifies that preliminary analysis accounts for gender and social dimensions, iii) identifies gaps where additional clarification or analysis may be necessary, iv) ensures that each recommendation is supported by evidence, and v) serves as the basis for the debrief presentations and the Draft Evaluation Report.

Furthermore, ET members will take KII and FGD notes in real-time, cleaning and synthesizing electronic summaries on a rolling basis after each site visit. SI will use content and comparative analyses to identify response categories and patterns and to elucidate emergent themes and contextual factors among qualitative data. For all primary data collection – and secondary monitoring data, to the extent possible – the ET will disaggregate data by respondent group, respondent sex, and location to capture divergences between the different disaggregation categories of the respondents. The ET will also examine how organizations focused on supporting specific groups of beneficiaries – such as women and minority groups – responded to the ET’s questions, and will attempt to undertake a similar analysis based on the type of support CSOs received from CCSS.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

In assessing data for this evaluation, the ET plans to deploy several analysis techniques.

Contribution Analysis

CCSS operates within a wider system in which it is only one of several factors that potentially affect activity outcomes. CCSS interventions will therefore be, at best, a contributory cause to any observed outcomes. It is important to place CCSS activities within the wider range of other potential causal factors and to understand that these other factors have a potentially important influence on the occurrence, scale, and nature of changes. The CCSS ET will integrate the following steps into the data collection and analysis process to ensure that contribution analysis is applied to the development of sound and reasonable conclusions for USAID and CCSS stakeholders:

Set out the cause-effect issue to be addressed in a detailed and developed theory of change (TOC). This step maps out the cause-and-effect logic leading from project activities to expected outcomes, and carefully traces out the expected – and possibly unexpected – outcomes and causal linkages along with key assumptions and causal mechanisms underpinning the TOC.

Identify the risks to the postulated TOC, including rival explanations. This step assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the cause-and-effect logic underlying CCSS performance and assesses the nature and extent of CCSS contribution to each expected result, along with factors that imperil the hypothesized causal linkages and other possible contributory factors and rival explanations.

Gather evidence. This step involves the implementation of the data collection methods described above to gather evidence, particularly: (1) if the expected results occurred or not, (2) why expected results did or did not occur, and (3) the causal processes, contextual factors, and other contributory factors explaining why the expected results did or did not occur.

Assemble and assess the contribution claim and challenges to it. This step constructs the contribution narrative while assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the cause-and-effect logic in light of: the evidence collected during field work, the relevance of other contributory factors, and the evidence for rival explanations.

Seek out additional evidence. This step determines what kind of additional evidence is needed to enhance the credibility of the contribution claim and gather the appropriate evidence (as feasible).

Reexamine the TOC and update the FCR based on process above. Having identified and addressed any challenges to credibility, such as the strengths of certain assumptions and/or the roles of other influencing factors, this step builds a more credible evidence base. It measures contribution and guards against “self-importance bias,” which occurs when the relative importance of other contextual factors is under-estimated, and the importance of project-specific factors is overestimated.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis

To inform its analysis, the ET will draw upon tenants of a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework. This involves examining the degree to which CCSS identified and incorporated gender and minority groups and the barriers they face into activity planning and how, if at all, the program adjusted to better engage these beneficiary groups. The ET will also examine CCSS’s M&E processes and approaches to determine whether they adhere to good GESI practice.

The ET will work with SI’s Gender Specialist to ensure that the evaluation and assessment design incorporate gender-sensitive approaches for data collection instruments, interviewing strategies, and outreach methods. Furthermore, the ET’s Cambodian Gender Advisor will ensure that the evaluation’s implementation adheres to these gender-sensitive approaches. The Gender Advisor will also help the ET interpret and better contextualize responses received from women and minority groups, and, during qualitative data collection, will ask questions to probe and elicit greater clarity from respondents discussing topics pertaining to women and minority groups.

As noted above, the evaluation team will ensure diversity among respondents, oversampling as possible, and will explore how women are included in program activities as well as what role gender plays in program processes and outcomes. Select questions during qualitative data will also focus explicitly on gender and minority groups. Furthermore, responses to qualitative and quantitative questions will be analyzed by stakeholder groups, thus allowing the ET to evaluate the potential differential impacts of CCSS implementation on women and minority groups. Finally, data analysis will not only be disaggregated by respondent gender (and minority group, as appropriate) but will also consider the gender implications of the interventions. Further to this point, the ET will ensure that analyses are conducted on the intended and unintended, positive and negative results effecting women and minority groups.

Content Analysis

Content analysis will entail the ET’s intensive review of collected KII and FGD data to identify and highlight notable examples of CCSS’s successes (or lack of successes) that contributed to (or inhibited) CCSS’s impact on Cambodia’s CSOs.

Trend Analysis

Trend analysis will enable the ET to examine different CCSS indicators over time to identify patterns of convergence (or divergence) of activity outputs and outcomes toward the program’s objectives.

Gap Analysis

Gap analysis by the ET will examine which aspects of CCSS, if any, fell short of anticipated performance, and the likely factors behind these gaps.

Comparative Analysis

The ET will also undertake comparisons of CCSS’s results across the different data collection methods employed, as well as across different stakeholder groups, CSO interventions, and geographic locations, to assess either convergence or divergence in perspectives.

DISSEMINATION AND UTILIZATION

The ET will submit biweekly progress reports to USAID on the progress of the evaluation and any issues that may occur. For report submission, the TL and SI's headquarters (HQ) team will use the EQUI® review process to ensure a high-quality product. This will include a review by the SI Gender Specialist to confirm that the Draft Evaluation Report addresses gender issues and accounts for gender considerations in its recommendations. The evaluation report will contain only de-identified data. The final report will also be uploaded to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) and mini-survey data to the DDL.

CHALLENGES, LIMITATIONS, AND BIASES

The ET has identified several potential constraints to the evaluation alongside the following proposed mitigation strategies.

Incorrect attribution of CCSS's interventions. Respondents may attribute higher-level outcomes to CCSS activities rather than other exogenous factors. The ET will address this through its contribution analysis, which includes examining other potential factors that may have contributed to outcomes.

Respondent answers may be subject to recall bias related to past events or experiences. The survey allows the ET to address this by ensuring a larger number of respondents, thus mitigating individual challenges with recall. Primary data collection will also be cross-checked with desk review documents (See Annex H for a list of these documents) which, given the timeframe over which they were developed, should be subject to less recall bias.

Having an ET composed of individuals from different ethnic groups and nationalities from those interviewed may evoke response/desirability biases whereby respondents alter answers due to explicit or implicit expectations. The ET will mitigate these biases by clearly indicating, as part of the informed consent procedures, the independence of the evaluators. Documentation provided by USAID should reinforce this independence. The team members will also switch facilitation roles depending on the cultural context.

Biased CSO respondents. Some CSOs might not wish to participate in FGDs and KIs, and those that do participate might be different in fundamental ways than those that do not. By conducting surveys allowing for greater anonymity, the ET will obtain a larger sample of respondents. If the ET observes that answers from the CSO respondents are favorably biased, the ET will attempt to obtain a list of nearby CSOs engaged by the local CCSS office from which the ET can randomly sample CSOs to interview or invite to FGDs.

Non-representative sample of respondents. CCSS programming extends throughout Cambodia. Though it may be easiest to do so, collecting data from respondents in Phnom Penh is unlikely to be representative. SI will therefore travel to locations outside of Phnom Penh to ensure a more representative respondent base. Incorporating surveys into the evaluation also ensures a more robust number of respondents from a larger number of provinces.

WORKPLAN

An illustrative fieldwork schedule has been included in Annex C. The figures below present information on the evaluation schedule, deliverables, and team composition.

SCHEDULE OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

The ET will follow the schedule for data collection below. An "X" denotes a contract deliverable.

Figure 9: Schedule of Evaluation Activities

Evaluation Stage	Activity/Task/Deliverable	Sep	Oct					Nov.				Dec.				Jan.				
			1 to 4	7-11	14-18	21-25	28-1	4-8	11-15	18-22	25-29	2-6	9-13	16-20	23-27	30-3	6-10	13-17	20-24	27-31
1. Background Review and Familiarization	Contract award																			
	Kickoff call with USAID/Cambodia																			
	Desk Review																			
	Evaluation Design to USAID/Cambodia				X															
	USAID/Cambodia review of draft report																			
	Addressing USAID feedback on Evaluation Design																			
	TL and Evaluation Technical Expert depart for Cambodia																			
2. Field Work and Out-Brief	In-brief with						X													
	In-country data collection																			
	Exit Briefing with USAID Cambodia								X											
	TL and Evaluation Technical Expert return from Cambodia																			
3. Follow-up and Final Report	Draft Evaluation Report to USAID/Cambodia											X								
	USAID/Cambodia review of draft report																			
	Second Draft of Evaluation Report																X			
	USAID/Cambodia review of draft report																			
	Final Evaluation Report																			X

DELIVERABLES

The ET has developed its work plan in accordance with the deliverables schedule shown in the table below:

Table 1: Schedule of Deliverables

Deliverable	Days from Effective Date	Deliverable Dates
Evaluation design and work plan	19	10/19/2019
In-brief and field work	28	10/28/2019
Exit-briefing	46	11/15/2019*
First draft evaluation report	67	12/6/2019*
Second draft evaluation report*	95	1/3/2020*
Final Evaluation Report*	123	1/31/2020*

* These dates – which slightly vary from the original dates – have been recommended by SI but have not yet been approved by USAID.

TEAM COMPOSITION

This evaluation will be conducted by the following Evaluation Team:

Table 2: Evaluation Team Composition

Role	Responsibilities
Evaluation Team	
Team Leader & Senior Evaluation Specialist Ms. Sarah Wood	• Manage the entire evaluation, including overseeing team members and the local partner's technical inputs, and producing timely, high-quality deliverables. • Lead the development of all deliverables by delegating assignments to team members and partners, then reviewing and consolidating their inputs. • Serve as a point of contact (POC) to USAID and deliver briefings and presentations to USAID and other stakeholders.
Local Evaluation Civil Society Technical Advisor Dr. Chey Tech	• Use subject matter expertise to contribute significantly to the desk review; evaluation design and data collection tools; and data analysis and reporting. • Conduct data collection and manage the Data Analyst when split into sub-teams. • Assist the TL to prepare and deliver briefings and presentations.
Local Evaluation Civil Society Technical Advisor Mr. Pheak Young	• Provide localized subject matter expertise to the desk review, to development of the design and data collection tools, and to data analysis and report writing. • Conduct data collection under the guidance of the TL. • Participate in the briefings and presentations to USAID.
Local Gender Evaluation Advisor Dr. Soheang Pak	• Contribute to the document review, evaluation design and data collection tools, data analysis, and report writing. • Support in conducting data collection. • Lead data compilation and subsequent coding and analysis after completion of field work.
Logistician Mr. Nguon Sophal	• Provide administrative and logistical support throughout all fieldwork • Set up interviews with key informants and alert representatives at field sites to the team's visits • Arrange all national ground, air, and water transport, as well as lodging. • Assist with data entry and report preparation support

The evaluation team will receive quality assurance, mobilization, operational, and management support from the following Social Impact HQ-based personnel:

Table 3: SI HQ Support Staff Composition

Role	Responsibilities
SI HQ Support Staff	
Program Director Mr. Samir Panjwani	Ensure USAID satisfaction via routine check-ins Provide high-level guidance on methodology, major deliverables', and any problems Oversee TL and HQ management staff Conduct in-depth review of deliverables using EQUI® QA checkpoints
Program Manager Mr. Sam Mirtaheri	Onboard the team and train them on SI procedures and quality standards. Issue and ensure contractual adherence to partner subcontract. Manage the budget by tracking LOE usage and other spending.
Program Assistant Mr. Dominick Margiotta	• Provide administrative and logistical support—arrange travel and lodging, process expense reports, etc. Copyedit and format deliverables
Gender Specialist Ms. Kathleen Sciarini	• Review all major deliverables to ensure appropriate addressing of gender considerations.