



Theory and Practice of Decentralization and Deconcentration

A Lecture Series for Civil Servants



CONCEPT PAPER

Lecture Series for Civil Servants

1. Brief Background

In 2001, the Royal Government of Cambodia initiated sub-national governance reform by decentralizing, by means of devolution, powers and functions to commune/sangkat councils. The Royal Government's reform objectives are to build participatory local democracy and to contribute to socio-economic development and overall efforts to reduce poverty.

In June 2005, the Royal Government of Cambodia issued a 'Strategic Framework for Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform' setting out the Government's vision and objectives for expanding sub-national governance reform to include provinces, municipalities, districts and khans. The Strategic Framework makes clear that the expanded reform will affect how line ministry structures and future sub-national councils and administrations interact. It can be expected that upon the adoption of the Organic Law in 2008, the reform will impact the work of civil servants at both national and sub-national levels.

2. Rationale

Commune/sangkat councils and their clerks have undergone intensive capacity development since the introduction of sub-national governance reform. However, there has been no comprehensive capacity development program for civil servants on national and sub-national levels (e.g. line ministries) despite their key roles envisaged. In order to fulfil their roles effectively, civil servants require an understanding of sub-national governance reform, their roles in the reform and how they can contribute to its implementation.

To address this need, the General Department of Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Royal School of Administration will organize a lecture series for civil servants. Technical assistance and financial support will be provided by the GTZ-supported Administration Reform and Decentralization Project under the umbrella of Cambodian-German Technical Cooperation (GTZ ARDP) and the French Cooperation.

3. Goal

The goal of the lecture series is to contribute to more effective implementation of sub-national governance reform by equipping civil servants with a theoretical and practical understanding of the reform.

4. Objectives

The objectives of the lecture series are –

- participants acquire a theoretical and practical understanding of sub-national governance reform in Cambodia, including their roles in the reform process; and
- dialogue is promoted among government institutions by developing a common understanding and terminology regarding the reform.

5. Participants

Each lecture series will target approximately 250 participants. The lecture series will primarily focus on Royal School students, however, additional participants may be considered as well. The Royal School will integrate the lecture series into its curriculum and appropriately publicize the lecture series to students. Information about the civil servants lecture series will also be published on the Royal School website. Interested civil servants/students will be required to confirm their attendance at each lecture in advance.

6. Methodology

Frequency

The frequency of the lectures is initially once a month, with the understanding that it could be increased to twice a month depending on the available resources and the length of preparation. Review of the lecture frequency will be done towards the end of 2008.

Advance Schedule and List of Topics

A schedule for the lecture series will be developed in advance indicating topics and speakers. The date and time of lectures will be flexible in order to accommodate presentations by high ranking officials.

Format

Each lecture will consist of one presentation of one to two hours in length. The presentation will be followed by a question & answer session and discussion.

Speakers

Both Cambodian and international resource persons will be invited to deliver lectures. Translation will be provided for lectures delivered in a language other than Khmer.

Moderator

Each lecture series will have a moderator who is responsible to –

- liaise with and provide guidance and assistance to speakers;
- attend all lectures;
- introduce speakers;
- moderate question & answer sessions; and
- summarize each lecture, highlighting –
 - o how the topic relates to and impacts on civil servants; and
 - o how the topic relates to previous and upcoming topics.

M&E

In order to monitor and evaluate the activity, in 2008 two focus group discussions will be held with a selected number of participants in order to assess both the perceived quality of presentations and organizational matters as well as an assessment of knowledge impact.

Indicative List of Topics 2008/2009

(Subject to change)

Lecture 1 (March)

1. History of local governance in Cambodia and overview of the current legal framework
 2. Overview of Strategic Framework for Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform
- Suggested Resource Person: H.E Sak Setha (Director General of Admin). (MoI)

Lecture 2 (April)

3. Key concepts and theory of decentralization and deconcentration
4. Application of decentralization and deconcentration concepts and theory in the Cambodian context

Suggested Resource Persons: Mr. Chhor Sophal, Mr. Stevens Tucker (PACT)

Lecture 3 (May)

5. Regulations under the Law on the Administration and Management of Communes/Sangkats and their implementation.

Suggested Resource Person: H.E Leng Vy

Lecture 4 (June)

6. The Organic Law

Suggested Resource Person: Mr. Prak Sam Oeun (DoI/MoI)

July: No scheduled lecture due to elections.

Lecture 5 (August)

7. Presentation on powers & functions review and delegation/devolution to sub-national levels within the current reform process and future for the future.
8. Presentation on the Royal Government's Powers & Functions database.

Suggested Resource Persons: Mr. Klok Dara, Mrs. Keo Sony (GTZ ARDP)

Lecture 6 (September)

9. Fiscal aspects of sub-national governance reform: theories, international practices and application in Cambodia
10. Presentation on Public Financial Management

Suggested Resource Persons: Mr. Liv Bunhay, HE Hong Chuon Naron

Lecture 7 (October)

11. Pilot Project: New District Administration and One Window Service Office

Suggested Resource Persons: Mr. So Platon, Mr. Boeung Nang

Lecture 8 (November)

12. International practice regarding organizational and human resource management in the context of sub-national governance reform
13. Civil service management in Cambodia

Suggested Resource Persons: H.E Thoa Sethana, Director General of Civil Services

Lecture 10 (December)

14. Inter-governmental relations: current national-sub-national relations and relations among sub-national levels, and possibilities for the future.

2009

Lecture 11

15. Cross-cutting issue: civil society roles

Lecture 12

16. Cross-cutting issue: good governance and poverty reduction

Lecture 13

17. Cross-cutting issue: gender considerations

Lecture 14

18. Role of local government associations: international experience and the National League of Commune/Sangkat Councils

Lecture 15

19. International experience regarding critical framework conditions for sub-national governance reform
20. Framework conditions for sub-national governance reform, achievements and challenges in the Cambodian context

Lecture 16

21. Revisiting the Strategic Framework on Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform