

Education Sector Working Group (ESWG)

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) was set up as part of the Consultative Group process in 1999. It provides a platform for policy dialogue and coordination within development partners and civil society towards the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (C-SDGs), and a coordinated support to the implementation of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and Education Strategic Plan (ESP).

The ESWG is committed to overall aid effectiveness agenda, including the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011). This commitment is further translated through the recognition of the Development Cooperation and Partnerships Strategy (DCPS 2019-2023); the Declaration by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and Development Partners on Enhancing Aid Effectiveness (2006); the Standard Operating Procedures for All Externally Financed Projects/Programs in Cambodia (SOP 2012); the National Operational Guidelines for Development Cooperation Grant Assistance (2006), and the RGC's Action Plan on Harmonization, Alignment and Results 2006-2010. In the education sector, these commitments are reflected in the "Partnership Principles for the Royal Government of Cambodia and its Development Partners in support of the Education Sector".

In all its activities, the ESWG commits to pursuing internationally agreed aid effectiveness and aid harmonisation principles,¹ including:

- Ownership of development priorities by developing countries;
- A focus on results: having a sustainable impact should be the driving force behind investments and efforts in development policy making;
- Partnerships for development: development depends on the participation of all actors, and recognition of the diversity and complementarity of their functions; and
- Transparency and shared responsibility: development cooperation must be transparent and accountable to all citizens.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of the ESWG are:

- To promote the Leave No One Behind agenda, and continued access to quality, safe and inclusive education for all children in Cambodia;
- To contribute to the successful implementation of the RGC education strategies and to promote and monitor major policy and program reform in the education sector;
- To serve as the main platform to co-ordinate the work of development partners and NGOs on all issues related to education with the view to facilitating sound policy dialogue and to minimise transaction costs;
- To serve as a mechanism for policy dialogue between development partners and between development partners and the RGC to increase harmonization and

¹ Agreed to as part of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Busan, South Korea, 2011.

coordination, and therefore impact, of development partner efforts in support of key education sector reforms; and

- To maintain and develop relationships with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and other ministries relevant to education service delivery in support of the realisation of key education sector reforms.

3. Roles and Functions

Donor coordination

- To share among development partners and with MoEYS emerging pipeline projects/programmes and impact evaluations and reviews. When required, do peer review on new project/programme development.
- Regularly report on major reforms implementation and support provided (reforms to monitor and respective focal points should be identified and confirmed on a yearly basis).
- Strengthen harmonization of development partner activities through such interventions as joint financing, joint appraisal and monitoring, joint evaluations, joint reviews, joint research and joint funding of technical assistance.
- Provide advice and technical support in the designing and implementation of programmes funded by global initiatives in country (e.g. by the Global Partnership for Education - GPE);
- To harmonize donor positions, procedures and approaches to education development in Cambodia, including towards their implementing partners.

Policy dialogue and advocacy

- To support joint, coordinated and planned policy and strategic dialogue, priority based planning, and effective implementation of reforms to develop the sector in a spirit of partnership and co-operation.
- To support the RGC to develop and implement a coherent and systematic capacity development master plan, and to track development partner support to the implementation of this plan.
- Attention will be given to all components of the education sector, including non-formal education and technical vocational education and training (TVET). Coordination will be ensured with the development partner group on TVET so that development partner inputs to ESP and MoEYS strategies on TVET are channelled through ESWG.

Coordination with the Joint Technical Working Group for Education (JTWG-Ed)

- To share collective views on all aspects of the development of the sector, either proactive or responsive, with the government through the JTWG-Ed.
- To discuss options for promoting aid effectiveness including harmonisation and alignment of aid activities to government policies, systems and strategic plans and advocate it to the JTWG-Ed.

- To support MoEYS to monitor and review Cambodia's progress in the education sector against ESP and sector performance indicators and targets, local and external investment and constraints to this progress.
- To promote an enabling environment for all actors in the education sector, including the civil society space, through the JTWG-Ed.

4. Membership

The ESWG is open to any development partners, private sector partners and NGOs contributing significantly to the education sector. As a large membership may hinder effective dialogue, it is desirable to constitute a "core group" which will meet as the ESWG and report to the wider membership and to the JTWG-Ed. Development partner and NGO representatives in the core group should keep their respective colleagues informed of progress and developments.

ESWG Core group

The ESWG will constitute a core group of 20 members. These members will facilitate dialogue and coordination. Members of the core group should nominate one representative at an appropriate and competent level to be able to share information and support the group in reaching decisions.

Members need to bring all information relevant to the ESWG discussions and can disseminate deliberations and decisions of the ESWG to other members of the development partner community.

If, and when, required (for example during the development or midterm review of the ESP where technical inputs from ESWG are required), two members of the core group will act as focal points for youth and sports: one for the youth and one for sports.

Members of the core group commit to a regular and active participation in the ESWG. The list of members will be reviewed on an annual basis based on these criteria.

Membership is open to the following within the limit of a total of 20 members:

- Multilateral partners such as UN agencies, Bretton Woods institutions, Asian Development Bank, European Union and International Organizations with significant investment and/or strategic policy dialogue in the education sector in Cambodia.
- Bilateral partners with resident missions and significant investment and/or strategic policy dialogue in the education sector in Cambodia.
- Organisations registered in Cambodia as Foreign NGO or Domestic NGO are invited to participate in the ESWG through the NGO Education Partnership (NEP). The number of NEP's representation equals the number invited in the JTWG (currently 5), with a minimum of 3. NEP's representation is comprised as follows: NEP Executive Director as permanent member and 4 NGOs for a two-year term in rotation². NEP and the NGOs will ensure effective policy dialogue and knowledge management with other NGOs.
- The Humanitarian Response Forum (HRF) education sector will be represented by its chair, i.e. UNICEF.

Sub working groups

² See Annex 1

“Sub working groups” are constituted to address more detailed or sub-sector issues, thus making the ESWG set-up more flexible and adaptable to changing needs and circumstances. Therefore, sub working groups can be used on a time-bound, task-specific or permanent basis. For example, sub working groups could be established when school-based management guidelines are in development, or to closely follow and coordinate on teacher development reforms.

Sub working groups can support the implementation of major reforms, to focus on capacity development and to address cross-cutting issues that can be reported back to the ESWG core group for further discussion and agreement on any actions that are required. Membership is open to any development partners and NGOs. The composition of ESWG sub-working groups will be reviewed and confirmed on an annual basis.

Provincial ESWGs

Provincial ESWGs (P-ESWGs) are aiming at enhancing operational coordination in the provinces and enabling the representation of NGOs to the Provincial JTWGs. The P-ESWGs are open to all partners working in the field of education at provincial level and registered as P-ESWG members. The chair and vice-chair of each 25 P-ESWG are elected for a two-year term. As the P-ESWG membership is largely from NGOs/CSOs, inputs and liaison from provincial ESWGs to the national ESWG will be ensured by NEP.

5. Organisation and Administration

- *Chairing:* In accordance with the TWG Guidelines, the chair of the ESWG is also the JTWG-Ed Lead Donor Facilitator/Vice-Chair. He/she is chosen among the ESWG members for a three-year mandate through a secret ballot. He/she convenes and chairs ESWG meetings.
- *Secretariat:* A part-time secretariat is made available by one of the ESWG members. Its role is to ensure strong knowledge management and coordination systems are developed and maintained within the ESWG and the JTWG-Ed. The secretariat will prepare and share agendas, minutes and relevant documents of ESWG meetings, JTWG-Ed meetings and education retreat, sub working groups, education congress and joint sector reviews with the ESWG core group. The secretariat will be responsible for the preparation and delivery of user-friendly and efficient knowledge management and information sharing systems for ESWG and in coordination with the JTWG-Ed secretariat/MoEYS.
- *Logistics/funding:* All ESWG constituents may be required to contribute to logistics and funding efforts according to their respective capacities.
- *Meetings of the ESWG core group:* meetings of the core group are ordinarily held every two months and preferably before every JTWG meetings. Ad hoc meetings of the ESWG core group may be called as needed. Agendas are prepared by the ESWG secretariat based on propositions made by ESWG members. Meetings should be focused and result-oriented. Agendas and minutes are shared with ESWG members for agreement before their dissemination. Technical assistants or additional civil society representation are invited to input into the discussions based on needs set in meeting agendas. Development partners headquarter missions may join ESWG meetings.
- *Meetings of the sub-working groups and P-ESWGs:* meetings are ordinary held every two months. The sub-group chairs and P-ESWG chairs are responsible for calling

meetings and ensuring these are minuted. Minutes are shared with the ESWG Secretariat. Agendas are prepared by the chair on propositions made by members.

- *Joint field visits*: are encouraged to nurture a culture of learning and reduce the burden on local authorities and local partners.
- *Participation and representation of ESWG*: in external meetings / external events, in particular those organized by MoEYS, should be coordinated as much as possible for better efficiency.

Phnom Penh, 6 March 2020

Annex 1

NEP and NGO representation in ESWG:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	
1	NEP				
2	NGO A	NGO E		NGO I	
3	NGO B	NGO F		NGO J	
4	NGO C		NGO G		
5	NGO D		NGO H		