

CAMBODIA



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SUPIC - SUPPORT TO THE PARLIAMENT IN CAMBODIA, PHASE 2



Signing ceremony of the capacity building programme. Photo by Hannah Reynes

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), through its support to the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC), contributes to improving access of the Cambodian Parliament to technically sound and politically neutral research products and strengthening the capacity and exchange of experiences among ASEAN parliaments. PIC is an independent non-government organization (NGO) providing capacity building to parliamentary staff along the core values of non-partisan integrity, neutrality and objectivity.

BACKGROUND

Since the first national elections in 1993, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has held a strong majority in both houses and chaired all commissions, thereby limiting effective participation by opposition parties who were divided and weak. However, a newly united opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), gained an unprecedented 55 seats in the National Assembly in the 2013 elections. In July 2014, the CPP and the CNRP brokered an agreement and ended a political

stalemate - the longest in Cambodian history. The two parties resolved the contentious point of the reform of the National Election Committee (NEC).

In 2015, the culture of dialogue following the deal sealed by the CPP and the CNRP was tainted by a series of events that created a feeling of mutual distrust between both parties. The political situation deteriorated further and tensions intensified through the forceful dissolution of the CNRP. The current political context is moving from a process of building democratic institutions and pluralism in the parliament to a de facto one-party state.

These political tensions strongly affect the functions of parliament and hinder the democratic process. However, deep reforms in significant sectors will continue to be enforced in order to realise the political agenda of the government. The Cambodian Parliament is still a young institution that has yet to gain the capacity to fulfil its mandate. PIC is working on capacity development towards the professionalization of parliamentary services to deliver technical and research services in a non-partisan way.

PIC supports parliamentary services in Cambodia and in the wider region to build capacities towards effective democratic institutions, as well as to promote accountability and professional and sound legislative work. SDC's support to PIC for the period 2017-2019 is part of the Governance and Citizen Participation domain and will contribute to sustainable poverty reduction, peace and stability in the country and in the region.

STRATEGY FOCUS

Due to the current political situation in Cambodia, PIC will re-allocate resources to regional activities. It will continue to strengthen parliamentary services to deliver technically sound and politically neutral research products.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE:

Project Duration

May 2017 – December 2019
(Phase 2)

Budget

SDC contribution: CHF 3,700,000

Implementing agencies:

Parliamentary Institute of
Cambodia (PIC)

Other partners

Sweden SIDA and Swedish
Parliamentary Services, National
Assembly, Senate, Swiss
Parliamentary Services

Imprint

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SDC's strategy in supporting PIC Phase II focuses on:

- Engaging all political parties
- Targeting key commissions and subjects from different political parties
- Deploying a diversified team of experts/mentors
- Providing capacity building and training, incorporating a coaching mechanism
- Proactive collaboration with local and regional partners
- Promoting core values of non-partisan integrity, neutrality and objectivity

KEY RESULTS AND INSIGHTS FROM SUPIC PHASE 1

PIC's approach to working in a volatile political environment has proven successful. As an independent NGO, PIC is impartial in all support to the parliament; not taking sides, but rather focusing on evidence-based arguments and analysis.

The evaluation of SUPIC phase 1 has shown that demand-driven research products linked to support for outreach and consultation activities are an effective way to increase parliamentary capacity. The 127 research products have provided parliamentarians with concise and unbiased information and enabled them to use this knowledge effectively to hold the relevant ministries and authorities to account. The Senate Secretariat adopted public Consultation Guidelines as standard procedural guidelines for the Senate.

OVERALL GOAL AND EXPECTATED RESULTS (OUTCOME)

The overall goal of the Support to Parliamentary services is to contribute to the improved performance of the Cambodian Parliament and enhanced trust by Cambodian citizens in the work of parliamentarians, as well as to the strengthened capacity and level of exchange among ASEAN parliaments. The four main envisaged results (outcomes) are:

Outcome 1: Parliamentary staff have increased capacity to provide support to parliamentarians to input draft legislation.

Outcome 2: Parliamentary staff have improved capacity to provide support to parliamentarians to implement their representation function.

Outcome 3: Parliamentary staff have improved capacity to provide support to parliamentarians to fulfil their oversight role.

Outcome 4: Parliaments of ASEAN countries use PIC services and engage in peer learning and exchanges.

APPROACH AND TARGET GROUPS

The direct target groups are the members, commissions and secretariats of both houses of the Cambodian Parliament, as well as parliamentary staff in the ASEAN region. PIC works independently and adheres to neutrality. It is demand driven. Capacity strengthening is at the core of PIC's activities and services. PIC's capacity development programme will support the Secretariat of the houses. By assisting in developing the capacity and improving the performance of the Cambodian Parliament, and building on the work to reach out to other parliaments in the region, PIC strengthens national democratic processes and the accountability of parliaments in the region.



Plenary Session at the Senate of Cambodia. Photo by Senate



Visit of the Cambodian parliamentarians at the parliament of Switzerland. Photo by SDC