Project#6: One Window for Citizens (OW4C), 2019-2022

In partnership with Nickol Global Solution (NGS) and INSTEDD, API will identify, produce and promote civic tech solutions which will help broaden public access and improve awareness of the services offered by the One Window Service Offices (OWSO) and the District Ombudspersons. API will also provide monitoring tools for citizens and businesses, which will enable them to rate and report the efficiency of and satisfaction with public services delivery in their community. The results will inform government authorities to better measure progress on service delivery and respond to the public's service needs.

Project Objective:
Increase the capability of civil society to engage in political processes through a series of tested interventions, including the design and implementation of civic technical tools, outreach and engagement activities.

Funding:
API received $ 461,819 from USAID for activities from October 2019 to September 2022.

Implementing Partners:
API and INSTEDD (Both organisations are members of the consortium led by Nickol Global Solutions).

Target Areas:
Communities surrounding OWSOs in the Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Kampong Chhnang Provinces.

Activities and Results:

6.1 We reached more CSO beneficiaries than originally targeted by using ICT-based solutions as a result of the CSOs engagement. The target was 2, 593 people (50% female), and the actual result was 3,039 (117%) people (female: 1737).

6.2 Youth recruitment and capacity building have reached wonderful milestones. A few hundred youths applied online to attend the project capacity building programme. In total, 47 of them (27 females) were recruited as volunteers and have received three training courses on OW4C project-related activities. All of them were trained and oriented and coached in three different training courses on the functions of One Window Services Offices, on the role and responsibility of the District Ombudspersons, on how to use the Interactive Voice Response and the Facebook chatbot. They are also trained on how to use the Google table survey questionnaire, coached on door-to-door dissemination and communication protocols, and they practiced door-to-door dissemination campaigns on OWSO. Based on the results of the post-test, participants who attended the training understood each topic very well - between 70% and 100% on each topic. The same test results showed that 91.94% of participants have gained more knowledge on the above-mentioned topics. After classroom training and field practice, they were provided a certificate.

6.3 **Enhance Awareness and Accountability on OWSO**. API has conducted the baseline survey to ensure evidence-based project design and intervention approach are in place prior to the project implementation. The survey was conducted with 499 people (55% female) in target districts. The data indicates that only 26 % (targeted 50%) of beneficiaries are able to name at least three one window services. The data analysis and storing is available via a US Grant support tech solution as part of the OW4C activities.

6.4 Furthermore, a growing understanding was reported concerning the OWSO services and how complaints on service delivery can be lodged. The assessment was made on a total of 440 participants (212 Females). There were a total of 21 public forums in 21 different communes. Participants were given tech tools (IVR and Facebook Chatbot). About 88 out of the total 99 questions were raised and responded by OWSO. Those questions are mostly related to applying and replacing license plates, procedures of opening retail shops, applying for certificates and family books, and the transfer of land ownership.

6.5 The project team also followed up on the list of actions and recommendations that had been raised by OWSO customers (the public) to see whether those had been implemented by the local government. We found out that around 79% (50 out of 63) actions and recommendations had been shared and presented in the six District Ombudsperson Working Group meetings and had received positive responses, which is a behaviour change toward service users.

6.6 OW4C developed civic tech monitoring tools to enhance awareness of and accountability at the OWSO in Battambang. OW4C developed two tools to better provide increased, transparent access for citizens on information pertaining to services provided at the One Window Service Offices. Our civic tech tools – an interactive voice response (IVR) with two phone lines: 095 888 159 and 088 888 159, and Pidor@OW4Cbot, the Smart Villager Facebook chatbot – both quickly direct citizens to the information they are looking for. In addition, the tools allow citizens to provide anonymous feedback on the quality of services they received and identify areas of improvement. Between the tools' launch on 27 August 2020 and 31 December 2020, the usage of the tools increased to reach 3,620 users. 52% of the users are female. As of the reporting date, 786 Cambodian citizens have used the IVR and 2,834 the OW4C chatbot since their launch. Both tools provide three services: information on application requirements, fees, and delivery standards of OWSO services; application status tracking; and citizen feedback on the delivery of OWSO services. The most popular service requested is information on OWSO services (71%), followed by user feedback (17%) and ticket tracking (12%). Yet ticket tracking is very popular too, with 282 users from outside the Kamrieng district demanding this service.

6.7 However, little or no complaints have been lodged to OWSO and District Office representatives, due to fear of repercussions. It is reported that less than 86 complaints and feedback comments were lodged to the District Ombudsman in 2020 (District Ombudsman Report, 2020).

6.8 Between 2018 and 2019, the project conducted online surveys on users' satisfaction with the OWSO performance. Our youth volunteers interviewed 159 citizens (81 females) using Google online questionnaires. The 10-minute-long one-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant during the scorecard meeting sessions. The key results were: 21% of the participants reported waiting too long for the services provided; 52% were satisfied and 8% very satisfied with the working hours of OWSO officers: Fees of services: 49% of the participants found them acceptable and 12% were very satisfied; Attitude of OWSO officers: 46% "acceptable", 15% "very satisfied"; information about OWSO: 49% "acceptable" and 15% "very satisfied". It can be concluded that between 60% and 70% of OWSO users confirmed the OWSO services were acceptable of they were very satisfied with these services, while 30% to 40% were not satisfied or not satisfied at all.

6.9 **Community scorecard meetings** were conducted in 26 communes of the Battabang province, with a total of 1,112 participants (471 female) including youths, students, monks, and private business owners. The community scorecards assessed OWSOs and provided a list of improvement suggestions that government offices (OWSO and DO) need to respond to. These suggestions and recommendations resulting from the communication scorecard assessments were presented in the District Ombudsman Working Groups Meeting.

6.10 **District Ombudsman Working Groups (DOWG):** The project engaged the District Ombudsperson Working Groups in all five districts and the provincial level working group was also engaged to facilitate the implementation of the suggested improvements resulting from the OWSO community scorecard assessments, as well as of the feedbacks comments collected from civic tech tools. The DOWG members were then engaged in the project activities such as Public Forums and consultation meetings. These groups comprise the District Governor, the District Ombudsperson, the OWSO Chief, the Council Chief, and representatives from civil society and the private sector.

Challenges and Lessons Learned:

The following are keys challenges posed to the implementation of the project:

6.11 The project does not support the service provider side (supply side); therefore, it was a challenge to encourage government officials to participate and make a meaningful contribution to the project activities, i.e., share monthly OWSO & District Office reports by provincial and municipal offices and participate in the scorecard meetings. Despite these challenges and a lack of commitment, there is notable support from Provincial Deputy-Governors and the central government level.

6.12 The participants from urban areas showed less interest and limited participation in OWSO scorecard sessions, lacking trust or confidence due to the fact that they had had no prior experience with the project activity.

6.13 OW4C is providing both a chatbot and an IVR tool to assess service delivery, but the vast majority of Cambodia's poor households remain vulnerable to the digital divide and the lack of access to smartphones.

The Way Forward:

6.14 The project will scale up to the provice of Banteay Meanchey, the municipality of Sisophon, and the province and municipality of Kampong Chhnang, with the same list of activities in different districts such as public forums, public outreach, District Office Working Group meetings, youth training on advocacy. Additional training is also provided on the role of the OWSO and tech tools. Dialogue meetings at the national and provincial levels are also organised in the form of consultation workshops on citizen scorecard reports and improvement suggestions. Capacity building and coaching will be provided to the recruited youth representing seven districts and municipalities in three provinces across the Kingdom.