"How to Make GDCC Meetings More Effective"
Discussion paper by CRDB/CDC
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I. Background

Government-Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC) meetings, of which seventeen have been held since December 2004, are aimed at improving cooperation and partnership by acting as "a high-level forum for dialogue and information sharing on policies, reform programs, and specific cross-cutting issues". More specifically, the GDCC meetings were instituted to coordinate the activities of joint Government-Development Partner Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and given the mandate to provide policy guidance, set priorities, and take action to resolve issues/problems raised by the joint TWGs, and act as a catalyst for the higher-level and less frequent Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF) meetings. The GDCC also provides an opportunity to monitor and discuss progress in implementing the Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs) and to address other issues based on an agenda that is agreed between RGC and DPs in advance of the meeting.

Rationale: The Royal Government is committed to working together with Development partners to find ways to ensure the continued effectiveness of the GDCC meeting. Indeed, all levels in our coordination mechanism – TWGs, GDCC and CDCF – are linked together and we need to strengthen them individually and also collectively. In this sense, the Royal Government is intended to review the GDCC mechanism in working closely with all stakeholders in order to make further improvement before moving to a comprehensive review in 2012 after the 4th CDCF and the 4th High Level Forum in Busan in late 2011. This may be a reflection of the way in which the format of the meetings have evolved, the actions taken in advance to prepare the dialogue, the nature of the topics selected for discussion, or even the disparity in expectations of what the meeting can reasonably be expected to achieve.

II. Scrutiny on previous GDCC meeting

This note will reflect on previous GDCC meetings to review the GDCC's objectives, format and process. This paper was elaborated based on the outcome of the discussion between RGC, represented by **Deputy Prime Minister, Minister** of Economy and Finance**,** and Development Partners in 2008 and the discussion between CRDB/CDC and World Bank in late 2010. The last four GDCC meetings are analyzed to assess the issues raised by several development partners and try to identify a way which is useful to improve an effective policy dialogue mechanism rather than to replace it as follows:

- **Objective**: The GDCC meeting is a forum of policy dialogue, JMI implementation follow up and information sharing. Through the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th meeting, RGC has observed that the meeting has well reflected its objectives by discussing the JMIs, and recent policy issues such as NSDP, integration of Planning-Budget-ODA, National social protection strategy, the Anticorruption law and other regulations, the Priority Operating Cost scheme, and government reform programs. In addition, macroeconomic issues have been also taken into account for high level discussion including global financial and economic crisis and its impacts on Cambodian sustainable development, macroeconomic measures to the road of recovery and to maintain sustainable growth, etc.

- **Format**:

    - **Agenda**: The last four GDCC meetings have well reflected the clear agenda on policy issues. The agenda has generally covered three topics for the discussion on recent policy issues and development priorities to support, on the one hand, the implementation of NSDP and the review of JMI, partnership issues and, on the other hand, relevant issues to Cambodian macroeconomic situation.

    - **Pre-meeting:** The proactive approach was used to prepare each GDCC meeting. The agenda was initially initiated by the GDCC secretariat and then discussed with the World Bank in its capacity as the lead DP facilitator at least 3 weeks beforehand to ensure that the agenda will cover the relevant topic to the sector work and political trend. GDCC secretariat sent a reporting template to each TWG secretariat to review progress and to secure joint endorsement from TWG chair and Lead Facilitator conforming to the Revised TWG Guideline. At this level, all issues shall be addressed at TWGs. Unresolved issues are subject to be discussed and addressed at GDCC meeting. The DP statement has been prepared following to the topic setting out the agenda.

- **Process**: The GDCC meeting is well prepared in terms of timing and process. CRDB/CDC Secretary General, in his capacity as Head of the GDCC secretariat has worked closely with line ministries and DP representatives to prepare the GDCC meeting in an effective and comprehensive manner. To further ensure partnership principles are reflected in the GDCC format, the Partnership and Harmonization TWG is a forum to discuss such kind of issues concerning with GDCC preparation.

    - GDCC is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance, First Vice Chairman of CDC, and be organized two times a year. Its timing should be linked to the CDCF so that JMI preparation and review is timely;

    - A GDCC Secretariat plays an important role in reporting, receiving and disseminating documents relating to the GDCC meeting: i) reporting by announcing a brief statement and submitting final GDCC report to GDCC Chairman and other participants ii) receiving and collecting a precisely brief statements from nominated RGC representatives and nominated DPs and lead DP facilitators, consolidated progress report and other related GDCC work iii) disseminating and sharing information of those statements, agenda of the meeting, and so forth;

    - Lead facilitator has worked with TWG secretariat to prepare progress report and raise the issues that are not able to address at TWG level to GDCC;

    - Lead DP facilitator works closely with GDCC Secretariat to ensure that management and process of GDCC would be fairly coordinated;

    - The participants of the GDCC meeting shall be relevant/nominated ministers and ambassadors/relevant and/or nominated DPs;

- Upon the consensus on topic for agenda, there should be a clear and agreed objective and anticipated outcome or purpose for the discussion under each agenda item;

- Both RGC and DPs nominate representatives to make a brief statement. Instead of adhering to a rigid format of formal statements, discussants and presenters may elect to present a statement, a presentation or simply to address questions based on a note to be circulated a week before GDCC meeting.

- In all cases, GDCC participants should endeavor to share any relevant documentation at least one week before the GDCC meeting in order to ensure adequate preparation and to facilitate dialogue;

- GDCC Chairman will announce decisions on outstanding issues reflecting a strong leadership and close each session with a brief summary result. It must be kept in mind, however, that RGC decision-making processes are such that decisions cannot always be made immediately at the GDCC and must sometimes be referred for further internal Government consultation and dialogue;

III. Possibility to improve more effective GDCC

Since the first GDCC conducted in 2004, the process, format and result of this meeting were gradually improved.. Strengthening the GDCC rather than replace it must be approached holistically as the success of the GDCC is itself determined to a great extent by the performance of the TWGs – in their routine work as well as in GDCC preparation – and the CDCF. The following options can be taken into consideration:

- TWG Chairs and DP Facilitators should hold a more in-depth review to agree progress and to identify any issues for GDCC dialogue, especially if they are of a more general nature related to the development cooperation partnership and implementation of capacity development initiatives related to the main reforms. This will serve to strengthen the TWG performance and also allow the GDCC to be used more effectively for its intended purpose of supporting TWGs.

- To address issues of a cross-sectoral nature that extend beyond the remit of a single TWG, the concerned TWG Chairs and DP Facilitators can consider convening informal "clusters" to address matters of mutual concern, bringing them to the attention of the GDCC if necessary.

- The Partnership and Harmonisation TWG can be used to review the process and the outcome of GDCC meetings in order to review issues of effectiveness and any additional remedies that be agreeable.

- Lead facilitator shall work closely with Ambassador to share information, especially the needs and issues at TWG level that already addressed or unresolved issues heading to GDCC meeting.

- CRDB/CDC as secretariat of GDCC, especially the P&H TWG, will play a role as ***Partnership Broker*** to work more closely with different TWG secretariat and Lead

facilitator to find out all issues and needs that could not be discussed and addressed directly between DP and TWGs. It is necessary for the Head of GDCC secretariat to identify unresolved issues to readdress separately with Lead facilitator and TWGs secretariat. Unresolved issues will be prioritized and briefed in GDCC meeting. In so doing, this mechanism will reflect the strengthening of partnership among RGC, DPs and CSOs.

- At future GDCC meetings, the GDCC secretariat will brief participants on the issues addressed at the previous meeting and progress made.
- Holding the GDCC does not preclude DPs from seeking additional dialogue with respective RGC ministries and agencies, for example on the Budget (which has been a concern of some DPs).
- A more formal matrix of agreed actions can be produced at the CDCF, providing a more structured format and agenda for discussion at subsequent GDCC meetings.
- In preparations for the GDCC, all participants should take account of the transaction cost of meeting preparation and should seek to balance the costs of preparation with the expected benefits. In some cases the GDCC may be seen as a "milestone event" to confirm or clarify decisions and actions; where this is the case participants should take care to manage preparations with efficiency.
- In the medium-term, the format and timing of the GDCC will be reviewed to accommodate the transition to the Cambodia Development Forum (CDF), which will include a wider range of participants, including the private sector. This will ensure that the GDCC can continue to serve as an effective follow up mechanism for the CDF and provide a valued forum for dialogue.
- A comprehensive review of the existing coordination mechanisms will be made in 2012 as part of the National Framework for development cooperation management after the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in late 2011.

Annex:

	CDCF	GDCC	TWG
OBJECTIVES	- Demonstrate RGC's ownership and leadership - Provide the opportunity for the Government to dialogue on key strategic policy issues and on broad areas; - Endorse the JMIs and consider progress in aid effectiveness through the Aid Effectiveness Report prepared by CRDB/CDC; - Present the Multi-Year Indicative Financing Framework.	- Strengthen RGC's ownership and leadership at ministerial level; - Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of all resources through the use of Joint Analytical Work and Joint Review; - Discuss, negotiate and coordinate through which programming of all resources in a transparent manner; - Promote alignment of DP's support with national and sector development priorities, policies and strategies, and reform processes; - Promote partnership and mutual accountability in the development; - Provide effective monitoring of the overall TWG coordination mechanism and intend to promote lesson learning, good practices and aid effectiveness agenda.	- Strengthen RGC ministries/agencies' ownership and leadership on the partnership-based development process and TWG effectiveness; - Harmonize DP procedures to reduce the transaction costs of aid delivery and strengthen RGC systems; - Encourage the use of program-based approaches - Identify and agree an appropriate approach to capacity development - Promote effective collaboration among and with DPs in the formulation and implementation of RGC's national and sectoral strategies and policies including JMIs.
ROLE AND FUNCTIONS	- Undertake impartial stock-taking and evaluate of Cambodia's overall progress and challenges in a broader context through the RGC strategic plan and consider long-term perspective; - Analytically discuss on policy and reform through the background documents and thematic papers prepared by RGC and by DPs; - Provide the opportunity to discuss matters and encourage DPs to bring clear "outside" and neutral perspectives relating to Cambodia through their policy statements.	- Discuss on progress and recessional issues identified and discussed during the last CDCF, and find ways for resolution; - Establish a common understanding on major thematic and policy matters relating to reform agenda, generic, cross-cutting and of an overarching nature; - Identify and select of core JMIs to be used at TWG level, and review the progress of all JMIs before submission for endorsement by CDCF; - Serve as a forum for "advisory" matters including the representation of invited CSO representatives.	- *NSDP linkages:* Prepare/ implement and identify sector priorities, strategies, cross-cutting issues, analytical work and available resources for NSDP; - *Sector/thematic strategies:* Identify relevant support and appropriate modalities to support the development of sector strategies/programs to promote NSDP Update 2009-2013, and follow up JMI progress; - *Capacity Development:* Develop a coherent capacity development strategy that address capacity needs at institutional/organizational/individual levels, and establish monitoring indicators to monitor the capacity development progress; - *Partnership and Aid Effectiveness:* TWGs will receive the strong support relating to aid management from CRDB/CDC.

	CDCF	GDCC	TWG
			- *Reporting and Review:* mutually identify progress and challenges and suggestions in TWG sectoral activities, mechanism and JMIs including aid effectiveness priorities.
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	- Evaluation of progress of RGC Reform and progress of sector strategy implementation using external resource - Link their own sector work to the national plan and strategy, and it was intended to provide a basis to make an assessment that will inform the provision of further support that is fully aligned with government development priorities; - Agree on macro and political issues to implement at sector level - Address the issues raised from GDCC meeting - The Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Reports are prepared as the monitoring document and compound of evidences to review the progress of aid effectiveness in Cambodia; - The JMIs linked to development result and improved partnership and mutual accountability are adopted and monitored; - The MYIFF figures provided by Development partners	- Broadly agreement between RGC's agencies and DPs on agenda and theme of CDCF, and those consistent with CDCF's objectives; - JMIs identified, selected and reviewed the progress before submission for endorsement by the CDCF; - Sector and cross-cutting issues including partnership arrangement identified, monitored and resolved; - The alignment of external resources with national priorities promoted through additional topic discussion relevant to Government's priorities; - Interaction between senior-level Government representatives and a wide range of DPs through broader development-related issues; - Institutional mechanism to hold Government and DPs' mutual commitment made to improve aid effectiveness; - The jointly assessment of progress shared and followed up; - Progress of CDCF monitored and more effective utilization of all external assistances ensured.	- Action plans including JMIs and aid effectiveness priorities developed, implemented and monitored; - Partnership and aid effectiveness work improved at sectoral level; - Relevant sector/thematic strategies prepared and implement to link sector priorities and strategies with the NSDP Update 2009-2013;