

## Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia

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This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO’s evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.

## Contents

Contents.....	2
Acronyms .....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
1. Introduction and Evaluation Background .....	13
1.1. Evaluation purpose and scope .....	13
1.2 Target Audience .....	13
1.3. Evaluability Assessment .....	14
2. The Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia Project .....	14
2.1 Context of social protection in Cambodia.....	14
2.2. Overview .....	16
2.3 Status of implementation and programme adjustments .....	16
2.4 Financial overview .....	17
3. Evaluation methodology .....	17
3.1 Data collection and analysis.....	18
3.2 Methodological limitations.....	19
4. Findings of the Evaluation.....	19
Relevance .....	19
Finding 1:.....	19
Finding 2:.....	21
Coherence .....	23
Finding 3:.....	23
Effectiveness .....	24
Finding 4:.....	25
Finding 5:.....	28
Efficiency .....	29
Finding 6:.....	30
Finding 7:.....	30
Sustainability.....	32
Finding 8:.....	32
Impact Orientation.....	34
Finding 9:.....	34
Cross cutting issues:.....	35
Finding 10:.....	35

Finding 11:.....	39
5. Conclusions .....	40
6. Good Practices and Lessons Learned .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7. Recommendations .....	42
Recommendation 1: Priorities for ILO .....	42
Recommendation 2: Priorities for UNICEF.....	43
Recommendation 3: for UNICEF and ILO together .....	44
Recommendation 4: A stronger gender approach .....	45
Recommendation 5: A sustainable capacity renewal approach.....	45
Annexes.....	48
Annex 1: Terms of Reference.....	48
Annex 2: List of Stakeholders Consulted.....	65
Annex 3: List of Documents Consulted.....	69
Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix.....	72
Annex 5: Original ToC, causation analysis.....	76
Annex 6: Reconstructed Theory of Change: Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia .....	78
Annex 7: List of trainings conducted through ASPC.....	79

## Acronyms

ASPC	Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia
CA	Contribution Analysis
CAMFEBA	Cambodian Federation of Employers
CTP-COVID	Cash Transfer for Poor and Vulnerable Households
CT-PWYC	Cash-Transfer for Pregnant Women and children under two
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EA	Evaluability Assessment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIRST	Fostering an Inclusive and shock Responsive Social Protection System in Cambodia
GMAC	Garment Manufacturing Association of Cambodia
GS	General Secretariat
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoEP	Ministry of Economy and Planning
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NSAF	National Social Assistance Fund
NSPC	National Social Protection Council
NSPPF	National Social Protection Policy Framework
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NSSF-C	National Social Security Fund for Civil Servants
NFV	National Fund for Veterans
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SA	Social Assistance
SP	Social Protection
SPIN	Social Protection: Innovation for the Informal sector
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference

## Executive Summary

This Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the 4-year EU funded Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia (ASPC) project was undertaken from April-June 2023. The project began implementation in February 2021 with an approved budget of €5,598,535 over four years. It is co-implemented by ILO and UNICEF, working in close collaboration with government stakeholders responsible for social protection, in particular the General Secretariat (GS) of the National Social Protection Council (NSPC); the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY). It aims to extend social protection coverage and quality of provisions (adequacy and quality of services) by improving operational capabilities of social protection institutions and the adaptability of existing schemes to the characteristics and needs of those working in the informal sector, with a particular focus on the expansion of social protection to the 'missing middle' and the vulnerable.

The specific objectives of the MTE were to:

- (1) Assess the progress achieved with project implementation against project objectives and performance indicators adopted, and to identify and address any major obstacles that may have arisen;
- (2) Examine the current and future role of the project in contributing towards generating system change across the Cambodia's social protection systems, and draw lessons learned and identify good practices from the two years of the project's intervention;
- (3) Propose recommendations to inform modifications of the project to increase its relevance and validity of design, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact orientation, and sustainability, in the remaining period

The independent MTE was managed by the Evaluation Manager, ILO RO Asia and Pacific. An evaluability assessment (EA) was carried out alongside the MTE by the same consultant team, and the two assignments were synergised as far as possible. Findings of the EA are reported separately.

The overall project goal and impact statement of ASPC is "More women and men in Cambodia have access to more effective, efficient, accountable and sustainable gender-responsive social protection." The project contributes to this impact through three Outcome areas: Outcome 1- Increased inclusion/coverage of workers that are covered by social security schemes; Outcome 2 - Increased inclusion and coverage of poor and vulnerable population in social assistance and complementary programmes promoting improved livelihoods and well-being; and Outcome 3 – Social security organisations are strengthened with improved business processes and tools to increase coverage and quality of service to workers in the formal and

The evaluation took a mixed-method approach, using quantitative and qualitative data available through document review, and qualitative primary data. It also took a primarily theory based approach, since this offered learning about causation and causal steps that would be relevant to the formative objectives of an evaluation at this mid-term stage. A Theory of Change had been reconstructed as part of the Evaluability Assessment process which was used as a guiding framework for understanding the project and expected causal chain. The evaluation also prioritised a gender responsive approach, aiming to fully incorporate study methods to address UNSWAP gender equality procedures. Evaluation criteria for cross cutting issues, and evaluation questions included a specific stand-alone inquiry about advancing gender equality, and a collaborative approach was taken wherever possible to engaged stakeholders, including rights holders, in the process. Altogether 62 documents were reviewed and 74 respondents were consulted in primary data collection involving an EA-focussed and an MTE-focussed stage.

Important limitations of the study include that there is some risk of bias in the evaluation findings towards information that is not directly attributable to ASPC. This is because there are several donor funded and RGC funded processes currently ongoing which have a bearing on the process of strengthening and expanding social protection in Cambodia. ILO and UNICEF are relatively long term stakeholders in this process, known for their technical expertise and ability to support the RGC led process. Other projects in which ILO and UNICEF are core stakeholders, and for which EU is the [main] funder are current or have recently ended. Therefore it was not always possible to distinguish which activities and processes discussed by government and wider stakeholders were directly related to ASPC, and which were attributable to other strands of work.

Key findings of the MTE include the following:

#### **Relevance:**

**Finding 1:** There is no doubt that the project objectives are broadly relevant and reflect the priorities of the government to extend social protection to its target groups of vulnerable populations for SA and informal workers, who represent the large ‘missing middle’ for SS. The project also fits well with the broader agendas of all the core institutions- ILO, UNICEF and the RGC in the form of its SP institutions NSAF, NSSF and GS-NSPC. However, it does not stand to (and did not aim to) support the government to reach all relevant groups within the project lifetime: coverage of social security in particular remains at the beginning of a long road in terms of outreach to ‘difficult’ sectors of informal workers such as farmers and ‘daily wage labour’ construction workers.

#### **Validity of design**

**Finding 2:** The MTE has added detail to several of the risks to the project strategy and logical framework identified through the Evaluability Assessment. This includes concerns about the number of procedural steps necessary in relation to the project timeline not accounted for in project design, reflected in the still pending adoption of the necessary legislations for mandatory SS schemes; an absence of concrete plans for large scale advocacy supporting the voluntary registrations of dependents of registered workers; a continued risk, despite improvements, that health service quality concerns that may be a barrier to the success of voluntary registration; and a risk that compulsory registration of micro enterprises, even when all the sub-legislation is approved, may not be immediately enforced. Further work is need to understand how registration will work for some groups; at the same time there may be relatively low-risk groups of self-employed who could be concurrently targeted in order to help develop a ‘norming’ of NSSF membership .

#### **Coherence**

**Finding 3:** Social protection in Cambodia has been a very active space with several players over the last decade: with the establishment of government institutions NSSF and NSAF, the rapid roll out of a large scale CT response to Covid-19 and the launching of various SP mechanisms. Structures have also been put in place for system coordination, including the GS-NSPC and a number of focused working groups, and ASPC has advocated for a one-SP approach. The project has seen a number of specific collaborations. However, ILO and UNICEF still have a tendency to work on SP in loosely coordinated silos. This has to be carefully addressed and monitored so the potential synergies between SS and SA, which are now emerging more clearly in part due to the project’s work, are not missed.

#### **Effectiveness**

**Finding 4:** Unless the necessary legislation for the compulsory expansion of social security to dependents of the covered members of the NSSF is secured and implemented quickly, Outcome 1 is

unlikely to achieve the targets set within the remaining 18-months of the project, although some important groundwork has been achieved. Outcome 2 has exceeded targets when emergency CTs are considered together with routine ones; but efforts to separate out these types of response needs to be made for a clear picture of progress. Institutional strengthening objectives for SA folded into Outcome 2 have also made tangible progress. Outcome 3 for institutional strengthening for SS met significant challenge in 2022, partly due to the fact that some of the direct TA support had been cancelled because either it was determined as outside the scope of the project or outside the area of the ILO's technical competency and progress in rolling out 3 of the 4 remaining outputs is only expected from 2023. Progress has been made which is relevant to these outputs e.g. by NSPC, but ILO's role in supporting this is unclear.

**Finding 5:** Qualitative data suggests that furthering the projects objectives would be supported by more focus on creating *flexible* contributory mechanisms to accommodate the self-employed; attention to creating incentives and communications to attract voluntary (or compulsory) contribution from self-employed; and continued articulation of the wider vision of the contribution of social security to national interests in order to underpin the delicate formalization processes envisaged.

### **Efficiency**

**Finding 6:** The most significant limiting factor on the achievement of outcomes is the limited timeframe of the project and additional steps likely necessary, rather than limited financial or human resources. However, particular challenges with progress under Outcomes 1 and 3, mean that anticipated technical staff budget, which was weighted to the early project stages, may now need extension for the further technical inputs still needed to pursue outcomes.

**Finding 7:** The 3-way configuration of SP support that the EU has brought into being has brought identifiable benefits in specific respects, including creating leverage for the engagement of CSOs in the SP architecture; and through enabling ILO and UNICEF to contribute their distinct expertise. ILO and UNICEF's combined advocacy has also contributed to a new NSPPF which conceptualises SS and SA in harmonisation. However, the opportunity to actively synergise SS and SA through operation as a joint UN project team – has not yet been taken up; as these opportunities are now emerging it will be important to focus here.

**Finding 8:** The project has taken a strong sustainability approach in that it works at the level of evolving and supporting policy, and developing the knowledge base to inform this process. It has also taken a strong line on consistently supporting the evolution of the key social protection institutions: the GS-NSPC, the NSSF, and the newly established NSAF. While this contribution is significant, it is not by itself sufficient to the ongoing, long-term process of creating a fully sustainable SP system and this has not been the expectation from the Project; the pending transition from an emphasis on emergency cash transfers to the routine dimensions of social assistance, and further development of the interoperability of the IT / monitoring systems will be key parts of this.

### **Impact Orientation**

**Finding 9:** The project has used different approaches to strengthening institutional capacity for developing an SP system which will continue to drive towards impact at scale using in-house skills. These have included direct trainings and consultative workshops as well as skills building for essential decision-making tools. While these are likely to have contributed to the potential for more progress towards impact, at least in the short term, sustainable systems for following up the effectiveness of capacity strengthening activities, and of institutionalizing the continued acquisition

of key skills and knowledge transfer are not comprehensive yet. Developing a longer-term institutional and capacity building development plan could strengthen this approach to achieving impact.

### **Cross cutting issues**

**Finding 10:** While ASPC has an intrinsic focus on vulnerable groups through its focus on informal workers, and on groups in need of social assistance, there are a number of systemic ways in which its approach to gender equality and inclusion could be strengthened. These include systematic monitoring which makes disaggregation by gender more visible, and disaggregation by gender AND other vulnerabilities available; evaluation approaches which set out to uncover gender-relevant information; and more systematic, consistently integrated and critical approaches to issues such as gender labour market segregation and the gendered implications of formalization process which diminish workplace flexibility.

**Finding 11:** The project's continued technical support to the Government to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-Covid recovery, has demonstrated flexibility, adaptability, and a commitment to supporting government priorities. This support has contributed to the RGC's initiatives to protect poor and vulnerable households from the impact of inflation and flooding in the context of post-Covid economic challenges. To some extent, these initiatives have detracted project resources and focus from - and therefore caused delays to - the main tasks of supporting routinized SA and SS in the interests of a longer term economic resilience which will include further formalization and contribution-based social protection.

### **Conclusions**

The MTE concludes that for Social Security, the expansions have proceeded more slowly than anticipated by the design of the project and that for the scaled up level of registrations that the project envisaged, there is still a long way to go. This is partly due to weaknesses in the project design and partly due to government priorities and issues related to the wider context of economic recovery. The challenge is now to find ways to support the RGC to move assertively and confidently to achieve its stated objectives of expanding the coverage of contributory SP mechanisms. Several strategies are evident. First, open reflection on continuing economic challenges related to the post-Covid and climate-change affected context would be productive to gain clarity on the role of this environment in slowing progress on business registrations and therefore employee registrations with NSSF. Therefore continuing to make the case for how expanded contribution-based social security is supportive of the wider pursuit of economic resilience and national development will be important. Taking action to support implementing the NSSF communications strategy to attract voluntary or compulsory contributions from self-employed groups and from dependents of current NSSF members would likely support progress towards those targets. Strengthened advocacy for legislation on compulsory coverage of dependents of NSSF members could hasten scale-up in the longer term.

For Social Assistance, the challenge lies in successfully making the transition from the emergency support which has dominated SA for the last few years, to more routinized and reliable support schemes allow vulnerable people to plan and therefore to strategize to move out of poverty - and potentially into labour market based contributory protection schemes. While the RGC has a commitment to making the transition to the Family Package during 2024, it will be important for the ASPC to continue to find ways to closely support it as the wider project of closing the missing middle gap will take much longer. Immediate ways to support the process include methods to clearly



separate out monitoring data on emergency and routinized schemes, so that the relative progress in each format becomes more visible.

For both ILO and UNICEF an important mode going forward will be building and acting on synergies between the pillars. The bottleneck for SA in making the transition from emergency to routine assistance has much in common with the bottleneck facing progress with SS. This suggests finding ways of working on addressing these challenges together by the ILO and UNICEF (and other development partners), more clearly demonstrating the whys and hows of a harmonised approach to SP. Becoming clear on the steps via which vulnerable groups can / will be able to get the right support to move into positions which are [newly] covered by SS schemes will contribute to the evolving conception in the GS-NSPC of a harmonized SP system. This will likely involve continuing to gather disaggregated information on the situations of vulnerable groups, including the impacts of intersectionality. Carefully making visible disaggregated monitoring data by gender and by other vulnerabilities will support this. It may also involve generating information on how individuals supported through emergency and routine SA are or are not connected to any of the self-employed sectors which are the focus on new work to register these groups into NSSF.

To strengthen the gender equality approach, there is a clear opportunity as the reviewed NSPPF comes into play over the next months, to take a more proactive approach to supporting the NSSF, NSAF and GS-NSPC in better integration as expressed in that framework. At the first level, this means systematically supporting steps towards making gender disaggregated data visible in both SA and SS monitoring systems, as well as intersectional data. It also means supporting more systematically gender-critical approaches to analysing labour market sectors, (especially e.g. gender segregation and its relation to gender wage gaps, and therefore the contributory power of workers), formalization processes which should avoid creating less flexibility if they are to be gender equal; and a recognition of the role and value of unpaid care work in the overall economy.

The overall objective of ASPC is to [support RGC to] create a system in which more women and men in Cambodia have access to more effective, efficient, accountable and sustainable gender-responsive social protection. While the project does not explicitly set out to complete this evolution, it is important to maintain a picture of where the project fits into the wider pictures: – both of a fully inclusive SP system; and of the several contributing stakeholders to this desired evolution. With this in mind, it is essential to acknowledge that ASPC will not yet meet the needs of all relevant groups (of workers; of vulnerable people) and therefore to calibrate this project with a conception of what will remain to be done after the close of the project in approximately 18 months – such as continuing to develop creative schemes that meet the particular challenges of certain types of self-employed and otherwise vulnerable people. Slow progress in actual coverage achieved by Outcome 1 makes it particularly important to carefully clarify what will be achieved in the remaining timeframe of ASPC; what will remain to be completed to achieve the overall objective; and what timeframe might be required for this. It also means a clear focus on how best to support government capacity renewal in the long term; and continued work to support the institutionalisation of NSAF in particular.

As the SP institutions continue to work towards harmonization of SS and SA, and towards interoperability of the data systems supporting this, coherence among supporting stakeholders will continue to be a priority - but equally, working towards clear understanding of the linkages (from beneficiary perspective) between emergency SA schemes, routinized SA schemes and SS coverage will be key. This may include stronger advocacy with NSSF for how SS can and should be oriented towards creating a more integrated social protection system with built-in resilience among

vulnerable work sectors to diminish the need for [emergency] SA, as well as how to protect vulnerable populations who are not able to work, including children – which is a highly relevant issues for both SA and SS systems.

The project has also arrived at an important moment where the ‘in-principle’ linkages between SP and SA are beginning to become increasing evident in the expanding objectives and design of new schemes. This is in part because the SA approach is gradually moving out of emergency mode and into a more routinized approach as economic conditions stabilize. In this mode, opportunities such as focusing SA for skills development into areas which can generate SS coverage through voluntary or compulsory contribution are becoming more obvious. In addition, a key structural element of the NSPPF 2030 is the life risk of individuals, rather than the separate pillars of SA and SS. Thus, the linkages are becoming much more relevant in the near future. The project will be in a better position to take up these opportunities for synergising their work if the two pillars take care to work in close collaboration with all key stakeholders and with each other as the SP system progresses. Creating an optimally integrated / harmonised SP system will involve synchronised work from stakeholders, including project managers in ASPC.

The MTE articulated the following specific recommendations:

**Recommendation 1: Priorities for ILO.** First, ILO should undertake a candid review of the timeline available to ASPC; the causal steps necessary to achieve objectives; and realistic targets. This review should include assessing potential for a No Cost Extension; planning for what actions can be taken within the original timeframe; and what actions might take place within the framework of an extension. Second, ILO should take action as soon as possible to support implementing the NSSF communications strategy to attract voluntary (or, where relevant, compulsory) contributions from self-employed groups and the dependents of NSSF contributing members through public and social media. Consider extending technical staff inputs for the last stage of the project to support this. As part of this strategy, consider developing and disseminating feedback positive stories of the benefits of health cover into self-employed communities and/or the benefits of cover for dependents into NSSF member communities.

Third, the NSSF should develop promotional materials, in the forms of printed posters, brochure/or leaflets, containing the key information on how to register, eligibility criteria and procedural steps, and including the benefits members can expect to receive from mandatory or voluntary schemes. ASPC could support the capacity of NSSF staff to develop these materials. These materials should complement the active registration campaigns as recommended in the communications strategy and already underway. This action should be undertaken jointly with the key national social partners, i.e. Trade Unions/, Economy Associations, and Employer Association/or CAMFEBEA, following the adoption and approval of the Sub-Decree.

Fourth, ILO should continue to advocate for progress with amendments to legislation for extending health insurance to dependents of the NSSF’s registered members via compulsory contribution as a preferred option. For compulsory contributions for dependents of members, much groundwork is in place but action has been hesitant, creating a bottleneck. Releasing this bottleneck will require advocacy with the NSSF and GS-NSPC, which should indeed continue but will take time.

Meanwhile, the shorter-term option for voluntary contributions via the pending Sub-Decree - mainly aimed at facilitating voluntary contributions for the self-employed but with some option to include employee dependents - should be carefully promoted as this route shows some promise for more immediate progress within the timeframe of ASPC. This means 1) prioritizing support to the adoption,

approval and implementation of the *pending* Sub-Decree on the extension of social security (health insurance, and pension) to self-employed/own-account workers – and including dependents of NSSF members - though voluntary contributions; alongside support to the recently initiated one-year pilot scheme health insurance scheme for select self-employment sectors and then 2) promoting and disseminating information about this opportunity via the communications strategy implementation and 3) agreeing annual targets for dependents' enrolments through this option and tracking these.

**Recommendation 2: Priorities for UNICEF:** UNICEF should collaborate with the GS-NSPC, and NSAF in making the separated data for Emergency CTs and the Routine CTs more distinct, visible and available for ASPC project monitoring and reporting, as well as more broadly for NSAF and GS-NSPC – where necessary - to gauge the progress made particularly on routine CT coverage. Supporting the integration of a separate approach to routine and shock-response schemes in the M&E handbook for SP could be part of this.

Second, UNICEF should continue to seek opportunities to support ongoing work to develop and promote the integration of MIS system/or data-sharing platform into the Single National Registry of the Social Protection's Beneficiaries. This can work through the development of the integrated social assistance ICT platform linking data from all CTs, and APIs linking CTs with the Registry to contribute to GS-NSPC's creation of this Registry and its platform, so that data are available in other government ministries and institutions, including NSSF.

Following successful completion of the current Digitalization Project/SP-ID Project, including the imminent roll out of the CamDX, there is an opportunity to maintain momentum on implementing the agenda of the data collection modules and APIs to support the Cash-Plus development options.

**Recommendation 3: for UNICEF and ILO together.** In the context of the NSPPF 2030 life cycle approach, which provides a framework for synergising SA and SS, UNICEF and ILO should take action and opportunities to strengthen visibility of the linkages between SA and SS through more explicitly joint work by ILO and UNICEF. This should include continuing to explore potential linkages in the TVET Cash Transfer scheme; the expansion of the cash transfer for pregnant women and children to garment workers. It might also include designing referral schemes so that information on SA and SS is available to all (to be discussed with GS-NSPC), and seeking new resources to facilitate developing such linkages.

It might also include more open reflection on how current post-Covid economic challenges including inflation and climate change effects have dampening effect on expanding SS registrations at the same time as fixing SA efforts in emergency mode. There is therefore a clear mutual benefit to getting beyond the bottleneck in SS – including by advocacy on where and how SS is linked to SA through improving economic resilience by providing protection at specified critical points, especially for vulnerable groups; and how routine SA schemes linking livelihood skills and cash support can / could be linked to new opportunities for SS coverage in key sectors. It might also include further consideration of the potential linkages between SS and ongoing SA for those groups who cannot work, such as children, people with severe disability, and the very elderly.

**Recommendation 4: A stronger gender approach.** In the immediate term, ILO and UNICEF should work with the social protection institutions to make gender disaggregation consistently visible and available in SA and SS monitoring systems, and therefore also in ASPC project reporting data. While this disaggregation is available in the SP M&E framework, any remaining gaps in disaggregation, for instance in some SA schemes, should be filled.

In the medium term, with some groundwork in the course of the current ASPC project's remaining 18 months, ILO and UNICEF should support consistent capacity of those monitoring systems to make data available on intersectionality— including gender and disability; and gender and vulnerable groups used for ID Poor classification.

In the medium term, ILO and UNICEF should work with the social protection institutions to support stronger gender integration in line with the reviewed NSPPF, when it is made available. This could include support to developing a gender strategy, or specific gender-related actions, to translate the gender dimensions of the NSPPF into an operational process. It should include an approach/ strategy to counter gender segregation in labour markets when there are opportunities through the SP system; and to maintaining flexibility in the process of labour market formalization in the interests of not closing this formal sector off from those who also have care responsibilities. It should also include special consideration of the gender dimensions of poor and near-poor profiles, including of the large number of female headed households among this group.

**Recommendation 5: A sustainable capacity renewal approach.** UNICEF and ILO should continue to support the further institutional strengthening of NSAF; NSSF and GS-NSPC including with a long term strategy on how skills can be maintained and renewed internally. Consider supporting the development of a long-term institutional strengthening and capacity renewal plan for NSSF and NSAF and coordinated by GS-NSPC where there are capacity needs in common or to support schemes which are intentionally harmonised. For NSAF, this means continuing to work on the under-development organizational development plan and the Family Package costing which aims to make capacity building more structured and sustainable. An institutional strengthening and capacity renewal plan for NSSF could be separately developed, with a role for GS-NSPC in planning common elements, and with the purpose of ensure sustainability and continuation of the mechanisms and tools or good practices and lessons learnt etc., and a mechanism for allocating government financial resources to this end. Clear annual activity targets along with an appropriate budget allocation should be set for NSSF's and NSAF's training and outreach activities.

## 1. Introduction and Evaluation Background

The EU funded Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia (ASPC) project began implementation in February 2021 and will run until December 2024 with an approved budget of €5,598,535 over the four years. It is co-implemented by ILO and UNICEF, working in close collaboration with government stakeholders responsible for social protection, in particular the General Secretariat (GS) of the National Social Protection Council (NSPC); the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY). It aims to extend social protection coverage and quality of provisions (adequacy and quality of services) by improving operational capabilities of social protection institutions and the adaptability of existing schemes to the characteristics and needs of those working in the informal sector, with a particular focus on the expansion of social protection to the ‘missing middle’ and the vulnerable.

### 1.1. Evaluation purpose and scope

This document reports on a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) undertaken from April-June 2023 after just over two years of project implementation. The overall purpose of the MTE was for accountability; and especially to generate learning to support improvements in the project over its final 18 months of implementation. It was therefore essentially a formative evaluation, with some additional accountability perspective.

The MTE was undertaken by a two-person independent consultant team contracted by the Evaluation Manager, ILO RO Asia and Pacific. The team consists of a National Consultant specialist in social protection based in Phnom Penh; and an International Consultant specialist in gender responsive evaluation, based in UK.

The specific objectives of the MTE were to:

- (4) Assess the progress achieved with project implementation against project objectives and performance indicators adopted, and to identify and address any major obstacles that may have arisen;
- (5) Examine the current and future role of the project in contributing towards generating system change across the Cambodia’s social protection systems, and draw lessons learned and identify good practices from the two years of the project’s intervention;
- (6) Propose recommendations to inform modifications of the project to increase its relevance and validity of design, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact orientation, and sustainability, in the remaining period.

The evaluation covered the first two full years of project implementation – 2021 and 2022 – and includes some information relevant to recently initiated work during the first 3-4 months of 2023.

### 1.2 Target Audience

The MTE is expected to provide information to the UN partners ILO and UNICEF and Government counterparts, including especially the GS- NSPC, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), and the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MoEP). For these stakeholders the MTE provides opportunity for accountability on achievements of the initiative; information relevant to continuing to improve social protection in Cambodia including for scale-up; and an opportunity to reflect on jointly implemented interventions and the evaluations’ findings. Findings are also relevant to social partners, including INGOs and NGOs involved in other social protection projects such as the FIRST project, led by OXFAM; employer organisations such as the Cambodian Federation of Employers (CAMFEBA), and worker organisations and trade unions

such as the Association of Transportation and Informal Workers and Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association. Finally, findings are intended to inform the European Union – as the donor for this and other social protection projects in Cambodia.

### 1.3. Evaluability Assessment

An evaluability assessment (EA) was carried out alongside the MTE by the same consultant team, and the two assignments were synergised as far as possible. The EA began slightly prior to the MTE, thus allowing the MTE approach to be informed by preliminary findings of the EA. Data collection opportunities for the MTE were then also used to collect information for finalizing the EA. The EA was focused on technical features of the project’s design, results framework, and monitoring structure and on evolving a Theory of Change in order to investigate the question of whether the project design was comprehensive and achievable. The MTE questions were therefore focused less on these areas, focusing more on issues of progress, sustainability, potential impact and cross-cutting issues. The EA’s findings and recommendations are reported in a separate document.

## 2. The Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia Project

### 2.1 Context of social protection in Cambodia

The 1993 Constitution of Cambodia guarantees a rights-based and inclusive social protection system that warrants a minimum social security benefit to every citizen. A National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 (NSPPF) was adopted in 2017 and accompanied by a series of laws and policies to provide the legislative, regulatory and policy framework governing both contributory social security schemes<sup>1</sup> and non-contributory social assistance programmes<sup>2</sup>, and is building on these two main pillars. To coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NSPPF, a National Social Protection Council (NSPC) chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance (MEF) and a General Secretariat (GS) based at the MEF were established respectively. The goal of the NSPPF is to develop a strategic plan for the RGC “to ensure income security for all citizens, promote their welfare, strengthen social solidarity and maximize poverty alleviation impacts” with a view to ensuring equity and social solidarity, and promoting the welfare and livelihood of all citizens.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has also developed a series of national legislations, legal frameworks, national policies and action plans. These include: 1) Law on Social Security Schemes, 2) Law on Social Protection System (being drafted) 3) National Social Protection Policy Framework, 4) Policy on Child Protection System to build human resource and strengthen the capacity to implement the laws and regulations related to child protection, 5) National Employment Policy 2016-2025 to promote productive employment and formalization of informal business and employment, labour protection, and access to unemployment insurance etc., 6) the National Ageing Policy 2017-

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<sup>1</sup> The contributory social protection schemes that have so far been implemented include: 1) Contributory Health Care Scheme under the NSSF, 2) Contributory Occupational Risk Scheme, 3), Contributory Old Age Pension Scheme for Civil Servants and Veteran, and 4) the recent implemented mandatory pension scheme for private sector employees. The last remaining contributory scheme that has yet been implemented is the unemployment scheme.

<sup>2</sup> The non-contributory social protection programmes that have been implemented include: 1) Non-contributory Child-Benefit Programme (Scholarship, School Feeding Programme), 2) Non-contributory Cash-Transfer for Pregnant Women and children under Two (CT-PWYC), 3) Non-Contributory Cash-Transfer for Persons with Disability, 4) Non-Contributory Old-Age Benefits (being proposed), and 5) Non-Contributory Healthcare Benefit under Health Equity Fund (HEF).

2030 to take care about the health, well-being and the needs of the elderly people, and 7) The Strategic Plan on Social Service Workforce in Cambodia 2022-2030 to improve capacity building and increase the size of social service workforce.

However, in 2021 it was estimated that only around 20 per cents of workers are covered by contributory or employment related social protection schemes while a further 20 per cent of the population are covered by the array of the non-contributory social assistance programmes targeted at the poorest, thus leaving a significant proportion “missing middle” or majority of the population without access to any form of social protection.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the Cambodia’s social protection system has historically been fragmented and under-resourced, leading to an overall low coverage, - although the RGC’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic began a process of systematic change in this respect.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambodia has expanded the scope of contributory and non-contributory schemes and has demonstrated strong leadership in implementing reforms and initiatives to strengthen its social protection system. The government’s specific social protection measures to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 include:

- 1) Cash Transfer for Poor and Vulnerable Households affected by Covid-19 (CTP-COVID), providing monthly payment to households identified as poor and vulnerable using ID Poor database. As of June 2021, The CTP-COVID reached 658,875 households, including 2.583,255 individuals;
- 2) Wage-Subsidy Scheme, proving a form of unemployment benefit to workers in form of unemployment benefit to workers in textile, garment, footwear, and tourism sectors, where business operations had been suspended. The benefit amount was set at US\$70, with US\$40 paid by government and US\$30 paid by employers. By late 2021, 554,988 workers had been granted the wage subsidy;
- 3) Post-lockdown Social Assistance in Cash to support individuals and households in the context of lockdowns put in place in response to the spread of COVID-19. This involved a one-off lump-sum payment of at least KHR160,0000 (US\$40) to people living in areas under lockdown (Phnom Penh, Kandal province’s Takmao town and Preah Sihanouk City). Support was also provided to nationwide to families where a member contracted or died from COVID-19;
- 4) Home-Grown School Feeding Programme was adjusted from providing meals to providing take-home rations (rice and ingredients) to eligible students;
- 5) The Cash for Work Programme was expanded to support development of rural infrastructure, support local farmers creating jobs, supporting returning migrants and generating income for local population to support their daily lives.

The total expenditure of these social assistance programmes (1.4 per cent of GDP at the time of the NSPPF review) entailed an unprecedented increase in the social protection spending, which was approximately equal to the total regular expenditure and more than four times the regular government expenditure on social protection schemes and programmes combined (excluding the National Social Security Fund – Civil Servants (NSSF-C) and National Fund for Veterans (NFV)).

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<sup>3</sup> Review of the Cambodian National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025. Final Report “Unpublished”. Development Pathways, June 2022.

## 2.2. Overview

The ASPC project was designed during 2020 in this context, partly drawing on the momentum created by the RGC's Covid-19 response, to articulate objectives for a sustainable and 'routine' approach and architecture for social protection.

The overall project goal and impact statement of ASPC is "More women and men in Cambodia have access to more effective, efficient, accountable and sustainable gender-responsive social protection."

It was envisaged that these will be achieved through three pillars of work:

- (1) Extending **social security** coverage to workers not covered and to improve the quality and depth of service for those that are covered;
- (2) Enhancing capabilities in the provision of **social assistance** programmes to increase inclusion of extremely poor and at risk populations into social assistance while strengthening their livelihoods and participation in the labour market, including through supporting the building of the delivery system for social assistance through the single operator.
- (3) Improving the delivery and coordination of social security through the modernisation of the NSSF,

These work streams correspond with the project's three intended outcomes:

- Outcome 1 – A Increased inclusion/coverage of workers that are covered by social security schemes
- Outcome 2 - Increased inclusion and coverage of poor and vulnerable population in social assistance and complementary programmes promoting improved livelihoods and well-being
- Outcome 3 – Social security organisations are strengthened with improved business processes and tools to increase coverage and quality of service to workers in the formal and

## 2.3 Status of implementation and programme adjustments

At the time of the preparation for the MTE, the project had been in implementation for just over two of the four planned years. Progress had been made in implementing several activities under Outcomes 1 and 2.<sup>4</sup>

Under Outcome 1, research had been completed; knowledge products developed and workshops conducted establishing government commitment to expanding social security coverage. These include a policy proposal of extension of health insurance to dependents of covered workers; a communications strategy for social security; and preparation of a pilot project to register informal workers from the transport sector into the social security fund.

Under Outcome 2, extension of the Covid-19 cash transfer package had delayed the actual roll out of the Family Package - designed to replace that programme by extending 'non-emergency' assistance to vulnerable groups (originally planned for end 2022). This has incurred some sequential delays, such as the M&E system for the family package now expected to be in place in 2024. Nevertheless, several steps supporting the roll out had taken place, and technical assistance was in place supporting outputs including linking the cash transfer programme with vocation training/ livelihoods skills. Activity has also focused on ensuring delivery of the Covid-19 cash transfer package and preparing for its exit; on continued support to existing routine cash transfers (the CT for pregnant

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<sup>4</sup> Information based on a summary of results collected by the project towards the end of 2022 and presented to project steering committee: Summary results update, consolidated.doc



women and children under 2; and a new near-poor floods and inflation scheme); and on research to inform the planned TVET scheme. Strengthening of the new ICT platforms for interoperability of the Family Package with ID Poor and DMIS; and M&E data systems strengthening has also made progress.

At this time, progress under Outcome 3 focused on strengthening social security systems was still in very early stages, with a supporting study recently commenced and early discussions held on a data sharing mechanism. The nature of the technical / ICT advances to be undertaken had not yet been agreed.

## 2.4 Financial overview

With a total budget contribution from the EU over four years of €5,598,535, 53% or € 2,978,558 was budgeted for operationalisation by ILO and 47% or € 2,619,977 by UNICEF. By Outcome, 16% or €915,000 was budgeted for work under Outcome 1; 36.5% or €2,042,000 was budgeted for work under Outcome 2; and 21% or €1,160,000 under Outcome 3.<sup>5</sup>

After two years of implementation, at the end of 2022, a total of US\$ 2,295,474 (approx. €2,119,266) had been utilized: US\$ 1,035,099 by ILO and US\$ 1,260,376 by UNICEF. This amounts to 38% of the total budget.

## 3. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation took a mixed-method approach, using quantitative and qualitative data available through document review, and qualitative primary data. It also took a primarily theory based approach, since this offered learning about causation and causal steps that would be relevant to the formative objectives of an evaluation at this mid-term stage.

A Theory of Change had been reconstructed as part of the Evaluability Assessment process (See Annex 5 and 6). This assessment (see separate report) had identified some weaknesses in the results framework, in particular some gaps in the logic between output and outcome, and had prioritised the ToC process as a method for gaining insight into the intended change processes, which could be used to guide understanding of project strategy for the MTE.

This approach also makes it possible to gain some insight into the project's contribution to the wider social protection improvement processes taking place, and the work of other institutions and agencies in this.

### **Study methods to address UNSWAP Gender Equality**

Prioritising a gender responsive approach was an important part of the evaluation. Evaluation criteria for cross cutting issues, and evaluation questions included a specific stand-alone inquiry about advancing gender equality (EQ10). Analysis of information about gender equality was also an important part of the Evaluability Assessment, which looked at the collection of gender relevant information through the project. These inquiries are drawn into specific conclusions and recommendations for strengthening the gender equality approach in the project.

In terms of specific methodology, the evaluation also, wherever possible, has taken a collaborative approach, engaging stakeholders in the process stages of evaluation design, stakeholder identification, data collection, and – following a discussion of preliminary findings - in an iterative

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<sup>5</sup> Specific details have not been made available, but the remaining 26.5% of the budget is likely to have been allocated to common operational and administrative costs.

process of articulating recommendations. It has also prioritised taking a gender responsive approach wherever there were good opportunities for this: this has meant prioritising and analysing how gender has been embedded into the project design, objectives and M & E system; paying attention to how information on gender related changes associated with can be improved; and seeking to be in a position to recommend how steps towards a gender transformative approach can be embedded in future work. It also meant prioritising carrying out at least a minimum of consultations with rights holder beneficiaries, so that their voices and perspectives were included in the data available for analysis.

### 3.1 Data collection and analysis

Three principle methods were used for data collection: document review; key informant interviews (KIIs); and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving 74 respondents altogether.

**Document review:** 62 documents were reviewed in three processes: an initial document scan to assess information availability and gaps; an in-depth analysis of key project documents mainly for the purposes of the EA but also informing the MTE; and a further in-depth review of key documents collected iteratively during the data collection process, to add detail to the original and primary information, and to assess the extent of triangulation across data sources for the emerging findings. See Annex 3.

**Primary data collection** took place in two stages. Altogether 74 people were consulted (see list in Annex 2).

- In the first stage, 7 remote scoping interviews were conducted with 12 respondents. This stage took place in synergy with the EA; questions covered both EA and MTE topics / perspectives.
- In the second stage, 20 face to face KIIs were carried out with 36 stakeholders during a field work phase in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May 2023, with follow up during 29<sup>th</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.
- In this phase, 3 FGDs were also carried out, involving 35 participants.
  - 1 FGD with 4 participants from worker organisations
  - 2 FGDs with rights holder-beneficiaries: 16 recent recipients of the CT-PWCU2 and 15 recipients of the emergency CT for those affected by inflation.

**Selection** of informants was carried out in consultation with ILO and UNICEF project staff. A list of stakeholders was compiled, drawing from the tripartite structure, therefore including Government officials and representatives of Trade Unions / worker organisations and employer organisations. Since the project has worked primarily with government institutions involved in social protection, representatives from each relevant ministry / agency were selected, as well as the three primary institutions, the GS-NSPC, NSAF and NSSF. Consultations were also sought with organisations leading parallel projects to progress social protection (Oxfam) and with the donor (EU delegation in Cambodia).

For consultations with rights-holder beneficiaries, constraints on the time and travel for the data collection meant that a location was chosen close to Phnom Penh, where both the CT-PWYC and the emergency CT for those affected by inflation had been delivered. Selection of participants was then carried out by officials at the municipal office.

At analysis stage, primary data from both interviews and focus groups was coded against the 11 EQs. This consolidated data was then reviewed against information collected from document review to

identify stronger and weaker points of triangulation, as well as any points of tension / counter evidence. This analysis was also put together with document analysis – for example of the logical framework and the theory of change – carried out for the EA – so identify areas in which the EA also gave support to preliminary MTE findings (and vice versa).

### 3.2 Methodological limitations

While the data collection process went quite smoothly and eventually covered all identified stakeholders, the following limitations should be noted:

- FGDs with rights holders were limited for practical reasons and because the evaluation did not set out to evaluate the specific policies and instruments which they had potentially benefitted from – rather, the aim was to include their perspectives in the pool of data. Therefore, information derived from FGDs cannot be considered representative of a larger sample of beneficiaries; instead these perspectives can provide pointers to areas or issues which may need further investigation.
- Limited financial data available to the evaluation team has meant that limited analysis was possible regarding the level of effort put into each output so far, and the corresponding progress towards results. More detailed utilization data by output / activity could have led to some insight into where activities carried out appeared to be resulting in progress towards outcomes at this stage, or not.
- There are several donor funded and RGC funded processes currently ongoing which have a bearing on the process of strengthening and expanding social protection in Cambodia. ILO and UNICEF are relatively long term stakeholders in this process, known for their technical expertise and ability to support the RGC led process. Other projects in which ILO and UNICEF are core stakeholders, and for which EU is the [main] funder are current or have recently ended (see Finding 2). For this reason, during data collection consultations, it was not always possible to distinguish which activities and processes discussed by government and wider stakeholders were directly related to ASPC, and which were attributable to other strands of work: this is fully understood as a positive structure in which projects are variously contributing to a wider system. However, it means there is therefore there is some risk of bias in these findings towards information that is not directly attributable to ASPC.

## 4. Findings of the Evaluation

### Relevance

#### **EQ1: To what extent does the project meet the needs of the beneficiaries?**

*To what extent does it meet global, country and partners/institutions' SP needs, policies and priorities, considering the changes in circumstances?*

#### Finding 1:

**There is no doubt that the project objectives are broadly relevant and reflect the priorities of the government to extend social protection to its target groups of vulnerable populations for SA and informal workers, who represent the large 'missing middle' for SS. The project also fits well with the broader agendas of all the core institutions- ILO, UNICEF and the RGC in the form of its SP institutions NSAF, NSSF and GS-NSPC. However, it does not stand to (and did not aim to) support the government to reach all relevant groups within the project lifetime: coverage of social security in**

**particular remains at the beginning of a long road in terms of outreach to ‘difficult’ sectors of informal workers such as farmers and ‘daily wage labour’ construction workers.**

ASPC works primarily to support government implementation and as such it is led by government priorities as these have evolved in response to Covid-19 and subsequent economic pressures. It has good alignment with the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 (NSPPF) including its support to the creation of the single operator for SA, the NSAF; and the support to social security expansion is well aligned with the government’s agenda for formalization as driven by the Economic Recovery Plan<sup>6</sup>.

ASPC was designed pre-Covid-19 but the SA part of its objectives were highly relevant to the Covid-19 situation, and there has been synergy between ASPC and the emergency response. As Covid-19 support begins now to be withdrawn, this has left a structure which the Family Package will build on in a more routine support approach.

The project objects also fit well into the broader work of the two UN Partners: ILO Decent Work Country Programme, of which Social Protection makes up one of three priorities (and constitutes the large majority of the work being carried out under this pillar); and UNICEF’s pillar on Social Protection (with a focus on children).

Other stakeholders, such as the employers Association CAMFEBA are in part aligned with the project, in so far as the employer’s confederation is supportive of increasing coverage (not least because this potentially increases the size of the fund and therefore the volume available for investment) but favours a focus on low risk groups.

In terms of beneficiaries, there is little doubt that in principle the expansion of social protection – both social assistance and social protection - would reduce vulnerabilities and exposure to risk. Similarly, there is evidence from the process evaluation of the CT for PWCU2, and reinforced by the primary data collected for this evaluation, that recipients find the CT helpful, at least for enabling them to cover costs of travelling to the health centres for checkups for themselves and their babies. The project has also targeted – and begun to reach – the ‘near poor’<sup>7</sup> affected by inflation and floods; and aims to start to link social assistance services so that vulnerable groups are supported in a more holistic manner – such as by CTs linked to vocational training.

For social security, the project has set out in general to reach coverage of the self-employed; employees in (informal) micro enterprises, and the dependents of (formal) workers already covered by social security. In terms of specific groups reached / targeted, the project has supported research into appropriate mechanisms and rate of contribution feasible for different groups of the self-employed. The selection of further groups of self-employed for specific targeting through pilot work has been led by the GS-NSPC in consultation with NSSF and proceeded with some caution. At the time of this MTE, no government decision has been made yet on which sectors and/or who among the

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<sup>6</sup> the Strategic Framework and Programs for Economic Recovery in the Context of Living with the COVID-19 in a New Normal 2021-2023 which entails a combination of strong measures under the three main pillars “3Rs” namely Recovery, Reform, and Resilience, with the objectives for the country to bounce back to a path of strong growth, sustainability, and inclusiveness.

<sup>7</sup> Limited evidence that some of these are not in fact ‘near poor’ but rather ‘poor but as missed by the ID Poor registration system’

vulnerable groups, in both formal and informal settings, will be prioritized/ targeted for the extension of social security coverage under a pilot project to be implemented by NSSF with support from the project via GRET. However, given the fluidity of the economic activity and workforce mobility in Cambodia, it was suggested that the most likely groups to be targeted for the pilot project would be platform delivery workers and the market traders in permanent market places as opposed to the difficult/or hard to reach ‘self-employed’ groups such as farmer and daily wage construction workers.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, while the project is entirely relevant to government priorities, the full extension of SA and SS is at the early stages of a lengthy process. While the project aimed to contribute to expanding SP coverage, it did not and could not have aimed to meet the needs of *all* relevant beneficiaries – thus the needs of a large group of potential beneficiaries are unlikely to be met within the lifetime of this project.

## VALIDITY OF DESIGN

### EQ2: Is the project strategy sound to achieve the project’s planned outcomes and objectives?

*What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving its objectives?*

*Are there any areas or project activities that need to be modified in the second half of the project?*

#### Finding 2:

**The MTE has added detail to several of the risks to the project strategy and logical framework identified through the Evaluability Assessment. This includes concerns about the number of procedural steps necessary in relation to the project timeline not accounted for in project design, reflected in the still pending adoption of the necessary legislations for mandatory SS schemes; an absence of concrete plans for large scale advocacy supporting the voluntary registrations of dependents of registered workers; a continued risk, despite improvements, that health service quality concerns that may be a barrier to the success of voluntary registration; and a risk that compulsory registration of micro enterprises, even when all the sub-legislation is approved, may not be immediately enforced. Further work is need to understand how registration will work for some groups; at the same time there may be relatively low-risk groups of self-employed who could be concurrently targeted in order to help develop a ‘norming’ of NSSF membership.**

As identified in the findings of the Evaluability Assessment, the logical framework of the project is weak in some instances including:

- The original ToC was weak in expressing the line of causation expected for the achievement of outcomes. This has meant there are some likely ‘gaps’ in causation – for instance, advocacy for new registrations is focused on micro-enterprises; while it is likely that similar advocacy/communications will be required among the self-employed and among contributing workers to also make contributions to cover their dependents. Similarly, the causal steps of developing legislation into sub-decrees and prakas are not sufficiently present in the project logic.
- In addition, in the case of Output 1.6 the activity planned for in this timeline is very unlikely by itself to lead to any contributing to increasing registrations as yet. This output aims to begin / contribute to a process of working in the garment sector to reduce the numbers of women dropping out of SS coverage as they move out of formal employment, but exploring options for their retention.
- There is a lack of clarity / specificity on the causal relation of the capacity building /

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<sup>8</sup> Note that some parts of these and similar groups may in fact have been reached by Covid-19 related social assistance; while the ID Poor identification system was used to target Covid-19 CTs, it is not clear whether economic activity in this data base is updated often enough to cater to sometimes fluid economic activity patterns. This may represent an area of potential synergy between the SS and SA systems.

institutional strengthening initiatives undertaken by the project to project outcomes within this project timeframe – i.e. which capacity inputs (if any) are **necessary causal steps** for achieving the objectives of **this project**; and which capacity inputs are implemented in the interests of sustainability / impact orientation beyond the scope of this immediate project. In other words, are there capacity support initiatives which are needed to support achieve the targets of THIS project? Or is capacity in place for this (or taken care of through TA)? This means that where capacity strengthening exercises have been slower than expected to implement (for instance under Outcome 3), it is not clear to what extent this jeopardizes the expected results in terms of extension of SP (in this example, under Outcome 1).

These each constitute some risks to the success of the project, as there is a lack of certainty about whether project activities are in fact properly sequenced and fully designed to achieve objectives and the specific targets set at outcome level in terms of expanded coverage (though they may be; or indeed objectives could be achieved but unrelated to project activities).

Evidence collected for this MTE have made some of this *in principle* risk to the ToC identified in the EA somewhat more tangible. For instance, stakeholders are concerned variously that:

- Although legislation has been passed supporting formalization (such as implementing compulsory registration by micro-enterprise) and eligibility of self-employed to make voluntary contributions, there are still a number of formal processes needed such as the approval of sub-decrees.
- For Output 1.3 on dependents' coverage, while facility has been made under the legislation for self-employed to make voluntary contributions, no attempt has been made to pilot or otherwise test, or to communicate this opportunity to the target audience – although this area does offer some potential for extending cover in the short term.
- Improving health care services is beyond the scope of the project. However, while SS coverage extension is partly depending on increases in voluntary contributions (e.g. from self-employed) there is a risk to the project that the historical lack of confidence in the quality of public health care provision may need to be addressed, in close collaboration with the MoH. This may be mitigated, for example, by generating and publicizing positive stories of the health benefits of voluntary contribution-based health cover. It is likely that it will take time for these messages to diffuse 'naturally' through social interactions – beyond the time frame of this project.
- Although the Project's support to the formalization of the enterprise was limited to the development of the Formalization Policy, without better enforcement of business registrations, which, may in principle be possible once the necessary sub-decrees have been passed, the question is whether the timing will make it politically possible to proceed with this type of business regulation. There is a risk that in the context of a challenging economic outlook, - not to mention very deep seated informality norms in Cambodia – that implementation will be deferred.
- While progress has been made to understand how registration will work for some groups of self-employed workers, the needs / specific limitations of many groups have not yet been specifically understood or addressed. Specific target groups were not specified at the outset – in fact part of the project's work has been to support the process of articulating RGC priorities but this is not clear from the project design and framework. While a project of this scale cannot be expected to reach all groups, since target groups were unclear it has also not been specified in design which groups are NOT targeted. At the same time there *may* be relatively low-risk, easy to target groups of self-employed (such as e.g. lawyers) who could be concurrently targeted in order to help develop a 'norming' of NSSF membership among the self-employed.

## Coherence

### EQ 3: To what extent have other interventions and policies supported or undermined the project interventions, and vice versa?

*To what extent has the project linked and coordinated with other interventions or strategies of other SP Institutions?*

*How could synergies be maximized and collaboration with new or existing key stakeholders improved?*

#### Finding 3:

**Social protection in Cambodia has been a very active space with several players over the last decade: with the establishment of government institutions NSSF and NSAF, the rapid roll out of a large scale CT response to Covid-19 and the launching of various SP mechanisms. Structures have also been put in place for system coordination, including the GS-NSPC and a number of focused working groups, and ASPC has advocated for a one-SP approach. The project has seen a number of specific collaborations. However, ILO and UNICEF still have a tendency to work on SP in loosely coordinated silos. This has to be carefully addressed and monitored so the potential synergies between SS and SA, which are now emerging more clearly in part due to the project approach, are not missed.**

Social protection in Cambodia has gathered several stakeholders over the last years, and some significant programmes and projects to support the establishment of SP institutions and effective mechanisms. This work has included the active involvement of the RGC institutions coordinated by GS-NSPC; UN partners, UNICEF, ILO, UNDP and WHO; and other development partners, donors and INGOs including EU, GIZ, AFD (via GRET), DFAT and OXFAM, among others.

Good efforts have been made in several cases to establish active mechanisms for coordination across this activity; and there is high awareness among stakeholders that collaboration is essential in this space. The ASPC stakeholders have been active advocates of a coordinated, one-SP approach with SA and SS working together under one framework.

Building on the above solid foundation with the already well-established national institutional and social protection policy frameworks and with the strong support received from the relevant social development partners, the overall intent of the Project, which is co-implemented by the ILO and UNICEF, is to design programmes that work to complement other on-going projects and initiatives, in different dimensions but support each other, and enable a full array of stakeholders to engage. For instance, the SP-PFM has worked with MEF to support financing of SP; EU budget support has enabled government to implement SP. Both of these provide the context in which the capacity strengthening driven in part by the ASPC has traction and purpose, which, in turn, had contributed to the coherent approach and joint actions toward advancing the social protection in Cambodia. Meanwhile, INGO-managed projects funded by EU and AFD via Oxfam (the FIRST project) and GRET (the SPIN project) have engaged with wider stakeholders including by bringing CSOs and worker organisations into consultations; and by engaging with rights holders about what SP mechanisms will work for different groups.

The project has also taken a strategic partnership approach, partnering in several different ways for the achievement of specific results:

- **UNDP** on formalization and economic recovery and on joint advocacy and **knowledge products** to inform policy proposals and push for greater emphasis on the extending social security to the informal workers. This evidence-based knowledge product will be used as the



business case to demonstrate the impact of formalization on economy, productivity, employment through the extension of social security coverage to the informal economy. The consolidated report on **Integrated Formalization** and 5 Background papers had been completed and will be the basis for the development of **Formalization Policy**.

- **ILO-BFC** on study to improve women's access to continued employment in the garment and social security to support their continued economic participation vis-à-vis the expectation to provide care for the family and children. The draft study has been produced and is being internally reviewed and discussed;
- **Joint UNICEF - WFP-ECHO** collaboration in the area of shock-responsive social protection and nutrition-sensitive social protection. The fund provided by the Project, in the form of seed resource, had contributed to the development of the **Shock-Responsive** complement to the Family Package;
- **GIZ** on the development of the **TVET Cash Transfer Programme** and support to institutional building of the NSAF. GIZ also supported the development of the Cambodia Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021-2025, including Strategy for **Digital Social Protection** led by GS-NSPC.
- **DFAT** on support to the disability sector, screening of the COVID-19 vaccination and strengthening linkages between social protection and health services;
- **OXAM** on joint advocacy and support greater capacity building within CSO groups, and social partners, which include several training and workshops on topic of addressing informality in Cambodia, including effort to build the platform **SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL**.

The establishment of GS-NSPC has shown vision for the coordination of SP across government, and a location for exploring cross-cutting and common issues among SS and SA such as formalization of labour markets and harmonization of SA and SS etc. The current four Coordination Working Groups set up under GS-NSPC are bringing together key stakeholders from their specific fields: viz - .

1. Policy WG co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the NSPC.
2. Social Security WG co-chaired by ILO and EU.
3. Social Assistance WG co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children
4. Health WG co-chaired by WHO and GIZ.

However, the concentration of expertise into these focused working groups has perhaps been influenced by the 'normally' relatively siloed ways of working across the UN agencies and other development partners involved in this wider SP related picture – with UNICEF responsible for supporting social assistance; ILO for supporting social security. While these divisions of labour are helpful to avoid duplication, and reflect the structural distinctions in the policy space, they risk solidifying the separation of SS and SA. As progress on building the SP institutions AND coordination has become more established, it will be important going forward to take available opportunities for understanding the broader common purpose and linkages between SS and SA. This may include continuing to explicit support the strengthening of this wider SP vision in the GS-NSPC, and responding to the emerging synergies - for example towards building a harmonized digital SP system - which are becoming clearer at this stage in the process.

## Effectiveness

**EQ4: Is the project making sufficient progress towards its planned objectives as laid out in the project's logical framework?**



*Will the project be likely to achieve its planned objectives upon completion?*

Finding 4:

**Unless the necessary legislation for the compulsory expansion of social security to dependents of the covered members of the NSSF is secured and implemented quickly, Outcome 1 is unlikely to achieve the targets set within the remaining 18-months of the project, although some important groundwork has been achieved. Outcome 2 has exceeded targets when emergency CTs are considered together with routine ones; but efforts to separate out these types of response needs to be made for a clear picture of progress. Institutional strengthening objectives for SA folded into Outcome 2 have also made tangible progress. Outcome 3 for institutional strengthening for SS met significant challenge in 2022, partly due to the fact that some of the direct TA support had been cancelled because either it was determined as outside the scope of the project or outside the area of the ILO's technical competency and progress in rolling out 3 of the 4 remaining outputs is only expected from 2023. Progress has been made which is relevant to these outputs e.g. by NSPC, but ILO's role in supporting this is unclear.**

At impact level, ASPC's objective is that SP is expanded to missing middle and vulnerable: More women and men in Cambodia have access to more effective, efficient, accountable, sustainable, gender responsive social protection.

It does this through 3 Outcomes:

**Outcome 1** aims to achieve

- Social security coverage to an additional 1 million workers
- Social security coverage to an additional 3.4 million dependents of workers

By the end of 2022 there were an additional 135,416 workers (total 1,735,416 workers) with active social security coverage, compared with a baseline of 1.6 million covered at the beginning of the programme<sup>9</sup>. There were as yet no additional registrations from dependents of registered workers. Therefore at this point, **only 3.1% of the targeted additional registrations** (altogether 4.4 million) has been achieved.

There has clearly been some progress at activity and Output level under Outcome 1. This includes considerable 'groundwork' in the form of studies, policy advocacy, and support to a communications strategy for NSSF which will help to make the new schemes more widely known and accessible. For example, the reports on formalization<sup>10</sup> and on the characteristics of the informal economy<sup>11</sup> are reported by stakeholders to be informing and influencing government decision making on how to proceed with expanding SP. Several respondents commented on the strong change in levels of buy-in among government stakeholders for expanded social security.

There are however undoubtedly several steps to go before this policy level groundwork translates into new registrations at scale. These are inadequately articulated in the project logical framework. Many of these steps involve following formal government procedures of developing and approving sub-decrees and prakas subsequent to the initial legislation, which take time in any circumstances and are also subject to predictable but unavoidable delays, such as that the process will now be

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<sup>9</sup> Annual Report December 2022

<sup>10</sup> UNDP and ILO: Understanding the paths to formalization in Cambodia: an integrated vision, May 2023, Dr. Jared Bissinger

<sup>11</sup> ILO 2023: Extending Social Protection for workers in Cambodia: A study to understand the characteristics of workers and enterprises in the informal economy

disrupted for some weeks during the national election in July 2023. For example, while legislation accommodating voluntary contributions for health coverage by the self-employed ‘missing middle’ has been passed, the sub-decree has not as it is currently under discussion by the NSSF’s Board of Directors. Legislation on a compulsory version of this coverage has not yet progressed. In another example, while it is compulsory for businesses to register with NSSF if they have even one employee, and – therefore to pay contributions for the cover of this employee – implementation of the legislation is so far weak, so large numbers of new micro enterprise workers have not yet been registered.

Other steps which have been initiated but are incomplete involve designing, testing, then refining and scaling the mechanism through which new workers will get on board with social security (currently health coverage is the main objective). A new pilot project under ASPC for a Voluntary Health Care Scheme for the Self-Employed through which implementing partner GRET will work with NSSF to test the mechanisms is recently been initiated in June 2023. This will certainly generate some new registrations and – importantly, further learning on ‘what works’ to bring the self-employed ‘missing middle’ on board. But this pilot is unlikely to generate the numbers of registrations anticipated by project targets (around a million), and was not intended to – so there are several steps to go, including absorbing the lessons from the pilot, before this target will be reached.

Under Output 1.3 which aims for the extension of health insurance to dependents of registered workers, again some groundwork has been achieved. This has taken the form of a review of the NSSF Health Insurance; the development of a policy proposal and a policy note on the definition of dependents; and an actuarial review. But the NSSF is not yet taking a proactive approach to these new registrations, in part because there is no legal basis specifically for this form of SS extension. Instead, accommodation has been made for this category to make voluntary contributions under the same basis as the self-employed scheme, but as yet no active steps have been taken to communicate or test/pilot this strategy. In parallel, the NSSF is working to develop a legal instrument i.e. Sub-Decree, based on the Actuarial Study on costing for dependents – but it is unlikely this will be developed, approved and implemented within the project timeline.

Although ILO has supported NSSF to develop a wider communications strategy, the roll out of which could include communication to worker’s dependents on their (forthcoming) eligibility, this strategy does not specifically mention the eligibility of member workers’ dependents for coverage – hence even when it is implemented, it is not likely to generate interest in that opportunity in particular. Further, evidence of a relatively cautious approach to this type of expansion on the part of NSSF, driven by economic considerations, suggests that reaching target numbers (3.5 million) over the next 18 months is unlikely.

Under Output 1.6 which targets garment workers, ultimately to find ways to support them in remaining active in the social security system, work on the first study to find out more about the needs and priorities of garment workers is now underway. While this stands to generate important information to fill this critical gap, turning this initial study into a policy, mechanisms, and implementation of measures to support young women to stay in formalized work during their main reproductive years will require a much longer time frame than the 18 months at hand.

While some stakeholders remain optimistic that targets will be reached, most – more realistically – note that the timeframe needed to achieve this scale up is actually much longer than the framework of the ASPC project. Alongside this assessment runs a recognition first how rapid the expansion in social protection has been over the last 10 years, and also depth of the change undertaken by moves towards formalization of the economy.

**Outcome 2** aims to extend cash transfer programmes to an additional **373,570** households from the baseline of 787,500 (cumulative for Covid-19 CT programme, CTPWYC and disability allowance) at the beginning of the project. Outputs under the Outcome also have planned objectives for strengthened capacity of social assistance institutions, but this is not formally expressed as an outcome in the results framework, implying that these direct output level results are intended to contribute to the outcome targets of additional covered households.

Therefore with the **1,354,000** households reached by routine and emergency cash transfers by the end of 2022, <sup>12</sup> 566,500 of these are newly reached and technically this target has been exceeded by 192,930 or 52%. 350,000 of these newly reached households were (by December 2022) recipients of the Dual Cash Transfer Programme<sup>13</sup> which was launched toward the end of 2022 to aid households which, have been financially impacted by floods or are vulnerable to the growing inflationary pressure. These included a proportion of the approximately 1 million 'near poor' households identified by the Cambodian Economic and Socio-Economic Survey of 2019, and selected using five additional criteria: a) a household with members over 60; b) including member/s with disability; c) female headed households; d) all children below 17 years; e) single member households.<sup>14</sup>

However, the challenge here is separating out routinized social assistance from emergency cash transfers in response to economic shocks. While the baseline includes routine conditional cash transfers for pregnant women and children under 2 (PWCU2); and a disability allowance for a relatively small proportion of persons living with disabilities, the cumulated reported figures in annual reporting do not allow insight into whether or how far there has been increasing inclusion or expansion in routine CTs separately from the emergency CTs.

There is expectation that the roll out of the Family Package after the RGC transitions away from emergency SA will stabilize the numbers reached; but there are as yet conflicting understanding of whether overall numbers reached will be reduced with this roll out; it is likely that the overall numbers will be reduced to approximately 700,000 households. Much preparation for the Family Package has been supported by UNICEF, including multiple trainings at National, Provincial and Commune level on individual schemes and the FP overall; and TA support for design of the package and of Social Behaviour Change Campaign supporting delivery at commune level.

There are indications that the PWCU2 may be extended to include children 3 to 5 years old in the medium-term; the continued roll out of this extension of a routine scheme would clearly increase the numbers reached in routine support, but data on this is not yet available to the evaluation team.

Objectives for capacity strengthening under this Outcome have also made good progress – though this is not measured at Outcome level. UNICEF has contributed to the establishment of the National Social Assistance Fund in 2022 as a separate entity from (but still closely connected to) the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth, and to this end has supported the development of its institutional development plan and Strategic Plan. While there are a number of steps still to take to ensure the institutional maturing of this institution, its establishment is a major step towards creating a functioning single operator for Social Assistance, and an important cog in the three way SP system alongside the NSSF and coordinated by the GS-NSPC.

Strengthening M&E systems and advancing digital inter-operability as one dimension of this has also

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<sup>12</sup> Annual Report, December 2022

<sup>13</sup> The programme aims to help vulnerable people who are affected by floods and inflation due to the Russian-Ukraine war – in three phases: while the first phase was launched on December 10, 2022, the second phase will start on April 10 and the third on July 10, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Recipients of the the CT had to fulfill at least one of the five criteria.

made good progress at both grassroots levels through commune council training; and at national level via progress on the interoperability of NSAF's MIS systems with those of the wider government (more detail in Finding 9).

**Outcome 3** aims for strengthened capacity of social security institutions – i.e. NSSF and GS-NSPC. Progress on this outcome has been limited in most dimensions, slowed to a large degree by a realization in 2022 that ILO was not best positioned to support the ICT approach preferred by NSSF and GS-NSPC, and the subsequent repurposing of this Output (**Output 3.2**). **Some progress has been made under Output 3.4** on technical support and training for actuarial and investment management, governance and data management; the GS-NSPC team has also attended training on Actuarial Analysis and Social Budgeting so that the Team is able to understand how to do the costings and calculate data. Work on a further three Outputs (**Output 3.1, 3.3 and 3.5**) is looking to begin during 2023. Under 3.1, a new focus on working with the newly established (in 2022) Social Security Regulator in institutional development and strengthening has been agreed; Under **3.3**, the launch of CAM DX in June 2023 should allow the process of working with NSSF to align with this platform which aims to share enterprise registration data.

Related to Output 3.5, the GS-NSPC has continued to develop digital social protection, under the Harmonization Project funded by the harmonization project.<sup>15</sup> Through this a pilot project called SP-ID is being conducted, to test the new registration of individual workers to be assigned with a unique Social Protection Identification number to be used by both NSSF and NSAF. Thus progress is being made relevant to Output 3.5, but ILO's role in supporting it is as yet unclear.

#### **EQ5: What are the main constraints, problems and areas in need of further attention?**

##### Finding 5:

**Qualitative data suggests that furthering the projects objectives would be supported by more focus on creating *flexible* contributory mechanisms to accommodate the self-employed; attention to creating incentives and communications to attract voluntary (or compulsory) contribution from self-employed; and continued articulation of the wider vision of the contribution of social security to national interests in order to underpin the delicate formalization processes envisaged.**

While there are a number of minor challenges to different aspects of the project, going forwards, there are three broad dimensions of challenge – related to the expansion of social security - which were raised often by stakeholders. Gradually taking further steps to address these holds promise for supporting RGC objectives to expand SP in the road ahead.

##### **A focus on flexible schemes?**

First, there are many areas of the informal economy which will be difficult to reach with social security unless significant and several adaptations / flexible mechanisms for contribution can be made alongside those already being constructed through the currently prepared sub-decree. These areas include all employees who are (sub) contracted on a daily wage labour basis, who are

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<sup>15</sup> The Harmonization Project is funded by USAID/WB/GIZ/ADB with the purpose to develop a Digital Social Protection System that can serve as the One Social Registry to share data with all social protection institutions and other concerned government ministries and institutions.

considered employees by labour law and by the ASPC project, but who's relationship with employers is non-standard. They include much construction labour, and a proportion of workers in the tourist industry, for example. The low response of domestic workers to the (non-ASPC) SPIN pilot – altogether about 20 domestic workers were registered, and none managed to persuade their employer to register them – suggests a similar set of difficulties with clearly establishing employer-employee relationships (and therefore responsibilities) in some sectors.

There has been much discussion also over what is an achievable level of contribution among different groups of self-employed workers; but less discussion of how contribution mechanisms might respond to a clear need for flexibility – perhaps mirroring unstable income in many of these sectors - instead of regular, and mandatory monthly payments by the workers.

### **Incentives and communications to attract voluntary (or compulsory) contribution from self-employed**

Second, although worker organisations implementing the SPIN pilot project reported that it was not difficult to reach the number of registrations required for the pilot scheme, several stakeholders are concerned that too little attention has been paid to how to attract people to make paid contributions. The message is that in a situation of a very dominant informal economic approach, the advantages of health insurance cover will need to be widely communicated to convince potential contributors of the advantage of being insured. This includes creating confidence in the quality of service that will be available in the case of claims. While a communications strategy has been developed by NSSF and capacity for its implementation has been strengthened, this will need to be well implemented to push registrations forward, especially after a Sub-Decree – now in preparation - on Extension of voluntary social security coverage to self-employed individuals has been issued.

### **Low compliance to legislation on registration of micro-enterprises**

Third, there are several steps to go in the gradual (and sensitive) issue of the enforcement of legislation for micro enterprise registration. While this by itself is beyond the scope of ASPC, it is clear that this is intimately connected to extending SS to employees in microenterprises, because it is very unlikely that microenterprises will pay their contributions for employees unless they are formally required to do so – and meanwhile, any extended coverage in this sector is on a voluntary basis with contribution from the worker only. Although the passing of a sub-decree on social security inspectors is expected in the near future and will enable enterprise inspections and step by step penalties to enforce compliance – this is likely to remain a long term project involving joined-up work from stakeholders engaged in economic recovery strategies and with social protection. More understanding of the ways in which economic recovery and formalisation can work in synergy could contribute to this; as well as continuing to strengthen the wider and common vision of the contribution that social security can and should make to promote and widen national interests, as opposed to protect ones' own institutional interests. In order words: how to balance out the conflicting interests of the respective institutions for the sake of the national interest in order to achieve a long-term goal of the RGC of building the comprehensive and sustainable social protection system for all citizens?

### Efficiency

#### **EQ6: Are the financial resources and other inputs sufficient to achieve the project outcomes within the remaining timeframe?**

*To what extent has the project leveraged resources with other projects (EU-PFM Facility and SP-PFM Project) within the country programme or possible partnership with other organizations outside the country to enhance the project efficiency and results/impact?*

#### Finding 6:

**The most significant limiting factor on the achievement of outcomes is the limited timeframe of the project and additional steps likely necessary, rather than limited financial or human resources. However, particular challenges with progress under Outcomes 1 and 3, mean that anticipated technical staff budget, which was weighted to the early project stages, may now need extension for the further technical inputs still needed to pursue outcomes.**

Limitations on the likely delivery of all outcome targets within the project timeframe are mainly related to the amount of time required for all of the necessary steps to be taken to achieve a scaled up process within the RGC's SP institutions.

By the end of Year 2, December 2022, the project had spent US\$ 2,295,474.94 out of the maximum EU contribution of EUR 5,598,535<sup>16</sup> (approx. US\$ 6 million), or approximately 38% of the maximum contribution in 50% of the timescale. Of this, ILO had spent US\$ 1,035,099, (approx. EUR 964,600 of a 4 year budget of EUR 2,978,558, or approximately 32.4%, and UNICEF had spent US\$ 1,260,376 (approx. EUR 1,175,000) of a 4 year budget of EUR 2,619,977, or approximately 45%<sup>17</sup>.

Given the greater progress towards outcomes under Outcome 2 than under Outcomes 1 and 3, this level of spend seems broadly commensurate with the level of progress; in addition, both agencies have somewhat over half their budget available for the second half of the timeline. On this basis it can be inferred that financial resources are in principle sufficient – although unlikely to fully compensate for the challenge of achieving outcomes within the timeline.

Regarding human resources, the project works on a staff cost share basis with other parallel projects in ILO and UNICEF, with the result that project managers work more broadly as programme managers in the wider Social Protection outcome areas of their respective institutions. In effect, in ILO the 4 project staff are supported at up to 50% of their time on the project, with the rest allocated to other [social protection] projects as well as agency core work.

The time allocation for ILO's technical officer for the project was weighted into the first two years of the project, in the anticipation that technical work would evolve into implementation-focused work in the second half of the project. However, slower than anticipated implementation under Outcomes 1 and 3 - plus the finding above that more steps will be required to achieve the Outcomes than initially articulated – mean that technical inputs are expected to continue to be required into Year 3, which have not been budgeted. Given limited ability to absorb these unanticipated needs by other fully stretched staff, this situation warrants addressing.

**EQ7: What has been the added value, if any, of the distinct partnerships of the project: the ILO/UNICEF Joint Programme, and the EU Partnership in this?**

#### Finding 7:

**The 3-way configuration of SP support that the EU has brought into being has brought identifiable benefits in specific respects, including creating leverage for the engagement of CSOs in the SP architecture; and through enabling ILO and UNICEF to contribute their distinct expertise. ILO and UNICEF's combined advocacy has also contributed to a new NSPPF which conceptualises SS and SA**

<sup>16</sup> Annual Report 2022

<sup>17</sup> Calculated from Annual Report 2022 data and high level budget data made available to the evaluation team.

**in harmonisation. However, the opportunity to actively synergise SS and SA through operation as a joint UN project team – has not yet been taken up; as these opportunities are now emerging it will be important to focus here.**

ASPC is one part of a broader 3-way configuration of social protection funding modalities by the EU: the other arms of the strategy include the direct budget support provided by the EU through the Ministry of Finance/ Planning; and the Fostering an Inclusive and shock Responsive Social Protection System in Cambodia (FIRST) project led by Oxfam. In this configuration, budget support was intended to enable advances in social protection; while the UN joint programme between ILO and UNICEF in the form of ASPC was intended to enable the provision of expert advice, capacity development and technical assistance to the RGC to complement the budget support, as well as to accompany an increasing focus on the vulnerable and their access to benefits from social protection. Meanwhile the FIRST project aimed to promote the active participation and consultation of Cambodian civil society organisations (CSOs) in the development of social protection, and to contribute to building trust and cooperation between rights holders and duty bearers.

Although the ASPC does not have much distinct visibility of its own, due to the relatively dense nature of the development of SP, a little under the surface there is some evidence that parts of this configuration have indeed added value by enabling specific developments. These include that the EU's positioning as a consistent support to the RGC's expansion on SP has contributed to enabling the inclusion of CSOs in consultations – via the establishment of the Social Protection 4 All platform which amplifies CSO voices; and via the positioning of Oxfam in particular, and Save the Children two of the SP working groups, where to some extent they 'represent' the voices of the CSOs they partner with.

Second, both UNICEF and ILO have offered high-quality technical expertise and collaboration in their respective areas of specialisation, with NSAF and MoSVY on social assistance (UNICEF) and with NSSF on social security (ILO). This has been through training; workshops on specialist topics such as understanding actuarial reports; and through supporting TA placements in some cases. This part of the configuration has and continues to enable learning in the social protection system that budget support alone cannot achieve.

There have also been specific collaborations which have added value to the process: for instance, in Oxfam's role as leading FIRST, they have used ILO curricula in their training for CSOs and Trades Unions on connecting informal sector workers and vulnerable groups with social security and social assistance.

However, while ILO and UNICEF as the UN joint partners have clearly coordinated on the project – and, for example, have both advocated during the review of the NSPPF for a harmonisation approach to SS and SA for an integrated SP, their work has at the same time been split very clearly between them, and they have worked exclusively in their pillars of expertise rather than building a single project team. Beyond expertise, this positioning also reflects the existing structure of the SP landscape in Cambodia. As yet there has been little substantive/operational connection between these two project pillars, despite the basic coordination necessary to manage the project. For a [limited number of] stakeholders this is perceived as potentially contributing to missed opportunities in two ways: first because it there is a strong opportunity for a 'One UN' type of approach which could play into the UN reform agenda more strongly; second – and more directly relevant to the outcomes of the project – this structure risks missing an emerging opportunities to build the details of a vision within NSAF and NSSF of SP as a fully harmonised system with related parts; and an opportunity to strengthen this positioning in GS-NSPC. Ways to strengthen bridges between the two pillars are emerging now. For instance, the TVET CT currently under development promotes collaboration between NSAF, MOLVT and NSSF with the common objective of employment of poor youth. In another example, there is high level interest in extending the CT PWCU2 to garment workers covered under NSSF. It will be important to capitalise on these openings for linked approaches.



## Sustainability

**EQ8: What strategies have the project put in place to ensure continuation of mechanisms/tools/practices provided, if the support from the ILO Programme ends?**

*How can the projects' key partnerships contribute to the sustainability of the initiatives under the project and to what extent?*

*How effective has the project been in establishing and fostering national/local ownership?*

### Finding 8:

**The project has taken a strong sustainability approach in that it works at the level of evolving and supporting policy, and developing the knowledge base to inform this process. It has also taken a strong line on consistently supporting the evolution of the key social protection institutions: the GS-NSPC, the NSSF, and the newly established NSAF. While this contribution is significant, it is not by itself sufficient to the ongoing, long-term process of creating a fully sustainable SP system and this has not been the expectation from the Project; the pending transition from an emphasis on emergency cash transfers to the routine dimensions of social assistance, and further development of the interoperability of the IT / monitoring systems will be key parts of this.**

As envisioned in the Project's document, the provision of the necessary support and creating the conditions to enable the governments, social partners and other relevant stakeholders to play their respective roles and responsibilities in contributing to achieving the project's objectives, was at the heart of the sustainability strategy of the project. To this end, the project has taken a strong sustainability approach by instilling a high level of national ownership, through the dialogue process led by the government, with the active participation from the relevant stakeholders with a view to facilitating consensus building and sustainability of the outcome results and achievements. As a result of this sustainability strategy, the project had seen tangible outcomes at various fronts including high levels of national ownership and government leadership. ILO and UNICEF are widely seen as supporting government led initiatives, to the credit of the project structure.

### Improved Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

In a joint effort to advocate for the implementation of the adopted reform to the policy framework, based on the overall policy direction derived from the NSPPF review conducted under the UNJP, there is now a strong buy-in from the Government and other development partners to begin the process of developing the NSPPF 2.0. It is expected that this new NSPPF will also integrate those already adopted sectoral policy and strategic frameworks, which among others, including

- 1) **The Integrated Family Package Framework** encompassing all the routine social assistance schemes and programmes namely CTPWYC-2, Disability Allowance, Old Age Allowance and Gradual Integration of Scholarship. Based on the RGC, it is expected that the transition from the Emergency Cash Transfer to the Routine Cash-Transfer under the Integrated Family Package Framework will take place in 2024.
- 2) **The Strategic Framework for Formalization**, which will be launched by the Ministry of Economy and Finance in 2023. The goal of this new NSPPF is to achieve a more sustainable social protection system by pursuing a dual but complementary approach to increasing the coverage of social assistance programmes that is more inclusive of poor, vulnerable



individuals/households, and missing middles – through **Integrated Family Package** while extending coverage of the social security schemes to those working in the formal and informal sectors – to be achieved through the future implementation of **the Formalisation Policy**. The integration of the social assistance and social security pillars is one of the focused areas that the GS-NSPC, the EU and the development partners aimed to achieve.

### **Institutionalization of the Key Social Protection Institutions, NSSF, NSAF, GS-NSPC**

The project has supported key steps in the institutionalization / advancement of the key SP institutions, and in particular to the newly established **NSAF**. This support has included:

- 1) IT technical support to building **the ICT platform for the Family Package**, linked to other databases (ID Poor, DMIS and GS-NSPC) to meet the future expansion of additional social assistance programmes;
- 2) The utilization of the M&E Framework and digital application tools for monitoring the quality and uptake of services
- 3) The **Testing of Inter-Operability of the Social Assistance MIS** with CamDX, 3, also with a view of linking to the new SP ICT Platform and single registry of beneficiaries) the refinement, approval and testing of the **Risk and Vulnerability Tool** for collecting data on multidimensional risks and vulnerabilities;
- 4) Continuum of capacity building of social assistance administrators at multiple level for both the routine and Covid-19 related cash transfer programmes
- 5) The design **of the TVET Cash Transfer** and the development of its **Operational Manual**, and the **Payment Service Providers Assessment**, aimed at improving the quality of PSPs by expanding access to relevant financial services among social protection beneficiaries in Cambodia, while strengthening convenience and choice.

The Project's support to supporting **NSSF** evolution and sustainability had been mainly on the preparation for the **CamDX's roll-out with NSSF** to ensure that NSSF will be able to register workers working in enterprises that are registered through CamDX. This CamDX's roll-out is now scheduled to be launched in the second half of June 2023. Other support to the NSSF include TA to develop the **Communication Strategy** for the NSSF. The Communication Strategy had now been finalised, and currently it's under discussions on how it should be communicated to the public, either through physical contact or through social media. This Communication Strategy would become a powerful tool to be used to reach out to the public at large, with the aim at raising awareness of the public to promote new schemes such as private sector pension scheme, and the planned extension of the existing scheme (health insurance) to dependents, self-employed workers working in the informal economy sectors.

The Project's support to **GS-NSPC**, under **Output 3.5: Digital Social Protection** to enable through improved data sharing between the social protection institutions, i.e. NSSF and NSAF, has not yet started until the **Social Protection Identification (SP-ID) Project**, which is being piloted under the Harmonization Project to test the new registration of individual SP beneficiaries to be assigned with a unique Social Protection Identification number has been completed. This pilot project will contribute to the effort to harmonize the two pillars of the social protection, i.e. social security schemes and social assistance programmes, into one **Integrated SP system** in the future as the SP ID will cover all schemes and programmes. Both the NSSF and the NSAF are currently working to upgrade their respective MIS system that will contribute to building the National Single Registry. For example, the NSAF had assisted the GS-NSPC via the ASPC supported pilot project to link data on cash transfer for PWYC-2 to ICT Digital Platform, which will contribute to the development of the

Single Registry in the future, and the preparation, testing and roll-out of CamDX is also being undertaken as part of this initiative-pilot project, by both the NSSF and the NASF.

Therefore, while the approach to sustainability has been strong, the steps needed to build the fully integrated system are not yet complete, and it is likely that some will remain to be achieved after the close of the project.

## Impact Orientation

**EQ9: What progress has been made with strengthening institutional capacity for long-term and sustained improvements to Cambodia's social protection system (wider and more inclusive coverage)?**

Finding 9:

**The project has used different approaches to strengthening institutional capacity for developing an SP system which will continue to drive towards impact at scale using in-house skills. These have included direct trainings and consultative workshops as well as skills building for essential decision-making tools. While these are likely to have contributed to the potential for more progress towards impact, at least in the short term, sustainable systems for following up the effectiveness of capacity strengthening activities, and of institutionalizing the continued acquisition of key skills and knowledge transfer are not comprehensive yet. Developing a longer-term institutional and capacity building development plan could strengthen this approach to achieving impact.**

## Institutional Strengthening

The Project has provided many inputs to strengthen the capacity and internal skills of the key social protection institutions, in the forms of trainings and consultative workshops on the relevant topics ranging from policy design to data collection to field visits to conduct the **programmes' evaluation, review and monitoring**. In addition to these trainings, they were also equipped with a set of conceptual and technical skills such as **Formalization of Enterprises and Informal Workers, Understanding Data for Actuarial Valuation, and Actuarial Valuation** of NSSF schemes, and participated in the consultative process, with a view to developing their **decision-making skills** i.e. how to reach policy and programme design consensus, as well as on **Behaviour Change for Mothers and Child health and Nutrient** and **the information and knowledge exchanges** through the Mid-Term Review of the Social Assistance Programme.

Trainings for SS and SA stakeholders have reached a large number of stakeholders with skills to progress SP implementation and development based on the Project's training records, there was a total of **10,815** participants from the relevant social protection institutions, the sub-national authorities at Sangkat and Commune level and TU movement attended the above capacity building activities.<sup>18</sup> Annex 7 shows a summary of the list of trainings, workshops that they were organized and conducted by the Project in the 2021-2023.

These capacity building activities were oriented toward supporting a long-term institutional and capacity building development of the GS-NSPC, NSSF and NSAF so that they can effectively carry out

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<sup>18</sup> Note that not all of the training records were disaggregated by gender. Out of the total number of participants, only **6,988** participants were disaggregated by gender, i.e. **3,318** of them were women and the remaining **3,827** participants were not disaggregated by gender.

their roles and responsibilities in meeting an increase in coverage and the quality of service together with the long-term sustainability of the social protection sector. Their implementations are the important steps in the right direction towards continuing to work towards impacts going forwards.

Under Outcome 2 in support of NSAF, there has also been a drive to institutionalize a plan for ongoing training and skills building needs: a methodology / plan has been developed to systematize these kinds of inputs and to continue to address knowledge gaps which reappear with staff turnover. This methodology includes coaching, telegram knowledge management/trouble-shooting groups, the training for new staff, the catch-up/refresher trainings, and new trainings when there are new tools being introduced. Efforts have also been made to include ongoing training needs in the project approach, for example by using ToT training design so the government has capacitated trainers on an ongoing basis; and by including projections for multi-year training costs in the ongoing costing planning for the Family Package, with a view to streamlining these into the national budget.

Some gaps may remain in making sure skills and capacity is in place to continue to work towards the desired impact of the project. This includes a lack of clarity on whether there is a plan to systematize actuarial skills training or other ongoing capacity needs in NSSF.

There is some evidence of continued gaps in **capacity to implement the schemes** - the planned development and roll-out of the Cash-Plus Option linked to the Complimentary Programme had been progressing at a slower pace than expected due to other **competitive priority of the government** over the Design of the TVET Cash Transfer Programme (TVET-CTP) - being one of the first new programme (in addition to CTPWPC and Scholarship) to link cash transfer with the complementary TVET Education Service targeting 1.5 million poor and at risk young people over the period of 5 years aimed at improving access to formal employment opportunities. NSAF is also undoubtedly a young institution as yet, in the process of building its management structures and independence.

Given the technical nature of the capacities required, it is important to ensure that the training materials/tools that were developed/or will be developed in the future by the project, should be institutionalized into a **Long-Term Institutional and Capacity Development Plan**, as part of the **continuous** institutional and human capital development for the social protection institutions, in order to optimize the potential impact from the investment made so far.

Cross cutting issues:

**Gender equality, human rights based approach, non-discrimination and Covid 19**

**EQ10: How has the project promoted gender equality and improved access to social protection among those who belong to vulnerable groups (e.g. informal and vulnerable workers and people with disabilities)?**

*What should the project do or do more to maximise its success in improving equity and gender equality?*

*To what extent the project strategy and its means of actions designed and implemented to maximize sustainability of HR and GE gains at the country level?*

Finding 10:

**While ASPC has an intrinsic focus on vulnerable groups through its focus on informal workers, and on groups in need of social assistance, there are a number of systemic ways in which its approach to gender equality and inclusion could be strengthened. These include systematic monitoring which makes disaggregation by gender more visible, and disaggregation by gender AND other vulnerabilities available; evaluation approaches which set out to uncover gender-relevant information; and more systematic, consistently integrated and critical approaches to issues such as**

## **gender labour market segregation and the gendered implications of formalization process which diminish workplace flexibility.**

### *Gender equality*

The ASPC project, and indeed the current Social Protection Policy Framework, does not as yet have a strong or consistent integration of gender equality concerns. Observers have commented that the SP Policy Framework review process and document has been an opportunity to strengthen a gender equality approach through the SP institutions, but this reviewed framework has not yet been operationalised, and the framework document is not yet available publicly.

Under ASPC, gender equality concerns are most clearly addressed under Output 1.6, which has at this point only just begun the study phase before policy options are explored. This Output aims to begin to tackle the trend in which young women currently or previously covered by social security by virtue of their employment in formalised parts of the garment sector become inactive registrations – or in other words slip back out of the social security system - when they marry and / or start to have children. It has begun this journey by undertaking a study of women’s perspectives on the options and needs that are available to them as they navigate these life processes. Under this Output, ASPC will use the results and recommendations of this study to discuss and explore policy options for breaking the ‘drop out’ cycle, quite likely in synergy with ILO and Oxfam’s broader work under the DWCP and Better Factories, on advocating for maternity provision implementation, and breastfeeding and childcare centres in (formal sector) workplaces. While this is a necessary set of actions to support gender equality, with transformatory potential for gender inequality, there is a long journey ahead, and the timeline for achieving the desired outcome – retention of young women in the social security system – is well outside the time frame of ASPC. It will be necessary for the NSSF and GS-NSPC (possibly with ILO support) to map a change pathway for systematically pursuing solutions and implementing options in order to bring this outcome objective to fruition.

Under Outcome 2, there are also some instances of gender awareness and a gender sensitive approach, but also some gaps which should be urgently addressed – as well as some areas in which mapping a gender transformative approach will require focus, critical analysis, and data.

For example, under the conditional cash transfer scheme PWCU2, women and children are the direct beneficiaries and to this extent it is indeed ‘gender aware’. The cash transfer is paid directly to the pregnant women / mother except in cases where she has died following childbirth, and care has been taken that this is not transferrable to others – with the intention that when women control cash a) it tends to be more consistently spent to the benefit of [children in] the household and b) there is a possibility that household relations can [somewhat] change in favour of the woman in so far as she controls this spending.<sup>19</sup>

However, the question of any change in household gender relations connected to this transfer has not yet been explored – and opportunity should be taken to explore this in any forthcoming evaluation of the effectiveness of the scheme. There is a danger, researched elsewhere,<sup>20</sup> of reinforcing women’s association with and responsibilities to the [unpaid] care economy when they are the exclusive recipients of cash to benefit the baby they have with the baby’s father. Moreover, when cash transfers are conditional, it is highly likely that the recipient of the cash is the one who becomes responsible for fulfilling the conditions – in this case ensuring their own pre-natal health

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<sup>19</sup> Look for reference to this in the evaluation.

<sup>20</sup> Reference innocent research

checks and post-natal vaccination for the baby. In this case, there is strong evidence from the process evaluation that except where recipients live very close to health clinics, the CT virtually only covers the cost of transport to health centres to fulfil these conditions – thus it is unlikely as yet to be making any significant difference to the woman’s decision making power within the household, but likely that it reinforces her responsibility for reproductive tasks.<sup>21</sup> There is also limited evidence from primary data that women in Phnom Penh at least (where we can assume that health centres are close by) would be very likely to attend health checks and vaccination clinics whether they received the CT or not – thus there is perhaps a question whether the conditionalities of the CT might in fact be having a primary effect of reinforcing women’s responsibilities for these processes; and may simply not be necessary – establishing this would require further research.

In other areas of work under Outcome 2, it is reported that the emerging focus on TVET, and of linking TVET with CT schemes, has not yet included an objective for gender equality and women’s empowerment, although UNICEF has started advocacy for a gender dimension, including as a component of M&E to better understand uptake, barriers and outcomes for women. Continuing to ensure strong integration of gender responsive components represents a clear opportunity, as the labour market for which TVET is preparing young women and men has strong implications for gender equality – both as a potential site for women’s empowerment when they acquire valuable and well remunerated skills and are supported into competitive positions; and as a site for the entrenchment of gender inequality when women are uncritically positioned in skills and tasks which are less well remunerated, often precisely because of strong gender segregation of tasks in the labour market facilitates gender pay gaps. [When women’s work is paid less than men’s work under the guise of being less skilled].

More broadly in social assistance, there is reported to be an awareness of the particular vulnerabilities of female headed households in support to identification of poor and near poor households; and in the disability identification work there is an awareness the women living with disabilities may be more vulnerable, and/or vulnerable to additional risks such as sexual exploitation.

On the other hand, monitoring systems to produce information on how social protection is or is not affecting gender equality are only barely being put in place currently – for instance, it was reported that the system in NSAF was amended to enable gender disaggregation for the Covid CTs – which was paid to ‘households’ – but this disaggregation has not routinely come into effect yet.

Under social assistance, therefore, a stronger approach to gender equality could be supported by:

- Consistently generating gender-aware data, including by:
  - Including critical gender relevant questions in evaluation of SA schemes
  - Prioritising facilities for making gender disaggregation more visible in all monitoring and information systems, including in data sub-sets such as disability and other vulnerable groups.
- Ensuring that steps are taken to understand the gender equality effects of social assistance schemes
- Critically approaching TVET schemes so that opportunities are used to support women into non-traditional (and often better remunerated) work sectors.

Under social security, a stronger approach to gender equality could be supported by:

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<sup>21</sup> Building on this process evaluation, RGC recently announced a doubling of the benefits from August 2023. Going forward, it would be informative to measure what effect this change may have on gender relations / women’s decision making power in the household, and her association with reproductive tasks.

- For ASPC, integrating gender alertness into the work of each Output / work focused on each targeted sub-group. This means:
  - Increasing awareness of how formalization processes have a gender dimension. This includes
    - 1) Designing for the likelihood that women enterprise owners may need particular targeting to become equally integrated into formalization support schemes (which requires prior awareness of in which sectors women owned enterprises are likely to be in operation, and the characteristics of these sectors.
    - 2) Awareness that – and more information on the likelihood that – women can be pushed out of formalizing workplaces where formalization involves diminishing flexibility for workers. Women generally- in their reproductive years – rely on flexibility in the workplace in order to balance their employment and care work roles. When formalization implies more rigid approaches to work hours, holidays and other leave, women may not be able to sustain their participation [an important reason why they are often the majority in the informal sector]. This awareness needs to be integrated into all sectors addressed by SS, - and perhaps particularly in male dominated sectors where it is already difficult for women to enter - not only the garment sector
  - In support to informal sector workers access to voluntary contribution schemes an awareness that:
    - The informal sector, like the formal sector, is very strongly gender segregated – thus sectors selected for priority / experimental schemes are by virtue of this either ‘male’ or ‘female’ sectors: a balance must be sought to maintain benefits to both men and women.
    - An awareness that sectors in which women are prevalent often have characteristics which are considered ‘not normal’, and therefore hard to reach / address. This includes, for example, domestic work (in which paid work and normally unpaid domestic relations are in close interaction) – which, for example, the SPIN project found was hard to reach; the entertainment sector, in which value/ morality-based approaches are broadly unconstructive but difficult to escape; and street food enterprises which are not only employer-less, but also generally address-less.

### *People living with disabilities*

There is broad awareness by ASPC stakeholders that there is an opportunity in social protection for stronger targeting of people living with disabilities; and of a lack of information / data to support strengthening approaches. Strong advances have been made recently – with some support from ASPC and complementary EU programmes such as SP-PFM – in the Disability Welfare Department of MoSVY – in the identification of people with disabilities with the imminent ID card roll-out, and in the ability of the SP system to identify and reach the disabled poor. Some progress has also been made in linking information on people living with disabilities with employers, so that employers can meet quotas for employment of people with disabilities, through a database and app promoting this. Similarly, there is a strong emphasis in the development of the TVET cash transfer to ensure access to people with disabilities (and to women) and to monitor this. Disability is therefore an area in which there are developing linkages between SS and SA which can be further elaborated. Common ground between

social security coverage for as dependents or as workers and people with disabilities has to our information not yet been explored.

**EQ11: To what extent has the project responded to the needs of the ILO and UNICEF constituents and beneficiaries for COVID-19 response and recovery?**

*What are the possible strategies for implementation of project in the changed context of post COVID-19 crisis that would maximise the efforts to advance social protection in Cambodia?*

Finding 11:

**The project's continued technical support to the Government to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-Covid recovery, has demonstrated flexibility, adaptability, and a commitment to supporting government priorities. This support has contributed to the RGC's initiatives to protect poor and vulnerable households from the impact of inflation and flooding in the context of post-Covid economic challenges. To some extent, these initiatives have detracted project resources and focus from - and therefore caused delays to - the main tasks of supporting routinized SA and SS in the interests of a longer term economic resilience which will include further formalization and contribution-based social protection.**

The COVID-19 crisis brought to the fore the need for being better prepared and to protect the general population, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable households, from the negative impact of covariate shocks that can be brought by disasters such as pandemics, floods, droughts and typhoons etc. To respond, the project has shown flexibility and adaptability in **both** supporting the RGC in operationalizing its emergency 'stop gap' responses to support vulnerable citizens with emergency cash transfers, **and** supporting the groundwork for building a more sustainable system for building resilience. For SA, this latter focus has taken the form a consistent contribution to the development of the Shock-Responsive Family Package for which some seed funds were provided under ASPC while the continued work itself is funded by ECHO, through collaboration of UNICEF and WFP, which will more systematically address vulnerability of children, persons with disability, elderly, poor and near-poor people, including young children. The TVET Cash Transfer for Poor and Vulnerable Young People was developed in direct support to the Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan. It has also supported increasing attention to particular vulnerabilities such as those living in hard-to-reach areas with poor access to basic services. For SS, this has taken the form of support through GS-NSPC/MEF to the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2023, leading to the development and finalization of the Formalization Operational Plan for the extension of the social security coverage to informal workers in the targeted sectors. As a result. This also aims to bring more long term shock resilience to these workers.

Over the past two years, responding to the government priority of providing immediate support for shocks, the project continued to provide technical support to NSAF/MoSVY in measures to mitigate the impact of the post COVID-19 scenario. This included inputs to the design and roll-out of the short-cash transfer programme for near-poor households impacted by the floods and inflation in responding to the global price and inflation crisis had provided about \$12 million in cash benefits to around 1 million households impacted by the flood over the 3 month-period (December 22 – February 2023), about 35.5 million in cash benefits to around 350,000 households impacted by inflation in the first two rounds (December 22, and April 23). The final round is scheduled for July 2023.



On the negative front, the continued technical support to the government in support of emergency measures has to some extent mitigated attention to the longer term routine measures and challenged the project's rate of implementation and timeframe. More directly, attention to technical support for emergency measures not clearly anticipated in project design has put some strain on the project's human resources as they continue to try to roll out the longer term / routinized measures for SP.

## 5. Conclusions

### **Conclusion 1 – Social Security**

#### **Based on Findings 2, 4 and 5**

Extending contribution-based social security has proceeded more slowly than anticipated by the design of the project, despite some good groundwork (Finding 4, Finding 2). Project annual reporting that states outputs are 'on target' has been optimistic, and solutions have therefore not systematically been sought for this slow progress in terms of actually achieved new registrations. For the scaled up level of registrations that the project envisaged, there is still a long way to go. This is partly due to weaknesses in the project design / lack of anticipation of predictable dimensions of a causal chain (Finding 2), and partly due to government priorities and issues related to the wider context of economic recovery. The challenge for Outcome 1 is to find ways to support the RGC to move assertively and confidently to achieve its stated objectives of expanding the coverage of contributory SP mechanisms.

The findings here point to several possible strategies for working to release these bottlenecks. First, more open reflection on continuing economic challenges related to the post-Covid context; to conflict in/over Ukraine; and through climate change effects would be productive to gain clarity on the role of this environment in slowing progress on business registrations and therefore employee registrations with NSSF (Finding 2). Related to this, it will be necessary to continue to make the case for how expanded contribution-based social security is supportive of the wider pursuit of economic resilience, in the wake of the recent challenges and the RGC response to these - and, through that, to national development (Finding 3). More concretely, taking action to support implementing the NSSF communications strategy to attract voluntary or compulsory contributions from self-employed groups (Finding 5) and perhaps also from dependents of current NSSF members, would likely support progress towards those targets. Fourth, strengthened advocacy for legislation on compulsory coverage of dependents of NSSF members could hasten scale-up in the longer term.

### **Conclusion 2 – Social Assistance**

#### **Based on Findings 4, 7, 11**

The challenge for social assistance lies in successfully making the transition from the emergency support which has dominated SA for the last few years, to more routinized and reliable support schemes (Finding 4; Finding 7; Finding 11) which allow vulnerable people to plan and therefore to strategize to move out of poverty - and potentially into labour market based contributory protection schemes. While the RGC has a commitment to making the transition to the Family Package during 2024, it will be important for the ASPC to continue to find ways to closely support it as the wider project of closing the missing middle gap will take much longer. Immediate ways to support the process include methods to clearly separate out monitoring data on emergency and routinized schemes, so that the relative progress in each format becomes more visible.

### **Conclusion 3 - Synergies for ILO and UNICEF.**

#### **Based on Findings 3, 5, 7, 10**



It is no coincidence that the [less severe] bottleneck for SA in making this transition has been the dominance of economic challenges over the post-Covid period – and therefore has much in common with the [more severe] bottleneck facing progress with SS. This therefore suggests finding ways of working on addressing these challenges *together* by the UN agencies (and other development partners), more clearly demonstrating the whys and hows of a harmonised approach to SP (Finding 3, Finding 7). Becoming clear on the steps via which vulnerable groups can / will be able to get the right support to move into positions which are [newly] covered by SS schemes (Finding 5) will contribute to the evolving conception in the GS-NSPC of a harmonized SP system. This will likely involve continuing to gather disaggregated information on the situations of vulnerable groups, including the impacts of intersectionality. Carefully making visible disaggregated monitoring data by gender and by other vulnerabilities will support this (Finding 10). It may also involve generating information on how individuals supported through emergency and routine SA are or are not connected to any of the self-employed sectors which are the focus on new work to register these groups into NSSF.

#### **Conclusion 4 – integrating gender equality approaches.**

##### **Based on Finding 10**

There is a clear opportunity as the reviewed NSPPF comes into play over the next months, to take a more proactive approach to supporting the NSSF, NSAF and GS-NSPC in better integration of gender equality enhancing approaches as expressed in that framework. At the first level, this means systematically supporting steps towards making gender disaggregated data visible in both SA and SS monitoring systems, as well as intersectional data (such as gender disaggregated disability data; gender disaggregation within vulnerable groups used for ID Poor). It also means supporting more systematically gender-critical approaches to analysing labour market sectors, (especially e.g. gender segregation and its relation to gender wage gaps, and therefore the contributory power of workers), formalization processes which should avoid creating less flexibility if they are to be gender equal; and a recognition of the role and value of unpaid care work in the overall economy.

#### **Conclusion 5 – Going forward.**

##### **Based on Findings 1, 3, 6, 8, 9**

The overall objective of ASPC is to [support RGC to] create a system in which more women and men in Cambodia have access to more effective, efficient, accountable and sustainable gender-responsive social protection. While the project does not explicitly set out to complete this evolution, it is important to maintain a picture of where the project fits into the wider pictures: – both of a fully inclusive SP system; and of the several contributing stakeholders to this desired evolution. With this in mind, it is essential to acknowledge that ASPC will not yet meet the needs of all relevant groups (of workers; of vulnerable people) (Finding 1) and therefore to calibrate this project with a conception of what will remain to be done after the close of the project in approximately 18 months – such as continuing to develop creative schemes that meet the particular challenges of certain types of self-employed people and otherwise vulnerable people (Finding 1). Slow progress in actual coverage achieved by Outcome 1 makes it particularly important to carefully clarify what will be achieved in the remaining timeframe of ASPC (while also considering a NCE); what will remain to be completed to achieve the overall objective (Finding 6); and what timeframe might be required for this. It also means a clear focus on how best to support government capacity renewal in the long term (Finding 9); and continued work to support the institutionalisation of NSAF in particular (Finding 8).

As the SP institutions continue to work towards harmonization of SS and SA, and towards interoperability of the data systems supporting this, coherence among supporting stakeholders will continue to be a priority (Finding 3) - but equally, working towards clear understanding of the linkages (from beneficiary perspective) between emergency SA schemes, routinized SA schemes and SS coverage will be key. This may include stronger advocacy with NSSF for how SS can and should be oriented towards creating a more integrated social protection system with built-in resilience among vulnerable work sectors to diminish the need for [emergency] SA (Finding 5) as well as how to protect vulnerable populations who are not able to work, including children – which is a highly relevant issues for both SA and SS systems.

The project has also arrived at an important moment where the ‘in-principle’ linkages between SP and SA are beginning to become increasing evident in the expanding objectives and design of new schemes. This is in part because the SA approach is gradually moving out of emergency mode and into a more routinized approach as economic conditions stabilize. In this mode, opportunities such as focusing SA for skills development into areas which can generate SS coverage through voluntary or compulsory contribution are becoming more obvious. In addition, a key structural element of the NSPPF 2030 is the life risk of individuals, rather than the separate pillars of SA and SS. Thus, the linkages are becoming much more relevant in the near future. The project will be in a better position to take up these opportunities for synergising their work if the two pillars take care to work in close collaboration with all key stakeholders and with each other as the SP system progresses. Creating an optimally integrated / harmonised SP system will involve synchronised work from stakeholders, including project managers in ASPC.

## 6. Recommendations

### Recommendation 1: Priorities for ILO

**1.1:** ILO should undertake a candid review of the timeline available to ASPC; the causal steps necessary to achieve objectives; and realistic targets. This review should include assessing potential for a No Cost Extension; planning for what actions can be taken within the original timeframe; and what actions might take place within the framework of an extension.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO with EU	High	Short-Term	Within the Project's Current Resource

**1.2:** ILO should take action as soon as possible to support implementing the NSSF communications strategy to attract voluntary (or, where relevant, compulsory) contributions from self-employed groups and the dependents of NSSF contributing members through public and social media.

Consider extending technical staff inputs for the last stage of the project to support this.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Priorities might also include: Testing the mechanism for dependent's contributions (and learning from the test); targeting some low-risk easy access groups of self employed (such as lawyers) to begin to catalyse the expansion of NSSF membership.

As part of this strategy, consider developing and disseminating feedback positive stories of the benefits of health cover into self-employed communities and/or the benefits of cover for dependents into NSSF member communities.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO ASPC and NSSF	High	Short-Term	Within the Project's Current Resource

**1.3:** The NSSF should develop promotional materials, in the forms of printed posters, brochure/or leaflets, containing the key information on how to register, eligibility criteria and procedural steps, and including the benefits members can expect to receive from mandatory or voluntary schemes. ASPC could support the capacity of NSSF staff to develop these materials. These materials should complement the active registration campaigns as recommended in the communications strategy and already underway. This action should be undertaken jointly with the key national social partners, i.e. Trade Unions/, Economy Associations, and Employer Association/or CAMFEBA, following the adoption and approval of the Sub-Decree.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
NSSF, Trade Unions/IDEA, Employer Association/CAMFEBA	Medium	Medium-Term	Increased investment by RGC; support from the ASPC Project

**1.4:** ILO should continue to advocate for progress with amendments to legislation for extending health insurance to dependents of the NSSF's registered members via compulsory contribution, as a preferred option. For compulsory contributions for dependents of members, much groundwork is in place but action has been hesitant, creating a bottleneck. Releasing this bottleneck will require advocacy with the NSSF and GS-NSPC, which should indeed continue but will take time.

Meanwhile, the shorter-term option for voluntary contributions via the pending Sub-Decree - mainly aimed at facilitating voluntary contributions for the self-employed but with some option to include employee dependents - should be carefully promoted as this route shows some promise for more immediate progress within the timeframe of ASPC. This means 1) prioritizing support to the adoption, approval and implementation of the *pending* Sub-Decree on the extension of social security (health insurance, and pension) to self-employed/own-account workers –and including dependents of NSSF members - through voluntary contributions; alongside support to the recently initiated one-year pilot scheme health insurance scheme for select self-employment sectors and then 2) promoting and disseminating information about this opportunity via the communications strategy implementation and 3) agreeing annual targets for dependents' enrolments through this option and tracking these.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO, NSSF, MoSVY. MoLVT	High	Short-term	Within the Project's Current Resource

Recommendation 2: Priorities for UNICEF

**2.1** UNICEF should collaborate with the GS-NSPC, and NSAF in making the separated data for Emergency CTs and the Routine CTs more distinct, visible and available for ASPC project monitoring and reporting, as well as more broadly for NSAF and GS-NSPC – where necessary - to gauge the progress made particularly on routine CT coverage. Supporting the integration of a separate approach to routine and shock-response schemes in the M&E handbook for SP could be part of this.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
<b>UNICEF, NSAF, GS-NSPC</b>	High	Short-Term	Within the Project's Current Resource

**2.2:** UNICEF should continue to seek opportunities to support ongoing work to develop and promote the integration of MIS system/or data-sharing platform into the Single National Registry of the Social Protection's Beneficiaries. This can work through the development of the integrated social assistance ICT platform linking data from all CTs, and APIs linking CTs with the Registry to contribute to GS-NSPC's creation of this Registry and its platform, so that data are available in other government ministries and institutions, including NSSF.

Following successful completion of the current Digitalization Project/SP-ID Project, including the imminent roll out of the CamDX, there is an opportunity to maintain momentum on implementing the agenda of the data collection modules and APIs to support the Cash-Plus development options.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
<b>GS-NSPC, NSSF, NSAF, Relevant Government Ministries; UNICEF and other development partners</b>	Medium	Medium-Term	Increased investment by RGC; support from the ASPC and Development Partners

Recommendation 3: for UNICEF and ILO together

**In the context of the NSPPF 2030 life cycle approach, which provides a framework for synergising SA and SS**, UNICEF and ILO should take action and opportunities to strengthen visibility of the linkages between SA and SS through more explicitly joint work by ILO and UNICEF. This should include continuing to explore potential linkages in the TVET Cash Transfer scheme; the expansion of the cash transfer for pregnant women and children to garment workers. It might also include designing referral schemes so that information on SA and SS is available to all (to be discussed with GS-NSPC), and seeking new resources to facilitate developing such linkages.

It might also include more open reflection on how current post-Covid economic challenges including inflation and climate change effects have dampening effect on expanding SS registrations at the same time as fixing SA efforts in emergency mode. There is therefore a clear mutual benefit to getting beyond the bottleneck in SS – including by advocacy on where and how SS is linked to SA through improving economic resilience by providing protection at specified critical points, especially for vulnerable groups; and how routine SA schemes linking livelihood skills and cash support can / could be linked to new opportunities for SS coverage in key sectors. It might also include further

consideration of the potential linkages between SS and ongoing SA for those groups who cannot work, such as children, people with severe disability, and the very elderly.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO, UNICEF	High	Short-Term	Within the Project's Current Resource

#### Recommendation 4: A stronger gender approach

**4.1:** In the immediate term, ILO and UNICEF should work with the social protection institutions to make gender disaggregation consistently visible and available in SA and SS monitoring systems, and therefore also in ASPC project reporting data. While this disaggregation is available in the SP M&E framework, any remaining gaps in disaggregation, for instance in some SA schemes, should be filled.

In the medium term, **with some groundwork in the course of the current ASPC project's remaining 18 months**, ILO and UNICEF should support consistent capacity of those monitoring systems to make data available on intersectionality – including gender and disability; and gender and vulnerable groups used for ID Poor classification.

In the medium term, ILO and UNICEF should work with the social protection institutions to support stronger gender integration in line with the reviewed NSPPF, when it is made available. This could include support to developing a gender strategy, or specific gender-related actions, to translate the gender dimensions of the NSPPF into an operational process. It should include an approach/ strategy to counter gender segregation in labour markets when there are opportunities through the SP system; and to maintaining flexibility in the process of labour market formalization in the interests of not closing this formal sector off from those who also have care responsibilities. It should also include special consideration of the gender dimensions of poor and near-poor profiles, including of the large number of female headed households among this group.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO and UNICEF with GS-NSPC	High	Short and Medium-Term	Within the No-Cost Extension (NCE)

#### Recommendation 5: A sustainable capacity renewal approach

**5.1** UNICEF and ILO should continue to support the further institutional strengthening of NSAF; NSSF and GS-NSPC including with a long term strategy on how skills can be maintained and renewed internally. Consider supporting the development of a long-term institutional strengthening and capacity renewal plan for NSSF and NSAF and coordinated by GS-NSPC. Where there are capacity needs in common or to support schemes which are intentionally harmonised. For NSAF, this means continuing to work on the under-development organizational development plan and the Family Package costing which aims to make capacity building more structured and sustainable. An institutional strengthening and capacity renewal plan for NSSF could be separately developed, with a role for GS-NSPC in planning common elements, and with the purpose of ensure sustainability and continuation of the mechanisms and tools or good practices and lessons learnt etc., and a mechanism for allocating government financial resources to this end. Clear annual activity targets

along with an appropriate budget allocation should be set for NSSF’s and NSAF’s training and outreach activities.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
UNICEF, ILO, NSAF, NSSF, GS-NSPC	High	Medium term	Within any No Cost Extension; eventually increased investment by RGC;

## 7. Good Practices and Lessons Learned

### Lesson learned

A stronger approach to Theory of Change development at the design stage would have benefited the project implementation and will still be beneficial in the remaining timeframe. The reconstructed Theory of Change should be reviewed during the second half of the project and before final evaluation.

A theory of change was developed at the project design stage, but the causal dynamic was not clearly expressed in the visual version or the narrative accompanying it. This reflected gaps in project design which was not clearly articulated at the outset.

One challenge for the ToC is that the project aims to give strategic support for the government-led evolution (expansion and improved targeting) of the SP system as a whole. Thus in principle the project –specific ToC sits within a broader (and longer) vision of the evolving social protection system in general. This created complexity for what the ToC for this specific project should look like.

As the current process of both EA and MTE has revealed, some causal steps were missing in the plan at the outset. This has meant that at this mid term point results have so far been slow to emerge, especially in the Social Security dimension, and there continues to be some risk that the expected outcomes will not be achieved by the end of the project. Challenges in the line of causation expressed in project design has meant that there are ‘gaps’ – for instance in allowing time for the procedural steps necessary for developing and then implementing new legislation. This means that some types of support which might be helpful has not been identified; and results as currently framed are over ambitious.

Good focus on reconstructing the ToC at this mid term stage has laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive and realistic approach moving forwards, as the expected process is now more clearly mapped.

A clear approach to reviewing the current (reconstructed) ToC by the project partners in systematic manner over the next 2 years will strengthen the sense of how targets are to be achieved and how long this will take, and therefore help to design the project’s final months, including any no cost extension planned. It will also clarify thinking on the relation of the capacity building / institutional strengthening initiatives to project outcomes within this project timeframe – i.e. which capacity inputs (if any) are necessary steps for achieving the objectives of this project; and which capacity

inputs are implemented in the interests of sustainability / impact orientation beyond the scope of this immediate project.

### **Good Practice**

The project has taken a strong sustainability approach through its strong integration of inputs to strengthen internal capacity for developing and sustaining social security schemes, alongside targeted technical assistance to move the developing schemes forward.

The project is taking place at a key stage in the establishment of the key SP institutions NSAF and NSSF. Giving support at these early stages of creating the organisational architecture and skills for both has been productive to support a sustained approach to SP. In other contexts, recognising optimal timing for capacity strengthening at the early stages of institutional development is key to effecting this good practice.

This approach has combined specialist TA in positions such as for the development of systems for data interoperability with skills building inputs to work towards internal sustainability for important specialisms such as actuarial skills.

While this work has yet to be fully written into a comprehensive plan for capacity renewal, there is some early evidence that it is contributing to tangible results which promise to have long lasting effects. These include

- 1) Allowing for the development of opportunities for linkage between Social Assistance and Social Security schemes;
- 2) Developing in-house skills for high level advice and risk assessment for social security schemes;
- 3) Embedding an evidence based approach to the design of different components of the extension of SP to new worker groups.

This approach has potential for other ILO country programmes where social security systems have begun to rapidly develop, such as in middle income and high middle-income countries.

This approach is contributing to DWCP's Outcome 2.1 "Social Protection System operates in a sustainable, transparent, coordinated well-administered and equitable manner."

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT **AND** MID TERM INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE ADVANCING SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CAMBODIA PROJECT

#### Key Facts

<b>Project Title</b>	Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia
<b>ILO TC project code</b>	KHM/21/01/EUR
<b>Donor</b>	European Union
<b>Total approved budget</b>	5,598,535 EUR (ILO and UNICEF)
<b>ILO Administrative unit</b>	DWT/CO-Bangkok
<b>ILO Technical Units</b>	SOCPRO
<b>Type and scope of Evaluation</b>	evaluability assessment (EA) <b>AND</b> mid term independent evaluation
<b>Evaluation dates</b>	January 2023 to May 2023 (Field mission takes place in March 2023)
<b>Project Duration</b>	1 February 2021 – 31 December 2024 (47 months)
<b>Evaluation Manager</b>	Ms Rattanaporn Pongpattana, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ILO -RO-Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
<b>TORs preparation date</b>	October-November 2022

#### Introduction

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) calls for proposals from team of a home-based International evaluator (IE) and national evaluator (based in Cambodia) to conduct an evaluability assessment (EA) and independent mid term evaluation (MTE) of the EU-funded **Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia** project, co-implemented by the ILO and UNICEF.

The evaluability assessment (EA) serves two purposes: 1) to assess the quality of the project's M&E plan and systems in the light of implementation realities, and; 2) to recommend changes in the ToC and the logical framework to make the project evaluable.

The mid term evaluation will be carried out in line with standard UNEG guidelines including UNEG guide on integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluations and in line with the evaluation protocols of the EU, ILO and UNICEF. It will be conducted in compliance with the principles, norms, and standards for project evaluations as outlined in the *ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 4th ed. (Nov 2020)*. The overall objective of this mid-term evaluation is to assess the relevance and validity of design, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact orientation, and sustainability, of the project the visibility of the EU. The specific objectives are to: (1) assess the progress achieved with project implementation against project objectives and outcome



indicators adopted, and to identify and address any major obstacles that may arise; (2) examine the current and future role of the project in contributing towards generating system change across the Cambodia's social protection system, and draw lessons learned and identify good practices from the two years of the project's intervention;

(3) propose recommendations to inform modifications of the project to increase its relevance and validity of design, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, in the remaining period.

The evaluation team will report to the Evaluation Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, based in the ILO's regional office in Bangkok, who will be managing the overall evaluation process with oversight provided by the ILO's evaluation office. The evaluation manager has no prior involvement with the project at any level.

### Background of the Project and the Context

In 2017, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) adopted a National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016 – 2025 (NSPPF), building on two main pillars: social security and social assistance. To coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NSPPF, a National Social Protection Council (NSPC) chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance (MEF) and a General Secretariat (GS) based at the MEF were established respectively. The goal of the NSPPF is to develop a strategic plan for the RGC “to ensure income security for all citizens, promote their welfare, strengthen social solidarity and maximize poverty alleviation impacts”.

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) is responsible for the administration of the social insurance schemes with 2.6 million members from the public and private sectors being covered (as of 2020). Until recently, the Social Security law only covered workers in companies with more than 8 people employed, which excluded a large part of workers. With the new law, provisions were included to cover self-employed and since January 2018, workers in companies with 8 or less workers are also covered. The recently approved Social Security Law includes provisions for pensions (contributory - the launch of the scheme is expected to take place in 2021) and for unemployment insurance.

However, the existing NSSF schemes and operational modalities are not yet adapted to deal with this new group of workers, particularly those working in the informal economy and those moving

between formal and informal jobs. According to ILO preliminary estimates from the most recent Labour Force Survey (LFS), informal employment accounted for 88% of total employment, corresponding to 7 million persons.

In the meantime, the current social assistance measures are in the early stages of their development and also limited, with only two national poverty targeted programmes (scholarship programme and cash transfer for poor pregnant women and children 0-2 years old) currently implemented at scale. The disability allowance programme is in early stages of development, with low coverage and adequacy of benefits. In the area of health, the Health Equity Fund is the key social protection tax-funded programme, targeting the poor and covering approximately 3.2 million people. Even so, households bear about 60% of the country's health expenditure out of their own pocket, creating perverse incentive to forgo care and an additional push factor into poverty.

Cambodia currently has a fragmented and under-resourced social protection (SP) system, leading to an overall low coverage, both in terms of level of benefits and population coverage. Fragmentation, relatively low coverage and scope of the social assistance programmes proffers a demand for integration of existing programmes into a lean and more effective system of service delivery and cash transfer administration. This objective is spelled out in the NSPPF's focus on the development of a family package of social assistance and creation of a single operator model for social assistance. The RGC and General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council (GS-NSPC) have recently started the process of developing the family package of integrated social assistance services to address current fragmentation and build a more effective and sustainable social assistance system.

Government social protection measures to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 include implementing a temporary cash transfer scheme for poor families identified through the government's Identification of Poor Households Program (IDPoor). The cash transfer is for approximately 560,000 households, providing between US\$10 and US\$50.

Considering the policy framework in place, reinforced by the current decisions as part of the COVID-19 response, a central element in the success of extending coverage will be the capacity to ensure inclusion of the near poor, the missing middle and the vulnerable who are not covered by existing ID-Poor registration. These groups of population include the informal and urban workers not covered by NSSF, who face the risk of not being captured under a mechanism such as ID Poor. These workers are also not covered by the existing schemes offered by NSSF.

In order to support advancement of social protection in Cambodia, there is an urgent need to build capacities within Cambodia's social protection institutions to handle the extension of social protection and increase the level of protection provided. Capacity building and technical support needs to be made in the key institutions such as the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) amongst others, in order for these institutions to be able to manage the increased expectation of providing better services and the exponential increase in persons covered by social protection.

## About the Project

The Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia project is a four-year project co-implemented by the ILO and UNICEF. The project started on 1 February 2021 and will end on 31 December 2024. It aims to extend social protection coverage and quality of provisions (adequacy and quality of services) by improving operational capabilities of social protection institutions and the adaptability of existing schemes to the characteristics and needs of those working in the informal sector, with a particular

focus on the expansion of social protection to the missing middle and the vulnerable. The project goal is “at the end of the project, more women and men in Cambodia have access to more effective, efficient, accountable and sustainable gender-responsive social protection.” These will be achieved through three pillars of work, namely: (1) extending social security coverage to workers not covered and to improve the quality and depth of service for those that are covered; (2) improving the delivery and coordination of social security and social assistance through the modernisation of the NSSF, and supporting the building of the delivery system for social assistance through the single operator, and; (3) enhancing capabilities in the provision of social assistance programmes to increase inclusion of extremely poor and at risk populations into social assistance while strengthening their livelihoods and participation in the labour market.

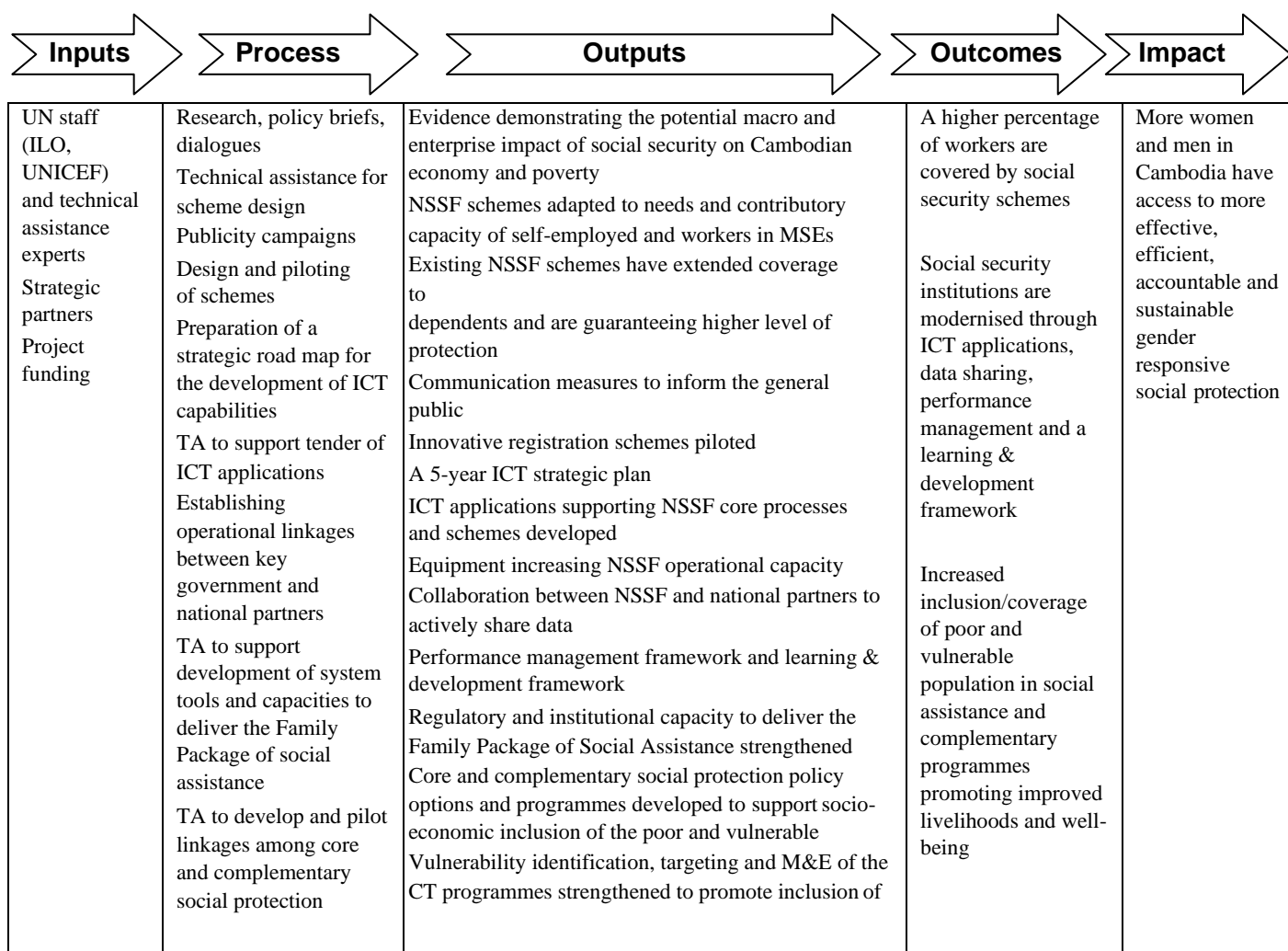
The project has three main intended outcomes.

Outcome 1 – A Increased inclusion/coverage of workers that are covered by social security schemes

Outcome 2 - Increased inclusion and coverage of poor and vulnerable population in social assistance and complementary programmes promoting improved livelihoods and well-being

Outcome 3 – Social security organisations are strengthened with improved business processes and tools to increase coverage and quality of service to workers in the formal and informal sector

The diagram below presents the **Theory of change of Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia**



	measures, including piloting of solutions Key domain experts and resources for workshops TA to GS NSPC and ministries Survey on barriers to uptake of vocational training	the hard to reach and vulnerable in the CT programmes Referral mechanism for the CT programmes and selected complementary services designed and tested Poverty identification and targeting tools strengthened Complementary measures to support economic inclusion of the extremely poor developed		
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**Assumptions for outputs achieving outcomes:**

Smooth cooperation between Government ministries and national partners concerned.

Operational capacity of NSSF and ministries to provide consistent delivery of high quality services to households.

Operational capacity of MoSVY and collaborating ministries to provide quality social assistance services and expand the coverage of social assistance measures.

Potential beneficiaries develop trust in the social security institutions.

Evidence demonstrates positive impact of formalization in macroeconomic terms and on business outcomes.

## Links to International and National Development Priorities and Outcomes

The project is aligned with the goal of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC)’s National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) 2016-2025, and is align with ILO’s P&B (2020-2021) Outcome 8 on “Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all”.

It is in line with the Cambodia UNDAF 2019-23 Outcome 1: By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular marginalized and vulnerable populations have their basic (economic and social) needs addressed equitably as they benefit from and utilize expanded quality social services and social protection in a more resilient, fairer and sustainable society; and Accelerator 1: Strengthening capacity for implementation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework towards Poverty Eradication in Cambodia.

It will contribute to SDG targets SDG 1.3: Implementing nationally appropriate social protection system and measures for all; SDG 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. It addresses the Recommendation on Social Protection Floor, 2012 (No.202), the Minimum Standards Convention, 1952 (No.102) and the Recommendation on Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy, 2015 (No.204).

In relation to ILO country programmatic framework it will be linked with the ILO Decent Work Country Program (2019-2023) priority 2, contributing to CPO KHM226 Increased quality and coverage of social protection, particularly among vulnerable groups.

In relation to UNICEF Country Programme Document, the project is linked to the Policy and Public Finance for Children Programme framework 2019-2023 Outcome: By 2023, children and adolescents in Cambodia, including the most deprived benefit from effective social services and child-sensitive social protection system

## Project Management Team Set-up

The implementation of the Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia project is led by the government, under the coordination of the Executive Committee of the National Social Protection

Council of Cambodia (NSPC)<sup>1</sup>. Under the supervision of the NSPC, the implementation of the different components will be done in strict coordination with the line ministries, including the central and subnational levels.

The Steering Committee (SC) was established, consisting of representatives of the implementing agencies, NSPC, a representative of a Member State (Germany) and a representative of the European Union. The role of the Steering Committee encompasses: (i) endorse annual work plans and budgets and review indicative calendar of activities; (ii) review progress reports provided by the implementing agencies based on the results framework; and (iii) provide strategic guidance and direction on the implementation of the project.

The GS-NSPC will provide general oversight and guidance for the implementation of all components of the Project and will support the coordination between the project and other ministries and agencies in the RGC. Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) is the main partners for the implementation of the Outcome 2 of the Project. National Social Security Fund (NSSF) is the main partners for the implementation of the Outcome 3 of the Project.

For ILO: High-level advocacy and overall oversight of the project will be ensured by the Director of the Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Laos with support from ILO National Coordinator in Cambodia. The ILO project team comprises of five (5) members including: (1) Program Manager who coordinate the overall implementation of the project, with close collaboration with UNICEF to ensure the consistency between the interventions, and is responsible for coordination with focal point for the GS-NSPC and EUD for matters related with the program coordination, and ensures routine management and makes management decisions in collaboration with ILO Senior SP Specialist, CO Director and Country Coordinator; (2) ILO Senior Social Protection Specialist who is responsible for the provision of technical backstopping and overall guidance on Project implementation; (3) One junior Social Protection Officer will support the Program Manager on the implementation of the technical social protection activities; (4) One National Program Officer who support the Program Manager with the coordination work required for the implementation of the project activities, and; (5) one Finance and Administrative Assistant who support the budget implementation and program management support

For UNICEF: High-level advocacy and overall oversight of the project is ensured by UNICEF Representative with support of the Communications section whereas the overall project coordination and management by the UNICEF Deputy Representative. The UNICEF project team comprises of six (6) members including: (1) Chief Policy and Public Finance for Children who ensures technical oversight and routine management and who makes management decisions in collaboration with Deputy Representatives. Responsible for coordination with the coordination bodies established to support the project; (2) Social Policy Specialist (Social Protection) who manages activities linked to social protection and collaboration with MoSVY and GS NSPC; (3&4) two Social Policy Specialists (Public Finance) manages activities linked to costing and budget planning for family package and supports Social Policy Specialist NOC in development of the M&E framework, data collection and analysis ; (5) Community Development Officer who ensure the delivery of components of the programme linked to delivery of services including capacity building, dissemination at sub-national level and testing of the referral mechanism, and will ensure

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<sup>1</sup> To coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NSPPF, a National Social Protection Council (NSPC) chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance (MEF) and a General Secretariat (GS) based at the MEF were established in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

monitoring and follow up on project activities linked to sub-national administrations, and; (6) Programme Associate who provides management support.

## Stakeholders and Target Groups

The key national stakeholders for this project include the General Secretariat of NSPC within the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the National Social Assistance Fund, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), the Ministry of Commerce, and national tripartite partners including the Cambodian Federation of Employers (CAMFEBA), industry groups such as the Garment Manufacturing Association of Cambodia (GMAC), the trade unions and other professional organizations, particularly those representing workers in the informal sector.

The key target groups for this project will be the vulnerable population in Cambodia which includes all Cambodians who are not socially protected by any social protection schemes. Through this project, workers in the informal economy, who are often earning an income just above the poverty line and are not protected through social insurance, will be brought into the social security schemes. In social assistance, focus will be on expanding the coverage of the poor and vulnerable to poverty, within the context of large portion of Cambodian population living in near poverty.

The EU is the donor and a key stakeholder of the project. The Programme Manager (Good Governance, Human Rights and Decent Jobs), the Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Cambodia, is a main focal point for the overall project coordination.

Purpose, objectives, and users of the EA and MTE

### *Evaluability Assessment (EA)*

The key objectives of the EA include:

- to assess the quality of the project's M&E plan and systems in the light of implementation realities, and;
- to recommend changes in the ToC and the logical framework to make the project evaluable.

The main users of this EA will include the ILO management at country, regional and headquarters level and UNICEF's management and the EU.

### *Mid term Independent Evaluation*

The purpose of the mid term evaluation is to promote accountability and learning to support improvement in the project. The specific objective of this mid-term evaluation is to assess the relevance and validity of design, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, of the project the visibility of the EU. The specific objectives are to: (1) assess the progress achieved with project implementation against project objectives and performance indicators adopted, and to identify and address any major obstacles that may arise; (2) examine the current and future role of the project in contributing towards generating system change across the Cambodia's social protection systems, and draw lessons learned and identify good practices from the two years of the project's intervention; (3) propose recommendations to inform modifications of the project to increase its relevance and validity of design, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, in the remaining period.

The main users of this mid term independent evaluation will include:

User	Intended Use
<b>UN Partners:</b> ILO, UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accountability and learning from the project.</li> <li>• provide an opportunity to make modifications to ensure the achievement of outcomes and objectives within the lifetime of the project.</li> <li>• Inform on how to most effectively support the RGC and key stakeholders (including national stakeholders, UNs and the EU) to improve SP.</li> </ul>
<b>Government Counterparts:</b> General Secretariat of NSPC, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accountability on achievements of the initiative</li> <li>• Inform on the project's commitment to continue improving its programming in support SP in Cambodia</li> <li>• Reflect on evaluation findings in as much as they also relate to jointly implemented interventions</li> <li>• Engage together with the project in the response to the evaluation recommendations</li> <li>• Provide the necessary information for potential scale up of the interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Partners, Non Government Organizations, and other organizations:</b> Cambodian Federation of Employers (CAMFEBA), Garment Manufacturing Association of Cambodia (GMAC), Association of Transportation and Informal Workers and Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association, GIZ and EU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on evaluation findings in as much as they also relate to jointly implemented interventions</li> <li>• Provide accountability on achievements of the initiative</li> <li>• Inform on areas that need support and improvements to better support results for SDGs and SP</li> </ul>
European Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accountability and learning from the project</li> <li>• Inform on areas that need support and improvements to better support results for SDGs and Social Protection that can be used in funding decisions</li> </ul>

## Scope and Criteria for the Evaluability Assessment

The scope of the EA covers the entire project (both the ILO and UNICEF components).

Substantive scope: The EA will analyze the logical fit of the project design and risk registers, availability of information, conduciveness of the context and accountability.

The Evaluability Assessment (EA) covers:

- Systems that are in place to conduct M&E (see detail in the following page);
- The project's log frame and theory of change approach to identify the logic between the activities, outputs, objectives and risks/assumptions. The quality of the risk analysis at project design and assessment of importance and likelihood sets the framework for subsequent monitoring during implementation;
- The M&E framework and plan of the project;
- The causal logic and results-level linkages between the DWCP/CPO and the project;
- The definitions, key questions, methodological approach, and initial preparations made, including baseline measures, by the project to assess the effectiveness and impact of the project;
- The monitoring and evaluation capacities of key partner organizations for each project, in addition to the resources and management arrangements for implementing the M&E plan;
- The engagement and accountability of the stakeholders and constituents as well as the accountability of the project M&E system, including communicating M&E data and results with constituents and stakeholders, and;

- Good practices and also specific improvements that should be made to the M&E system, giving specifics for acting upon these recommendations.

Criteria for evaluability assessment are assessed in the following areas and systems<sup>2</sup>:

1. Intervention logic, risks and assumptions	1.1 Has the situation been properly analysed? 1.2 Are the programmes/ project's overall objective clearly defined? 1.3 Does the document contain a strategy or Theory of Change for dealing with the problem? 1.4 Does the document contain satisfactory immediate objectives / project outcomes? 1.5 Are assumptions, risks and mitigations adequately identified? 1.6 Partnerships for sustainability of results
2. Quality of indicators, baselines, targets and milestones	2.1 Are indicators appropriate proxies for the IOs? 2.2 Are indicators of quality? 2.3 Is Baseline information collected for each indicator? 2.4 Are targets established for each indicator? 2.5 Are milestones identified for each indicator? 2.6 Can data be disaggregated to support performance reporting on areas of special interest for the ILO?
3. Means of verification/measurement and methodologies	3.1 Does the document propose the appropriate combination of annual reviews, mid-term and final evaluations? 3.2 Does an M&E plan exist to conduct monitoring and evaluation in a systematic manner? 3.3 Are the data collection and analyses methods in the M&E plan technically adequate?
4. Infrastructure, human and financial resources	4.1 Is the budget for the evaluation properly expressed in the project budget? 4.2 Are there adequate financial resources in the evaluation budget? 4.3 Are there adequate human resources? 4.4 Are organizational arrangements for M&E efficient?
5. Partners' participation and use of information	5.1 Was the proposal designed in a participatory manner? 5.2 Was information from previous evaluations used to design the proposal? 5.3 Is there a plan for evaluation reporting and dissemination?

#### Scope and Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions for the Midterm Evaluation

The scope of the MTE covers the entire project from inception to the evaluation date. Where possible, interviews should be taken with real (ultimate) beneficiaries and recipients.

With regard to geographical coverage, the MTE will cover the national level and pilot provinces (if relevant).

Below is the list of the evaluation criteria and suggested evaluation questions.

RELEVANCE AND VALIDITY OF DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the project met the needs to the beneficiaries, and to what extent it met global, country, and partners/institutions' SP needs, policies, and priorities, considering the changes in circumstances?</li> <li>• Is the project strategies sound to achieve the project objective? What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving its objectives?</li> </ul>
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<sup>2</sup> See more detail in Annex III (page 11-15) of [Guidance Note 1.3: Procedure and Tools for Evaluability](#).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any areas or project activities that need to be modified in the second half of the project?</li> <li>• How well has the project responded to the “work, employability” that has received increasing attention? What is the scope under the project to support policy developments across the areas of social protection and decent employment?</li> </ul>
COHERENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have other interventions and policies supported or undermined the project interventions, and vice versa?</li> <li>• Are there possible ways to maximize synergies and improve collaboration with new or existing key actors/stakeholders?</li> <li>• To what extent has the project linked and coordinated with other interventions including the ongoing EU funded Projects including, but not limited to, especially the EU-PFM Facility and the SP-PFM Projects as well as other interventions carried out by ILO, UNICEF, RGC, other UN agencies, NGOs, and social partners in order to maximize the project’s efficiency and impact?</li> </ul>
EFFECTIVENESS (including effectiveness of management arrangement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project making sufficient progress towards its planned objectives as laid out in the project’s logical framework? Will the project be likely to achieve its planned objectives upon completion?</li> <li>• What are the main constraints, problems and areas in need of further attention? What should be done or done more by the project to promote advancement of social protection and to expand Social Security and Social Assistance to the poor and the vulnerable in Cambodia?</li> </ul>
EFFICIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the financial resources and other inputs sufficient to achieve the project outcomes within the remaining timeframe?</li> <li>• Was the intervention more efficient in comparison to what could have been done through a single agency intervention?</li> </ul>
SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies have the projects put in place to ensure continuation of mechanisms/tools/practices provided, if the support from the ILO Programme ends? How can the projects’ key partnerships contribute to the sustainability of the initiatives under the projects and to what extent?</li> <li>• How effective has the project been in establishing and fostering national/local ownership?</li> </ul>
IMPACT ORIENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the project likely to produce a catalytic effect in terms of generating system change across the Cambodia’s social protection systems, especially in relation to extending Social Security and Social Assistance to the poor and the vulnerable?</li> <li>• What needs to be done to increase the impact of the programme and to better measure the impact?</li> </ul>
VISIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the project contributed to the image/visibility of the EU in the country?</li> </ul>
CROSS CUTTING ISSUES INCL. GENDER EQUALITY HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH, NON DISCRIMINATION AND COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the project promoted gender equality and improved access to social protection among those who belong to vulnerable groups (e.g. informal and vulnerable workers and people with disabilities)? What should the project do or do more to maximise its success in improving equity and gender equality?</li> <li>• To what extent were the project strategy and its means of action designed and implemented to maximize sustainability of HR and GE gains at the country level?</li> <li>• Identify possible strategies for implementation of project in the changed context of post COVID-19 crisis, that would maximise the efforts to advance social protection in Cambodia</li> <li>• To what extent has the project responded to the needs of the ILO and UNICEF constituents and beneficiaries for COVID 19 response and recovery</li> </ul>

## Methodology

### Methodology of Evaluability Assessment

The evaluability review will involve four complementary data collection and review activities:

- i. Document review, including project proposals, work plans, M&E framework, communications, minutes of stakeholder meetings, M&E products, and other information sources;
- ii. Stakeholder consultations with several key informant interviews (online/remote), either through email, telephone ;
- iii. Review of national M&E activities of ILO and UNICEF constituents, UN and implementing partners; and
- iv. Stocktaking of existing M&E plans and systems to identify capacities and needs.

The evaluability assessment will address the criteria and questions provided in Annex III (page 11-15) of Guidance Note 1.3: Procedure and Tools for Evaluability.

### Methodology of Mid term Independent Evaluation

The evaluation will apply a mixed-method approach, including: stakeholder mapping, in-depth documentary review; analysis of national-level and district-level results against the logical framework; analysis and testing of Theory of Change (ToC) to see if it holds true, and to explore the linkages between different levels of change; contribution analysis to determine progress against intended results and attribution analysis to the extent possible; systems analysis of the social protection system; financial analysis; in-depth and semi-structured interviews, focus groups and discussion groups; participant observation during site visits, and stakeholders' validation workshop.

The midterm evaluation shall be conducted, keeping gender equality and human rights as one of the key concerns. GE implies applying gender analysis by involving both men and women in the consultation and evaluation's analysis, inclusion of gender in the analysis and justification of project documents, reviewing of project's objectives and indicators in line with its sensitivity towards gender; and assessing outcomes in terms of its role in improving lives of women and men.

The analysis of gender-related concerns will be based on the ILO [Guidance note 3.1. Integrating gender equality in M&E](#). The evaluation will be conducted in compliance with the principles, norms, and standards for project evaluations as outlined in the ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 4th ed. (Nov 2020).<sup>3</sup>

The evaluation will also integrate gender equality and non-discrimination, disability inclusion, human rights, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, and environmental sustainability as crosscutting themes throughout its deliverables and process. In this regard, it will be guided by EVAL guidance notes on gender, norms and tripartism, stakeholder participation. The evaluation will consult the [UNEG Guide on integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluations to make sure the evaluation](#) applies HRBA and gender equality mainstreaming principles to the evaluation process.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS\\_168289/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_168289/lang--en/index.htm)

## Main Deliverables

### Evaluability Assessment (EA)

- (a) Deliverable 1.1: initial findings: The Evaluator shall share with the EM the initial findings which will then be disseminated project team prior to the internal debriefing.
- (b) Deliverable 1.2: internal debriefing with the ILO and UNICEF's project teams and specialists and the EU that will walk the stakeholders through summary overviews of issues, recommendations and each output specified above.
- (c) Deliverable 1.3: An EA report that provides a summary overviews of issues (by project outcomes, where appropriate) with recommendations of systemic improvements, as per the scope of the EA specified in section 4. It should be accompanied by the following outputs:
  - Filled M&E appraisal checklists with rating and narrative comments. The checklists (tables) are available in Annex III (page 11-15) of [Guidance Note 1.3: Procedure and Tools for Evaluability](#).

In cases where the evaluators assess that certain project M&E tools require improvement, they should also clearly propose how the tool(s) could have been revised. These may include, but not be limited to the following M&E tools:

- A revised project's logical framework based on the review and interviews , including (1) indicators that are SMART and that allow to capture gender equality, non-discrimination, and people with disability concerns; (2) the indicators' definitions and methodological note (i.e. a clear indication of how the project is collecting the indicator data); (3) established baseline data and milestone data disaggregated by sex (as well as age and disability, if appropriate)); (4) proposed targets (disaggregated by sex (as well as age and disability, if appropriate)) for all indicators; (5) sound logic between the activities, outputs, objectives and risks/assumptions, and; (6) has complementarity with the relevant indicators under the ILO Cambodia DWCP (2019-2023), UNICEF Country Programme Document, and the project.
- A revised M&E plan with (1) clearly specified source of information and useful methods for defining and evaluating impacts and good practices; (2) clearly defined data gathering system, and; (3) technically and operationally feasible data collection methods
- A revised risk management plan and proposed monitoring mechanisms
- A revised theory of change (ToC)

### Mid term Independent Evaluation

The evaluators will deliver the following main outputs:

- Deliverable 2.1: Inception report

The evaluators will draft an inception report upon the review of the available documents and Skype briefings/initial discussions with the project team, relevant ILO and UNICEF officials/specialists and, if required, the EU. The inception report will include the final evaluation questions, data collection methodologies and techniques, and evaluation tools as well as a completed evaluation question matrix (See illustrative sample in [Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report](#) Page 3). The methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods, including those related to

representation of specific group of stakeholders. The inception report will be prepared in accordance with the EVAL [Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report](#), and approved by the evaluation manager.

- Deliverable 2.2: Stakeholders' validation workshop/presentation on preliminary findings of the evaluation

At the end of the data collection exercise, the evaluation team will present POWERPOINT file detailing preliminary findings of the evaluation and proposed evaluation recommendations, at the stakeholders' workshop arranged virtually through Webex. The project team will provide necessary administrative and logistic support to organize this stakeholder workshop.

- Deliverable 2.3: Draft evaluation report

The draft evaluation report should be prepared in accordance with the EVAL [Checklist 4.2 Preparing the evaluation report](#). The draft report will be improved by incorporating evaluation manager's comments. Then the evaluation manager will circulate the draft report to key stakeholders including the project team, the ILO and UNICEF officials concerned with this evaluation, the EU and national partners for comments.

- Deliverable 2.4: Final evaluation report with evaluation summary (in a standard ILO format)

The evaluators will incorporate comments received from the ILO and other key stakeholders into the final report. For finalisation purposes, the evaluator has to ensure that it is done in accordance with the EVAL [Checklist 4.2 Preparing the evaluation report](#)

The reports and all other outputs of the evaluation will be produced in English. All draft and final reports, including other supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible with WORD for Windows. The report should not be more than 50 pages (excluding annexures). Findings, gaps and results should have a logical flow, be credible and clearly presented.

The draft reports will be circulated to key stakeholders and partners of the project, relevant tripartite constituents, and the ILO and UNICEF staff and specialists for their review. Comments from all the stakeholders will be consolidated by the Evaluation Manager and will be sent to the evaluation consultant to incorporate them into the revised evaluation report. The evaluation report will be considered final only when it gets final approval by the ILO's Evaluation Office. The quality of the report will be assessed against the relevant EVAL Checklists ([Checklist 4.9 Rating the quality of evaluation report](#)).

Draft and Final evaluation reports should include the following sections:

1. Cover page (ILO template to be provided)
2. Acronyms
3. Executive Summary (*standard ILO format*) with key findings, conclusions, recommendations, lessons and good practices
4. Description of the project and its intervention logic
5. Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation
6. Methodology and evaluation questions
7. Limitations
8. Presentation of findings for each criteria
9. A table presenting the key results (i.e. figures and qualitative results) achieved per objective (expected and unexpected)
10. Conclusions and recommendations (including to whom they are addressed)

11. Lessons learned, potential good practices<sup>4</sup> and models of intervention/possible future direction
12. Appropriate Annexes (list of meetings and interviews, TOR, and other relevant documents, lesson learn and good practice using standard ILO format).

### Management Arrangements and Workplan

An M&E Officer from ILO ROAP will be the **Evaluation Manager**. Evaluation Team leader reports to the evaluation manager. The evaluation manager is responsible for completing the following specific tasks:

- Draft and finalize the evaluation TOR with inputs from key stakeholders including ILO and UNICEF team (draft TORs to be circulated for comments);
- Develop a call for expression of interest and manage selection of an independent Evaluation Team in coordination with Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL);
- Brief the evaluator on ILO evaluation policies and procedures;
- Initial coordination with the joint programme team on the development of a field mission schedule and a preliminary result workshop;
- Approve the inception report;
- Circulate the first draft of the evaluation report for comments by key stakeholders;
- Ensure the final version of the evaluation report address stakeholders' comments (or an explanation why any comment has not been addressed) and meets ILO requirements, and;
- Share the report with ILO EVAL for the final approval.

### ILO and UNICEF project teams

The ILO, as lead agency, will handle administrative and contractual arrangements with the evaluator and provide logistical and other assistance as required. Primary responsibilities of the ILO and UNICEF project team include:

- Provide comments on the development of the ToRs;
- Provide joint programme documents and materials to the ILO National Programme Coordinator and Evaluation Manager;
- Provide list of interviewees and their contact details;
- Help schedule interviews/consultations when needed;
- Be on hand and available to provide information, written inputs, and face to face interviews as requested;
- Participate in the internal debriefing meeting and the stakeholders' validation workshop.

### The European Union

The Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Cambodia, will:

- Provide inputs on the development of the ToRs;
- Provide comments to refine the EA and MTE deliverables including the draft inception reports, draft Evaluability Assessment reports, and draft evaluation reports;
- be a key informant and provide the evaluation team with information during key informant interview sessions;
- Participate in the stakeholders' validation workshop.

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<sup>4</sup> Good practices refer to good approaches or practices of this project which can be further built upon by the project in the future and can also be replicated in other similar projects

## Evaluation Team

The evaluation will be conducted with the support of a team of consultants. The Evaluation Team will have the final responsibility for the evaluation report and ensure the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency, and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases. The Evaluation Team will agree on the distribution of work and schedule for the evaluation and stakeholders to consult. It is expected that the report will be written in an evidence-based manner.

The Evaluation Team reports to the ILO's Evaluation Manager.

## Evaluation Timeline

Timeline	Tasks		Responsible person
	E A	MT E	
21-31 Oct 2022	Draft a ToRs		EM
1-14 Nov 2022	Review of draft ToRs by stakeholders (including ILO staff and specialists, UNICEF, EU and national partners and stakeholders)		Project team
16 Nov 22-1 Jan 2023	ToRs advertisement		EM+Project
3-11 Jan 2022	Call for expression of interest (re-advertised)		EM+Project
12-18 Jan	Selection of consultants /procurement process		EM+REO
17-21 Jan 2022	The evaluation consultant conduct desk review		Evaluator
23-27 Jan 2022	Interview with stakeholders + Review of national M&E activities of ILO constituents, UNICEF and IPs		Evaluator
30 Jan 2022- 7 Feb	Draft EA report and other outputs		Evaluator
12 Feb 2022	Internal debriefing of EA findings and outputs with ILO+UNICEF+EU		Evaluator
13-22 February 2023		Inception phase +Desk review	Evaluator
23-28 February 2023	Finalize EA report and other outputs incorporating ILO+UNICEF comments	EM and project team review draft Inception report	
6-24 March 2023	Review process-- EM and Project team review the result of the evaluability assessment	Data collection for MTE	Evaluator
W4 March 2023		Internal debriefing	Evaluator
W1-2 April 2023		Draft MTE report	Evaluator
W3 April 2023		EM and Project team conduct 1 screening of draft evaluation report	EM+Project
W4 April-W2 May 2023		Stakeholder review of draft evaluation report	Stakeholders
W2 May 2023	Stakeholder validation workshop to present key findings from both EA and MTE		Evaluator
W4 May 2023	Finalize the EA report	Finalize the MTE report	Evaluator
	<b>TOTAL # DAY</b>		

## Qualifications of the Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team leader has the responsibility to undertake the evaluation and deliver all the required deliverables as per this TOR. The table below described desired competencies and responsibilities for an evaluation team leader and team member.

<b>Team leader:</b>	
Responsibilities	Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conduct EA and MT evaluation and deliver all deliverables under this TOR</li> <li>✓ Desk review of programme documents and other related documents</li> <li>✓ Develop evaluation instrument and draft inception report</li> <li>✓ Virtual interviews with project team and specialists of PUNOs</li> <li>✓ Undertake a field visit in Cambodia</li> <li>✓ Facilitate stakeholders' workshop/ debriefing with the programme and key stakeholders</li> <li>✓ Draft EA report and other outputs (i.e. revised ToC, logical framework, M&amp;E plan, risk registers, etc.)</li> <li>✓ Draft evaluation report</li> <li>✓ Finalize evaluation report</li> <li>✓ Draft stand-alone evaluation summary and lessons learned and good practice as per standard ILO format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has no previous engagement in the design and delivery of <i>the</i> project</li> <li>• Experience conducting at least 3 evaluability assessments and 5 evaluations of project/programme of similar nature.</li> <li>• Has minimum of ten years of experience in M&amp;E and in conducting programme or project evaluations;</li> <li>• Has knowledge of, and experience in applying, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies;</li> <li>• Has proven knowledge of the social protection systems, as well as the political and economic context of Cambodia</li> <li>• Holds substantial working experience in implementing and /or conducting evaluation for projects pertaining to social protection;</li> <li>• Knowledge of, and experience in gender issues will be an advantage;</li> <li>• Holds knowledge of the ILO/UNICEF's roles and mandate and its tripartite structure as well as UN evaluation norms and its programming;</li> <li>• Has excellent report writing skills in English.</li> </ul>
<b>Team member:</b>	
Responsibilities	Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Desk review of programme documents and other related documents</li> <li>✓ Assist the team leader in developing evaluation instrument and drafting inception report</li> <li>✓ Take part in the interviews with key stakeholders and assist in note taking during interview</li> <li>✓ Undertake a field visit in Cambodia</li> <li>✓ Assist the team leader in facilitating stakeholders' workshop/ debriefing with the programme and key stakeholders</li> <li>✓ Contribute to the drafting of the evaluation report, EA report, and other outputs prepared by the team leader</li> <li>✓ Participate in and jointly facilitate the stakeholders workshop</li> <li>✓ Provide interpretation for the IE during the evaluation data collection as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Khmer nationality with relevant qualifications in Law, Business Administration, International Development, Social Sciences or other relevant fields;</li> <li>• Holds no previous involvement/engagement in the design and delivery of the project</li> <li>• Has minimum eight years of experience in M&amp;E and/or conducting programme or project evaluations;</li> <li>• Has knowledge of, and experience in applying, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies;</li> <li>• Has proven knowledge of international labour and environmental standards, sustainable enterprises, and working with representative employers and workers organizations;</li> <li>• Knowledge of, and experience in gender issues will be an advantage;</li> <li>• Has excellent analytical skills and communication skills;</li> <li>• Has good report writing skills in English.</li> </ul>

## Legal and Ethical Matters

The evaluation will comply with UN Norms and Standards. The TOR is accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluations. UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed. It is important that the evaluator has no links to programme management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of evaluation.

Ownership of the data from the evaluation rests jointly between the ILO, UNICEF and the consultants. The copyrights of the evaluation report rests exclusively with the ILO. Use of the date for publication and other presentation can only be made with the agreement of the ILO. Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

*All relevant EA and evaluation guidelines can be found accessing the following links:*

1. [Guidance Note 1.3: Procedure and Tools for Evaluability](#)
2. [Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report](#)
3. [Checklist 4.2 Preparing the evaluation report](#)
4. [Checklist 4.9 Rating the quality of evaluation report](#)
5. [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's Covid-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations](#)
6. [Guidance note 4.5 Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation](#)
7. [Guidance note 3.1. Integrating gender equality in M&E](#)
8. [Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate](#)
9. [Code of conduct form \(To be signed by the evaluator\)](#)
10. [UNEG integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluations](#)
11. [United Nations Evaluation Group. 2008. \*Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation in the UN System\*](#)
12. [United Nations Evaluation Group. 2014. \*Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations\*](#)
13. [United Nations Evaluation Group. 2016. \*Norms and Standards for Evaluation\*](#)
14. [United Nations Evaluation Group. 2018. \*UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator - Technical Note and Scorecard\*](#)
15. [ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 4th ed., \(Nov 2020\)](#)



Annex 2: List of Stakeholders Consulted

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>
1.	Mr. Niroth Chhy	Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)	Researcher
2.	Mr. Yasak Ly	Ministry of Interior (MoI)	Director of DDC;
3.	Mr. Sovannarith	Ministry of Interior (MoI)	Chief of the Project Office
4.	Mr. Sao Yeng	Ministry of Social Affairs and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)	Director IT Department of the NSAF
5.	Mr. Warren Daly	Ministry of Social Affairs and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)	IT Department of the NSAF, Independent consultant.
6.	Mr. San Ratana	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)	Director of DWPD,
7.	Mr. Lu Chanrithy	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)	Deputy of DWPD,
8.	Mr. Hour Phally	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)	Head of Bureau of DWPD,
9.	Mr. Chhoeung Dara	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)	Official of DWPD
10.	H.E. Keo Ouly	Ministry of Planning (MoP)	Director of IDPoor Department
11.	Mr. Ouk Samonn	The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)	Director of Customer Service and Public Relations Department
12.	Mr. Punlork Leang	The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)	Director of Policy Department,
13.	Ms. Chak Tey	National Social Assistant Fund (NSAF)	Chief of Legal Affairs Division

14.	Mr. Lay Sovan	The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)	Deputy Head of Planning Division
15.	Mr. Phang Molika	The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)	Chief of Planning Division
16.	Ms. Va Vicheka	National Social Assistant Fund (NSAF)	Chief of Statistics Division
17.	Mr. Sok Sovan Seilaboth	The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)	Deputy Head of Planning Division
18.	H.E. Chhour Sopannha	National Social Assistant Fund (NSAF)	Secretary of State of MoSVY, Delegated Government, Director General of the NSAF
19.	H.E. Yok Samedy	General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council (GS-NSPC) of the MEF	Deputy Secretary General of the NSPC,
20.	Mr. Sreng Sophornreaksmey	GS-NSPC	Director of the Social Assistance Department,
21.	Mr. Lay Sophanith	GS-NSPC	Director of Social Security Department,
22.	Mr. David	GS-NSPC	General Affairs Department,
23.	Ms. Nasy	GS-NSPC	General Affairs Department
24.	Mr. Chy Sour	The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)	Director of IT Department
25.	Mr. Kaing Seyha,	The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)	Official of the IT Department
26.	Mr. Tep Sophorn	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Association (CAMFEBA)	General Manager
27.	Mr. Vorn Pov	Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA),	President
28.	Mr. Morm Rithy	Cambodian Tourism and Service Workers Federation (CTSWF)	President

29.	Ms. Sie Kunthea	Cambodia Women Labour Union Federation (CWLUF)	President
30.	Mr. Hai Khen	Occupation of Informal Workers and Transport Association (OITA)	Representative
31.	Dr. Ivan Gonzalez de Alba	UNDP Cambodia,	Country Economist at
32.	Mr. Theara Khoun	UNDP Cambodia	Social Policy Specialist
33.	Mr. Thibaut Hanquet,	GRET	Project Manager Social Protection
34.	Mr. Tun Sophorn	ILO Cambodia Country Office	National Coordinator
35.	Ms. Francesca Ciccomartino	Delegation of the EU to the Kingdom of Cambodia	Programme Manager, Human Rights and Decent Jobs,
36.	Ms. Sophorn Phean	OXFAM Cambodia	Country Director
37.	Mr. Visal	OXFAM Cambodia	FIRST Programme Coordinator
38.	Mr. Holger Thies	ASPC Steering Committee Member	EU Representative
39.	Mr. Finn Koh	ILO/ASPC	Programme Manager
40.	Ms. Heng Sokgech	ILO/ASPC	National Programme Officer
41.	Ms. Erna Ribar	UNICEF/ASPC	Chief, Social Policy and Public Finance for Children
42.	Ms. Sara Park	Better Factory Cambodia (BFC)	Programme Manager
43.	Mr. Cunha, Nuno Meira Simoes	ILO DWT-RO Office	Senior Social Protection Technical Specialist
44.	Group of <b>15</b> rights-holders/new beneficiaries of CTP-PWYC 0-2 in Phnom Penh	Social Assistance Programme	
45.	Group of <b>16</b> rights-holders/new beneficiaries	Social Assistance Programme	

	of CTP affected by Inflation in Phnom Penh		
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### Annex 3: List of Documents Consulted

- ADE, Mid-Term Evaluation Report of the Project on Improving Synergies between the Social Project and Public Financial Management (SP-PFM), 2019-2021.
- Cousins, Mel, 2021 Global Action on Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management, Evaluability Assessment – Final Report
- DEFT Advisory and Research Pvt. Ltd., 2018, Extending National Social Security Fund coverage to Informal Workers in Cambodia An initiative to enable selected segments of informal workers to join the NSSF (The case of Domestic Workers)
- DEFT Advisory and Research Pvt. Ltd., 2018, Extending National Social Security Fund coverage to Informal Workers in Cambodia - an initiative to enable selected segments of informal workers to join the NSSF (The case of Tuk-Tuk Drivers)
- Development Pathways, 2022, Review of the Cambodian National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025. Final Report “Unpublished”., June.
- EPRI, Cash-Plus Programming in Cambodia – towards Building a Referral and Linkage Mechanism, May 2023.
- EPRI, Demand Side Survey Report: Data Collection Survey on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Cambodia, April 2023.
- EPRI, Risk and Vulnerability Monitoring Toolkit – Feasibility Assessment and Pilot Findings, April 2023.
- Final Evaluation Report of the SDG Funded Joint Programme for Supporting the National Social Protection Policy Framework in Cambodia, April 2022.
- GRET ASP Project, Inception Report/Project Workplan, April 2023.
- ILO Better Factories Cambodia, Background Study: Social Protection and Childcare Garment Sector, April 2023.
- ILO Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2019 – 2023, March 2019.
- ILO Improving Women’s Access to Old-Age Pensions in Cambodia and Vietnam.
- ILO, Statistical Brief: Overview of Workers in the Auto-Repair Sub-Sector, January 2023.
- ILO, Statistical Brief: Overview of Workers in the Cargo-Handling Sub-Sector, January 2023.
- ILO, Statistical Brief: Overview of Workers in the Construction Sub-Sector, January 2023.
- ILO, Statistical Brief: Overview of Workers in the Manufacture of Beverage and Food Products Sectors, January 2023.
- ILO, Statistical Brief: Overview of Workers in the Restaurants Sub-Sector, January 2023.
- ILO/ NSSF, Policy Brief: Extending Social Protection to Informal Workers in Cambodia,
- ILO/ UNICEF ASPC Progress Report: Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia, January – December 2022.
- ILO/ UNICEF ASPC Project Progress Report February-December 2021
- ILO/ UNICEF ASPC Project’s Training Record for Years 2022 – 2023.

ILO/ UNICEF Project Document: Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia (ASPC), 2021.

ILO/ UNICEF Project Implementation Summary, January – December 2022,

ILO/ UNICEF Project Workplan 2022

IMPACT Advisors, Final Report: Payment Service Providers/E-Payment Assessment in Cambodia, August 2022.

Ministry of Economy and Finance, Policy Brief Vol.3: Graduation-Based Social Protection, November 2021.

Ministry of Interior, Guidelines on the Implementation Activities of Social Services at Sangkat/ Communes, May 2018.

MoSVY, Enhancing Alternative Care Opportunities for Children with Disabilities in Cambodia, January 2018.

MoSVY, Strategic Plan on Social Service Workforce in Cambodia 2022-2031, March 2022.

MoSVY. Evaluation Management Response Document: Evaluation on Joint Programme for Supporting the NSPPF in Cambodia, 2022.

NSSF Communication Strategy and Action Plan, December 2022.

RGC Royal Government of Cambodia, Law on Social Security Schemes, 2019.

Royal Government of Cambodia, 2017, Cambodia National Social Protection Framework 2016-25

The Report of the National Social Security Fund on the Work Achievements in 2021 and the NSSF's Continued Implementation and Future Direction.

UNDP, Final Report: Understanding the Paths to Formalization in Cambodia – an Integrated Vision, May 2023.

UNICEF ASPC Project's Training Record for Year 2022.

UNICEF, 2019b. Country-led Evaluation of the National Education Scholarship Programmes of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in Cambodia (2015-2018): Final Report – Volume 1.

UNICEF, Final Evaluation Report of the SIDA Funded Project Strengthening Local Governance for Delivering Social Services and Social Protection for Vulnerable Children and Women in Cambodia, May 2022.

UNICEF, Final Report on Process Evaluation of Cash Transfer Programme for Pregnant Women and Children under 2, November 2021.

UNICEF/USAID, Social Protection and Its Effects on Gender Equality: A literature review, Innocent Working Paper, Dec 2020.

### **News' Publications**

NSSF's Launch of a Pilot for Tuk-Tuk coverage, March 2023:  
<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/nssf-preps-pilot-tuk-tuk-coverage>

- NSSF's \$27.7 Million Collected from Pension Contributions, March 2023:  
<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/277m-collected-pension-contributions>
- Union Calls for NSSF Registration for Every Construction Workers, March 2023:  
<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/union-calls-nssf-registration-every-construction-worker>
- Small Businesses Urged to Register with the NSSF, November 2022:  
<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/small-businesses-urged-register-nssf>
- NSSF Piloting Services for Cambodia's Self-Employed, March 2023:  
<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/nssf-piloting-services-cambodias-self-employed>
- Dual Cash Transfer Programme's First Phase was launched on December 10, December 2022:  
<https://cambodianess.com/article/inflation-and-floods-cash-transfers-to-support-over-one-million-people>
- .

Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix

	EQ and sub questions	Measures/indicators	data sources	collection method	Stakeholder/informant					
					Government	UN partner	Social partner	Implementing partner	Rights holder	Others
Relevance and validity of design	<b>EQ1: To what extent does the project meet the needs of the beneficiaries?</b>	Responds to needs identified in situation analysis / Targeting consistent with new information in project produced studies / rights holders agree that project supports them	Prodoc Project studies Rights holders	Desk review FGDs			✓		✓	
	To what extent does it meet global, country, and partners/institutions' SP needs, policies, and priorities, considering the changes in circumstances?	Objectives and strategy of the project supports: - National SP Framework - SDGs - ILO global SP strategy - UNICEF global SP strategy	Framework doc ILO and UNICEF SP strategies	Desk review FGDs	✓	✓				
	<b>EQ2: Is the project strategy sound to achieve the project's planned outcomes and objectives?</b>	Causal steps are clear between output and outcome Progress so far has been commensurate with the project timeline Few 'missing steps' are identified	Evaluability Assessment Project partners and stakeholders UNICEF and ILO reports on SP systems elsewhere	EA logical framework analysis KIIs	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving its objectives?	Global / ASEAN experience of expanding SP Stakeholder testimony of missed opportunities Stakeholders identify strategy changes necessary	Project partners and stakeholders Project progress reports	Desk review KIIs	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Are there any areas or project activities that need to be modified in the second half of the project?	Evidence that activities have not started or are not progressing Evidence of significant changes in circumstances / country situation	Observation of current affairs Stakeholder consultations	Desk review Participant observation KIIs	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Coherence	<b>EQ 3: To what extent have other interventions and policies supported or undermined the project interventions, and vice versa?</b>	Similarities and differences in related projects Extent of coordination with related projects Testimony on negative or positive effects on ASPC of related projects	Prodocs and evaluations of related projects Project management staff Partners Other implementing agencies	Desk review KIIs	✓	✓	✓		✓	



	To what extent has the project linked and coordinated with other interventions including the ongoing EU funded Projects including, especially the EU-PFM Facility and the SP-PFM Projects as well as other interventions carried out by ILO, UNICEF, RGC, other UN agencies, NGOs, and social partners in order to maximize the project's efficiency and impact?	Knowledge of other projects by stakeholders Coordination mechanism exists and includes ASPC with others Degree of momentum on progress in SP Stakeholders identify improvement spaces for collaboration	Prodocs and evaluations of related projects / project mapping Project, partners and other agencies	Desk review KIIs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	How could synergies be maximised and collaboration with new or existing key stakeholders improved?	'Reasonable belief' that better coordination would improve results	Project stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Effectiveness (including of management arrangements)	<b>EQ4: Is the project making sufficient progress towards its planned objectives as laid out in the project's logical framework?</b>	activities have been completed on schedule Evidence that activities produce expected outputs milestones have been met / progress towards targets commensurate with timeframe	Progress reports / updates MIS data with GS-NSPC EA findings	Desk review Request for gov data EA analysis					✓
	Will the project be likely to achieve its planned objectives upon completion?	Testimony on existing and foreseen challenges Evidence of gaps in ToC / missed assumptions Stakeholders identify areas of insufficient progress	Stakeholders EA findings	KIIs TOC analysis	✓	✓	✓		✓
	<b>EQ5: What are the main constraints, problems and areas in need of further attention</b>	Stakeholders identify unforeseen consequences / blockages	Stakeholders	KIIs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Efficiency	<b>EQ6: Are the financial resources and other inputs sufficient to achieve the project outcomes within the remaining timeframe?</b>	Expenditure is as planned; budget lines do not exceed +/- 10% utilization No major new activities identified as essential Project staff are managing successfully; workload is reasonable	Budget and utilization data Stakeholder perspectives on workload and management project organigram	Desk review KIIs	✓	✓			
	<b>EQ7: What has been the added value or weakness of the distinct partnerships of the project: the ILO/UNICEF joint programme; and the EU partnership in this?</b>	Evidence of use of ILO and UNICEF expertise (TA/consultation) Level of coordination of ILO, UNICEF and EU Degree and types of involvement by EU Evidence of links between ILO and UNICEF counterparts	Logical framework review Stakeholders	EA analysis KIIs	✓	✓			✓

Sustainability	<p><b>EQ8: What strategies have the projects put in place to ensure continuation of mechanisms/tools/practices provided, if the support from the ILO Programme ends?</b></p>	<p>Capacity building initiatives planned, carried out, results measured Implementing partners are in a position to carry on the work beyond 2024 Project was designed with partners Project prioritises partner ownership Synergy between partners' priorities and projects'.</p>	<p>progress reports / Post training testing Stakeholders</p>	<p>Doc review KIIs</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	
	<p>How can the projects' key partnerships contribute to the sustainability of the initiatives under the project and to what extent?</p>	<p>Other fund sources for partners Partner confidence in capacity to continue</p>	<p>Stakeholder perspectives</p>		<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>		
	<p>How effective has the project been in establishing and fostering national/local ownership?</p>	<p>Government stakeholders prioritise project objectives</p>	<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>KIIs</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>		
Impact orientation	<p><b>EQ9: What progress has been made with strengthening institutional capacity for long term and sustained improvements to Cambodia's social protection system (wider and more inclusive coverage)?</b></p>	<p>Positive post training feedback Partner confidence in capacity to continue Progress on monitoring of inclusion to inform future work Progress on evidence informed policy making</p>	<p>Post training feedback data Testimony on use of data for policy Govt MIS for SPc</p>	<p>MIS request KIIs</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
Cross cutting issues: gender equality, human rights based approach, non-discrimination and Covid 19	<p><b>EQ10: How has the project promoted gender equality and improved access to social protection among those who belong to vulnerable groups (e.g. informal and vulnerable workers and people with disabilities)?</b></p>	<p>Gender and vulnerable groups integrated into logframe and targets Stakeholders aware of gender dimensions and informed by monitoring data Women and vulnerable stakeholders report progress towards equality Project results include proportionate benefits to women and vulnerable Monitoring systems capable of disaggregation by gender and vulnerable groups</p>	<p>Logical framework review (EA) Stakeholders Progress reports Gov MIS Rights holders testimony</p>	<p>EA analysis KIIs Document review MIS request FGDs</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	
	<p>What should the project do or do more to maximise its success in improving equity and gender equality?</p>	<p>Identified gaps / missed opportunities for integrating GEWE Identified areas where gender effects are unknown / invisible Evidence of government capacity for gender analysis of SP</p>	<p>Logical framework review (EA) Progress reports Stakeholders</p>	<p>EA analysis KIIs Document review</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>	
	<p>To what extent have the project strategy, activities and methods maximized the sustainability of HR and GE gains at the country level?</p>	<p>Buy-in for focus on gender equality and vulnerable groups among gov stakeholders Gender strategy for project is understood and integrated by stakeholders</p>	<p>Stakeholders Document review Evaluations of CT programmes Progress reports Project management testimony</p>	<p>Desk review - evaluations KIIs FGDs</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>	
	<p><b>EQ 11: To what extent has the project responded to the needs of the ILO and UNICEF constituents and beneficiaries for COVID 19 response and recovery?</b></p>	<p>Beneficiaries feedback on Covid 19 support packages Changes to implementation recorded to respond to Covid 19 SP needs</p>			<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>	

<p>What are the possible strategies for implementation of project in the changed context of post COVID-19 crisis, that would maximise the efforts to advance social protection in Cambodia ?</p>	<p>Participant observation of post Covid situation Beneficiaries identify changes in SP needs in post Covid situation Government willingness to move onto post Covid SP framework</p>	<p>Government and rights holders</p>	<p>KIIs FGDs</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
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Annex 5: Original ToC, causation analysis  
 Coloured annotation marks connected activity.

The visual version of the Theory of Change (Figure 1 below) given in the project concept note sets out the intervention logic in groups related to inputs, process, outputs, outcomes and impact but is missing a real sense of causation in any detail; it is not clear what the causal linkages are for some elements; and a clear connection between the elements in this visual and in the narrative version.

For example:

Under 'Outputs' it is not clear:

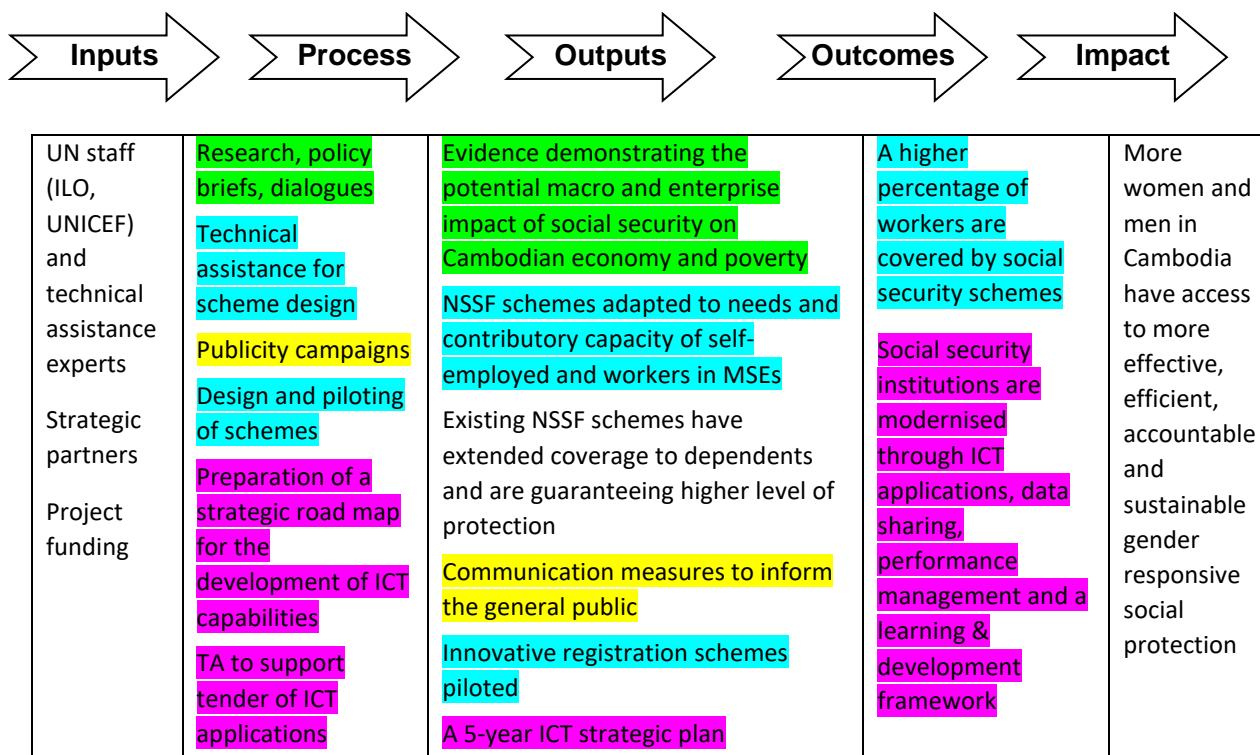
- What processes or activities have led to the output 'Existing NSSF schemes have extended coverage to dependents and are guaranteeing higher level of protection'
- What processes of activities have led to the output 'Performance management framework and learning & development framework'
- In what sense 'Equipment increasing NSSF operational capacity' is an output; what is it an output of?
- What activities, inputs or process have led to 'Vulnerability identification, targeting and M&E of the CT programmes are strengthened to promote inclusion of the hard to reach and vulnerable in the CT programme's'
- What activities, inputs or process have led to 'Complementary measures to support economic inclusion of the extremely poor have been developed'/'

Similarly, under 'Outcomes' it is not clear what has contributed to the outcomes

- Performance management and a learning & development framework'
- Complementary programmes promoting improved livelihoods and well-being

**Figure 1: original theory of change, as presented in the concept note for ASPC.**

*Annotated colours denote elements that are clearly related causally to each other.*

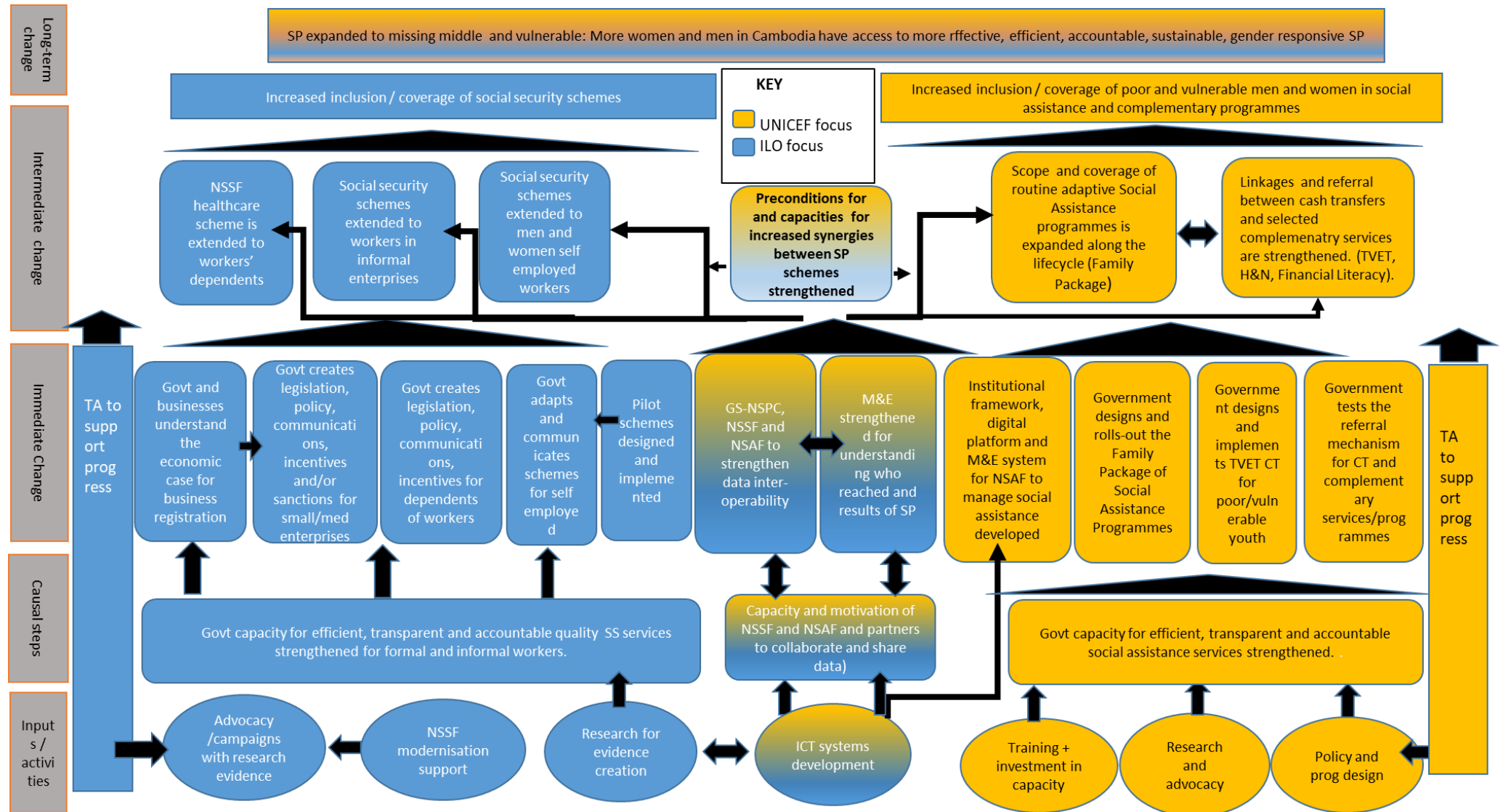


	<p>Establishing operational linkages between key government and national partners</p> <p>TA to support development of system tools and capacities to deliver the Family Package of social assistance</p> <p>TA to develop and pilot linkages among core and complementary social protection measures, including piloting of solutions</p> <p>Key domain experts and resources for workshops</p> <p>TA to GS NSPC and ministries</p> <p>Survey on barriers to uptake of vocational training</p>	<p>ICT applications supporting NSSF core processes and schemes developed</p> <p>Equipment increasing NSSF operational capacity</p> <p>Collaboration between NSSF and national partners to actively share data</p> <p>Performance management framework and learning &amp; development framework</p> <p>Regulatory and institutional capacity to deliver the Family Package of Social Assistance strengthened</p> <p>Core and complementary social protection policy options and programmes are developed to support socio-economic inclusion of the poor and vulnerable</p> <p>Vulnerability identification, targeting and M&amp;E of the CT programmes are strengthened to promote inclusion of the hard to reach and vulnerable in the CT programmes</p> <p>Referral mechanism for the CT programmes and selected complementary services is designed and tested</p> <p>Poverty identification and targeting tools strengthened</p> <p>Complementary measures to support economic inclusion of the extremely poor have been developed</p>	<p>Increased inclusion/coverage of poor and vulnerable population in social assistance and complementary programmes promoting improved livelihoods and well-being</p>	
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**Assumptions for outputs achieving outcomes:**

- Smooth cooperation between Government ministries and national partners concerned.
- Operational capacity of NSSF and ministries to provide consistent delivery of high quality services to households.
- Operational capacity of MoSVY and collaborating ministries to provide quality social assistance services and expand the coverage of social assistance measures.
- Potential beneficiaries develop trust in the social security institutions.
- Evidence demonstrates positive impact of formalization in macroeconomic terms and on business outcomes.

Annex 6: Reconstructed Theory of Change: Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia (Final version September 2023)



Annex 7: List of trainings conducted through ASPC

No.	Type of Training Programmes and Targeted Stakeholders	2021	2022	2023	Total	Remark
<b>A. GS-NSPC and Government Ministries/ National Assistance Sub-Committees</b>						
1.	1-Day Consultation meeting on Behaviour Change for Mothers and Child health and Nutrient with Inter-Ministries		68 (F: 15)		68 (F: 15)	
2.	1-Day Meeting on Consultation Families Package Programme and CTP-WC Evaluation dissemination		25 (F:??)		25 (F:??)	
3.	1-Day x 25 Provincial meetings on 1st Semester results review and planning for 2nd Semester for Commune and Public Health Facilities		1,447 (F:640)		1,447 (F:640)	
4.	National meeting on 1st Semester results review, planning for 2nd Semester for WCCC/BoG/DoSVY/DoP/DoH		223 (F: 82)		223 (F: 82)	
5.	Half-Day Steering Committee and project closing meeting of the BMZ-funded project		15 (F: 6)		15 (F: 6)	
<b>B. NSSF</b>						
1.	1-Day Training on Understanding data for actuarial valuation for NSSF staff		14 (F: 8)		14 (F: 8)	
2.	1-Day Training on Actuarial Valuation of NSSF schemes for NSSF Staff		15 (F: 9)		15 (F: 9)	
3.	2-Day Training on Actuarial and Investment NSSF staff (Phase I)	22 (F: 8)			22 (F: 8)	
4.	The 3rd 2-Day Visioning Workshop on Extension of the health coverage in pursuit of UHC for NSSF			19 (F: 6)	19 (F: 6)	
5.	2-Day Training on Formalization of Enterprises and workers with NSSF.		38 (F: 8)		38 (F: 8)	
6.	2-Day Leadership Training on Social Security for MoLVT and NSSF Management		22 (F: 4)		22 (F: 4)	
<b>C. NSAF</b>						
1.	2-Day Facilitation Skills for Trainers/Facilitators		21 (F:3)		21 (F:3)	
2.	2-Day Consultation Meeting on Family Package Programme for MoLVY		22 (F: 3)		22 (F: 3)	
3.	2-Day Orientation Training (1st Semester Results Review and Planning for 2nd Semester) and Refresher Training		94 (F:17)		94 (F:17)	
4.	1-Day x 25 Trainings on Cash Transfer Programme for Women and Children under 2 years for NEW CS &PHF Staff		814 (F:487)		814 (F:487)	
5.	1-Day x 25 Refresher trainings on Monitoring and Evaluation by using Management Information System for Commune and Sangkat Staff		3,109 (F: 740)		3,109 (F: 740)	

No.	Type of Training Programmes and Targeted Stakeholders	2021	2022	2023	Total	Remark
6.	3-Day Training on Kobo System Data Entry for Risk and Vulnerable Data Collection for NSAF		15 (F:1)		15 (F:1)	
7.	2-Day x 2 Trainings on Vocational Training Need Assessment for Poor Families for 25 PDoSVY		50 (F:12)		50 (F:12)	
8.	1-Day Orientation Training on Rapid Assessment on Poor Families Impacted by Flood for 25 PDoSVY and NSAF		90 (F:18)		90 (F:18)	
9.	1-Day Training on Cash Transfer Programme for Vulnerable Families During Inflation for MoSVY, NSAF, and 25 PDoSVY.		147 (F:40)		147 (F:40)	
10.	1-Day Training on Cash Social Assistance Programme for Vulnerable Families serious impacted by flood for MoSVY, NSAF, and 25 PoDSVY		144 (f:40)		144 (f:40)	
11.	1-Day x 25 Trainings on Cash Transfer Programme for Vulnerable Families During Inflation and impacted by flood for CS and MDK Staff		3,712 (F:??)		3,712 (F:??)	
12.	1-Day Consultation meeting on Behaviour Change for Mother and Child health and Nutrient with NGOs		50 (F:8)		50 (F:8)	
<b>D.</b>	<b>NATIONAL SOCIAL PARTNERS</b>					
1.	1-Day Consultation workshop on the Review of the National Social Protection Policy Framework		90 (F:??)		90 (F:??)	
2.	3-Day ToT Training on Social Protection to focal trainers of NTUC.		33 (F: 15)		33 (F: 15)	
3.	3-Day Refresher Training on Social Protection and Facilitation Skills to NTUCs members (groups A and B).		35 (F: 14)		35 (F: 14)	
					<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>10,815</b>
					<b>Sub-Total Disaggregated by Sex</b>	<b>6,988 (F: 3,318)</b>
					<b>Sub-Total without disaggregation by Sex</b>	<b>3,827 (F:??)</b>



## Annex 8 : Lesson learned, templates



# Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia

Project DC/SYMBOL: *KHM/21/01/EUR*

Name of Evaluator: Kirsty Milward and Veyara Chhieu

Date: 07 August 2023

*The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.*

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	<p>A stronger approach to Theory of Change development at the design stage would have benefited the project implementation and will still be beneficial in the remaining timeframe. The reconstructed Theory of Change should be reviewed during the second half of the project and before final evaluation.</p>
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	<p>A theory of change was developed at the project design stage, but the causal dynamic was not clearly expressed in the visual version or the narrative accompanying it. This reflected gaps in project design which was not clearly articulated at the outset.</p> <p>One challenge for the ToC is that the project aims to give strategic support for the government-led evolution (expansion and improved targeting) of the SP system as a whole. Thus in principle the project –specific ToC sits within a broader (and longer) vision of the evolving social protection system in general. This created complexity for what the ToC for this specific project should look like.</p>
<b>Targeted users /Beneficiaries</b>	<p>Project management; project staff; partners</p>
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	<p>As the current process of both EA and MTE has revealed, some causal steps were missing in the plan at the outset. This has meant that at this mid term point results have so far been slow to emerge, especially in the Social Security dimension, and there continues to be some risk that the expected outcomes will not be achieved by the end of the project. Challenges in the line of causation expressed in project design has meant that there are ‘gaps’ – for instance in allowing time for the procedural steps necessary for developing and then implementing new legislation. This means that some types of support which might be helpful has not been identified; and results as currently framed are over ambitious.</p>
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	<p>Good focus on reconstructing the ToC at this mid term stage has laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive and realistic approach moving forwards, as the expected process is now more clearly mapped.</p> <p>A clear approach to reviewing the current (reconstructed) ToC by the project partners in systematic manner over the next 2 years will strengthen the sense of how targets are to be achieved and how long this will take, and therefore help to design the project’s final months, including any no cost extension planned. It will also clarify thinking on the relation of the capacity building / institutional strengthening initiatives to project outcomes within this project timeframe – i.e. which capacity inputs (if any) are necessary steps for achieving the objectives of this project; and which capacity inputs are implemented in the interests of sustainability / impact orientation beyond the scope of this immediate project.</p>

## Annex 9: Emerging good practice template



### Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia

**Project DC/SYMBOL:** KHM/21/01/EUR  
**Name of Evaluator:** Kirsty Milward, Veyara Chhieu  
**Date:** 07 August 2023

*The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.*

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The project has taken a strong sustainability approach through its strong integration of inputs to strengthen internal capacity for developing and sustaining social security schemes, alongside targeted technical assistance to move the developing schemes forward.
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	The project is taking place at a key stage in the establishment of the key SP institutions NSAF and NSSF. Giving support at these early stages of creating the organisational architecture and skills for both has been productive to support a sustained approach to SP. In other contexts, recognising optimal timing for capacity strengthening at the early stages of institutional development is key to effecting this good practice.
<b>Establish a clear cause- effect relationship</b>	This approach has combined specialist TA in positions such as for the development of systems for data interoperability with skills building inputs to work towards internal sustainability for important specialisms such as actuarial skills.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	While this work has yet to be fully written into a comprehensive plan for capacity renewal, there is some early evidence that it is contributing to tangible results which promise to have long lasting effects. These include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Allowing for the development of opportunities for linkage between Social Assistance and Social Security schemes;</li> <li>2) Developing in-house skills for high level advice and risk assessment for social security schemes;</li> <li>3) Embedding an evidence based approach to the design of different components of the extension of SP to new worker groups.</li> </ol>
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	This approach has potential for other ILO country programmes where social security systems have begun to rapidly develop, such as in middle income and high middle-income countries.
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	This approach is contributing to DWCP’s Outcome 2.1 “Social Protection System operates in a sustainable, transparent, coordinated well-administered and equitable manner.”
<b>Other documents or relevant comments</b>	