

SKILLS FOR FUTURE ECONOMY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CAM-SFE-SDF-CS-06 (Various Assessment Studies)

Terms of Reference for Consulting Firm “Outcome and Impact Assessment on SDF-funded Training Programs”

[27 August 2024]

1. Background

The Skills Development Fund (SDF) was a pivotal initiative managed and implemented by the Department of Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy (DMFP) under the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). Established through MEF Prakas No.265 SHV-BrK on 12 March 2018, the SDF aims to address industry needs through co-financed skills development projects in collaboration with governmental institutions, industries, training providers, and development partners. To sustain this initiative, the SDF Pilot Project had been institutionalized by Sub-decree No. 97 RNKr.BK dated 18 May 2023 and has been managed by the Board of Directors (BOD) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The SDF consists of 4 divisions: 1). Public Relations, 2). Monitoring and Evaluation, 3). Skills Development Strategy, and 4). Admin and Finance. The SDF has a vision, and a mission as follows:

Vision: to become the most trusted financing platform for demand-driven and sustainable skills development to support the realization of the 2023 & 2050 visions of the RGC.

Mission: To stimulate pragmatic partnerships between employers and quality training providers.

As of February 23, 2024, the SDF has awarded 126 training projects in priority sectors, totaling approximately 8.4M USD and benefiting 15,938 trainees, including 35% females. Among those, 101 projects have been completed in the past five years, benefiting 8,800 trainees.

The Skills for Competitiveness Project (S4C), approved by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), complements the SDF's efforts. Under the S4C, the SDF has successfully implemented output 3, focusing on strengthening DMFP's capacity to manage the pilot Skills Development Fund and expanding the program.

Skills for Future Economy Sector Development Program (SFESDP), aligned with Cambodia's Industrial Development Policy and the Law on Investment, aims to modernize and transform Cambodia's industry into a skills-driven economy. This program, supported by ADB and AFD, focuses on enhancing the employability of the current and future labor force through skills development ecosystem reforms and investment in priority skills.

While the SDF is a newly established permanent agency, it has been running its operations successfully since 2018 under the Department of Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy of the MEF through a pilot arrangement supported by the Skills for Competitiveness Project. To evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the skills development programs implemented by the SDF, the SDF is seeking to hire a consulting firm to conduct an Outcome and Impact Assessment to gather feedback from project stakeholders and assess project results. The assessment seeks to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for future enhancement.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The main purpose of this assignment is to assess practical outcomes and overall impacts of SDF-funded training projects and to draw lessons learned for the enhancement of SDF's vision and mission. Through this assessment, we aim to:

- Measure the effectiveness, efficiency, and outcomes of the training projects funded by SDF for the past five years at the trainees, company, and training institution levels.

- Assess the overall impacts of the projects, including their contribution to overall competitiveness, changes in perception towards Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), improvement in living standards of program graduates, and community contributions.
- Identify lessons learned for future enhancement of the skills development initiatives and provide recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

3. Duration of the Services

The assignment shall be completed within 6 months after commencement.

4. Scope of Services

This assignment shall cover both outcome and impact assessment of the training projects focusing on various levels and dimensions.

Outcome Assessment:

1. At Trainee Level:

- Long-term Employment Rate: Measure the percentage of program graduates who remain employed in their chosen field more than a year after the training completion.
- Long-term benefits for trainees: assess the sustained benefit of the trainees from the training on their salary increase, job promotion within and across occupations in the company, job mobility, etc. The assessment should provide outcomes by training types (pre-employment and upskilling) and skills areas.
- Skills retention and knowledge transfer: Assess to determine if skills acquired are still utilized and evaluate how trained employees share their new knowledge or skills with colleagues.

2. At Company Level:

- Company's feedback: Assess the satisfaction level of employers with the training project, training institutes, course content and methods, facilities, and overall experience after completing the training for a period of time. The assessment shall also measure outcomes of soft skills and digital knowledge and literacy.
- Employer Satisfaction with the trainees: Evaluate the satisfaction level of the employer with the trained employees focusing on their skill acquisition, competency improvement, and behavior change. The assessment should provide outcomes by training types (pre-employment and upskilling/reskilling) and skill types (technical and soft skills).
- Productivity Improvement: Evaluate the impact of trained employees on company productivity through the company's key performance indicators (KPIs), such as output per employee, efficiency gains, reduced error rates, etc.
- Business Improvement: Gather feedback from participating companies regarding any observed improvements in business processes, customer satisfaction, revenue growth, or market competitiveness attributed to trained employees.
- Innovation and Technology Adoption: Explore how the training projects have facilitated innovation and technology adoption within industries. This could include examining whether training programs incorporate emerging technologies, promote digital literacy, or encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among participants.

3. At Training Institution Level:

- *Demand-Driven Program*: Analyze the extent to which and how the training programs align with industry demands and skill requirements by assessing the relevance of curriculum, feedback from industry partners, and job placement and/or recruitment agency.
- *Collaboration with Private Sector*: Evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships with private sector entities in curriculum development, providing resources, internships, job placements, and ongoing support for trainees.
- *Scalability and/or Sustainability*: Assess how support (financial and non-financial) helps training institutions to scale up and/or sustain their training programs to fit with industry demand in terms of quality and quantity.

Impact Assessment:

- *Relevancy*: Evaluate the alignment between trained skills and demands of priority sectors.
- *Change in TVET Perception*: Assess changes in perception towards Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) among stakeholders, including trainees, parents, educators, and employers, through assessments and qualitative interviews.
- *Improvement in Living Standards*: Track the socioeconomic status of program graduates, including income levels, access to better job opportunities, and overall improvement in living standards for themselves and their families.
- *Community Contribution*: Evaluate the impact of graduates on their communities through initiatives such as job creation, skills transfer, community development projects, or engagement in social and civic activities.
- *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion*: Evaluate the extent to which the training projects have promoted gender equality and social inclusion within the workforce. This could involve analyzing participation rates of marginalized groups, such as women and persons with disabilities, as well as assessing any initiatives aimed at addressing barriers to their inclusion.
- *Policy Impact*: Assess the influence of the SDF programs on national policies related to skills development, workforce training, and industrial modernization.

Data Collection and Analysis: The consultant shall employ a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the programs' outcome and impact.

A. Data Collection Methods:

Quantitative Data Collection:

- *Surveys*: Conduct surveys targeting trainees, companies, and training institutions to gather relevant quantitative data including, but not limited to employment rates, satisfaction levels, productivity improvement, business improvement, demand-driven program alignment, and collaboration with the private sector.
- *Document Analysis*: Analyze program documents, reports, and administrative records to collect quantitative data on program outputs, funding allocation, and project implementation metrics.

Qualitative Data Collection:

- *In-depth Interviews*: Conduct in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including program trainees, trainers, employers, and representatives from industry associations, to gather qualitative insights on changes in TVET perception, improvement in living standards, and community contributions.
- *Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)*: Facilitate FGDs with selected groups of program graduates and industry representatives to explore perceptions, experiences, and the broader socio-economic impact of the training programs.

- Case Studies: Develop case studies of selected training projects to provide detailed insights into program effectiveness, best practices, and lessons learned.

B. Sample size:

- Individual survey: The estimated sample size for the survey at trainee levels is 369 graduated trainees under SDF programs (8,800 population, 95% confidence, 5% margin of error, 50% population proportion).
- Business survey: The minimum sample size for the survey at business levels is 192:
 - o i) Training institutions, enterprises, and business/industry associations that are co-funded by the SDF: by the end of 2023, SDF has provided support for 297 enterprises/employers, 44 training providers, and 16 business/industry associations.
 - o ii) current employers of the trainees: proper sampling method is required for this group.
 - o iii) other stakeholders including relevant ministries, SSC, and development partners involved in SDF programs for the past five years: five to ten entities to be selected for consultation.

C. Data Analysis:

Quantitative Data Analysis:

- Statistical Analysis: Employ statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, to analyze quantitative survey data and identify patterns, trends, and correlations related to employment rates, satisfaction levels, productivity improvement, and other program outcomes.
- Comparative Analysis: Conduct a comparative analysis of quantitative data collected before and after program interventions to assess changes and improvements attributable to the training programs.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

- Thematic Analysis: Utilize thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and narratives emerging from qualitative data collected through interviews, FGDs, and case studies.
- Content Analysis: Analyze qualitative data from documents and reports to extract key insights and themes related to program effectiveness, impact, and stakeholder perceptions.

Integration of Data:

- Triangulation: Integrate findings from quantitative and qualitative data sources through triangulation to validate results, provide a comprehensive understanding of program outcomes and impacts, and ensure the reliability and validity of the assessment.

D. Data ownership: SDF retains full ownership of all data collected during the outcome and impact assessment. This includes survey responses, analysis results, and any associated documentation. The consultants ensure that data is securely stored, utilizing access controls to safeguard against unauthorized access. Data transfer between the consultants and the SDF follows strict protocols to maintain confidentiality and integrity.

5. Firm Recruitment

The consulting firm should be based and registered in Cambodia. The method of selecting the consulting firm will be aligned with the Consultants' Qualifications Selection (CQS) process of the ADB. The interested firms are to submit an amplified and detailed expression of interest (EOI) in reply to the advertisement which will be posted on ADB's CSRN website, SDF's website and Facebook Page, and a local advertising portal. A firm with the best evaluated EOI will be requested for a combined submission of the technical and financial proposal, and subsequently, invited for negotiations. The firm will be engaged if the proposal meets the requirements, and the negotiations are successful.

6. Team Composition and Qualification Requirements for the Experts

The consulting firm will need to arrange transportation and accommodation for survey activities and must deploy the following team of experts to carry out the tasks as follows.

A. Team Leader – International Skills Program Evaluation Specialist (1 person, 4 person-months)

Qualification:

- At least a master's degree in a relevant field such as Economics, Education, Public Policy, or a related discipline.
- At least 9 years of professional working experience related to research work, M&E, and project management and implementation.
- Minimum of 7 years of professional experience in program evaluation, particularly in the field of skills development, vocational education, or related areas.
- Strong understanding of evaluation methodologies, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches.
- Experience in leading complex evaluation projects, including developing frameworks, managing teams, and delivering high-quality reports.
- Excellent project management skills, including the ability to coordinate with multiple stakeholders and manage timelines and budgets effectively.
- Strong analytical and critical thinking skills, with the ability to interpret data and draw actionable insights.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills, with the ability to effectively convey complex information to diverse audiences.
- Familiarity with the areas of skills development and economic policy is an advantage.
- Strong analytical skills and proficiency in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to lead a diverse team and engage effectively with stakeholders.
- Excellent English, and interpersonal and communication skills.

Responsibilities:

- Develop the evaluation framework and methodologies for assessing training outcomes and socio-economic impacts.
- Lead the assessment process, ensuring alignment with project objectives and requirements.
- Coordinate with key stakeholders, including the SDF management and technical team, and other relevant entities.
- Oversee data collection and analysis to ensure accuracy, relevance, and adherence to timelines.
- Provide guidance and direction to the assessment team, including the deputy team leader, team members, and field supervisors.
- Facilitate consultations and meetings with stakeholders to gather feedback and insights.
- Interpret findings, identify trends, and draw conclusions to inform the assessment report.
- Draft the final assessment report, incorporating recommendations, lessons learned, and best practices.
- Ensure effective communication and collaboration within the assessment team and with external stakeholders.
- Present assessment findings to stakeholders, including presentations and discussions to facilitate understanding and recommendation.

B. Deputy Team Leader – National Skills Training Management Specialist (1 person, 4 person-months)

Qualifications:

- At least a master's degree in policy studies, development studies, education, economics, social science, business administration, or other related fields.
- At least 7 years of professional working experience related to research projects, monitoring and evaluation, project management, and training management.
- At least 5 years of professional experience in the field of education and training development and management, training quality assurance, design monitoring framework, development of M&E tools, performance management, and KPIs.
- Deep understanding of skills development programs, including curriculum development, training delivery, and industry partnerships.
- Experience in coordinating with training providers, industry partners, and government agencies to implement skills development initiatives.
- Strong project management skills, including the ability to coordinate teams, manage logistics, and ensure the successful implementation of activities.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to build relationships and facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders.
- Familiarity with monitoring and evaluation methodologies, particularly in the context of skills development programs.
- Knowledge of the Cambodian education and training landscape, including key stakeholders and policy frameworks, is desirable.
- Excellent English, and interpersonal and communication skills.

Responsibilities:

- Assist in developing the evaluation framework and methodologies for the assessment.
- Coordinate with training providers, industry partners, and development partners.
- Organize consultations and meetings with stakeholders to gather feedback and insights.
- Support data collection and analysis, focusing on skills program effectiveness and management.
- Contribute to interpreting findings and identifying implications for program improvement.
- Assist in drafting sections of the assessment report related to trainees, training providers, employers, and social dimensions.
- Collaborate with the team leader in ensuring alignment with assessment objectives and requirements.
- Facilitate communication and collaboration within the assessment team and with external stakeholders.
- Provide input and support in presenting assessment findings to stakeholders.
- Participate in discussions and recommendations related to program enhancements and policy development.

C. Team Member – National Economist (1 person, 3 person-months)

Qualifications:

- At least a master's degree in economics, Development Economics, or a related field.
- Minimum of 5 years of professional experience in economic analysis, preferably in the context of development projects or programs.
- Strong quantitative skills, including proficiency in statistical analysis and econometric techniques.

- Experience in conducting cost-benefit analyses, economic impact assessments, or similar economic evaluations.
- Familiarity with labor market analysis, including skills demand and supply dynamics, employment trends, and wage determination.
- Excellent research skills, with the ability to gather, analyze, and interpret economic data from diverse sources.
- Strong communication and writing skills, with the ability to present complex economic concepts in a clear and accessible manner.
- Familiarity with development challenges and priorities in Cambodia, particularly in the context of skills development and economic growth.
- Proficiency in statistical software such as STATA or R.
- Excellent English, and interpersonal and communication skills.

Responsibilities:

- Analyze quantitative data collected through surveys and other methods.
- Evaluate the economic implications of the training programs, including productivity improvement and business impact.
- Contribute to interpreting findings and identifying economic trends relevant to the assessment objectives.
- Assist in drafting sections of the assessment report related to economic analysis and implications.
- Provide expertise in interpreting economic data and trends for program improvement.
- Ensure alignment of economic analysis with overall assessment objectives and methodologies.
- Support the team leader and deputy team leader in data interpretation and report drafting.
- Participate in discussions and recommendations related to economic aspects of skills program enhancement and policy development.
- Provide input and support in presenting economic analysis findings to stakeholders.

D. Data Analyst (1 person, 2 person-months)

Qualifications:

- At least a bachelor's degree in Statistics, Data Science, Economics, or a related field.
- At least 4 years of professional working experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- Proficiency in statistical software such as R, Python, or SPSS for data analysis.
- Experience in data management, including data cleaning, coding, and entry.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to interpret data and identify trends.
- Familiarity with quantitative research methodologies and techniques.
- Attention to detail and ability to ensure data accuracy and reliability.
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to present data findings visually and verbally.
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment and collaborate with other team members.
- Familiarity with survey methodologies and techniques for data collection is desirable.
- Knowledge of the Cambodian context and data sources relevant to the assessment is an advantage.

Responsibilities:

- Responsible for data coding, entry, and analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- Conduct statistical analysis of quantitative data collected through surveys and other methods.
- Collaborate with the economist and other team members in analyzing and interpreting findings.

- Prepare data visualizations and summaries to communicate key findings effectively.
- Ensure data security and confidentiality throughout the analysis process.
- Contribute to drafting sections of the assessment report related to data analysis and interpretation.
- Provide expertise in data management and analysis techniques.
- Assist in identifying trends and patterns in the data to inform skills program improvement.
- Support the assessment team in ensuring data quality and integrity.
- Participate in discussions related to data analysis and reporting.

E. Field Supervisor (3 persons, 2 person-months each)

Qualifications:

- At least a bachelor's degree in a relevant field such as Social Sciences, Development Studies, or a related discipline.
- At least 4 years of working experience in managing surveys and stakeholder consultation.
- Previous experience in project coordination, monitoring, or fieldwork management, preferably in the context of research or evaluation projects.
- Strong organizational skills, with the ability to plan and manage fieldwork activities effectively.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to liaise with diverse stakeholders professionally and effectively.
- Experience in supervising teams or working with enumerators in data collection activities.
- Knowledge of research ethics and protocols for conducting interviews and focus group discussions.
- Familiarity with data collection tools and techniques, including surveys and qualitative research methods.
- Ability to work independently and handle multiple tasks simultaneously.
- Flexibility to travel to different locations within Cambodia for fieldwork activities.
- Strong communication and organizational skills.

Responsibilities:

- Communicate effectively with target stakeholders to coordinate data collection activities.
- Facilitate and supervise enumerators during surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions.
- Ensure adherence to standardized protocols and procedures for data collection.
- Provide guidance and support to enumerators to maintain data quality and consistency.
- Check surveyed questionnaires for completeness and accuracy before data entry.
- Coordinate logistics for fieldwork, including scheduling and transportation arrangements.
- Monitor fieldwork progress and address any challenges or issues promptly.
- Liaise with the assessment team to provide updates and feedback on fieldwork activities.
- Ensure compliance with ethical standards and protocols during data collection.
- Represent the assessment team professionally in interactions with stakeholders.

F. Enumerators (9 persons, 1.5 person-month each)

Qualifications:

- At least a bachelor's in development studies, education, economics, or other related fields,
- At least 2 years of working experience in conducting quantitative and qualitative surveys with multi-stakeholders, especially the enterprises and training institutions,
- Previous experience in data collection activities, preferably in surveys, interviews, or focus group discussions.

- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to interact with respondents professionally and respectfully.
- Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to establish rapport with diverse groups of people.
- Attention to detail and accuracy in data collection, including the ability to follow standardized protocols and procedures.
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment and collaborate with other enumerators and field supervisors.
- Basic knowledge of research ethics and principles of confidentiality.
- Proficiency in using electronic devices such as tablets or smartphones for data collection.
- Willingness to travel to different locations within Cambodia for data collection activities.
- Flexibility to work flexible hours, including evenings or weekends, to accommodate the availability of respondents.

Responsibilities:

- Conduct surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with target respondents.
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data according to standardized protocols and procedures.
- Engage with respondents professionally and ethically, maintaining confidentiality and respect.
- Follow instructions from field supervisors and assessment team members during data collection activities.
- Ensure accuracy and completeness of data collected through surveys and interviews.
- Adhere to timelines and targets for data collection activities.
- Report any issues or challenges encountered during data collection to field supervisors promptly.
- Maintain proper documentation of data collected and submit it to the assessment team as required.
- Participate in training sessions and meetings to enhance data collection skills and knowledge.
- professionally represent the assessment team during interactions with respondents and stakeholders.

7. Reporting Requirements

Reporting Arrangement:

The recruited consulting firm will be under the direct supervision of and report to the Project Management Unit (PMU) of Output 3 of The Skills for Future Economy Sector Development Program (SFESDP).

Report Preparation:

- (i) *Prepare inception report which indicates report outline, sampling methods, data collection tools, and detailed work plan,*
- (ii) *Prepare an interim report on data collection activities,*
- (iii) *Prepare draft report and cleaned dataset,*
- (iv) *Present preliminary findings,*
- (v) *Revise and finalize the report.*

The number of copies of the report:

- (i) *Hard copies: 10 copies of the final report,*
- (ii) *Soft copies: 5 USB flash drives which include a final report and cleaned dataset.*

Contact details for submission of Reports:

To: Ms. Tim Sreytom
Head of M&E Division

8. Expected Deliverables and Timeframe

The final report and cleaned datasets shall be submitted within 6 months after commencing the contract. Upon contract signing, a 10% advance payment will be made to the firm. The specific deliverables, expected timeframe, and payment are expected as below.

No.	Deliverables	Expected Timeframe	Payment
1	Completion of an inception report, including research framework, methods, data collection tools, proposed outline of the final report, and work plan	3 weeks after contract commencement	15%
2	Submission of interim report	8 weeks after inception report	30%
3	Submission of the draft report and dataset	6 weeks after the interim report	
4	Presentation of preliminary findings to the SDF team	1 week after the draft report	
5	Submission of a revised draft report	3 weeks after the 1st presentation	20%
6	Presentation of findings to the SDF team	1 week after revising the report	
7	Submission of the final report	2 weeks after the final presentation	25%

9. Client's Input and Counterpart Personnel

(a) Property to be made available to the Consultant by the Client:

- (i) PMU will issue a commission letter to the consultant if requested.

(b) Professional and support counterpart personnel to be assigned by the Client to the Consultant's team:

- (i) PMU, Project Coordination Specialist, and M&E Specialist will provide advice and comments on the content of the study and questionnaires.

10. Client inputs, project data, and reports to facilitate the preparation of the Proposals:

- (i) A list of the completed projects including numbers of trainees, year of completion, and locations will be provided to the consultant.
- (ii) A list of training institutions, enterprises, and business/industry associations.
- (iii) PMU will provide studies and reports completed under SDF per request.