

## Investment Concept

<b>A: Investment Concept Title: Cambodia Vulnerable Peoples Support Program</b>
<b>Proposed investment start date and timeframe: 2018 – 31 December 2020) (3 years), with the option to extend for two further years</b>
<b>Proposed funding allocation: \$25 million (\$5 million per annum) Current program fund annual allocation: \$62.4 million</b>
<b>Risk and Value assessment result: Low Risk /Low Value</b>
<b>Consultation: Vietnam and Cambodia Section; Gender Equality Branch; Disability Section; Investment Design Section; South East Asia Development Strategies Section</b>
<b>Proposed Design Pathway: Internal DFAT peer review, SES1 approval of design</b>
<b>Draft AidWorks Initiative number: INM135</b>

### **B: Problem/Issue definition and rationale for investment (Why)**

Women who have been victims of violence and people with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in Cambodia. According to the most recent prevalence data, at least one in five women between the ages of 15 and 64 have suffered physical or sexual intimate partner violence, with current prevalence (in the last 12 months) found to be at least eight per cent. Violence against women and girls with disabilities is even higher and can take both similar and different forms.

Cambodia is estimated to have approximately 2.25 million people with disability (15 per cent of the total population). The true number is most likely higher due to Cambodia's development status and history of conflict. A 2014 study (by Evans et. al) found that 10 per cent of children below nine years of age in Cambodia had one or more disabilities.

Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) and supporting disability inclusive development are priority areas for Australia's development cooperation program as outlined in the *Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability strategy*, DFAT's *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, *Development for All 2015-2020 Strategy*, and *Aid Investment Plan for Cambodia*.

To support these two vulnerable groups in Cambodia, Post currently implements two separate programs: the Ending Violence Against Women Program [*\$13.5 million, 2012-17*] and the Disabilities Rights Initiative Cambodia (DRIC) [*\$10.4 million, 2014-17*]. The completion dates of these two investments are in August 2017 and December 2017, respectively. This provides an opportunity for DFAT to consider whether to continue to support these sectors and if so, the most appropriate modalities to manage future investments.

Both programs have seen some success. The strength of both programs is in bringing stakeholders together under a single framework through the implementation of government strategies i.e. the second National Action Plan for Violence Against Women (NAPVAW2) and Cambodia's National Disability Strategic Plan.

The EVAW program's achievements include: (1) assisting the development of the NAPVAW2; (2) providing a strong evidence base on the prevalence of violence against women (VAW) in Cambodia; and (3) developing guidelines and minimum service standards for access to justice, referral, mediation and counselling.

Similarly, DRIC has played an important role in (1) helping the Cambodian Government establish 14 Disability Action Working Groups in line-ministries and 20 Disability Action Councils at the provincial level to implement Cambodia's National Disability Strategic Plan; (2) funding physical and community based rehabilitation services for over 31,000 people with disability; and (3) supporting advocacy groups and Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) to give voice to people with disabilities to claim their rights.

Despite these gains, there is plenty more that remains to be done. Services for victims of violence and people with disabilities are weak and patchy across the country. Discrimination towards women and people with disability is common place. As a result, economic opportunities for these vulnerable and marginalised groups are particularly scarce.

Given the ongoing and demonstrable need in Cambodia and their alignment with Australian Government priorities, it is recommended that DFAT continue to invest in EAW and disability inclusive development sectors in Cambodia. While the Cambodian Government is committed to policy and program development in both sectors, it still faces constraints. As the primary supporter of both sectors in Cambodia, DFAT currently fills this gap. In South-East Asia, the EAW program is one of only two stand-alone programs on violence against women and DRIC is the only such program for people with disabilities in the region (making it particularly important for upholding our reputation as an international leader in disability inclusive development).

It is proposed that DFAT continue its investment in these two sectors. They are closely aligned with Australia's policy priorities as described in *Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability* through the promotion of disability inclusion, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The investment is also aligned with the *Cambodia Aid Investment Plan 2015 -18* through its focus on inclusive participation through improved quality of life for people with disabilities and ending violence against women and girls.

Both DRIC and the EAW Program are at a similar stage of development. The Cambodian Government have enacted strong national policies, but still requests support to implement these policies. The two programs are implemented through similar modalities. Both include a grant component and work through a range of partners, including UN agencies (EAW works with UN Women and DRIC partners with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO)). Both programs have high administrative costs, face coordination challenges, and are resource intensive for Post.

It is proposed that DFAT decline an extension option for DRIC and EAW and choose instead to design a new program which can provide support for both sectors. A design process would assess the degree to which current priorities would be retained and remain effective under a new program of support and also examine potential synergies offered by alternative implementation modalities with the aim of developing a more effective, efficient, sustainable, and administratively simpler program.

Due to the current resourcing requirements of both the EAW and DRIC programs, this concept affords an opportunity to continue engagement in EAW and disability inclusive development which may not be otherwise possible.

### **C: Proposed outcomes and investment options (What)**

The proposed investment should initially aim to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence in Cambodia. The program would retain the flexibility to expand to include other vulnerable persons over the program period, depending on emerging priorities.

Specifically, it should focus on four outcomes:

1. Increased capacity of, and collaboration between, all levels of government, donors, the private sector and NGOs to provide sustainable institutional support and coordination
2. Improved advocacy and awareness
3. Improved services
4. Increased economic independence, including through improved skills and income generation support.

To achieve these outcomes, the program will look to invest in three activity components:

1. capacity development, awareness raising and advocacy (including primary prevention of VAW);
2. provision of accessible, appropriate and quality services; and
3. skills training and establishment of income generating activities.

The design process should consider UN agencies, NGOs, advocacy groups, the private sector, and government entities as potential partners.

The program will build on existing support provided under the EAW and DRIC programs, thereby maximising outcomes and using existing networks and relationships. The investment will continue to align its work with Cambodian government priorities to ensure sustainability and Cambodian Government buy-in. The proposed investment could look to work even closer with the Cambodian Government by considering a grant matching mechanism to increase funding contributions from the Cambodian national budget.

Post is proposing to use a different implementation model than what is being used to currently deliver the EAW and DRIC programs.

The **EAW Program** (2012-2017) will expense approximately \$13.5 million by program end. It is managed directly by DFAT with support from a contractor-implemented Program Management Office (PMO). The PMO consists of three staff and coordinates the program of least 11 grant agreements at a given time (all agreements are held directly by DFAT). The PMO has a specific role in drawing together the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the program. This modality, while useful to implement the EAW Program's iterative design, has high administration and management costs due to multiple layers of management and coordination.

**DRIC** (\$10.4 million 2014-2017) is managed by a UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund which engages UNDP, UNICEF and WHO as well as a number of NGOs through a grant funding window. This organisation model was chosen as a way to consolidate a previous program of support that could engage in high-level policy dialogue and provide opportunity to leverage additional technical and financial resources from the UN. However, this modality has also not proven to be the most effective or efficient due to issues with coordination, communication and synergy across the components, external communication and advocacy.

The implementation model for the investment will be based on the recommendation and findings from the design process. The designers will consider the options listed below:

- Traditional Project Support through a Managing Contractor with Flexible Support Facility: The program is managed by a managing contractor procured through open tender. In addition to work undertaken by the managing contractor (primarily with the institutional strengthening agenda), a flexible support fund will be allocated to provide competitive grants to other implementing agencies, including but not limited to UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. The contractor mobilises a small Operational Team (Team Leader, disability and EAW sector specialists, grant manager, admin and finance manager and M&E program manager). This model is currently the most preferable option:

- DFAT will have full control over program implementation and have prominent visibility. DFAT technical staff would be utilised.
- More opportunity to ensure continuity between current EAW and DRIC work and that undertaken by the new program and program cohesion.
- Efficient use of resource persons within DFAT, managing contractor and other implementing agencies, with strong leadership by the managing contractor to ensure program cohesion. The competitive grant mechanism will allow for innovation and private sector engagement.
- This could also afford the opportunity to include other vulnerable groups, if such priorities emerge and funding is available.
- Facility with Competitive Grant Mechanism through a Managing Contractor: Similar to the first option, the program is managed by a small Operational Team mobilised by the managing contractor. However, all program activities are undertaken by the sub-grantees through a competitive grant process. The managing contractor, in working closely with Post, provides strategic and logistical capacity to deliver services. Technical expertise is assumed to be available within the implementing organisations. This model is currently the second preferred option as per the reasons similar to the first option. However, there are some concerns around complicated M&E framework and fragmentation of activity plans resulting from multiple grants (with all activities sub-granted).
- Basket Fund (Earmark to Vulnerable People Implementation Program): DFAT provides funding to the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to administer the program. A Program Technical Support Team would be mobilised to work with NCDD and support program implementation. There would be a budget allocated for competitive grants to other implementing agencies. This model is considered as an option as it could generate more ownership across all levels of the Cambodian Government. However, there are some concerns around accountability issues resulting from lack of capacity and environment within government counterparts. It is also unclear whether existing Government of Cambodia partners (Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) would welcome this approach. If this became the preferred approach, additional assessments would be required (such as a Fiduciary Risk Assessment and an update of the 2013 Cambodia Assessment of National Systems). This would have timing implications which reduces the viability of this option.

#### **D: Implementation/delivery approach (How and with whom?)**

The first, currently preferred option above would see efficiencies gained by utilising the technical skills of staff at Post and within implementing agencies. It is expected the merger of sorts of EAW and disability inclusive development programs will result in lower administrative costs; a simpler delivery model which would require fewer DFAT resources; improved program coordination; and greater responsiveness to DFAT priorities.

The competitive grant window would be managed by the Team Leader, minimal technical staff and a few core administrative staff. The grants would fill gaps the Operational Team cannot undertake. The grant mechanism will also provide an opportunity to support various implementing agencies specialised in different fields, while encouraging innovation and private sector engagement.

One of the main roles of the Team Leader would be to ensure strategic communication and coordination, program implementation, monitoring, advocacy and synergy across the implementing partners. The Managing Contractor may outsource short-term technical expertise as needed to undertake specific activities.

Governance of the program would be in the form of a Steering Committee that would meet biannually to approve the annual work plan and the performance report of the previous year. The Steering Committee would likely consist of DFAT, relevant government partners (MOWA, MoSVY, MOI, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy and Finance), NGO representatives and multilateral partners. An implementing agencies forum should also be established to promote the sharing of good practice, lessons learnt, networking, and promote cooperation between various partners.

There will be a need to strike a balance of expenditure across the focus areas (VAW and disability) due to the two distinct client groups. This will influence the governance and management arrangements that are considered. Inclusion of MEF in governance arrangements affords the opportunity to assist line ministries in advocating for greater national budget to address EAW and disability inclusive development.

DFAT will engage through the First Secretary (Development Cooperation) and the technical support of a Senior Program Manager (SPM) and a Program Manager (PM). The two program managers would provide technical support to the Operational Team in program implementation. Steering Committee participation would be at Deputy Head of Mission level. Post would engage regular technical input from Gender Equality Branch and Disability Section particularly during program start up.

#### **E: Risk assessment approach (What might go wrong?)**

Combining EAW and Disability programs is not a risk-free proposition. The stakeholders (including government counterparts and NGO partners) are almost entirely different between the two sectors, meaning that an inclusive governance mechanism could be complicated. Developing a program logic and monitoring and evaluation framework would be similarly affected.

A Steering Committee that is multi-sectoral could be difficult to manage, particularly when designating activity budgets. Lessons will need to be learnt from other multi-Ministry governance mechanisms managed by Post.

It is not currently clear how the Facility could engage with multilateral partners. The switch from direct engagement with UN agencies to working through a managing contractor may also present relationship management challenges.

The design will need to carefully determine whether a facility model is likely to be more efficient and effective, particularly with the difficult task of ensuring overall program coherence.

The investment will work directly with vulnerable and marginalised people, including: children; people with disabilities; and victims of violence. The investment will need to ensure it follows the 'Do No Harm' principles and has a robust child protection policy in place, particularly when sub-granting to NGOs.

#### **F: Proposed design and quality assurance process (What are the next steps?)**

Post will ensure high quality assurance during design procurement process and the implementation of the investment by active participation of DFAT First Secretary, Second Secretary and current SPMs (EAW and Disability) at all stages.

Post will engage DFAT gender, disability and design specialists from DFAT Canberra to peer review this investment concept, Design Team Terms of Reference and the eventual design. The latter will be used to ensure the facility model approach proposed would be fit for purpose. These program areas will also be used to ensure we obtain a strong Design Team

Leader.

CVB will be engaged to ensure value-for-money procurement and a transparent tendering process.