

CONCEPT NOTE (Version 1 - Published)

Review of National Social Protection Policy Framework Cambodia

1. Background

The Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) coordinated the formulation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) in 2016 which defines the necessary areas of reform to ensure income security of the people, reduce poverty, strengthen the stability of the financial system and sustain economic growth.

The NSPPF was developed to achieve the goals set forth in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2014-2019 and the Rectangular Strategy Phase III of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) which seek **“to continue to develop and to strengthen the social protection system with concentration, consistency and effectiveness”**. The strategic goals and plans of the NSPPF are based on the following key principles:

- i) **Reforming the governance structure of the whole social protection system;**
- ii) **Enhancing the effectiveness of public expenditure;**
- iii) **Maximizing the coverage;**
- iv) **Reviewing cross cutting issues.**

The draft of the NSPPF was finalized and approved by the Committee for Economic and Financial Policies on December 15, 2016 and it was adopted by the Council of Ministers plenary meeting, presided by **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia on March 24, 2017.

The NSPPF 2016-2025 sets out the roadmap for the development of the social protection system by focusing on two main pillars: Social Assistance and Social Security. Social Assistance is divided into four components: (1) emergency response, (2) human capital development, (3) vocational training, (4) welfare for vulnerable people. In the NSPPF Social Security consists of five components: (1) pensions insurance, (2) health insurance, (3) employment injury insurance, (4) unemployment insurance, (5) disability insurance.

The NSPPF objectives are to harmonize, concentrate and strengthen existing schemes or programs in order to increase the effectiveness, transparency and consistency of the whole social protection system. In addition, it seeks to expand the coverage of the social safety network to all citizens, given the pace of national economic growth.

Since its establishment, NSPC has taken ownership of the NSPPF and have worked to implement the strategies laid out in the framework. With the support of the General Secretariat of the NSPC (GS-NSPC), it has coordinated policy drafting on the social protection system among relevant ministries and institutions to develop common policy proposals, monitored and evaluated the progress and effectiveness of social protection policy implementation and dealt with cross-cutting issues by harmonizing social assistance and social security systems to ensure consistency across the whole system.

As we approach the midpoint mark of the NSPPF 2016-2025, it is ideal for NSPC to take stock of the development of Social Protection in Cambodia, to recognize the achievements and to also identify areas where an update of the NSPPF might be needed in order to attain the lofty ambitions it has set, and to remain relevant to the changing demands of the social protection system as a whole.

This review also comes at a critical time as Cambodia, like many other countries, are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic fallout. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic fallout have shined the light on the importance of social protection to mitigate the impact of a crisis and to provide a comprehensive disaster response mechanism. Social protection is not only a safety net in times of economic crisis but also plays an important role in the post-crisis economic recovery. With the new perspective of social protection as a national mechanism to mitigate the impact of disaster and to build resilience in the country, the review becomes even more relevant as it will be necessary to revisit the strategy and the approach of the NSPPF in view of the changing context. This is in line with the decision taken by the NSPC on 3 November 2020 to undertake a review of the NSPPF.

Finally, considering the commitments of the Royal Government of Cambodia towards the Sustainable Development Goals, one of the milestones to be considered in the analysis are all the Cambodian SDG goals, including those directly related to social protection such as CSDG 1.3.1 and 3.9, and also other SDGs that are directly or indirectly impacted by social protection.

2. Objectives

The objective of the review is to provide a comprehensive review of the NSPPF and propose, on this basis, options for reforms / improvements. It should consist of an evaluation of the current social protection landscape vis-à-vis the objectives of the current Rectangular Strategy and National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023 and reflects the current understanding of the social protection system in Cambodia. In addition, it should also be an opportunity to assess the overall performance of the social protection system in Cambodia versus the country's needs, particularly in terms of creating a more inclusive and sustainable social protection system. In this regard, it should also include the identification of new areas and gaps that have arisen and are not addressed by the NSPPF. It should provide options with consideration of the overall feasibility to pursue these options. so as to enhance and update the framework to include an articulation of the strategy for the further implementation of the NSPPF.

As such, the main objectives are:

- The assessment of the adequacy of the NSPPF in addressing and further guiding the development of social protection in Cambodia
- The reform options to be included in NSPPF for the further acceleration of implementation of social protection reform.
- The assessment of the overall performance of social protection system in Cambodia versus the needs

3. Outputs

To attain the objectives, the following outputs are envisioned:

- A consolidated report on the Review of the NSPPF
- A discussion between relevant stakeholders on reform options
- A technical note (produced on behalf of the GS-NSPC) containing the proposed reforms to be presented by the GS-NSPC to the NSPC

The review should include the following elements:

- 1) **Assessment of the added value of NSPPF, the implementation** to date, including its achievements, progresses and challenges in reaching the objectives and the action plan.

- coherence which includes the assessment of the institutions, regular monitoring and evaluation.
- 2) **Assessment of how the programmes/schemes perform.** This include assessing the current social protection system versus the needs and the objectives of social protection by looking at elements:
 - such as coverage, adequacy, equity, efficiency of social protection provision;
 - **needs** which includes a forward-looking analysis of risks and vulnerabilities across the lifecycle to determine future needs of an effective social protection system, including its disaster risk responsiveness.

4. Institutional arrangements

The process will be participatory and ensure that the staff from the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council and key stakeholders across ministries and institutions such as Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), Ministry of Education Youth and Support (MOEYS), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), Ministry of Planning (MoP), can build their technical capacities throughout the process and have ultimate ownership over the products of the review of NSPPF.

The NSPC will be the owner of the review and the objectives are to be achieved under direct supervision of the GS-NSPC who have been mandated by NSPC. The GS-NSPC will also provide administrative support for the consultants engaged to deliver the review of the NSPPF.

The complexity of the assignment requires a multidisciplinary team of experts, which necessitates contracting a single institution with the capacity and experience to conduct a review on the NSPPF across multiple domain areas. The team shall be led by a Lead Expert who will be ultimately responsible for the coordination within the evaluation team and the quality and the coherence of the deliverables. The evaluation team should also be supported by relevant international and national experts in the various domains related to the review (specific requirements will be defined under ToRs).

The appointed service provider to support the review process will work closely with the GS-NSPC to ensure that inputs from the different national stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the different pillars of social protection are involved. In addition, in collaboration with the GS-NSPC the service provided will also collaborate with the development partners, particularly through the use of currently existing mechanisms for collaboration such as the formal and informal Development Partners Coordination mechanisms and working groups.

5. Timeline

The consultancy is scheduled to start in February 2021 and completed by August 2021.

Outputs/deliverables	Deliverable Deadline
<u>Inception report</u> detailing the methodology for the review of the NSPPF	15 March 2021
<u>Presentation for the launch of the review</u>	Between 15 and 31 March 2021
<u>Questionnaires and other instruments for data collection</u> and the list of stakeholders to consult	15 March 2021
<u>Preliminary report</u> detailing the assessment of the NSPPF implementation to date, and the performance of the Cambodia Social Protection System, including the options for reforms and improvement	28 May 2021

<u>Final report</u> including the final recommendations taking into consideration all inputs from the national stakeholders and the review of the NSPPF	23 July 2021
<u>Draft technical note to be presented to the NSPC by the GS</u>	30 July 2021