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**The Government-Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC) and Technical
Working Groups (TWGs) in Cambodia**

A REVIEW

***Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Soon after the Consultative Group (CG) meeting in February 1999, a few Working Groups, consisting of representatives of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and Development Partners (DPs), were created to dialogue with the RGC and to pursue action-oriented targets on a regular basis on some thematic issues or sectors. Led by DPs to begin with, this Working Group mechanism in Cambodia has evolved over the years as a regular means of consultation, collaboration and cooperation at the sector level. The Prime Minister of Cambodia, Samdech Hun Sen, in his speech at the pre-CG meeting in September 2004, announced the restructuring of this mechanism and outlined the basic principles for the new mechanism which comprises Joint Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to be established at the sector/thematic level. There are now 18 TWGs chaired by RGC and consisting of RGC and DP representatives, each with one or more lead donor facilitator(s). In addition, there is an overarching and high level Government Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC) at the apex to coordinate the work of the TWGs and, jointly with DPs, to monitor progress on key issues.

2. Since December 2004, the TWG-GDCC mechanism has proceeded largely on a "learning by doing" basis. Over the past 18 months some TWGs are perceived to have functioned well, some are beginning to come to grips with issues but some others are not demonstrating much progress. GDCC, whose evolution is considered very positive, is also seen as in need of a sharper focus. As a result, in the past few months some concerns have been voiced from both within RGC and amongst DPs about the functioning of this mechanism, especially the role and function of TWGs in this new mechanism, principles to govern its functioning, and the linkages with other ministries and agencies and consultation bodies such as the annual Consultative Group meeting. The need to have a fresh look at them has been widely expressed with a view to rationalise, streamline and strengthen their functioning and improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The Prime Minister of Cambodia in his opening speech at the CG meeting in March 2006 urged that such a review be undertaken.

3. Accordingly, CRDB/CDC undertook this review in April-June 2006. The intention is not to redesign the mechanism but, based on lessons learnt, to improve its functioning. As part of the review process, close consultations were held with Chairs and Lead Facilitators of TWGs as well as with DP representatives. This paper does not intend to discuss the functioning of individual TWGs. Rather, it synthesises experience gained from the functioning of the bodies during the past years, and reaffirms the objectives and basic principles governing the mechanism so that role and responsibility of TWGs and GDCC, can be clarified. It also identifies issues and perspectives raised during the discussions with the Chairs and Lead Facilitators of TWGs as well as with DP representatives, and offers proposals and recommendations for steps to be taken to make better use of what is widely acknowledged as a very useful and rather unique mechanism for RGC-DP cooperation for the development of Cambodia. In addition, the paper also looks at the linkages between the GDCC-TWG mechanism and the annual Consultative Group Meeting, which from 2007 will become the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE GDCC-TWG MECHANISM

4. Although the GDCC-TWG mechanism pre-dates the Paris Declaration and the OECD-DAC Guidelines, the overarching objectives of the mechanism are entirely consistent with these global initiatives. In particular, the GDCC-TWG mechanism is intended to attain the following objectives:

- (i) Strengthen RGC's ownership and leadership of a partnership-based development process;
- (ii) Promote alignment of development partners' support with national development priorities, policies and strategies identified in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and complementary sector and reform processes;
- (iii) Harmonise DP procedures, seek to reduce the transactions costs of aid delivery, and strengthen RGC systems so that external resources can be channelled to priority RGC programmes through RGC systems;
- (iv) Provide a forum through which the programming of all resources – domestic and external – can be discussed in a transparent manner so that overlap can be minimised and the financing of priority activities can be negotiated in a comprehensive and coordinated manner using appropriate aid modalities;
- (v) Foster development of programme-based approaches and/or sector-wide approaches (SWAPs), moving away from project-based assistance toward programmatic assistance and, ultimately, to budget support;
- (vi) Promote partnership and mutual accountability in the development and implementation of RGC's national and sectoral policies and strategies, including through the use of Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs) and the RGC Action Plan on Harmonisation, Alignment and Results (H-A-R);
- (vii) Provide an opportunity to objectively monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of all resources – including through the use of joint analytical work and joint reviews - so that future strategy and resource use can be informed accordingly;
- (viii) Identify and agree an appropriate approach to capacity development that promotes ownership in the use of technical assistance and provides for an objective means of assessing progress in strengthening RGC capacity;
- (ix) By locating the GDCC at the centre of the TWG structure, to allow for effective monitoring of the overall coordination mechanism, which, in turn, is intended to promote lesson learning, identification of good practices and the overall implementation of the RGC aid effectiveness agenda.

III. EMERGING EVIDENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE TWGs

5. The TWG-GDCC mechanism has been functioning, at least to some extent, on a "learning by doing" basis, although the GDCC dialogue and the H-A-R Action Plan have provided some objective guidance. About a third of the 18 TWGs are perceived to be working very well; a third are just beginning to make progress; and a third are still quite some distance away from establishing themselves as effective bodies.

6. It is useful to identify the major factors and emerging "best practices" that have contributed to the success of those TWGs that are functioning relatively well. These factors include:

Leadership and Partnership

- (i) RGC ministry or agency leading the TWG has clearly demonstrated capacity in the formulation of policy, strategy and action plans for the sector/theme under their responsibility, and has the leadership and commitment to guide the TWG;
- (ii) The roles and functions of TWG participants are well understood, with each taking responsibility for making their respective contributions in accordance with agreed "partnership principles";
- (iii) "Rules of the Game" have evolved and have been internalised as result of a long history of partnership (e.g. Health and Education), establishing a relationship based on trust, familiarity and a common understanding;
- (iv) Clearly identified institutional anchoring of the TWG with effective links and relations between and among concerned RGC ministries and agencies;
- (v) Effective collaboration among and between the DPs.

Common Understanding on Scope of Work

- (vi) Clearly articulated Terms of Reference (ToRs), result-oriented Action Plans and monitorable indicators of progress;
- (vii) Themes or subjects to be covered are clearly identified and relate to a single RGC entity, ministry or agency (e.g., Education, Health, Finance);
- (viii) Cross-cutting issues, including those requiring collaboration with other ministries or agencies, are clearly identified and managed efficiently.

Management of the TWG's Work

- (ix) Meetings at regular intervals of the TWG or their sub-groups or DP groups, complemented with efficiently-managed informal information sharing between meetings;
- (x) Both RGC and DP members are represented at appropriate levels, with participants being technically competent and mandated to represent the views of their own institution;
- (xi) Core sub-groups tackle specific issues and report back to the TWG, allowing for a more detailed dialogue on key issues and saving time in the main TWG;
- (xii) Full and open dialogue, including full exchange of information, with RGC providing regular updates on progress and DPs disclosing information on all programmes and projects;
- (xiii) An effective secretariat function, *inter alia*, to prepare and distribute the agenda, to maintain and disseminate minutes, to maintain a well-updated record of all DP assistance to the sector, and to support the Chair in timely follow-up of TWG decisions and agreements;
- (xiv) Regular, ongoing (informal) contacts between DP facilitators and RGC Chair (or designated representative) outside of the formal TWG meetings to address mutual concerns and to ensure timely progress of the TWGs work;
- (xv) The overall size of the group is not too large so as to unintentionally restrict the opportunity for a substantive dialogue;
- (xvi) Pro-active, positive and supportive DP participation;

- (xvii) Realistic expectations on the part of the members, that take account of available capacity and resources.

7. In contrast, where TWGs are felt to have performed with less success, the following observations have been made:

- (i) Where the subject is of a diffused or cross-sectoral nature, a lack of focus can result in a great deal of valuable time, resources and effort of many people being diverted without commensurate value-added;
- (ii) Ministries that host a TWG can be diverted from their own work in servicing this mechanism, writing reports and attending meetings (including GDCC); there needs to be a clear link between the work of the TWG and the manner in which it informs or facilitates routine RGC functions;
- (iii) Some TWGs are still excessively "donor-driven", resulting in a reduced level of RGC engagement and ownership that can affect the follow-up or implementation of TWG activities;
- (iv) There is a perception that full and effective disclosure of information may hinder the effective conduct of the TWGs work;
- (v) Dialogue regarding ongoing programmes and projects is not routinely undertaken, meaning that objective evidence regarding alignment to national priorities and the effective use of resources cannot be discussed.

IV. EMERGING EVIDENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GDCC

8. Under the Chairmanship of H.E. KEAT CHHON, Senior Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance and the First Vice-Chairman of CDC, GDCC is a high level forum for coordination, dialogue and information sharing on policies and matters of key concern and importance related to the socio-economic development of Cambodia. Members include Ministers or heads of government agencies, Ambassadors or heads of diplomatic missions and heads of multilateral institutions.

9. GDCC is to intended to ensure coordination among the TWGs, provide policy guidance, set priorities and propose measures to solve problems raised by TWGs. The GDCC has met at regular intervals and the last (7th) meeting was on 14 June 2006 to jointly follow up progress made since last CG meeting on 2-3 March 2006. The GDCC now meets three times a year and is supported by a secretariat located at CRDB.

10. There is general acknowledgement that GDCC has been a very useful high level forum for policy dialogue on development and governance issues and has been quite successful, supporting the process of enhanced cooperation between RGC and DPs. It has also facilitated bringing about better understanding among DPs and RGC participants on the larger overall canvas and the integral place of sectors within it. Procedures of work have already been well developed. The secretariat has been effective in supporting the functioning of GDCC, enabling it to jointly monitor progress through progress reports sent to the GDCC secretariat by TWGs according to a set form prescribed by the secretariat. Routine TWG reporting includes information on progress in the implementation of TWGs action plan, the JMIs, alignment and harmonization issues included in the H-A-R Action Plan, and resources for the TWGs.

At the same time, it has been felt that considerable time is spent in GDCC meetings on matters of a routine nature and more benefit could be derived by bringing an increased focus to its deliberations.

11. A key role for the GDCC is in agreeing and tracking progress on the Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs). During the recent dialogue on the role of the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum, it was agreed that the TWGs would assume responsibility for identifying JMIs, setting targets and routine monitoring of progress. These would then be reported to GDCC for agreement before submitting them to CDCF for endorsement (see sections VIII and IX).

V. RE-AFFIRMING THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE GDCC-TWG MECHANISM

12. Having reviewed the objectives of the GDCC-TWG mechanism, and informed by the evidence that has emerged on the mechanism's functioning, it is useful to re-state and re-affirm the principles that inform and operationalise these objectives. These principles include:

- (i) GDCC and the respective TWGs facilitate regular and open dialogue, premised on RGC leadership and ownership, and informed by principles of partnership and mutual accountability. The principles of the Paris Declaration shall also be used to guide the structure and nature of dialogue;
- (ii) The focus for all GDCC and TWG activities shall be twofold. First, the achievement of the goals and targets of the NSDP and its associated sector and reform processes. Second, the identification and application of approaches that enhance aid effectiveness in the context of the RGC H-A-R Action Plan;
- (iii) National and sectoral/thematic policy and strategy formulation is an RGC responsibility. GDCC & TWGs have an important advisory function in the process and can play a supporting role in identifying options and approaches. The specific nature of each TWG's work – in particular the extent to which they play a policy development, financing or monitoring role – is therefore to be determined by RGC, in dialogue with DPs, on a case-by-case basis;
- (iv) GDCC and TWG activities shall be guided by a Terms of Reference and an Action Plan;
- (v) The GDCC-TWG mechanism provides an opportunity to share information and to discuss progress, together with challenges and proposed approaches, in particular with regard to the NSDP targets, the H-A-R Action Plan and the JMIs;
- (vi) The GDCC-TWG mechanism seeks to coordinate inputs provided by the DPs so that they can be integrated with those resources provided by RGC;
- (vii) The GDCC-TWG mechanism shall seek to establish trust and an improved understanding between RGC and DPs. This understanding is expected to contribute directly to more effective working practices based on programmatic approaches, and a constructive dialogue that will identify appropriate aid modalities for supporting capacity development and the strengthening of RGC systems;

- (viii) TWGs are coordinating, operational and monitoring bodies, not "advocacy" forums for "pressure groups" to pursue their agendas; an advocacy function may at times be carried out through GDCC.

V. THE FUTURE ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

13. Roles and Functions of TWGs: Based on the objectives and principles of the GDCC-TWG mechanism, which have been reaffirmed and clarified in earlier sections, it is possible to determine the key roles and functions of TWGs. It is important to emphasise that this Review paper is not intended to be overly prescriptive and it will be necessary for each TWG to identify, prioritise and sequence its activities based on perceived need, available resources and existing capacity. Notwithstanding this observation, TWG functions could be formulated in a Terms of Reference and an Action Plan that include the following:

NSDP Linkages

- (i) Identify NSDP strategies, priorities and indicators that fall within the remit of the TWG;
- (ii) Identify cross-cutting issues that the work of the TWG is expected to support, either through activities within the sector or through collaboration with other RGC Ministries or TWGs;
- (iii) Identify relevant available data sources for NSDP monitoring and agree on any additional analytical work that the TWG might support to enhance NSDP monitoring;
- (iv) Based on an RGC appraisal of development assistance, promote alignment with national priorities and strategies;
- (v) Where necessary, align planning cycles with those of the NSDP and the Budget.

Sector/Thematic Strategies

- (vi) Support the development of a sector strategy or programme that promotes the attainment of NSDP targets (including issues of a cross-cutting nature), supports routine work functions, and which addresses capacity development needs;
- (vii) Identify relevant support, and appropriate modalities, directed to the development, implementation, financing, monitoring and review of the sector strategy;
- (viii) Establish and monitor JMIs that are linked to NSDP targets.

Financing

- (ix) Maintain a record, derived from the CRDB ODA Database, of all on-going DP funded activities that are relevant to the TWG, whether implemented by RGC or otherwise;
- (x) Identify pipeline projects – and potential DP funding - that will address priority activities included in the sector plan or strategy;
- (xi) To the extent that it is feasible, cost priority activities and identify funding sources and gaps, working with CRDB/CDC in its capacity as RGC aid coordination focal point;

- (xii) Support the preparation of the Public Investment Plan (PIP) by ensuring that all projects are up-dated in the CRDB ODA Database;
- (xiii) Discuss the sector Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as a basis for programming comprehensive RGC and DP support;
- (xiv) Ensure that activities related to the work and administration of the TWG, in particular the JMIs, are fully-funded.

Capacity Development

- (xv) Capacity development activities should be located in the context of on-going public service reforms:
 - a) Develop a coherent capacity development strategy, based on a needs assessment and functional review, that addresses capacity development at institutional, organisational and individual levels;
 - b) Identify and agree on a rational and RGC-led programme for providing technical assistance;
 - c) Establish and monitor indicators that will inform progress toward capacity development.

Aid Effectiveness

- (xvi) In the context of the H-A-R Action Plan, identify relevant activities that will promote aid effectiveness. This may include but need not be limited to:
 - a) Establishment of a programme-based approach to guide project development/programmatic support in the context of the sector strategy and to coordinate resource mobilisation efforts;
 - b) Lead a dialogue on aid modalities that are appropriate for the sector/thematic work supported by the TWG, identifying opportunities for more efficient forms of channelling DP assistance, including a 'donor division of labour'; delegated partnerships; basket funding etc;
 - c) Coordinated and rational use of technical cooperation (see capacity development above);
 - d) In the context of the respective TWG, approaches to strengthen national PFM and procurement systems that will ultimately allow resources to be increasingly managed by RGC;
 - e) Monitoring the use of PIUs, and in the context of broader capacity development work, agreeing a transition toward full RGC management of ODA;
 - f) In the context of MTEF and routine RGC PFM work, monitor funds committed, projected and actually disbursed so that implementation of sector activities can proceed smoothly;
 - g) Monitor missions and analytical work, promoting joint approaches informed by the TWG Action Plan to the fullest extent possible;
 - h) Implementation of the National Operational Guidelines (for grants) and/or the Standard Operating Procedures (for loans).

Reporting and Review

- (xvii) Consolidate and report to GDCC on JMIs; H-A-R Action Plan; TWG Action Plan activities; and any other issues necessary for GDCC discussion;
- (xviii) Identify and agree a modality for reviewing TWG and/or sector progress, ideally on a joint basis;

- (xix) Identify and agree a mechanism for providing inputs to the NSDP Annual Progress Report;
- (xx) Follow-up issues relevant to the TWG that are raised in either GDCC or CDCF, and identify those issues within the TWG that may need to be taken forward for dialogue at these higher-level fora.

14. Criteria for formation of TWGs: Keeping in mind the objectives and basic principles identified above, the criteria for formation of TWGs could be laid out as follows:

- (i) TWGs should cover clearly identifiable sectors or themes, with sub-groups where necessary to deal with individual components;
- (ii) There must be clearly identifiable substantive targets that the TWG would help achieve through its own work;
- (iii) The subject or theme to be covered should not be too diffused, needing action on the part of several RGC ministries or agencies, making it difficult to assign clear responsibilities or to monitor progress;
- (iv) Where adequate coordination and RGC-DP information sharing mechanisms already exist, there is no need to create parallel or additional mechanisms.

15. Subjects or sectors to be covered: TWGs have tended to be theme or sector based. However, the involvement of more than one ministry, or multiple departments of more than one ministry, has led to a diffusion of goals and targets and a lack of clarity regarding respective responsibilities. In such cases, sub-groups may offer a more effective approach to addressing cross-sectoral themes. In addition, if the sector or theme itself is too wide (even within the same ministry) and/or there is more than one TWG with responsibility for that theme, meetings among core members of relevant interconnected TWGs would be helpful to coordinate activities.

16. Size: It appears that too many members in a TWG (some going well above 40) is not conducive to meaningful dialogue. It is suggested that:

- (i) An optimum size to facilitate proper discussion on a dialogue format would be about 10 – 15 persons;
- (ii) Where it is necessary to have a larger number of members, it would be useful to constitute a "core group" of not more than 10-15 persons which could meet more regularly and report to the plenary; DP facilitators in such core groups can keep other DPs informed of progress and developments;
- (iii) It would also be useful to constitute small "sub-groups" within any TWG to address more detailed issues (as is already being done in some TWGs).

17. Composition: In order to achieve purposeful and informed dialogue, it is necessary that TWGs consist of:

- (i) Well informed, technically or substantively competent, and adequately high level RGC representatives who are mandated to represent the views of their

- institution and who are able to provide required information and to facilitate follow-up action within their own institution.
- (ii) DPs should also be represented at an appropriate and competent level. DPs might agree and coordinate between themselves so that not every DP supporting a sector needs to attend the TWG;
 - (iii) The RGC-appointed Chair needs to be fully committed, with authority within the host ministry, and to be able to deal with matters arising on the spot as well as to guide discussions smoothly; in addition the Chair must be associated or familiar with some or all of the DP assisted programmes in the sector;
 - (iv) The DP-chosen lead facilitator(s) must be at a senior level within their organisation, competent in the field and be willing to relate information to all other DPs. DPs should manage their own arrangements for nominating or replacing the lead facilitator but, in the interest of continuity, a lead facilitator is normally expected to support the TWG for at least two years;
 - (v) Focal points for generic issues, including gender mainstreaming, in each ministry or agency;
 - (vi) Technical Advisors working within the RGC structure (embedded TAs) should not function as DP lead facilitators, unless agreed by the TWG. They nevertheless should participate and contribute along with RGC representatives;
 - (vii) Each TWG may choose to allow NGOs and civil society representatives where they have a clear operational role and are providers of specific assistance and/or services related to the sector or where they make a specific contribution to the work of the TWG.

18. Conduct of Meetings: The following points may be used to guide the work of TWGs:

- (i) Meetings should have a clear agenda with documentation shared in advance to the fullest extent possible;
- (ii) All participants should be provided with an opportunity to inform the TWG of important developments, with document distribution being used as an option for information sharing on less important topics;
- (iii) TWGs should meet as often as is deemed appropriate, but at a minimum should meet to agree the report to be submitted to the GDCC;
- (iv) Preparatory meetings between the Chair and the lead facilitators – as well as between DPs – may ensure a more focused and productive TWG dialogue;
- (v) The Chair, or his/her nominated representative, and the lead facilitators should maintain informal contact between meetings to ensure timely follow-up to agreed actions;
- (vi) A Secretariat should be appointed and facilitated. Their role will include keeping records of each meeting, document sharing and serving as the aid coordination focal point;
- (vii) GDCC may be employed to move the dialogue to a higher-level where the TWG feels that it otherwise unable to make progress or that there is an issue that merits further cross-sectoral dialogue.

19. Support Structures: Two types of support mechanisms are needed for each TWG, internal and external. These already exist in many cases:

- *Internally*, a well-organised and properly led unit within the lead ministry or agency should be the back-stop to organise, keep records or minutes of meetings of TWGs and sub-groups, and conduct follow-up with line ministries and agencies responsible for carrying out agreed upon actions (the normal secretariat functions). The unit will also generate progress reports for dissemination and sending to the GDCC secretariat along with issues to be resolved by GDCC. It cannot be overemphasised that, to avoid adding new layers to the existing structure, such a unit should ideally and necessarily be an integral part of the host ministry or agency, such as the planning department. As already stated in paragraph 18(vi), the unit should be the designated contact point for the lead facilitator or other TWG members on behalf of the Chair (if the Chair is too busy to perform this function) and should also be the "focal point" for aid coordination within that ministry or agency, including to liaise with CRDB on ODA Database issues.
- *Externally*, some TWGs, especially those which are presently not functioning well, may need the continued support of the GDCC secretariat to move forward on the alignment and harmonisation agenda. Initiatives in this regard have already started to be taken by the GDCC secretariat by way of holding meetings of Chairs of TWGs ahead of GDCC meetings. Such support might include clarification of roles and functions, the promotion of effective RGC leadership and ownership, and other confidence and capacity building efforts.

20. Linkages: Members representing RGC ministries or agencies in any TWG should bring information and knowledge from their offices and communicate back for dissemination and decision on any recommendations or suggestions made at the TWG, as well report back on actions taken. Likewise, DP facilitators and representatives at TWGs need to bring all information about ongoing and proposed programmes they support; they should also disseminate deliberations and decisions of the TWG to other members of the DP community. TWGs receive guidance from and report progress of their work to GDCC, which also deliberates on issues that relate to the work of more than one TWG.

VI. THE FUTURE ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE GOVERNMENT DONOR COORDINATION COMMITTEE

21. Role and Functions: GDCC will continue as a high-level RGC-DP forum for coordination, dialogue and information sharing on policies related to the socio-economic development of Cambodia. While TWGs are to be used as the main forum for technical and detailed discussion, the GDCC is intended to focus on overarching progress with regard to the NSDP, the JMIs, the H-A-R Action Plan, and the core public service reforms. It is accordingly useful to reaffirm GDCC's Role and Functions as follows:

- (i) Establish a common understanding on major thematic and policy matters, particularly those related to the broader reform agenda and those that are generic, cross-cutting and of an overarching nature.
- (ii) Discuss progress on issues identified for further discussion during the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum, and to discuss matters specifically brought up by TWGs for resolution and/or advice.
- (iii) Serve as a forum to identify and select a set of core JMIs that are informed by those JMIs used at TWG level, as well as to review progress all JMIs before submission for endorsement by the annual Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum;
- (iv) Serve as a forum for "advocacy" matters, including the representation of invited NGO and civil society representatives.

22. Procedures of Work and Reporting have already been well developed. The practice of holding internal meeting of Chairs of TWGs in advance of a GDCC meeting has proven very useful on the RGC side. Similarly, the DPs themselves hold meetings to agree upon common items to be discussed and to nominate speakers for each item. There is a consensus that the frequency of GDCC meetings should now be three times a year, and this was agreed at the 7th GDCC Meeting in June 2006. There is also a consensus that GDCC meetings should seek to cover a few topics in detail, rather than provide a brief overview on a broader range of topics. This format was adopted for the 7th GDCC meeting and future meetings will also attempt to facilitate a more detailed and focused dialogue on key development issues.

23. Over the last year a system has developed of TWGs sending progress reports of their work to the GDCC secretariat, based on a standard format, which includes information on progress in the implementation of TWGs action plan, JMIs, alignment and harmonisation issues, and resourcing of the TWGs. The progress reports are then consolidated by the GDCC secretariat as an information document for distribution in advance of the GDCC meeting. There is no formal requirement for this document to be discussed or approved by GDCC, although the set of JMIs will be agreed before submitting to CDCF for endorsement. In the future, this reporting exercise will also be used to support the monitoring of the RGC Action Plan on Harmonisation, Alignment and Results.

VIII. JOINT MONITORING INDICATORS

24. Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs), have evolved in Cambodia through the CG process, with their origins informed by the need to jointly establish and monitor indicators in the key reforms and sectors that underpin the national development framework. As the nature of partnership and dialogue has evolved, the TWGs have developed an increased number of JMIs that are now linked to activities that inform NSDP outcomes. The process by which JMIs are identified, agreed and monitored has become somewhat uncertain, however, and this resulted in concern being voiced by both RGC and DPs during the GDCC in February 2006 when significant time and effort were devoted to excessively detailed screening, selection and editing of JMIs. A similar exercise also took place at the CG meeting on 2-3 March 2006.

25. As an important results-based tool for monitoring progress in key reform and sectoral strategies, it is useful to clarify the respective JMI-related roles of the TWG and GDCC in the context of this Review. Given that the roles and functions of TWGs and GDCC have been elaborated in earlier sections of this paper, the management and responsibilities with regard to JMIs may be identified as follows:

- (i) TWGs, as the operational level bodies for identifying and pursuing achievable goals and targets, have the primary responsibility to establish and monitor JMIs that represent progress at defined intervals in their concerned sector or area of responsibility. These JMIs should be derived from outcome targets identified in the NSDP and take the form of output and/or process indicators that are necessary to attain the NSDP targets;
- (ii) JMIs are "joint" and must therefore reflect "joint" action and responsibility between RGC and development partners;
- (iii) JMIs must be highly selective, measurable over time, and associated with a clearly identified source of funding and operational responsibility;
- (iv) In the process of selecting, implementing and monitoring progress on JMIs, RGC leadership should be enhanced in the context of partnership;
- (v) TWGs will include progress on JMIs in their routine reports to GDCC;
- (vi) The set of JMIs identified by TWGs will be deliberated and agreed upon at the GDCC meetings where RGC and all DPs are represented;
- (vii) The set of JMIs that has been agreed at the GDCC will be submitted to the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF) for endorsement. On an exceptional basis, further dialogue on critical JMIs may be facilitated at the CDCF, which might also indicate areas where progress needs to be more closely monitored or where additional JMIs are required;
- (viii) For a thematic area or sector that does not fall within a clearly identified mandate of a TWG, and where JMIs are required, GDCC could deliberate and designate an RGC ministry or agency and concerned DPs to take responsibility for formulating, measuring and monitoring the JMIs as well as mobilizing resources needed to implement them.

IX. LINKAGES WITH THE CAMBODIA DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM

26. TWGs and GDCC are regular mechanisms for in-country coordination, review and monitoring to ensure optimal and effective utilisation of all external assistance and RGC funds to achieve desired impact for meeting overall goals and targets specified in NSDP. Briefly, and to summarise previous sections:

- (i) TWGs are sector or ministry or agency level "technical" mechanisms which have primary responsibility, among others, to develop JMIs for their sector or area. Their Terms of Reference should include responsibility for following-up relevant discussions which take place at GDCC and CDCF, as well as identifying issues for discussion at those higher-level fora;
- (ii) GDCC is a higher level mechanism for review of overall all policies, reform programmes and specific activities covering cross-cutting issues. Meeting not more than three times a year, it is a forum to review and agree upon the JMIs prepared by TWGs, and will also decide upon arrangements for

- specific JMIs not covered by TWGs or covering areas outside the mandate of more than one TWG;
- (iii) Progress on JMIs will be reviewed on the basis of a consolidated report prepared by the GDCC Secretariat for every CDCF meeting, which will also report on progress in implementing the aid effectiveness agenda.

27. CDCF (previously CG) meetings are designed to be an important and overarching forum for a higher level (than GDCC) government-donor discussions regarding Cambodia's socio-economic development. Main features and essential functions are:

- (i) Undertake impartial stock-taking and evaluation of Cambodia's overall progress and challenges in a broader context, informed by the NSDP, and with a long-term perspective;
- (ii) Analytically discuss policy and reform based on background documents prepared by RGC and analytical and thematic papers prepared by development partners to arrive at a common understanding of the overall situation, future needs and challenges;
- (iii) Review the progress made in regard to implementation of the Paris Declaration on the basis of a special RGC paper on aid coordination containing a report on the functioning of TWGs and GDCC and the JMIs;
- (iv) A high-level forum where policy statements of significance are made by development partner representatives. These bring to bear clear “outside” and neutral perspectives on Cambodia's socio-economic development from development partners, and provide an opportunity to discuss matters considered of overarching importance relating to Cambodia;
- (v) Attendance by high level representatives from the capitals and headquarters of development partners, with their field visits and discussions with other participants affording them an opportunity for a better and clearer understanding of progress in Cambodia. This is 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;
- (vi) A forum for RGC representatives to be exposed to, and to learn from, the wider development discourse, enabling them to relate their own sectoral work to this 'larger canvas';
- (vii) Aid-mobilisation, in the context of the financing framework of the NSDP, through pledging of future aid by development partners as a demonstration of their appreciation of the progress that has been achieved, and commitment and trust in RGC's effort for the development of Cambodia and its people. Pledges also serve the purpose of informing the public in aid-providing countries and in the wider world of the international community's commitment to the people of Cambodia;
- (viii) Dissemination of the major points of discussion on such issues to a wider audience, through the media both in Cambodia and further afield;
- (ix) Not the least, a ceremonial and highly symbolic event which by its nature attracts a high-level global profile, turning the media spotlight on to Cambodia;

X. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

28. This paper has briefly outlined and considered the performance of the GDCC-TWG mechanism. The most important objective of this mechanism is to promote the optimal use and effectiveness of all resources available to the RGC, both domestic and external, to implement the priorities outlined in the NSDP. This paper has attempted to identify factors that inform the performance of the TWGs and the GDCC, as well as to provide some recommendations on how the mechanism might be further improved, including by ensuring a close linkage with CDCF. The paper should now be used as a basis for further discussion and, once a common consensus is arrived at on the matters raised in this paper, it is recommended that the following actions be considered:

- (i) Formulate a set of "broad guidelines" for the future functioning of TWGs and GDCC, including a request for them to review their ToRs and any required capacity development needs.
- (ii) Disseminate widely such guidelines within the RGC and among DPs.
- (iii) Based on consultations with each TWG, take urgent measures to improve the working of the underperforming TWGs. This will include holding special briefing sessions particularly for the Chair and RGC representatives. It would be also of benefit for the GDCC Secretariat to hold joint sessions with the Chairs and lead facilitators of such groups to ascertain problems relating to expectations, perceptions, procedures, etc.
- (iv) Review some of the TWGs, including through a process of internal evaluation, with a view for possible rationalisation through merging with other TWGs or consolidation within existing well-functioning mechanisms, or for being split up or abolished.

Annex 1. Government Donor Joint Technical Working Groups

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Annex - 2

ABBREVIATIONS

CARD	Council for Agriculture and Rural Development
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CDCF	Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum
CG	Consultative Group
CRDB	Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board
D & D	Decentralisation and Deconcentration under Ministry of Interior
DP	Development Partner – bilateral countries, multilateral institutions and NGOs
GDCC	Government Donor Coordination Committee
JMIs	Joint Monitoring Indicator(s)
NGOs	Non-Government Organisation (s)
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan, 2006-2010
PIP	Public Investment Programme (three year rolling)
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SWAP	Sector-Wide Approach
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWG	(Joint) Technical Working Group
WB	World Bank
